

1ST DEC
2014

BUSINESS

FIJI CAFE

90 THOMAS ST - D'NONG

FIJIAN AND FIJI-INDIAN CUISINE.

FIJI CAFE 90 THOMAS ST JOURNAL NEWS D'NONG

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Connecting people and communities

Island dining makes for a fine Fijian family feast

By CAM LUCADOU-WELLS

IN ONE of central Dandenong's quieter corners there are rare feasts of Fijian and Fiji-Indian cuisine.

Fiji Cafe in the eastern end of Thomas Street combines a typical Indian menu of roti bread, fried-spinach bjejas, samosas and a plethora of curries with tropical-island dishes using coconut cream and taro, which is also known as cassava.

In keeping with the island tradition, seafood is the restaurant's strength and all-you-can-eat \$18-a-head weekend banquets are a speciality.

Owner Farin Khan-Esaq recommends the fish iolo sauced in a coconut cream and cassava blend.



**EAT LOCAL,
DINE GLOBAL**

Cassava is a white, starchy tuber vegetable. Goat, fish, lamb, chicken and vegetarian curries go up the heat scale from mild to scorching.

Desserts and dried snacks such as deep-fried blue peas and murku are made on the premises.

Behind the sweets counter are gulab jamun, a pretzel-shaped moist toffee, as well as cardamom-laced slices with sweet toppings known as barfi, and the traditional vakalolo, made of grated cassava, coconut and sugar.

Ms Khan-Esaq, in her seventh year as an owner, learnt and loved cooking growing up in a big family in the small town of Savusavu in Fiji.

She feted friends and family with her cuisine for years before she took the plunge and opened the cafe.

After initial struggles, the restaurant has grown from word-of-mouth and recently promoted itself via Facebook and a website.

It recently set up a Facebook page which would-be customers can 'like' to get a free coffee or a spicy masala tea.

Fiji Cafe is open at 90-92 Thomas Street, Dandenong, on Wednesdays to Mondays.

Phone 9792 0015.



Farin Khan-Esaq with some of the food she has prepared. 131114