



C24-30

# A Harmonious Journey of Flavours

Melodious tunes and mouth-watering Levantine cuisine at Fayrouz Nights

As the clock strikes eight on a Thursday evening, anticipation mounts for a melodic weekend retreat at Zahrat Al Fayrouz. Nestled within the luxurious Jumeirah Gulf of Bahrain Resort & Spa, this exquisite restaurant presents Levantine delicacies in indoor opulence and alfresco splendour. True to its name, Fayrouz Nights pays tribute to the timeless allure of the legendary Lebanese songstress Fairuz, whose charming melodies have captured hearts for over seven decades.

Zahrat Al Fayrouz is a restaurant with a lot of character. The niceties are captivating! Fayrouz means 'turquoise', and as you walk into the restaurant, the dainty turquoise ceiling lamps and turquoise soft furnishings add meaningful detail to the décor. Decorative faux ceiling joists add a traditional touch. Muted gold and lead-coloured lattices divide the space into community and private seating spaces. Artefacts and original art raise a curious eye and a keen desire to experience the special menu that the chef Bashar has designed for Fayrouz Nights.

Seated close to the belly dancer, I watched her graceful moves as she swayed to the music. Fayrouz Night features a set of performers that take turns each



week. They have a Tanoura show, belly dancing, and a singer to perform Fairuz classics.

I unveiled the impressive menu shaped like a phonograph record to reveal a unique Levantine menu. For starters, they have a selection of hot and cold mezzes, followed by a choice of main course and a dessert platter for sharing.

Beginning with a refreshing welcome drink prepared from raspberries, sprite and pomegranate, I commenced my din-

ing experience with a selection of cold mezza- a colourful array of cool and fresh hummus, mutabbal and warek enab bil zaita (Stuffed grape leaves). The starters were delicious! Hummus and mutabbal were creamy and smooth with extra virgin olive oil. I scooped up these delicious dips with hot bread.

The vegetables in the fattoush were colourful and fresh with a zesty pop of colour from sumac, and the fried Lebanese bread strips added crunch to the salad. Hot mezza included cheese rakakat, shrimp fatteh, and chicken liver with pomegranate sauce. The cheese rakakat had delicate layers of crispy phyllo with a stuffing of herby and stringy cheese which was so good! Chicken liver with pomegranate was a lip-smacking preparation of fried chicken liver coated in a flavour-packed sweet and sour pomegranate

molasses sauce. The hot and cold mezza consisted of classics, and each dish was prepared with utmost care and attention to detail.

After a successful round of appetisers, it was time for the main course. The set menu allows you to select one of four dishes. I highly recommend these dishes from the main course options-

Salmon with rice and tarator sauce-Seasoned and seared chunks of salmon served over a bed of fragrant basmati rice with slivers of pistachio and a tarator sauce. Tarator is a non-dairy



blend of tahini, garlic, and lemon. The sauce perfectly complimented

the fish and rice, adding creaminess and a zesty tang to the fatty fish.

Chicken molokhia is a stew prepared with molokhia and tender



chicken thighs served with a side of rice and vermicelli. I believe that molokhia is an acquired taste; you either love it or not. The herby taste is often compared to spinach; however, molokhia is more intense than other greens. I was not sure if I would enjoy it. However, I

loved it! Lemon broth cuts through the rich herby flavour to provide balance while the meat (In this case, chicken) adds a savoury note that makes this dish astonishingly addictive. Flakey almonds garnish added a nutty element and crunch.

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Kibbeh bil laban is one dish that looks simple but involves a lot of work. The preparation of the kibbeh is a work of art. The beautiful torpedo-shaped kibebe arrived in a savoury buttermilk broth with the goodness of garlic, mint, and other spices. The kibbeh had a stuffing made from minced meat, herbs and a perfect amount of seasoning. This dish is a comfort food that pampers your senses.

I concluded my meal with a dessert platter consisting of crunchy baklava, cheese-laden kunafa, fresh fruits and chilled vanilla ice cream, followed by a piping hot cup of green tea.

The meal was well-balanced, aptly portioned, healthy and tasty. I left feeling thoroughly satisfied.

Zahrat Al Fayrouz is an ideal location for a romantic Levantine dining escapade. Visit the restaurant for a memorable evening.

The set menu is priced at BD 25 net per person. For reservations, contact 33663466

