

A LA CARTE >

VEGETALIA

Wholesome, appetising ... and delicious desserts



Photos: David Toms



One of the misconceptions about vegetarian restaurants is that they are, essentially, for vegetarians – and vegans. The reality is that, while many people might still enjoy steak and seafood at home or when visiting other restaurants, an increasing number of diners are opting for vegetarian alternatives.

This is especially the case at Vegetalia in Los Boliches (Fuengirola), where diners have discovered that vegetarian fare isn't just about raw carrots, lettuce leaves and lentil burgers – or plain omelettes. It can be just as nourishing and flavourful as any other cuisine.

Katja Gilan, who moved to the Coast with her family from Finland in the mid-1980s, opened Vegetalia in 1997 after noting the absence of any purely vegetarian restaurant between Marbella and Málaga capital – not to mention limited vegetarian options at many of the Coast's restaurants.

She initially expected the restaurant to appeal more to international residents and visitors accustomed to a more developed vegetarian culture back home, but the opening coincided with the outbreak of "mad cow disease", and the restaurant quickly became a popular establishment for Spaniards seeking nutritious and creative alternatives to their customary cuisine – even if only a small percentage are actually vegetarians.

Using the freshest ingredients and avoiding food additives and artificial flavourings, their emphasis is always on taste and quality, offering ovo-lacto-vegetarian cuisine in a cosy and relaxed ambience. They also cater for vegans, celiacs, lactose intolerants and other food-allergy sufferers.

At lunchtime Vegetalia offers a self-service buffet from Monday to Saturday: €8.25 for adults and €3.50 for children under 12 years, not including drinks and desserts, consisting of a selection of salads, cold dishes, dressings, breads and four different hot dishes. Both the cold and hot dishes change daily.

Dinner, served on Friday and Saturday, is a la carte with a varied international menu including starters such as fried goat's cheese salad, soya croquettes with sweet chilli sauce, and grilled tomato and mozzarella skewer; and main courses such as seitan cutlets with French fries or baked potato, vegetable curry, filled crepes au gratin, lentil burgers, pasta dishes and stir-fries.

In addition, they offer home-made desserts, freshly squeezed fruit and vegetable juices, and an extensive drinks menu including organic wines and beers. Take away is also available.

Vegetalia is located in Los Boliches in Calle Santa Isabel: approximately 200 metres towards Fuengirola from the Los Boliches train station, second street on the right parallel with Avda. Jesús Santos Rein.

VEGETALIA

Opening hours:

Monday-Saturday for lunch (12.30-4pm)

Friday & Saturday for dinner (8-11.15pm)

Closed Sunday

Tel. 952 586 031 / www.restaurantevegetalia.com

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