



## Healthy east

■ Sai Raje

**E**ating out when you're trying to watch your diet can be quite frustrating. For one, most of what is on the menu is out of bounds. Second, a very tiny fraction of restaurants offer low-calorie menus. But hey, indulging yourself a couple of times while eating out is okay. It's all about making smart choices really.

"Opt for dishes that have been stewed, grilled or stir fried instead of choosing fried foods or salads with heavy cream, mayonnaise or oil-based dressings," says Dr Nupur Krishnan, nutritionist and director of Biologics Healthcare. "Always order vegetables or fruits that are in season."

Armed with this advice, I trudged into the Far East restaurant at the Rodas Ecotel in Powai. The food served here is Pan-Asian, with a focus on Chinese and Thai dishes. It wasn't too difficult to find low calorie and low fat options on this restaurant's menu.

First up was the **Thai Grilled Chicken Salad** (Rs 185) that included a chicken breast marinated in a red chilli, ginger, lemon grass and basil paste and grilled. This was sliced and served with crisp lettuce and coriander sauce in a salad. The salad was light, and the grilled chicken had a nice, mild flavour. "It's a protein-rich preparation because of the chicken, almost 10-18 gm," says Dr Krishnan.

**Calorie count:** 225-275.

The steamed **Three Treasure Dimsums** (Rs 210) came next. The six dumplings were made of refined flour (*maida*) and stuffed with broccoli, mushroom, baby corn and garlic.

"*Maida* isn't healthy because it has no fibre but the vegetables are rich in antioxidants. Since the dimsums were steamed, their fat content is low, between 6-11 gm," says Krishnan.

**Calorie count:** 140-160.

I was looking forward to the **Broccoli Chicken,**



### LIGHT BITE: FAR EAST



PHOTOS: SAMBIT SAHA

stewed with rice wine, (Rs 350) and I wasn't disappointed. The broccoli and chicken were wonderful together and the mild stock thickened with only a little cornflour kept the dish very light. "The dish is a good combination of anti oxidants and protein. Its stewed preparation also makes it very healthy," says Krishnan.

**Calorie count:** 190-200.

Along with the chicken, I also tried the **Black Mushrooms, Baby Corn and Water Chestnuts in a Garlic Soy Sauce** (Rs 265). Both dishes were served with **Rice Flat Noodles with Vegetables and Peanuts** (Rs 175). The black mushroom preparation was a tad too sour for me but Krishnan says the mushroom and water chestnuts make the dish iodine-rich, and good for those with hypothyroid.

**Calorie count:** 160-170

The flat noodles were rather filling. They used a tad more oil than the other dishes, but were cooked with a generous amount of fresh vegetables, that were nice and crunchy and not overdone. "This dish lacks protein, but the plentiful vegetables make it rich in antioxidants," says Krishnan.

**Calorie count:** 240-270

I was trying to stay healthy, but I couldn't skip the desserts so a **Tom Lai Roulade** (Rs 135) was called for. It was a sticky rice and coconut cream mixture rolled over a mango puree centre. The portion was tiny, so I didn't feel too guilty. "The dessert is rich, with the starchy rice, sugar and coconut cream. It could have an 11-15 gm fat content. But the small portion size makes it okay to indulge in once in a while," says Krishnan.

**Calorie Count:** 225-240

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