

## The top five best curry takeaways in Britain



by Simon Majumdar | 09 June 2011 |  6 comments

Where can you get the best curry takeaway in Britain?



Britain is slowly discovering the delights of “proper” Indian cooking, as restaurants representing the country’s many regional variations open to acclaim. However, there is still a very fond place in our hearts for the traditional Indian curry house, with its familiar menu filled with dishes like Phaal, Vindaloo, Korma and Do Piazza. These dishes may have little, if any, relation to food you might encounter during a visit to the Indian subcontinent but, when well made, can be delicious and have helped the curry house usurp the position of fish & chips as the nation’s takeaway of choice.

Although the rapid growth of curry houses can be traced back to the arrival of immigrants to the UK from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and what is now Bangladesh, after WWII, Indian restaurants have a long and illustrious history in Britain. Their origins can be traced back to the opening of [The Hindostanee Coffee House](#) in Portman Square in 1773. The owner, Dean Mahomet, offered his customers the enjoyment of 'Indian dishes of the highest perfection'.

In 1926, Edward Palmer opened Veeraswamy on Regent Street and it was here that the blessed combination of combining curry with the pleasures of a nice cold lager began, during a visit to the restaurant by Prince Axel of Denmark.

In the 1950’s and 60’s large numbers of immigrants from the Indian sub continent began to arrive in Britain. They gravitated towards centres of manufacturing, particularly the shipyards of Glasgow, the steel mills of Yorkshire and the cotton mills of Lancashire.

Over time, restaurants opened to serve these communities with food they remembered from home. The restaurants also became popular with the locals and, ever the entrepreneurs, the owners adapted their food to appeal to this potential new audience.

This led to the creation of a stock cast of favourite dishes that can now be found in curry houses in all parts of the UK and, indeed around the world.

While the curry houses may have little to offer in terms of authenticity, the good ones deserve to be given respect in their own right and, in my view, few things can be better than collecting a takeaway from your favourite restaurant on the way home from work and enjoying it with a nice cold beer in front of the television.

Below are five of my top Indian take away restaurants in Britain. I'd love to hear about your favourite place to call when only a curry will do.

### **The Shish Mahal Restaurant – Glasgow, Scotland**

[The Shish Mahal Restaurant](#) in Glasgow earns its place at the top of the Curry House tree, not only for the quality of its food, which is very high, but because it is owned by one Ali Ahmed Aslam. You may not have heard of him, but I can guarantee that you have eaten his most famous dish, [Chicken Tikka Masala](#). In the mid 1970's when a customer complained that his chicken tikka was dry, Aslam created a sauce with a tin of tomato soup and gave Britain what is now arguably its national dish.

### **Madhuban – Liss, North Hampshire**

The awards that plaster the walls of [Madhuban](#) in Liss, North Hampshire should be enough to convince customers that this smart restaurant knows what it is about. But, it is the presence of a few more unusual dishes like [Elaichi Gosht](#) (lamb with ground cardamom and tomatoes) and Jardaloo Sali Bot (lamb cooked with apricots) that really draws me to this restaurant. That and the fact you can order online.

### **Grameen Khana – Birmingham, West Midlands**

When you use the words “curry” and “Birmingham” in the same sentence, you can only be referring to one particular dish, the Balti. Although there is actually a place in North Pakistan called Baltistan, the Balti was a creation of Birmingham's Pakistani Kashmiri community looking to create a dish with less oil than their traditional food. In 2009, the chefs of [Grameen Khana](#) were awarded the coveted title of [“Best Balti in Birmingham”](#) by the local press. 'Nuff said, I think.

### **Nawaab – Bradford, West Yorkshire**

The size of the menu may be daunting, but the quality of the cooking at [Nawaab](#) in Bradford has attracted critical acclaim as well as a large number of celebrity clients, including the late [Princess Diana](#). There are more authentic dishes on the menu, but look to the section marked “Old Favourites” for some excellent renditions of curry house classics.

## **Brilliant Restaurant – Southall, Middlesex**

In 2010, the [Brilliant Restaurant](#) in London's "Little India" area of Southall was named not only the "Best Indian Restaurant in The London Suburbs" by the [British Curry Awards](#), but also appeared on TV as part of "Gordon Ramsay's Best Restaurants". All this attention merely went to confirm what its fiercely loyal regulars knew, that it serves some of the best curry in the country