

# Leicester Mercury

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FOOD AND DRINK

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**Alison Curtis visits a curry house that sets new standards**

**I**t's the blast of friendly and inviting atmosphere that hits you as you open the door to Kayal that tells you this is going to be a good place in which to eat. In fact, it's more than good – it's excellent. You don't even have to taste your first mouthful of curry to know this.

The buzzing vibe and happy faces on a Saturday night fill you with instant confidence.

It was a good thing we'd booked a table because the restaurant was filling up fast at 7.30pm.

Kayal is not new to Leicester. It's been in Granby Street since 2006 but in a previous incarnation as Halli – a vegetarian Indian restaurant.

At the end of last year, the restaurant was given a makeover and expanded its menu to include seafood and meat.

We started out with an array of poppadum-like snacks of various shapes and sizes.

### FLAVOUR, NOT POWER

There were none of your usual curry house offerings – these were colourful teatime snacks from Kerala, with an array of chutneys.

For starter, I opted for the Banana Boli, which consisted of huge chunks of juicy and addictively-sweet fried banana in batter, with several dips.

Apparently, this is a popular tea break snack for people in Kerala.

I'd find it hard to get back to work if I knew I could keep munching on them all afternoon.

My boyfriend, Dan, started with the seafood flavoured Kayal Soup, which he wolfed down so quickly he didn't even notice there were poppadums to dip into it until the end.

For the main course, it was my turn to sample one of the restaurant's fish specialities.

The Kuttanadan Konju Masala was a spicy seafood curry with huge, juicy prawns and a thick sauce blending coconut and ginger.

Dan's Cheera Erachi curry also went down well.

He described the lamb curry as mild



PICTURE: AUSTAIR LANGHAM

**PERFECT:** Ajith Nair and Prakash Mendonca serve Kuttanadan Konju masala, fish curry, meen porichathu and Sadya.

## Much better than the Okay Kayal

but not bland, relying on flavour but not power.

We shared some thenga choru (commonly known as coconut rice) and naranga choru (aka lemon rice) to accompany our curries, after some helpful advice from our waiter about which rice went well with which curry.

That brings me to what sets this apart from so many other restaurants – the excellent service.

All the staff were friendly and attentive, without being overbearing or annoying. From asking us if this was our first time at the restaurant to quickly coming back with extra drinks when

we emptied our glasses, their service was spot-on.

The bill came to £50.08, with £35 spent on the poppadoms, starters, main course and rice and £15 on beer to wash down all those spices.

Good value for the quality of food we were getting, I thought.

I've tried hard to think if there were any negatives to this meal and it's a struggle.

The food was amazing, the atmosphere warm and the waiting staff exceptional.

I would really be scraping the barrel to mention that one of the toilets in the

ladies' was out of order when we went, because no-one would be bothered by something as trivial as that.

The truth is this was a flawless meal and a perfect evening out.

### Verdict

**Kayal, Granby Street, Leicester**  
Phone 0116 255 4667

**5/5** From the friendly service to the fabulous flavours of the food, this was the perfect night out