



A photo of Aloo Gobi

Food in a Tiffin

By Samantha Stewart



As a young, Indian-American woman, finding the food I crave when I'm missing a small taste of home can be difficult. In Connecticut, where I grew up, Indian markets and restaurants are few and far between. Plus, when you find those scarce restaurants, not all of them can give you the food you remember eating when you were young. What I have noticed on the contrary though, is living in Philadelphia means you are never short of an Indian restaurant that can make your day. My personal favorite is a little restaurant in northern Philadelphia called Tiffin. I take my friends there, who may have never experienced the taste of India. It's also where I order out from, a little more frequently these days. Tiffin also has two other locations in the city, one at 710 West Girard and the other at 1100 Federal Street.

My grandmother immigrated from India when she was only 22 and spent most of her days and once I was old enough, she started to teach me about our shared culture that included the language, religion, but most importantly, the food. She was an eat-to-live woman and made sure I was the same. Every chance my grandmother got, she would cook me her favorites. Aloo gobi was one of the first dishes I grew to love while watching my grandmother cook away in her small, American kitchen. Aloo gobi is simple, but delicious when done correctly. A medley of vegetables (mainly potatoes and cauliflower) mixed and sautéed in Indian spices and other tasty veggies.

Tiffin was one of the first restaurants I found in Philadelphia that made not only astonishing Aloo gobi but other dishes I insisted my family try. They, like myself, were impressed with the quality and taste above anything. It reminded us all of my grandmother, and how she had cooked for us all those years. Another family favorite, one not difficult to find in most commonplace Indian restaurants but one that is hard to pull off, is saag paneer. It is a creamy spinach-based curry with cubes of delicious Indian cheese, it is a hearty and authentic delicacy.

Tiffin has mastered their saag paneer, another of many dishes my family and I gush over. It was spicy, as all Indian dishes are, but not overpowering, a mistake a lot of unauthentic restaurants can make. The spinach curry is creamy, not too thick to where it's chunky but smooth and with perfect consistency. Even just skimming the restaurant's review page, other happy customers have said largely the same.

Tiffin has an extensive menu, with all sorts of cuisine I miss: hand-made samosas, lamb vindaloo, chicken tikka masala and they even offer a treat I used to love as a child: mango lassi.

The point to be made here is this: when in search of a small slice of India in the Greater Philadelphia region, look no further than Tiffin. There is one in both North and South Philly, and there is no shortage of excellent cooking in either.