

**EAT-THNOCENTRISM AND CULTURE
NEPALI FOOD**

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**THE CULTURE AND CUISINE OF NEPAL IS DIFFERENT FROM
AMERICAN CULTURE. THE RESTURANT THAT WE PICK,
KATHMANDU, SHOWS OFF THE NEPALI CULTURE WELL.
NOT ONLY WAS THE FOOD TRADITIONAL BUT SO WAS THE
SEATING, DÉCOR AND MUSIC OF THE RESTURANT WERE
ETHNIC. THE WAITERS REFLECT THE KIND NATURE OF THE
NEPALI PEOPLE AND THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF THE
RESTURANT WAS ENJOYABLE.**

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“A Restaurant is based on a relationship, ...I am Kathmandu Chullo”

Pradip (“Rocky”) Poudel

- I. Introduction:
 - A. Background
 1. Nepal is a Southern Asian country just north of India and south of China.
 2. The cuisine that we experienced at Kathmandu resembles that of Nepal’s neighbor India. There are some dishes that are unique and some that are your basic Asian foods.
 - B. The Restaurant
 1. Kathmandu Chullo is located at 411 S. Washington Ave Royal Oak Mi, 48067. It stands out among the brown brick buildings as a bright red and green sign.
 2. The restaurant seats 65 people comfortably on the floor, though there were not many people in the restaurant when we went. We sat in the center of the room at the biggest table made for 8-10 people.
 3. When we went to the restaurant we had a fourth person in our group who brought a friend with her. Therefore we were fortunate to have the opportunity to taste five different entrees.
 4. The prices for the dishes that we savored were actually high for the type of food according to a review made by Jane Slaughter for the Metro Times. Although the atmosphere and food maybe enjoyable the prices may deter repeat business for the restaurant.
 5. Although the restaurant as many ethnic and diverse qualities it is somewhat Americanized. Instead of selling only Nepali oriented beverages such as Elam Chiya, Nepali tea, or Lychee Juice they also sell soft drinks and bottled water. Also instead of the traditional way of eating with their fingers, Rocky, the owner, provides silverware for you to use.
 6. Rocky is not only the owner of the restaurant but also the greeter, waiter, Nepali expert and chef. He did not cook for us but he started the restaurant with just him and his wife at first.
- II. Feelings Entering the Restaurant
 - A. Different Customs
 1. Upon entering the restaurant we were asked to remove our shoes and place them in cubbyholes provided to store them.
 2. The tables are actually only about one foot off the ground. We sat on cushions that were on the floor because the tables were so close to the ground.

B. Feelings and Expectations

1. The custom of sitting on the floor while dining was different than what we had expected. Usually we would associate this with far-east countries in Asia such as Japan.
 - a). The cushions were very comfortable to sit on when we first sat down. They were soft and thick and felt good after a long days work.
 - b). Because we were not use to sitting on the floor for long periods of time we became uncomfortable.
2. We felt welcomed by the owner of the restaurant, Rocky when we first walked in. He greeted us warmly. But because there were so few people in the restaurant itself the focus was all on us.
 - a). We were told by Rocky that it is custom \for Nepali people to invite people, even strangers and travelers into their homes to, as he put is “drink water, drink tea.”
 - b). Rocky told us that the Nepali people are very family oriented as well which is what makes them so friendly and nice to be around.

III. Atmosphere

A. Music

1. The music was ethnic sounding and different from what most people are use to.
2. The music was quiet and soothing. From what Rocky told us the music was there for entertainment purposes.

B. Décor

1. Accenting the walls is a diverse combination of décor. It is mostly a hodge-podge of different quilts and rugs draping the walls from the waist down. The fabrics, Rocky said were just decoration bought from different places to make the restaurant look more comfortable and cozy, they did not have any cultural significance to speak of.
2. Christmas lights are strung throughout the room that give off a glow to the otherwise dimly lit room. Rocky insists that they are just there for decoration as well.
3. The upper part of the wall is adorned with religious paintings and actual pictures and artifacts from the Nepali culture. Hindu and Buddhist artifacts and even the flag, the only triangle flag in the world, decorate the walls.
4. Clip from the restaurant.

C. Hospitality

1. Rocky promptly joined us when we sat down. He knelt down at our table and was eager to offer any information that we wanted to know.

2. He gave us time to think of any question that we wanted answered and took our minds off the fact that we were hungry and waiting for our food.

IV. Food

A. Decision for Entrees

1. Teresa
 - a). What? - Mashu Naunee, or chicken with pistachios, almonds, cashews, coconut and cream.
 - b). Why? - Because she likes coconuts and wanted to try something a little out of the ordinary.
 - c). Didn't pick- Lamb because of the association of where the meat came from and a little so much out of the comfort zone.
 - d). Did you like? - The first few bites were shocking but after a few it became more and more enjoyable. This was a new experience she because developed a taste for it very quickly.
2. Jaclynn
 - a). What? - Besisahar Tarakari-shrimp with tomatoes and rice.
 - b). Why? - She likes shrimp and we wanted to try all the different kinds of meat so she picked shrimp.
 - c). Didn't pick- anything with chicken because other people in the group were already eating chicken so we needed a different sort of dish.
 - d). Did you like? - It was okay but not great. The tomatoes really came through in the dish and tasted good but you had to pick the tails off the shrimp.
3. Andrew
 - a). What? - Vedako Pullow- lamb sautéed with basmati rice and sweet peas.
 - b). Why? - Because he has never had lamb before and wanted to try something new. Also he wanted to get something that no one else did so we could get a broader view of the cuisine
 - c). Didn't pick- anything that was really common because other people were getting things like that.
 - d). Did you like? - The lamb actually didn't have a distinct taste to it; it took on the flavor of the spices and vegetables around it so it wasn't that bad to the people who were hesitate about trying it in the first place.
- 4). 4th dish
 - a). What? - Himalayan Chili- chicken breast sautéed with green peppers, onions and tomatoes.
 - b). Why? - Chili has many different variations and we wanted to try some.

- c). Didn't pick-shrimp because already had a shrimp dish coming.
- d). Did you like? - The chili was one of the most different dishes that we ordered. It was something new that we tried but was not to our liking so much as the other dishes.

5). 5th dish

- a). What?- Chautari Tarakari- chicken breast, sautéed with mushrooms, onions and tomatoes.
- b). Why?- Because the mixture of vegetables was different and we wanted to try it.
- c). Didn't pick- things that sounded more familiar to us.
- d). Did you like?- This was our favorite dish by far. The seasonings were just right and the vegetable tastes, especially the mushrooms and tomatoes really permeated through the dish.

6). Soups

- a). What?- Ajako Suruwa- the soup of the day which was vegetable soup made with cabbage water and beans. And Mix Max Suruwa- chef's special mixed lentil soup with many vegetables and ginger and cumin spices.
- b). Why?- Because Rocky said that both were good.
- c). Did you like?-the lentil soup was very good and rich but the vegetable soup thin and watery
- d). Each soup came with pita bread that made the soup what it was to us.

B. In General

1. Rocky told us that all the Nepali dishes made at his restaurant are cooked to order meaning that they do not start preparing it until after you have placed your order.
2. The food usually takes at least thirty minutes to make because, as Rocky was sure to point out to us, they only use fresh herbs and spices that they cut up fresh before they make every order.
3. The food that we ordered had many different, fresh, herbs and spices. Among the ones that stood out were, ginger especially in the Mashu Naunee as well as garlic, cilantro and fresh cumin. Other spices include fresh olive oil and mint as marinates to the entrees.

C. How the Food is Served

1. All of the dishes came with rice, whether mixed in with the dish or just white rice on the side. They also came with carrots and cabbage to be mixed in with the main part of the dish.
2. When the dishes were brought out they were family style, meaning the entrée was on a big plate and needed to be dished out to everyone at the table.
 - a). We thought that maybe this was because we told Rocky that we were doing a project and wanted to try all of the

dishes but he told us that this is how the Nepali people serve their meals because they are so family oriented.
b). Rocky also informed us that there is a hierarchy of how the food is served. The children are fed first because they are believed to be the most important. Then the elderly and finally the parents and young adults.

V. Conclusion

A. Kathmandu

1. After our unique dining experience, we came away with an increased knowledge of this spiritual country, due to the passion that Rocky has for spreading the Nepali culture through his restaurant and the individual time that he shares with his customers.
2. Gathering around the dinner table is very important to the Nepali people but the food is not the main focus. The focus is on the opportunity for the family and friends to spend time enjoying each other while they nourish their bodies and souls.

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