

REVIEW

The best vegetarian spots in town

Beth Lassaline
Reporter

When thinking of great vegetarian restaurants, visions of exotic, specialty cafes hidden in the trendiest neighborhoods of Montreal and Toronto immediately come to mind. So... when given the task of finding some quality vegetarian food in Charlottetown, one can be mildly skeptical. Surprisingly enough, Charlottetown actually does have some premium vegetarian restaurants.

The first stop on this gastronomic adventure was lunch at the Formosa Tea House, located at 186 Prince St. It's the only yellow house on the street accented with green trim. Walking into the building, you are immediately surrounded by Asian influenced décor, most of it for sale. The exclusively vegetarian menu list snacks, meals and assorted tea-based beverages. For those of us who are not familiar with Taiwanese dishes, the menu comes complete with glossy photos of every dish. It was suggested, by the people sitting behind me, that I order the vegan sushi, the spring rolls and the fried rice. Having never eaten at the Formosa Tea House, I took their word and went for it. When the food came, it looked and smelled amazing. No worries here, the sushi was great, much better than the grocery store's Buento Nuevo California rolls. The fried rice has a great spice and is full of vegetables. It also includes tofu. In this particular case, the tofu was, in truth, good. The spring rolls topped with the dipping sauce are probably one the best things I have ever eaten. One order only comes with two spring rolls so I definitely recommend a double order. For vegetarians and carnivores alike, the Formosa comes highly recommended. If you can manage to get there during their limited hours, Monday to Friday, 11-3 and 5-8 p.m. you are definitely in for a unique and delicious meal.

Tai Chi Gardens, A Dim Sum Café, has to be one of Charlottetown's best-kept secrets. Newly renovated, it is a small building located at 119 Pownal St. Open Monday through Saturday from noon until 6 p.m., this strictly vegetarian restaurant declares that they only offer

'pure and simply good food.' Upon entering the building, it is customary to remove your shoes and don a pair of flip-flops. It seems appropriate, as the restaurant has a spa-like atmosphere of serenity and tranquility. Having never eaten at Tai Chi Gardens, and not really knowing what to order, I asked for the three most popular items on the menu. I received a pan-fried stuffed drum dumpling, spring rolls, and fried rice. I was also given pure mountain green tea that had been infused with lavender.

The loose leaf tea comes in a traditional clay teapot that you pour yourself into a tiny sake cup. The meal, complete with chopsticks, really was incredible. The two spring rolls, similar to those at the Formosa Tea House, come with a strong soy sauce. The stuffed drum was also quite good, filled with rice noodles, mushrooms and a unique blend of spices. Then came the fried rice. Truthfully, at first I was very leery. Much of the fried rice was unidentifiable, topped with what appeared to be the fried egg. Nevertheless, I was shocked at how good it was! Since visiting the Tai Chi Gardens last week I have gone back three times just to get the fried rice. I cannot stress how much I loved this restaurant. I highly recommend it for both the food and the atmosphere. It's a great place to eat study or catch up with friends. Also, for cash strapped students, the most expensive thing on the menu is \$3.80.

The most unexpected restaurant was the Royal Tandoor. Having previously tried curry flavoured dishes, and not really enjoying them, I was very, very hesitant to try their traditional plates. With a large class of water, I prepared myself to eat the channa masala, a curried chickpea dish, the aloo gobhi, a curried cauliflower and potato dish and some fresh tandoori naan bread. Then the unexpected...the vegetarian curry dishes truly were good. The curry flavour was not too strong but still present. The Royal Tandoor is located at 77 University Ave. Their hours of operation are, Monday through Saturday, with lunch served at 11:30- 2:00 p.m. and dinner served at 4:30- 9:00 p.m.

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CD Review: Scissor Sisters "Tah Dah"

Andie Bulman
Assignment Editor

A review that describes a CD by employing a math formula generally irritates the hell out of me. The equation usually goes something like this: New York hipsters sound like hybrid of Tom Waits and The Used, if lead singer was on an acid trip that enabled him to channel the still living spirit of Aretha Franklin.

The result of this stupid technique is that the reader needs to have a vast storage of musical knowledge in order to understand the "oh so clever" allegory.

And yet despite the fact that I hate this technique of mathematical description, the newest release from the Scissor Sisters seems to have pegged them as a band best described by comparison.

Their music is contrived and they seem to draw on a large variety of other artist's techniques in their quest for that

perfect pop song. On the title track "I don't feel like Dancing", one can hear shades of Abba, Elton John (particularly the star spangled sun glasses Honky Cat version), Blondie and the Bee Gees. Which is fine if you like these bands. My complaint is that the Scissor Sisters don't offer anything new, nothing unique. The songs will make you dance, it's true. But you aren't going to be dancing to something fantastically '07, you'll be dancing as poorly as your parents did in the early eighties. It seems as if the band that critics are calling "imaginative and daring" are really quite unable to synthesize the voices of rock and roll's past into their own sound. In short the scissor sisters fail to leave their own distinct mark, the only thing saving this CD from complete failure is lead singer Jake Shears vocal abilities. I give this CD 3 out of 5 Cadre stars.