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Magic mix on the menu

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A heady mix of fantasy and food — that's precisely the combination on offer at Millennium Park till Saturday. The park on the banks of the Hooghly is playing host to Khaddyotsav 2005, the annual gastronomic extravaganza by students of the Institute of Advanced Management, Salt Lake.

A fairytale world greets you at the entrance, with Bhooter Raja and Kumropotash singing in unison with Goopi and Bagha. The entire place is dotted with familiar fictional props like Rapunzel's Tower and Cinderella's pumpkin carriage.



A makeshift floating bar on an illuminated steamer is a special attraction, with the bartender whipping up innovative concoctions like Goblet of Fire.

Food from across the globe, with a special tilt towards European, Arabian and Bengali cuisine, is served by students dressed in theme attire. The menu designed innovatively includes Crispy Fried Gram Flour Titbits served with Salsa, Spicy Sausage tossed with Seasoned Onion and Tomato and Steam Fished Lollypops with Barbecue as starters.



The European main course offers Mixed Vegetable Florentine, Tangy Beans and Pulses, Chicken Lancashire Fish and Roasted Pork Loin, while the Bengali fusion fare (Abol Tabol) comprises Kumropotash (stuffed steamed vegetables with mustard), Hore Koro Komba (*paneer* balls in *chholar dal*), Hojoborolo (*shukto* in white sauce), Kimbhut-Kimakar (*koi machh* cooked in *chholar dal*), Mangsher Dum Duma Dum (mutton *malai* curry), Baluchi (*luchi* made of rice powder).

The Mediterranean fare includes Sheesh Tauk (pan-grilled spicy exotic vegetables served with tangy Peri Peri sauce), Samak Bill Adab (nut-coated fried fish served in Sultani style), Lamb Salona (chunks of tender lamb cooked with chickpeas), Cameroon Suya (marinated chicken cooked on bamboo sticks) and Paella Marinera (seafood served with rice).

The entertainment menu comprises Arabian dances, fashion shows and games.

(From top) A student dressed in Moroccan attire at Khaddyotsav 2005 at Millennium Park; participants at Bolly Beatz Dancercise at Gold's Gym; the kebab platter at Grain of Salt. Pictures by Amit Datta and Sanjoy Chattopadhyaya

Royal tandoor

World-cuisine restaurant Grain of Salt is playing host to The Royal Kebab Festival till December 11. On offer is a fine selection of kebabs, equally split into Mansahari (non-vegetarian) and Shakahari (vegetarian) divisions.

Connoisseurs can try the Jheenga Nayaa, a preparation of tiger prawns from the Bay of Bengal with Calcutta bekti layering. You can also order the perennial favourite Murgh Champ Taazedar, a version of drums of heaven. Fish lovers can go for Anari Mahi Tikka that is Calcutta bekti with *anardana* coating.

The vegetarian section is as comprehensive as the non-vegetarian one. Faldari Mewey Mawa Ki Sheek, a combination of fruits and *khoya*, is a must-try here. Other than the regular *paneer* and seasonal vegetables from the *tandoor*, you can also venture out and try the Nadoor Veg Sheek, a lotus stem delicacy.

I kebabs are served with mint and tomato chutney, a garlic dip and a salad. Prices range from Rs 165 to Rs 210.

Fitness steps

You crave to lose those extra kilos, but dieting or sweating it out is just not your style. Well, then you should have been at Bolly Beatz Dancercise, a two-day Bolly-aerobics workshop held at Gold's Gym earlier this week.

The workshop was conducted by dance and fitness expert Nidhi Mehta, the lady behind Stepz, a global chain of specialised studios dealing with fitness through the medium of dance. Nidhi's style draws from Bollywood, hip-hop, salsa, ballet, jazz and other forms.

"The workout routines are set to the latest Bollywood chartbusters, bhangra, salsa and instrumental music. The idea is to help burn calories through a fun-filled experience," smiles Nidhi, who has trained at Shiamak Davar's Institute for the Performing Arts in Mumbai.

"From experienced dancers to people who claim to have two left feet, the instruction is designed to offer value to everyone while working with individual needs," she adds. Each power-packed session of 50 minutes promises to de-stress, increase your stamina and flexibility — over time, of course.

