

# LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

October 6, 2006  
Neon Section

## RESTUARANT REVIEW: Origin India

### Jolly Good Kebabs: Origin India, possibly the best Indian restaurant in town, has its origins in England



The interior of Origin India is a blend of the old and the new, with traditional accents mixed with sleek styling.  
Photo by [Ralph Fountain](#).

Ideas for restaurants to be reviewed in this space come to me in a variety of ways. Most common is observation -- places that have crossed my path in one way or another. My favorite is reader suggestion, because readers tend to tell me about their favorite out-of-the-way spots that I might not otherwise find.

Occasionally, I'll get a tip from a co-worker. Origin India was suggested by a particularly persistent (euphemism in use here) colleague who's rather new to the city and discovered the restaurant early on. He's become quite a vocal cheerleader for the place, and so a review was a means to the end of restoring some degree of quietude to Podland. In other words, stuffing a sock in it.

So you can imagine how difficult it was to tell him he was absolutely right.

India's a big country jam-packed full of people, and it sometimes seems that the cuisine can vary greatly from one street to the next, which is why I'll probably never have a firm grasp of just what differentiates Bengali cuisine from Hyderabadi from south Indian or north Indian or northwest-central Indian. Suffice it to say that the origin of the food served at Origin India is London.

No, don't haul out that big thick geography book, which is out of date anyway. England may be somewhat distant from India physically, but it's right next door metaphysically, thanks to a tremendous expatriate community in London that dates to way back in the colonial era and has been growing ever since. There's been some fusion of the two culinary traditions and a lot of experimenting and innovating along the way, to the point that there's a degree of truth to my co-worker's assertion that London has "the best Indian food in the world" (although I would still argue that the best Indian food is in India).

Anyway. Origin India sprouted from sister restaurants in England, and the fusionistic spirit imbues its "modern" pan-Indian menu, from the crisp, cumin-seed-studded papadum brought to the table with what our waiter called "salsas" -- one tamarind, one mint with the balance heavy on the cilantro side -- to the carrot cigar (but more on that later).

In between, we had a choice from a veritable plethora of vegetarian dishes -- so many vegetarian dishes as to delight the heart of vegetarians struggling to survive in this meat-laden city, as my co-worker is -- and probably an equal number of non-vegetarian ones.

We'd choose one of each for starters -- the Origin India signature dish Dahi Ke Kebab (\$5.95) and the Lhasooni Jhinga (\$10.95). The former was deep-fried patties of hung yogurt, which is just what it sounds like -- yogurt that has been suspended in a cheesecake bag until the whey drains away; it's also called yogurt cheese. The yogurt was mixed with seasonings and fried gently, and served with smears of sauces. It had a refreshing, clean flavor that was just fabulous.

Far more spicy was the Lahsooni Jhinga, shrimp stir-fried and served bathed in an assertive garlic sauce. The saffron rice and papaya noodles that accompanied them were sufficient that the dish could constitute a light supper.

Like any Indian restaurant worth the tag, Origin India has a clay oven, or tandoor, but its Murg Lehsooni Kebab (\$10.95) arrived mercifully lacking the Day-Glo red of many tandoori dishes. The nuggets of chicken carried a medium-strength flavor of garlic, just a little fire and a subtle tinge of smoke.

The rich Gosht Dahiwala (\$18.95), lamb cooked with yogurt and a cashew-nut sauce, was rendered terrifically tender by the yogurt and carried just a haunting hint of the nut.

Both entrees were accompanied by rice with cumin seeds and a salad of mixed vegetables. And we had a choice of baby naan or the whole-wheat paratha, both worthy preparations.

And, back to that carrot cigar (\$6.95), which was basically a cylinder of carrot pudding wrapped in pastry. I love Indian carrot pudding (think carrot cake crossed with a pudding) and this was a pretty good rendition, but its moisture rendered the pastry a little tough.

Service throughout was excellent, and we positively luxuriated in the decor, which also had a fusionistic flavor, mixing traditional carved and woven panels with sleek furniture and suspended shelves bearing groups of faux candles. Even the parking was easy, as the plaza where the restaurant's located, on the northeast corner of Paradise Road and Harmon Avenue, has a big lot.

I liked Origin India so much that -- for the time being, at least -- I'd venture to brand it the best Indian restaurant in Las Vegas, all things considered.

But don't tell my co-worker.

Las Vegas Review-Journal reviews are done anonymously at Review-Journal expense. Contact Heidi Knapp Rinella at 383-0474 or e-mail her at [hrinella@reviewjournal.com](mailto:hrinella@reviewjournal.com).