

Kazbah Top Ryde

Jacqui Taffel
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Comments 8



Your chances of scoring a table are higher here than in Balmain. *Photo: Fiona Morris*

Reader rating: (22 votes)

Address : [Devlin St & Blaxland Rd, Ryde, New South Wales 2112](#)
Phone: (02) 9555 7067
Style: [Restaurant](#)
Cuisine: [Middle Eastern](#)
Hours: Daily from 8am
Features: [Breakfast, Sunday lunch](#)

Breakfast is not a highly adventurous time of day for many people. The typical cafe menu reflects an assumption that familiar fare is the safest bet - eggs, toast, muesli, pancakes or anything with bacon.

Yet serving something a bit different can pay dividends, as Kazbah proved when it opened in Balmain 13 years ago. The menu covers the standard eggs and bacon but many dishes have a North African or Middle Eastern angle, such as sweet couscous with rhubarb and cardamom milk or the breakfast tagine with lamb mince and fetta, which regularly turns up on Sydney's best-breakfast lists.

The downside to all this acclaim is the difficulty of getting a seat at weekends without a booking, even though Kazbah opened another branch at Darling Harbour six years ago. Now it has expanded again, to Top Ryde City Shopping Centre.

Eating at a large suburban mall is not high on my list of fun things to do but the breakfast tagine's lure is strong, so hi-ho, it's off to Ryde we go.

Weekend bookings are recommended here, too, but if you do arrive unannounced, your chances of scoring a table are higher than they are in Balmain. There's also more parking - a vast, underground labyrinth. Getting in is easy enough but leaving requires such a long route, claustrophobes may suffer panic attacks.

The locals have not been slow to discover Kazbah: by 11am, it's full. This is clearly the most popular breakfast spot in the mall's piazza.

Kazbah has been given a classy fitout with exotic touches - hanging pierced-silver lamps; ornate mirrors; bold, metallic sunburst wallpaper; and beautiful pressed-metal cabinets.

The wine rack is a reminder that lunch and dinner are also served. Hookah pipes with fruit tobacco can be smoked outside, seated on orange-red tin chairs, while inside, there are red banquettes, paper-covered tables and bentwood chairs.

The Di Lorenzo coffee is consistently good and strong and the loose-leaf mint tea is an aromatic house blend with cardamom, cinnamon, cloves and fresh mint.

The tagine doesn't disappoint: two baked eggs on spinach, capsicum, tomato, onion, fetta and a deliciously spicy lamb mince, flavoured with pomegranate molasses and ras el hanout. Served with toast and Lebanese bread, its proportions are generous.

Dishes tend to be enormous. The huge pile of chakchouka scrambled eggs, with capsicum and tomato stirred through, comes with loads of smoked salmon. And the warm rice pudding with half a saffron-poached pear and roasted hazelnuts is a wide bowl of creamy comfort food with nutty crunch, sprinkled with cinnamon and icing sugar.

The fetta potato cake forms the base of a mountain topped with creme fraiche, more smoked salmon and lovely, sweet strands of red-wine onion marmalade topped with caperberries.

The service is friendly and prompt but points are lost over the leaky teapot, the lukewarm rice pudding and the cool, rather than hot, potato cake. And despite crayons and high chairs provided, there's not a lot to order for small children.



Breakfast tagine with lamb. *Photo: Fiona Morris*