



HILL ROAD GETS A CHIC GOA-ESQUE CAFÉ

GOURMET-STYLE PIZZAS AND A TRANQUIL ALFRESCO SETTING MAKE RAY'S CAFÉ BANDRA'S MUST-VISIT NEW EATERY

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You wouldn't believe that Ray's Café & Pizzeria is a stone's throw away from the clamour that characterises Hill Road. You walk in, and the noise from the thoroughfare melts away. And while that by itself makes it endearing, the cosy little café has delightfully charming décor too. There's alfresco seating in a brightly lit courtyard, with mustard yellow walls lit up by stained glass porch lamps. A plate glass window and doorway separates the tiny whitewashed air conditioned section at the far end where board listing dessert specials hangs. It feels almost like one of the overpriced chic cafés run by foreigners in Goa.

Ray's claims to serve authentic, New York-style pizzas, and their thin-crust cheesy topping variety measured up to expectation. Don't expect your regular Indianised tikka and Manchurian toppings here. Ray's does mostly gourmet-style pizzas. The unusual cheese-less Hearty Vegan pizza (Rs 160 for a 9-inch) came topped with fresh spinach, slivers of artichoke

hearts and basil. We loved the punchy flavour of garlic that helped accentuate milder taste of greens. Noticing that we hadn't ordered their signature cheese pizza, proprietor Hemal Mehta offered us a slice of the regular Original Pizza (Rs 75 for a slice, Rs 175 for a 9-inch). It was thin and scrumptious, and you order two slices, it will be enough to make a small meal.



New York Hot Dog, Ray's Café; (top) Vegan Pizza; (bottom) PICS/ASHISH RANE

The burger selection isn't large. We opted for a New York Dog with pork (instead of chicken) sausage (Rs 175), and an Original Chicken Burger (Rs 250) in brown bread. Though on the expensive side, the Dog accompanied by relish, mustard, ketchup and sauerkraut was, not quite New York-style, but value for money as the little smiley on the menu indicated. It would work if they served mustard and ketchup in squeeze bottles rather than in bowls. The Chicken Burger stuffed with chicken breast fillets instead of a chicken patty, was big. It could quite easily be in the reckoning for the best burger in town.

Ray's Café should consider serving beer or wine. For the moment, the spicy ginger fizz is about as exotic as the beverage menu gets, but Mehta promises that they are working on acquiring a license.

AT: Gazebo House, I33 Hill Road, behind Godrej Nature's Basket, Bandra. CALL: 26451616 / 1818
Ray's Café didn't know we were there. The Guide reviews anonymously and pays for meals