

It's a family affair at The Pakora Bar

I love curry. Maybe it's in my genes. My mother was born in India, before moving to the UK at the age of nine, and it's a go-to cuisine for all my family when eating out or in. Nothing beats the comfort of a bowl of curry and rice for me. Indian, Nepalese, Thai, or Sri Lankan – I'm not fussy.

So, imagine my delight when I stumbled upon an old favourite this summer – The Pakora Bar. Founded by three Edinburgh-based brothers with a vision to share their mother's exceptional pakoras and curries, this family-run business has grown from a humble 12ft mobile kitchen. They first gained popularity at festivals like T in the Park, the Royal Highland Show, and the Fringe, which eventually led them to open their first permanent spot on Hanover Street.

I had been a regular at their city centre location – it was a healthier option for soaking up the effects of a late night out. However, after the Hanover Street branch closed, I assumed they'd gone the way of many hospitality ventures. As it turns out, they had simply relocated, and I was thrilled to rediscover them in their new Holyrood home, which they opened last year.

During this year's Fringe, their street food restaurant proved to be my salvation. Nursing a monumental hangover after one of those "just one drink" nights turned into 3am, I needed a rice-and-curry remedy. The Pakora Bar fitted the bill. I opted for their fantastic value #FixForOne – three of their delicious pakoras with fresh salad and pakora sauce, and a curry served on rice or naan for just £15, available Monday to Friday, noon until 5 pm.

I spoke with two of the brothers, Mark, who manages the restaurant, and Paul, who handles catering. They were launching their new Mango Lassi Pale Ale, "Chakk De Phatte." While my fragile state wasn't up to sampling it that day, I returned a few weeks later to give it a proper try.

On this visit, I dined solo, (my friend had to cancel last minute, honest!). But I was in good hands – warmly hosted by the father of the family, John Singh, a charming turban-clad Sikh, and his wife Rajindar, who couldn't have been more welcoming, with wonderful tales to tell. Meanwhile the brothers commanded their own sections, including brother Brian who was hosting the bar, and pulling many a Chakk De Phatte and making some mean cocktails. John's grand-daughter, Paul's daughter, was also getting in on the act, running their social media account and capturing customers' reactions to the new drink.



The idea for “Chakk De Phatte” originated with John. “Chakk De Phatte” – a phrase akin to “cheers” or “slàinte” – is Scotland’s first Mango Lassi Pale Ale. The recipe has been perfected by John’s sons over the years, and it truly

complements the rich flavours of The Pakora Bar's dishes. I might have been slightly overwhelmed by its presentation in a heavy tankard glass, but I rose to the challenge. In fact two pints went down too smoothly! The beer is sweet and fruity, with fresh mango notes, malty undertones, and a smooth finish. It paired beautifully with the spicy Punjabi Lamb Curry, slow-cooked for four hours, which was highly recommended by John.

**THIS SWEET, FRUITY
PALE BASED ON THE
CLASSIC INDIAN
YOGHURT BASED DRINK
HAS BEEN PACKED WITH
FRESH MANGO, MALTY
SWEETNESS AND
LASHINGS OF LACTOSE
FOR A VELVETY
MOUTHFEEL YOU CAN
ONLY GET WITH A LASSI.
BREWED FOR SHARED
TIMES WITH FAMILY,
FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES,
WHOEVER; IT DOESN'T
MATTER...IT ALWAYS
STARTS WITH A CHEERS!
OUR MESSAGE IS LOUD &
CLEAR NO MATTER
WHERE YOU ARE FROM
AROUND THE WORLD;
LET'S ALL CHAKK-DE
PHATTE.**

**AVAILABLE AT THE BAR
NOW!**











Already shortlisted for The Scottish Beer Awards, “Chakk De Phatte” is available on tap and in cans at The Pakora Bar and select restaurants across Scotland. It’s poised to become the new go-to drink for curry lovers. Forget the wine; this beer is the perfect match for pakoras and curries alike.

For more information, [visit www.thepakorabar.co.uk](http://www.thepakorabar.co.uk)

Krua Thai: A Taste of Thailand in Liberton

Continuing with the curry theme, I have a long-standing wish to visit Thailand one day, a bucket-list goal that would allow me to fully immerse myself in learning to cook authentic Thai cuisine. But for now, I found the next best thing – a Thai cooking masterclass right here in Liberton.

The Krua Thai Cookery School is run by the delightful Rujira (‘Ru’) Herd from her home kitchen. Ru’s classes attract students from all corners of the world, including chefs from luxury yachts keen to uncover the trade secrets of traditional Thai cooking. She’s achieved a lot in her life – even cooking alongside the legendary Albert Roux. In just a couple of hours, my fellow two cooking companions and I learned authentic Thai techniques and recipes you’d expect to find in top Thai restaurants. And for those with a creative flair, you can even learn fruit and vegetable carving.



Whether you're a seasoned chef or have never wielded a spatula, Ru has a knack for making everyone feel confident. She'll equip you with the skills to whip up an impressive two-course dinner. We mastered dishes like **Laab-e-saan**, a spicy,

herby salad made with minced pork; **Giew Hang**, delicate pork wontons with soy sauce and Kaw Pad, a simple but delicious fried rice with egg. The best part? We got to enjoy our creations in the comfort of Ru's dining room, making the experience all the more rewarding.





For a truly unique and delicious culinary experience, I can't recommend Krua Thai enough. Who needs a plane ticket when you can take your taste buds on a journey right here in Edinburgh?

<https://www.kruathai.co.uk>