

TRAVELOGUE

BY SHAHANA HUDA



Mermaid Beach Resort: a melody of the waves

The sea, millions of grains of sand, rain, sunsets and sunrises; the moon, and tranquillity— if you want to enjoy nature in all its glory, Mermaid resort is the place for it. You will not even know how the morning turned to noon, and then to evening, as your day slips by while you remain immersed in the magically changing scenes all around you.

I woke up to the roar of the waves not far away, and very shortly found myself right in front of the waters of the Bay of Bengal, a few steps away, enticing you to dip your feet in its warmth. When you sip a cup of tea while soothing your sight over the waters a gentle music playing somewhere behind you will set the perfect ambience.

Mermaid Beach Resort is some way off Cox's Bazar city, and the road to it is an experience in itself, with sheer hills on one side and the Bay with its waves on the



other, and patches of Jhau (Coastal She-Oak) and coconut trees.

Upon entering the resort, you become oblivious to whatever lies outside of it. You forget how far away you are from daily life, which way you came. No worry of the world will touch you. The resort welcomes you with flowers and green coconuts. "All we need is love" -- an entrance plaque proclaims.



There are many cottages in the serenely secluded resort. The outlay is inspired by Thai and Indonesian resorts, but the cottages are completely done with local materials.

Wonderful lanterns and paper decorated lights, large trees all around, flowering shrubs and a vegetable garden to boot—a piece of heaven indeed.

The décor inside the houses is also very nice, neat and clean. There are many frescos and wall paintings. There are also quite a few pools and ponds, with Neel Poddo in bloom. The cottages have a pool adjacent to them. You will not lack for anything as a tourist.

Apart from the obvious beauty, what impressed me the most about the place are the available amenities. The management has thought of all the comforts a tourist might be looking for at any moment, much more than I have seen in any other resort. Like there are many spots to just plonk down to see the sea, whenever you wish, on the randomly placed sitting arrangements on dry patches of highland amid the tidal waters.

And these are not just chairs, there are also writing tables for the suddenly inspired, easels for painters, and even water for drinking, so that you do not have to break your mood if thirst strikes you suddenly.

There are also plenty of plug points to charge all your



RECIPE

The wonderful chefs at the Mermaid Beach Resort shared this lovely recipe of a Binni rice dish, with a special element of Chittagonian mezban gosht—a perfect option to spice up your Pahela Baishakh table.

MOSA BHAT

Prep-time: 25 minutes, Cooking time: 1 hour

Ready In: 1 h 25 minutes, Serves two

Ingredients

Step 01, 100g binni rice, 150ml water

Step 02, 70g local chicken with bone, 20ml vegetable oil

1 tsp fresh ginger paste, 1 tsp garlic paste, ½ tsp red chilli paste

2 bay leaves, 1 stick of cinnamon, 2-3 whole cloves

¼ tsp coriander powder, 2-3 cardamoms

1 tsp salt, ½ tsp ground cumin

¼ tsp turmeric paste, 50g tomatoes

50g potatoes, 50ml water

Step 03, 2 tsp spicy mashed potatoes

2 tsp red chilli bharta, 2 tsp dry fish bharta

50g ready mezban gosht

Method

Boil water and add salt. Pour water (for every cup of rice, use 1¾ cups of water) into a large saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Pour in rice. Add it to the boiling water. Stir once, or just enough to separate the rice. Cover the pot and simmer. Fluff rice with a fork.

Add olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir onions in the hot oil until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add ginger-garlic paste and continue cooking for another 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; stir tomatoes into the mixture and cook until they are soft, in 5 to 10 minutes. Season with the cayenne pepper, curry powder, garam masala, turmeric, and cumin; cook and stir another 5 minutes. Add chicken and potatoes to the mixture in the skillet; simmer, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are tender and the chicken is no longer pink in the centre, in about 20 minutes. Sprinkle the cilantro over the mixture and continue simmering for another 10 minutes.

Put everything in the banana leaf, wrap, and serve on the table.