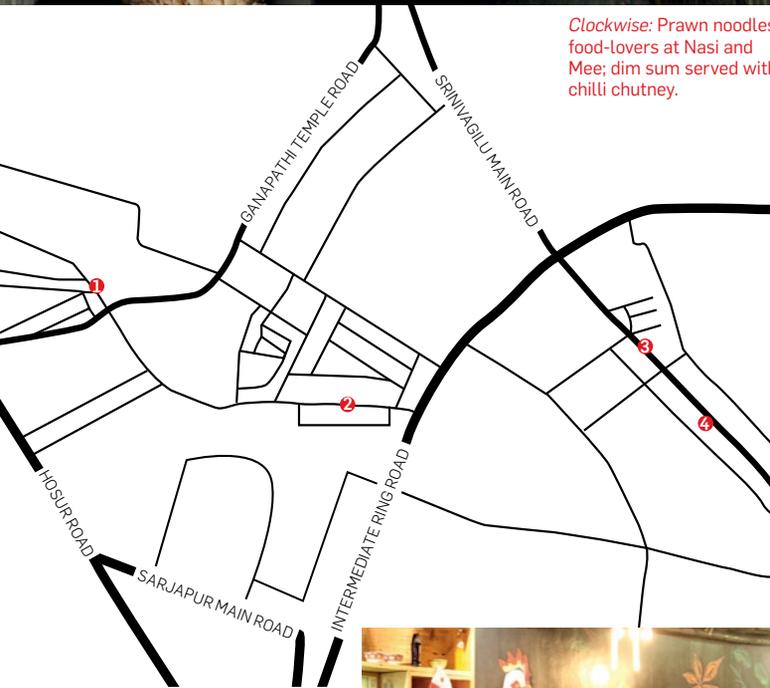


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Clockwise: Prawn noodles; food-lovers at Nasi and Mee; dim sum served with chilli chutney.



Taste

The Cool Guide to Eating in Koramangala

A crop of new indie cafes and experimental restaurants are slowly transforming a once-sleepy residential neighbourhood into one of Bengaluru's most vibrant quarters.

By Malavika Bhattacharya

Coffee roasters and microbreweries, Asian canteens, and hidden-away regional restaurants—these are the coolest spots in Koramangala to take you from an early morning caffeine fix to a late-night tippie.

1 Flying Squirrel Coffee Roasters

From a lush coffee estate in Coorg, small batches of carefully harvested Arabica and Robusta beans make their way to a cheery little coffee roastery in Koramangala. Overlooking a fiery red gulmohar tree in bloom, a strong aroma of coffee lingers in the air, as fresh roasts are brewed in a variety of styles. With pour-overs, cold brews, and the current global trend in the coffee world, nitro coffee, on their menu, Flying Squirrel lets you choose your brew and your bean. Tubs of organic Sattva, chocolate-and-caramel toned Parama, a chicory blend, and fruity-sweet Aromatic beans are on display and available for sale. Co-founders Ashish D'Abreo and Tej Thammaiah—a third-generation coffee estate owner—are in the business of serious brewing, and the new café is a natural progression of the three-year-old online coffee brand. 136, 1st Cross, 5th Block, Koramangala, Karnataka; flyingsquirrel.in

2 Maria's Goan Kitchen

A mix of homesick, experimental, and curious diners flock to Koramangala's 7th Block to the cluster of tiny, regional Indian restaurants known for their otherwise hard-to-find cuisine. Tucked away among these, Maria Fernandes dishes out the wonderfully piquant flavours of Goa at Maria's Goan Kitchen. What started out as a food delivery service for hot, home-style meals gradually evolved into a fuss-free, blink-and-miss establishment with a rather expansive menu. With favourites such as pork vindaloo, beef *xacuti*, pomfret in *ambotik* curry, Goan chorizo, and squid chilli fry, it's hard to believe you aren't seated at a beach shack with a view of the sea and beer in hand. The real winner here is the wholesome thali, perfect for those days when you want to order everything off the menu. Fluffy *sannas*, cutlets, tangy *sol kadi*, rice, a choice of seafood, meat, or veg, and a slice of gooey *bebinca*. Who says you can't have *susegad* in Bengaluru? 360, 1st Floor, 1st Main, 7th Block, Koramangala, Karnataka

3 Nasi and Mee

Sitting behind a cheery glass frontage on the busy 80 Feet Road, dressed in warm tones of wood and yellow lights,

COURTESY OF NASI AND MEE



Clockwise: Flying Squirrel co-founders Ashish D'Abreo and Tej Thammaiah; a serving of filter coffee; machine preparing fresh coffee.



the Asian canteen was born out of Singaporean local Ravindran Nahappan's vision to bring the food that he grew up with to the city. A fourth-generation Indian, Ravindran says, "Nasi and Mee, which means 'rice and noodles' in Malay, is truly what we eat in the Straits Belt. Our cuisine originates from the movement of people—it's a mix of Chinese, Malay, and Indian influences." His sentiment translates into the menu, which features staples and specials from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand—the slow cooked, ceremonial Malaysian Rendang, the delicate Chinese Char Siew, Indonesian sambal prawns, and the elaborate spread of Nasi Lemak. The peanut laden, coconut milk doused flavours transport you straight to Singapore's hawkker centres or Bangkok's street food stalls. Coupled with the summery, deceptively light kiwi and lychee-infused wine spritzers, it's no surprise that Nasi and Mee is always abuzz. 974, 4th Cross, 80 Feet Road, 4th Block, Koramangala, Karnataka; nasiandmee.co.in

4 Prost

With over 20 brewpubs, a Bengaluru visit demands a locally brewed craft beverage, and though there's no dearth of watering holes in Koramangala, Prost is one of the few microbreweries on the horizon. Spread across multiple levels and keeping in trend with the industrial theme, Prost—which translates to 'cheers' in German—sits smack bang on 80 Feet Road and offers regional flavours as bar food nibbles: spicy, coconut-laden Kerala-style buff fry, chilli pepper pork chunks, and bacon-wrapped prawns. To drink like a Bangalorean, begin with a sampler, containing little tasters of all the beers on offer. Choose from the dark, coffee-flavoured English stout; the easy-to-palate classic lager; a malty, deep red English ale; and a changing roster of seasonal brews. Beer aficionados will particularly enjoy the Bangalore Bolt—a fruity German wheat beer. 749, 10th Main, 80 Feet Road, 4th Block, Koramangala, Karnataka; prost.in ■