

Yoga Meditation
Ayurveda
Majestic Location
in South India Feb
16 - 27 Rural
Peaceful Retreat



Ottawa Star

Life Insurance up to 85
Free Life Insurance
Quotes for
Canadian Seniors.
No Obligations!



Home Features Canada World Community About us Contact

Search Sunday, October 26, 2014 The Weather Network Ottawa, ON 8°C YouTube Twitter Facebook

Community Ottawa Star Print Edition

Tantalizing & Tasty: Cuisine of Kerala — God’s Own Country

June 23, 2014



by Ms. Raju Banerjee

The India Canada Friendship Circle’s (ICFC) June 8th sold out session on food tourism in Kerala, a state in South India, with the talented Joe Thottungal, Chef and Owner of Coconut Lagoon Restaurant, was an event not to be missed for foodies, gourmards, and connoisseurs in pursuit of tasty and exotic flavours.

Joe laid out an array of exotic spices along with many that are used everyday in Kerala kitchens and pointed out a common misconception that “spicy food” means “hot food” unsuitable to some delicate palates.

Spices are used to enhance natural flavours and to bring out the complexities of many ingredients. He highlighted how using different techniques can change the taste, colour, flavour and strength of a spice; for example, tamarind when smoked has a completely different taste and flavour than when unsmoked. Joe explained that mace, the outer shell of nutmeg, imparts an altogether different aroma than the nut itself and that black pepper, at the various stages of drying, changes its color from green to red to black with unique potency and smell at every stage!

Since Kerala means the “land of the coconut”, it was natural for Joe to artfully demonstrate how to buy a good coconut and crack it open! In fact, it is this very meaning of “Kerala” coupled with its beautiful backwaters and lagoons that inspired him to name his Ottawa restaurant, located at 853 St. Laurent Boulevard, “Coconut Lagoon”.

ICFC members learned of Joe’s challenges in rising amongst the entrepreneurial ranks and how his Indian advisors encouraged him to specialize in authentic Indian rather than western cuisine. This advice went far in shaping Joe’s 20-plus year career, spanning India, Saudi Arabia and now Canada, as he worked amongst the world’s best chefs. One of his initial challenges was how to raise awareness of the regional differences in Indian cuisine and, with the success of Coconut Lagoon, he created a niche for Kerala and South Indian cuisine in Ottawa.

There was more in store for the ICFC crowd as Joe came with freshly prepared authentic Kerala snacks: Shrimp ‘pancakes’, samosas, potato and cheese fritters and Kerala tea infused with cardamom. Everyone, including Mr. Mauril Belanger, Member Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier, and Mr. Joe Daniel, Member of Parliament for Don Valley East (Toronto), enjoyed a taste of God’s Own Country – Kerala right here in Ottawa!

Joe emphasized that it’s Kerala’s unique combination of geography, climate and diverse cultures that makes its cuisine so special. He insisted that there is nothing that compares to leisurely drifting along the backwaters of Kerala in a handmade houseboat enjoying the tranquility of the unspoiled countryside while dining on freshly caught giant prawns prepared for you by your own on-board chef. True to his word, Joe led a group of Canadians on a very successful 15 day culinary expedition to Kerala in March 2014.

ICFC’s next event on September 21st will feature Suneet Tuli, CEO, of DataWind, which is widely known for its “Akash” – an Android-based tablet, dubbed as the world’s most affordable tablet.

Read now

Study gives tentative nod to electronic tools for tracking immigrants

Clipping on government in Western Europe part of Singapore risks and rewards are examined

India's Mars mission is boon for its space business And inspiration for homegrown scientists

World



In sign of growing desperation, expert says 8,000 Rohingya flee Myanmar in less than 2 weeks
Posted October 26, 2014

By Robin McDowell, The Associated Press YANGON, Myanmar – A growing sense of desperation is fueling a mass exodus of Rohingya Muslims from western Myanmar, ...



Ukraine pauses before decisive parliamentary vote soured by spectre of separatist conflict
Posted October 26, 2014

The Associated Press MARIUPOL, Ukraine – Ukraine is bracing for decisive parliamentary elections against the backdrop of unrest in regions roiled by conflict between government ...



Fighters from Islamic State group shell northern Syrian town amid heavy clashes with Kurds
Posted October 26, 2014

The Associated Press BEIRUT – Activists and a Kurdish official say fighters from the Islamic State group are shelling the northern Syrian town of Kobani, ...



Iran hangs woman convicted of murdering a man she said was trying to rape her
Posted October 26, 2014

By Ali Akbar Dareini, The Associated Press TEHRAN, Iran – Iran hanged a woman on Saturday who was convicted of murdering a man she said ...

Top Israeli minister bemoans ‘crisis’ in

relation with US after defence chief snubbed

Posted October 26, 2014

The Associated Press JERUSALEM— A top Israeli minister says there is a “crisis” in in the country’s relations with the United States that must ...

Ottawa Star Newsletter

Email *

Subscribe!



Product Testers (Wanted)



Receive Free Beauty Product Samples in the mail

[Click here](#)

