



# Authentic & Traditional at **Balti** Indian

STORY BY Laurie Wallace Lynch  
PHOTOS BY Steve Uhraney





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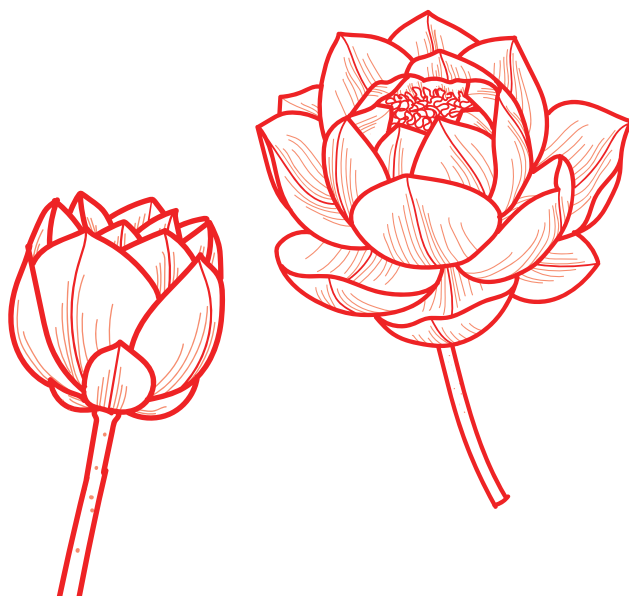
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**W**hen you walk into Balti Indian Restaurant in Whitby, it's as if your five senses suddenly spring to life, and this is exactly the customer experience Chef/ Owner Rajan Khatri had in mind when he opened his new restaurant in December.

"I designed Balti Indian Restaurant to introduce authentic and traditional Indian cuisine to Whitby, in a warm and welcoming atmosphere which delights your senses," says Chef Khatri. "The first thing you experience is the wonderful aromas coming from the kitchen. White table linens and creamy white walls set off the specially-selected paintings and India-inspired décor, while your taste buds come alive with the flavours of Indian cuisine."

Rajan Khatri grew up in India and worked at several prestigious hotels around the globe for almost two decades before coming to Canada in 2010. He opened Lazia Restaurant in Scarborough and sold it five years later when he and his wife decided to move to Whitby to raise their two sons. Last year the busy chef/restaurateur decided to skip the commute and opened Balti Indian Restaurant in his own neighbourhood. He has however, returned to his roots in terms of the food he serves.

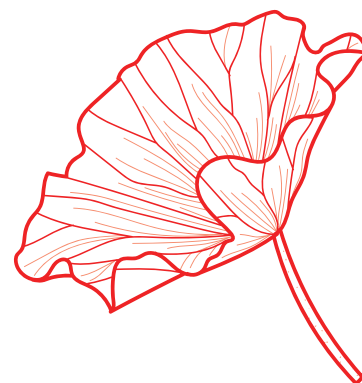
"Most of the dishes are based on my mother's recipes and are prepared the same way she cooked back home when I was growing up," states Khatri. "I try to stay authentic and true to the original dishes that everyone loves. We feature cuisine from northwestern India from the Jammu and Kashmir area, prepared in the tradition of Balti cuisine. I believe I am one of the first people in Ontario, if not Canada, to specialize in Balti cuisine. Balti food is very popular in England and other countries in Europe but is really being discovered here in Canada."

The word "Balti" means bucket in Hindu and Signature Dishes like Balti Butter Chicken, Lamb Rogan and Chilli Garlic Prawns are served to guests in a special copper bucket, or pot.

Menu selections range from appetizers to desserts under the categories of Appetizers (including traditional Mulligatawny Soup), Tandoori Appetizers, Signature Dishes, Old Flames (Prawn, Chicken, Lamb or Beef Curries made with onions, ginger, garlic, tomatoes and spices), Traditional Curries, Vegetarian Dishes and Treasures of Basmati Rice. The dessert menu offers popular items such as Kheer, a traditional Indian-style rice pudding garnished with pistachios and Mango Kulfi Ice Cream. Most main course dishes range in price



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#### **BALTI INDIAN RESTAURANT**

115 Brock Street North, Whitby

(905) 666-0909

[www.baltiindian.ca](http://www.baltiindian.ca)

from \$12.99 to \$16.99 per dish.

“Our Tandoori Chicken and kebabs are cooked the traditional way in Tandoori clay ovens,” describes the chef. “We marinate our Signature Tandoori Chicken in yogurt overnight which makes the meat incredibly tender. It’s one of our best sellers, along with Balti Butter Chicken and people rave about our Garlic Naan Bread. We make the dough fresh in-house every day.”

Fresh, flavourful and top quality are key words in Chef Khatri’s vocabulary. While many of us are still sound asleep, in the wee hours of the morning, Chef Khatri is already at the Toronto Food Terminal hand-selecting fresh produce for his menu. “Our dishes are made fresh when you order them, using the freshest ingredients possible,” he explains. “Our spices come from India and we make our own signature spice blends in-house by blending turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, black pepper and other spices.”

The kitchen may have the heady aroma of an exotic spice market, but Chef Khatri is well aware of the perception that Indian food can be quite spicy. He offers this reassurance: “Like many other cultures, we offer three levels of heat from mild, medium and hot, and each of our dishes and can

be custom-made to the level of heat a guest is comfortable with. Balti food may be new to many people, so I suggest people start with our famous Butter Chicken with mild spice.”

Speaking of popularity, Chef Khatri and business partner Gopal Puen are delighted by the warm welcome they have received from the Whitby community. “The response and feedback from customers has been very positive,” says Chef Khatri. “We didn’t expect to be so busy so soon, especially on weekends, and we are truly grateful to everyone who has supported us and will continue to support us. Take out and delivery have been very popular, and we offer free delivery within a five-kilometre radius.”

The restaurant is open Monday to Saturday for lunch and dinner and on Sundays for dinner from 4 to 9 p.m. The Weekday Lunch Buffet is offered Monday to Friday from Noon to 2:30 p.m. and features 12 hot dishes and assorted salads and sauces for just \$14.99 per person, plus tax. The 60-seat restaurant will soon be licensed to serve wine, beer and cocktails. Catering is also available for groups small or large (up to 300 people), starting at \$15 to \$25 per guest, depending on menu selection.



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## 5 of the Most Popular Dishes to Try

**Signature Tandoori Chicken**, world famous Tandoori chicken marinated overnight in yogurt and oriental spices, cooked in a clay oven (\$12.99-appetizer menu)

**Signature Balti Butter Chicken**, tender cubes of chicken prepared in cream, tomatoes and fenugreek (\$13.99)

**Signature Chilli Garlic Prawns** (see recipe) sautéed Pacific Coast prawns sautéed in a spicy and sweet garlic sauce (\$16.99)

**Garlic Naan Bread**, Indian fine flour flat bread with minced garlic (\$2.99)

**Aromatic Basmati Rice**, rice in an exotic gravy with fried onions, saffron, mint, coriander and raisins, available in vegetarian (\$12.99), chicken (\$14.99, lamb (\$15.99) or prawns (\$16.99) All prices are plus tax



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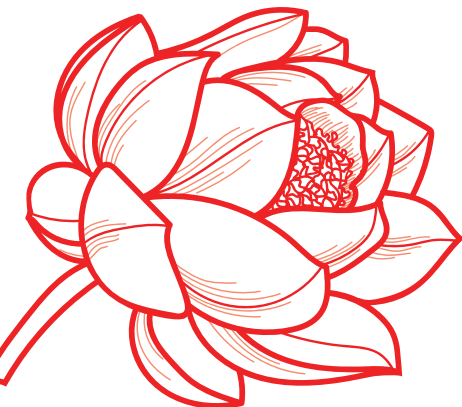
# Balti Signature Chilli Garlic Prawns

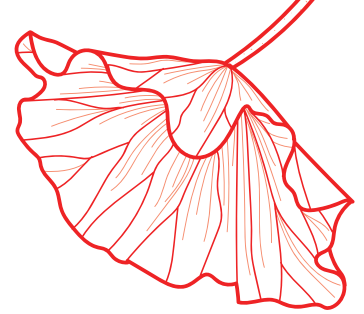
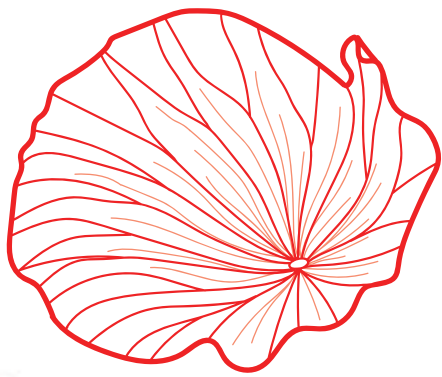
## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 pinch of Ajwain seeds (Carom seeds)
- ½ bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 cloves of fresh garlic, peeled and finely minced
- 6 pieces of Tiger Prawns, peeled
- 1 small onion finely diced
- 1 ladle (about ½ cup of tomato sauce)
- Homemade spices to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 Tbsp tamarind sauce

## METHOD:

1. Place the oil in a large pan and heat. Add a pinch of Ajwain seeds, bell pepper and 1 tsp each of finely chopped ginger and garlic. Sauté 1-2 minutes.
2. Add peeled Tiger Prawns and sauté slightly until half cooked.
3. Add 1 cup of tomato. Add the onion and tomato sauce, salt and pepper and graham marsala to taste. Add the prawns and sauté 2-3 minutes more until cooked through. Finish with 3 Tbsp tamarind sauce and mix well. Spoon into a copper pan and serve.





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