

Restaurant review: Karma Kettle, Kolkata

by [Hemchhaya De](#) | June 29, 2017, 12:00 AM IST



Name: Karma

Kettle

Location: 4, Swinhoe Street, Ballygunge Place, Kolkata - 700019

Ambience: The high walls of the palatial Ivy House in South Kolkata's Swinhoe Street conceal a spot of aromatic calm. As you walk through the main gate, you'd be guided to a green, shaded area at the back of the house. You will find a quaint little tea room called Karma Kettle there. A sliver of a well-decorated space adjoining the main tea shop, where one can enjoy a steaming cuppa along with some nibbles, will catch your eye too.



There's covered seating outside the shop overlooking a lush lawn. Now back to the main tea room. The moment you step into the room, an enchanting aroma of the blends on offer will make you feel rejuvenated. On your left, you can see a black desk which used to be a cottage piano once upon a time! On your right, there's a mini lab of sorts - you'd spot a series of glass tubes containing raw exotic tea blends, purely for demonstration. A wide variety of Karma Kettle blends, packaged in attractive containers and boxes, are on display along with interesting knick knacks (mostly kettles and tea cups of various shapes and sizes) on shelves covering two walls.



A couple of things will immediately capture your attention - the blue-orange mosaic floor and the Dutch-style drawings, depicting everything related to tea, near the ceiling. The intricate drawings, reminiscent of Kolkata's colonial heritage, have been executed to perfection by underprivileged students of a not-for-profit vocational training school in central Kolkata. Karma Kettle owners Dhiraj and Priti Arora wanted to give the shop a European look combined with strong Bengali decor elements. That's why you can also spot art deco features that were popular in Bengali households in the 60s (such as the mosaic tiled floor and stained glass

pieces).



What we ate and drank: There's an interesting idea behind the name, Karma Kettle, which has its roots in Eastern philosophy or beliefs. The concept is, if you serve a good cup of tea to a person, you gain good karma. The 'Kettle' part in the name comes from Priti and Dhiraj's (by their own admission) "obsession" with the vessel. We were indeed served some of the finest tea blends in the shop, so 'good karma' was ensured. It was a rainy afternoon - a perfect time for tea and cupcakes. We began the tasting session with a steaming cup of Maya. You can smell a hint of chocolate and the very first sip will confirm it. Basically, Maya is black tea with chocolate and cranberries. You will get a very, very subtle taste of chocolate, that's uplifting in every possible way. Maya is a dessert tea, that needs to be taken after a meal. You can enjoy it with a fat piece of a tea cake or a chocolate cake. We were served Table Mountain next. It's a caffeine-free blend made of rooibos (or redbush, a broom-like plant found in South Africa), liquorice, sage, fennel and vanilla. Incidentally, Table Mountain is an iconic natural monument in South Africa - in fact, the blends you get at the shop are all created locally with ingredients procured from various parts of the world. The creations are inspired by the owners' enviable travel experiences. The Table Mountain tea is ideal as a digestif or as an after-meal drink since rooibos can, among other things, ease digestive problems. The Table

Mountain tea is a strong blend that leaves behind a pleasant liquorice aftertaste. This is recommended for fitness buffs.



We tried Gulmarg next. This is a Kashmiri kahwa blend with a difference. Gulmarg combines premium emerald green tea with toasted almond slivers, cardamom, cinnamon, safflower (found in Kashmir) petals, apricot bits and saffron. You cannot help but marvel at the golden colour of the tea. It's light and you can find a heady mix of cardamom and saffron flavours. We didn't take milk and sugar for all the tea varieties we sampled. But you can of course add honey to all, including Gulmarg, which went well with lemon tarts. In fact, Gulmarg will be a perfect foil for Indian food too. What's more, you can buy these blends and take them home. Purists shouldn't panic - you can opt for Darjeeling Black Batasia (a medium bodied tea with mild astringency and delicate aroma) or Himalayan Moonshine (prized second flush or an early spring tea from the Himalayan highlands). All in all, a satisfying tasting session that you shouldn't miss for all the tea in China!



Price point: The price of a 25-pyramid tea bag box starts from Rs 250

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