



cafe **MALABAR**

Cafe Malabar: A Culinary Journey Home

At Cafe Malabar, you're invited to experience the warmth and vibrant flavours of Kerala, brought to life in the heart of Victoria, BC. Head Chefs Kiran Kolathodan and Karma Tenpa grew up in Southern India, surrounded by the rich aromas of spices, coconut, and seafood—a heritage they've dreamed of sharing with a broader community. With over 30 years of experience in luxury kitchens across Canada and India, Kiran and Karma bring their passion for authenticity into each dish, welcoming you into the comfort of Kerala with every bite.



The Essence of Cafe Malabar: A Sense of Home

At Cafe Malabar, we bring the heartfelt warmth of Kerala into every dish. In Kerala, welcoming someone into your home is a sacred tradition, where guests are treated like family and offered the best food, often prepared with care and cherished spices. It's a reflection of Kerala's culture of generosity and connection. At Cafe Malabar, we aim to create that same welcoming atmosphere. Our dishes, made with Kerala's spices and Vancouver Island's freshest ingredients, offer you an experience that's not just a meal but a journey into the warmth and comfort of a Keralan home. Whether you're a local or new to these flavours, each bite connects you to the rich hospitality and culinary heritage of Kerala, blended with the vibrant spirit of Victoria.



Name, Inspiration, and Cultural Influences

The name "Malabar" celebrates Kerala's southwestern coast—stretching along the Arabian Sea from Goa to Kanyakumari, a region famous for its spices and a key player in the global spice trade, which shaped its rich, diverse cuisine. Influences from Portuguese, Dutch, and Persian traders brought about dishes like Ishtu and Parotta. Ishtu began as an adaptation of European stews, using Kerala's coconut milk and spices, while Parotta drew from Middle Eastern bread-making techniques to create its unique layered texture.

Today, the Malabar region remains vibrant, merging tradition with modernity. Known for its spice markets, lush landscapes, and coconut groves, Malabar is a culinary treasure where old and new coexist. Cafe Malabar honours this heritage by blending Kerala's traditional ingredients with innovative techniques, creating timeless and refreshing dishes.

A Tapestry of Flavours: Local Roots, Global Flavour

Our menu weaves a tapestry of Kerala's bold and delicate flavours with the vibrant freshness of Vancouver Island. You'll find dishes like delicate Appams served with rich coconut stews and our signature Malabar Dum Biryani, each a tribute to Kerala's culinary heritage. We celebrate this tradition with thoughtfully crafted vegan and vegetarian options highlighting the abundance of local produce, from carrots to greens, all sustainably sourced.

Our commitment to quality extends into each ingredient. From locally sourced tuna in our Alleppey Fish Curry to farm-fresh vegetables, we prioritize sustainability while preserving authentic Kerala flavours. This fusion of Kerala's spices with West Coast ingredients creates a menu that is not only vibrant and flavourful but also reflects the diversity and vitality of our community.

At Cafe Malabar, we invite you to experience the warmth and hospitality of Kerala right here in Victoria. Whether you're craving a quick take-out meal, a cozy delivery at home, or a full dine-in experience in the vibrant setting of the Victoria Public Market, Cafe Malabar promises an unforgettable journey. Each dish is crafted with love, tradition, and the finest local ingredients, leaving you not only satisfied but deeply connected to the flavours and rich cultural heritage of South India. Taste the essence of Kerala with us!

MEET THE CHEFS:

KIRAN KOLATHODAN & KARMA TENPA



The chefs behind Cafe Malabar, Kiran Kolathodan and Karma Tenpa, combine extensive culinary expertise with a shared passion for Kerala's flavours. Both were raised in Southern India, where they developed a deep connection to the region's rich culinary traditions, which they now share with the community in Victoria, BC.

Kiran's culinary journey began at the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) in Thiruvananthapuram, India, where he built a strong foundation in hospitality and cuisine. Seeking to broaden his skills, he moved to Canada, taking on roles at prestigious luxury hotels, including Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, Shangri-La Vancouver, and Fairmont Chateau Whistler. His time at the Wickaninnish Inn in Tofino furthered his commitment to sustainable, seasonal ingredients, a philosophy he later refined at Boragó in Santiago, Chile. Boragó's innovative, foraged approach impacted Kiran's culinary style, which he later brought to his roles as Executive Chef at Rosewood Hotel Georgia and Westin Bear Mountain.

Karma pursued his education in hospitality at Bangalore University, establishing a foundation that shaped his career. Starting at the JW Marriott in Mumbai, he specialized as a sushi chef, becoming known for his precision, mastery of knife skills, and dedication to high-quality ingredients. His experience working with Japanese and fusion cuisines allowed him to explore complex flavours and techniques, establishing his reputation as a chef with a unique blend of tradition and innovation. This expertise became a hallmark of his style, which he expanded at Matsuri Japanese Restaurant in Bengaluru, blending Japanese techniques with Indian influences. Karma continued honing his craft at Conrad Pune and Yazu Mumbai before coming to Westin Bear Mountain in Canada.

Kiran and Karma's paths crossed at Westin Bear Mountain in Victoria, where they discovered a shared passion for authentic Kerala cuisine and a dedication to quality. At Café Malabar, they invite you to experience an authentic taste of Kerala, presented with the creativity and skill defining their unique culinary careers.