

# Café Paaka, Hyderabad: 'Organic, artisanal, slow'

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Café Paaka in Tellapur is an inviting alcove with its earthy aesthetic, organic food and intent to encourage independent arts

Walking into Café Paaka, you're immediately enraptured by the greenery and the charming thatched roof that houses a plethora of opportunities to immerse yourself in a subculture of Hyderabad that reminds you to pause and soak in the surroundings.

Café Paaka

- What Organic café and cultural space
- Where Nallagandla Road, Tellapur
- Area 400 square yards
- Hours 8am - 11am for breakfast ; 12:30pm - 3pm for lunch ; 4:30pm - 7pm for snacks; 7pm - 10:30pm for evening festivities and dinner ; juice bar and coffee all day except 3:30pm - 4:30pm

Run by Bharath Dantuluri, Adithya Varma and Rajanikanth Sumbet and their team, Café Paaka is gaining popularity. "My dad left his job with a central government affiliated arms and ammunition manufacturing unit to pursue and promote science and health awareness, through a multifaceted study centre called Disha, near Tellapur, with our landlord Sattiah in 2012. Around the same time I had started Paaka as an experimental project close to the University of Hyderabad, but we had shut down in 2015. This year we relocated to Disha for all practical purposes, with a great transition as an organic café and cultural space." The location of Tellapur gives a sense of escapism for city dwellers, while not being too far off from home.

The team at Café Paaka wanted an appropriate, easy to identify and vernacular name. Bharath continues, "There is a tendency to think vernacular names aren't cool among the café culture. We wanted to challenge this notion. *Paaka* means 'shack' in Telugu which is quite appropriate for Paaka's traditional thatched structures. Also, local cultures have shifted away from *paakas* to concrete houses in villages. We wanted to excite some nostalgia among the urban crowd with rural roots." This philosophy plays into the notion Paaka has of 'organic, artisanal and slow'.

*Underground arts* Every event is exciting in a different way at Café Paaka, with an intention to promote underground independent arts, to provide a platform for such artists and to expose the crowd to a variety of genres they wouldn't otherwise find within popular culture and discourses of the mainstream. "We also do underground movie screenings, stand-up comedy nights, and open mic events with a diverse artist gathering, as well as original music acts," adds Bharath, who very much enjoys evenings by the campfire area, singing. Expect ambient electronica and visual projections, too. "Our recent and most exciting event was inaugurating our guest live kitchen, where anyone can plan to cook their favourite recipes and serve them as a today's special on our restaurant-cum-café menu," recalls Bharath fondly. Recently, the space hosted Tyler Stuart from New Orleans, who'd prepared rabbit boudin and California almondine with golden raisins which were much loved.

## Organic to the core

"We source our organic produce mostly from Deccan Development Society in Zaheerabad," explains Bharath, "It's a whole different paradigm of values, of the structure of life within a diverse ecosystem. These sources deal with grassroots concepts which transcend our imagination to a different definition of development and sustainability." Bharath adds that they also procure from Prakruthi Vanam, Rythu Mitra, Sahaja Aharam and various other individual farmers. Expect a homely and traditional menu of dosa, sambar rice and thalis, among other items, to bring you to a home away from home. So the next time you want to chill by a warming fire under the stars and listen to some strums of a guitar on a cool evening, swing by Café Paaka. First published by

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