

the west. (Most buildings are still Indian-owned, but it's increasingly Pakistani shopkeepers who own and manage the small businesses.) The dining room here is filled with large extended families who linger over their meals while the children run circles around the tables. The famous whole tilapia, rubbed with red Lahori spices and deep-fried, is juicy and crisp. The weekend buffet of authentic curries—generous chunks of meat on the bone, with whole hot peppers or slices of ginger—and such staples as butter chicken are justifiably popular (lunch \$10, dinner \$13). 1330 Gerrard St. E., 416-406-0786.



6 Lahore Tikka House

Fourteen years ago, owner Alnoor Sayani took over a former KFC and began building a peach palace of a restaurant. A few trailers appeared in the parking lot as temporary dining space, and then never left. To feed the growing crowds, Sayani also installed a massive white summer party tent, draped inside with bright saris and strung with Christmas lights. The outdoor festival-like atmosphere, combined with the food (cinnamon- and cardamom-infused Karahi curries, Afghani chicken tikka, and homemade kulfi with a signature almond finish), so reminded Pakistani-Canadians of dining back home that business spiked. Sayani says that construction will be done in six months—he plans to turn the place into a massive nightclub—but he's been saying that for years now. The perpetual mid-construction state is part of its charm. 1365 Gerrard St. E., 416-406-1668.

7 Bombay Chowpatty

This takeout joint-meets-Bollywood movie store has the usual assortment of snack-shop chaats and puris, but the variety of Indian street food and desserts is the real reason people flock here. The vada pav (\$5), a sandwich of spicy, deep-fried potato balls, is smothered with two kinds of chutney. The royal falooda (\$4)—a rose-flavoured drink of cold milk, ice cream and vermicelli noodles topped with pistachios—is a traditional Bombay favourite. And then there is the paan,

a digestive aid that's somewhat controversial (the main ingredients, betel leaves and areca nuts, are known carcinogens). But for millions of South Asians, it's a mildly addictive after-meal staple. 1386A Gerrard St. E., 416-405-8080.



8 Kohinoor Foods

Aromas of cardamom, cumin and coriander draw shoppers past the battered red sign into this 32-year-old corner grocery. The sidewalk stands are covered in boxes of tindora (similar to okra), amla (Indian gooseberry, known for its medicinal qualities), karela (a gourd reputed to help fight diabetes) and tinda (a small squash-like fruit). Inside, the narrow aisles burst with bulk spices, basmati rice, every size of tiffin box, and stacks of locally baked naan and parathas. Boil-a-bag versions of such Indian classics as aloo gobi and mattar paneer are popular with time-strapped home chefs. 1438 Gerrard St. E., 416-461-4432.



9 Udipi Palace

Herbivores can order freely at this strictly vegetarian basement banquet hall. Diners shovel in the restaurant's signature South Indian crispy dosas, along with spongy uthapams and other traditional cuisine from the southwestern Indian city for which it's named. When owner Hubert D'mello isn't overseeing orders for the thalis and the ever-popular spring dosa (thin rice flour and lentil crêpes filled with potato curry, veggies and spicy chutney), he's looking after his second venture, Nitya, a candlelit resto across the street that's slightly more upscale. 1460 Gerrard St. E., 416-405-8189.

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