

## New Indo-Lanka Restaurant



**Verdict** Flavourful Sri Lankan fare trumps a lacklustre atmosphere

### A home-cooked Sri Lankan meal in Dora

Before stepping into New Indo-Lanka Restaurant, remind yourself that you're here for two things: the food and the experience. Beyond what looks like a typical Sri Lankan grocery store entrance, a narrow path lined with dried fruits, fresh vegetables and crackers ends at a staircase. Follow it up to the no-frills restaurant and tell yourself again that you're not here for the (non-existent) décor. I don't eat meat and had seen the face my companion made at a freezer full of questionable seafood downstairs, so when menus failed to appear I looked at our waiter and asked: 'Vegetarian?'

A quick nod and three minutes later he returned with two deliciously greasy types of vada (Sri Lankan 'falafel') on matching silver trays. One was a heavy, donut-shaped mass of dhal (lentils), the other a crunchy mix of what appeared to

be lentils, cauliflower, broccoli and some other unidentified vegetable bits. The flavour of each bite changed significantly with one of three accompanying chutneys: curried lentils; a tear-inducing tomato mix chock full of chilis; and refreshing coconut to offset the heat. Once the fried treats were sitting heavily in our stomachs, two more trays came out carrying golden roti and the same trio of dips. The flatbread was delightful, but served more as a vehicle for each sauce's distinctive flavor.

The Sri Lankans that smile down from flyers on the restaurant's walls imply that plastic tables, fluorescent lighting and questionable health standards should not be dwelled upon. Alas, there's no dessert to follow this heavy snack, but a plastic-wrapped sleeve of sugary Lemon Puff Biscuits from the ground-floor shop makes for an appropriate finish.

**New Indo-Lanka Restaurant**  
(01 257410)  
Second floor CIT Bldg,  
Dora Circle, Beirut  
Daily 7am-10pm  
Meal for two with beer LL13,000