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Creative Cooking

Judie Dweck

A culinary adventure at Jewel of Himalaya

After visiting restaurants for many years, I thought I had reported on every cuisine. Most recently, I was delighted to discover a restaurant serving the food of Himalaya. I drove to Harrison, anticipating a new culinary experience, and a wonderful taste treat it was. In a small shopping mall on Halstead Avenue in the center of Harrison is Jewel of Himalaya, which is a gem of a restaurant.

I was greeted by owner Geljen Nuru Sherpa, whose roots are in Kathmandu. As a Nepal guide or Sherpa, he led many expeditions in the mountainous terrain, but the work was only when the weather conditions permitted. He studied the culinary arts as well, and in 1991 he came to New York to seek new opportunities. He worked in Dutchess County, and eventually opened a Jewel of Himalaya in Yorktown and met with success. The Harrison Jewel of Himalaya opened several months ago.

Sherpa said, "My mom was a very good cook and she inspired me. I worked my way up from dishwasher to restaurant owner. My goal is to serve people and treat them in the best way possible. We give them not just good food, but a peaceful atmosphere. Our guests get to share both my culture and my food. It is important to be nice and to treat everyone with patience and respect."

The atmosphere is welcoming with brick and warm clay colored walls, dark wood floors

RECIPES

Rock shrimp (serves 2 as an appetizer)

6 tiger shrimp, peeled and deveined, washed and dried 2 Tbsp. honey Cayenne pepper or pepper flakes to taste, about 1 tsp. salt and black pepper, to taste 1 Tbsp. cornstarch for dusting the shrimp ¼ cup sweet mirin 2 Tbsp. canola oil 1 Tbsp. garlic ginger paste	1 scallion, finely chopped 1 Tbsp. chopped parsley 2 Tbsp. cilantro leaves for garnish Place cornstarch in a plastic bag. Add shrimp and toss together. Shake off excess cornstarch and place shrimp on the grill that has been preheated. Grill for five	minutes. Remove. Heat oil in a skillet to medium hot and add shrimp. Add honey, hot pepper, salt and pepper, ginger and garlic paste and mirin and reduce it a bit. Toss in the parsley and scallion. Stir the mixture slowly until the shrimp get crunchy. Place in a serving bowl and garnish with cilantro.
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Chicken chili (serves 2)

2 Spanish onions, chopped 2 cloves garlic, chopped 2 Tbsp. canola oil for frying 1 red and 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into large dice 1 tsp. chili powder 1 tsp. ground cumin red pepper flakes or cayenne to taste salt and pepper, to taste 1 scallion, chopped	1 tomato, large dice cilantro leave, to garnish 1 chicken breast with skin and bones attached, cut into four pieces Heat oil in a saucepan to medium low. Saute onions until translucent or about five to six minutes. Add garlic and saute for one minute more. Add bell pep-	pers, chili powder, cumin, cayenne or pepper flakes, and salt and pepper and saute for one minute. Add the chicken and tomato and cover the pan. Simmer until the chicken is cooked through. Serve. Any unusual ingredients can be found in Asian markets or international gourmet markets.
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and paintings from Sherpa's homeland. White banquettes and white linen clad tables are comfortable. Several Buddha statues lend a peaceful mood. Above the friendly bar is a TV screen showing footage of the Himalayas and giving the viewer an idea of the area in which

this food flourishes.

This is truly a family-run restaurant, with Sherpa's wife, brother and nephew all involved. The food is all freshly prepared from scratch. They buy local food when possible, and they shop every morning, making purchases in small

quantities. They use the same cooking techniques that the family used at home. Sherpa said, "When growing up, all vegetables and fruits were grown in the family's backyard. Here our food is authentic and nutritionally well balanced."

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A culinary adventure at Jewel of Himalaya

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There are many ethnic groups in Nepal and the cuisine is reflective of this, with a great influence from India and China. It is a healthy cuisine. Common ingredients include potatoes, mustard greens, ginger, garlic and fenugreek, as well as apples.

Sherpa said, "My favorite part of restaurant ownership is seeing customers happy and returning again. At Jewel of Himalaya we want you to forget negativity and enjoy the qualities of compassion, peace and love."

Our meal started with a cup of Himalayan chai flavored with cinnamon, cloves and cardamom. From the menu we enjoyed an appetizer of lamb chili. Here roasted lamb slices were nicely marinated and cooked with carrots, tomatoes, onions, scallions, and red and green bell peppers. A sprinkling of sesame seeds added to the beautifully seasoned dish. You can request your dishes mild, medium or hot. Next, we enjoyed momo, Nepal's very popular dumplings. We savored these flour dough pockets encasing fillings of chicken, vegetables or beef, each with a distinctive shape. These plump morsels were served with two wonderful dipping sauces. One was prepared with hot chili, and the other was tomato based, with the tantalizing addition of ginger, garlic and cilantro. Other starters are a variety of traditional soups such as

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daal, mushroom, chicken and garlic, thukpa with handmade noodles and momo soup. There also were rock shrimp, samosas and pakoras. To accompany these appetizers, we enjoyed a dish of freshly sauteed mustard greens, with ginger and garlic. This is one of the most nutritious greens that gained flavor from the garlic and ginger.

The entrees served with basmati rice show the Indian influence on the cuisine. Some choices are channa masala, matter paneer, chicken saag, and chicken korma and lamb vindaloo. Himalayan thalis are a good introduction to the cuisine. They include a tasting of several typical dishes of the area. Himalayan curry, Himalayan makhini and Himalayan korma are unique to the cuisine with a lovely combination of spices. Many of these dishes are offered on the luncheon buffet. We tried chicken drumsticks, dusted with cornstarch and cooked with chicken stock, honey, celery, orange, and mirin and lime juice. It was a great

Your Bill	
Lunch	
Menu items	\$10-11
Dinner	
Soups, salads, appetizers.....	\$3-9
Entrees, Himalayan specials, noodles and rice dishes.....	\$12-25
Desserts.....	\$3-5

snack food. Samosas and pakoras were crisp and tasty. Tandoori chicken was moist and tender and part of the buffet, as well. Himalayan aloo, a combination of potatoes, cauliflower and peas and vegetable korma were flavorful vegetable dishes.

Entree selections of chicken zalfreji, with onion, bell peppers and green cardamom and Himalayan herbs, corn saag and fave-bean daal with cashew sauce were part of the varied buffet, as well. Very special are

the housemade egg noodles. We enjoyed ours with fresh vegetables. They are offered with beef, chicken, shrimp or a combination of vegetables, egg, chicken and shrimp. A variety of biryani, Indian style rice dishes are offered as well. The buffet salad was dressed with a delightful fruit dressing with lemon and ginger. Accompaniments to your meal are tamarind, mint chutney, onion relish and crisp pickled radish sticks with mustard and fenugreek seeds and mustard oil, as well as Himalayan naan filled with dried fruits and nuts.

For dessert at Jewel of Himalaya, we tried Himalayan kulfi in mango; it's also available in cashew, pistachio or almond flavors. The mango was rich with the fruit flavor and very refreshing. Typical Indian desserts of rasmalai, rice pudding and gulab jaman are other possibilities.

At lunch, choose from the buffet or one of the lunch specials — perhaps a Nepal vegetable or combination thali or a platter of curry, tandoori selections, and dumpling or noodle platters.

Enjoy a relaxing meal at Jewel of Himalaya, as you absorb the culture and culinary world of Himalaya, where your meal is a new experience of dining in Westchester.

*Jewel of Himalaya
385 Halstead Ave.
Harrison
630-7921*