Rhythm AND Spice offers pricey Caribbean food

By Kamal Sweeney

I consider myself somewhat of a gourmet. I enjoy classic tastes like Hershey's chocolate and Coca-Cola. When I saw Rhythm and Spice, the new Caribbean restaurant on Massachusetts Avenue, I thought that food would be too exotic for my palate. I became increasingly intrigued by the adventure it presented, however, and I decided to try it. To my delight, Rhythm and Spice offered not only excellent food, but also a pleasant atmosphere and top-notch service.

The door is the first striking feature about the restaurant. The walls are a cheerful bright yellow, adorned with colorful tapestry-curtains. Skylights in the ceiling let in lots of sunlight. The combination of the ceiling fans, the bright sunlight, and the decorations was reminiscent of a restaurant by the beach.

I was soon seated and looking at the menu. The first thing I noticed was the price; everything looked expensive. This didn't seem to be a restaurant for students. Most of the patrons were older and rather well-dressed. I looked back at the menu and decided that ten dollars was the price of the adventure. Appetizers, soups, salads, entrees, curries, and side orders are available. There aren't many vegetarian dishes. Apparently jerked chicken is big in Jamaica, so it seemed appropriate to try.

The rhythm part of Rhythm and Spice comes from speakers on the wall as the food was being prepared. It was mellow reggae, just right for the beach-side atmosphere in the restaurant. Unfortunately, it became increasingly difficult to hear the music as the place filled up. By seven o'clock, it was barely audible above the crowd noise, but by then the food had arrived.

Jerked chicken is a half chicken cooked with lots of spices. I thought that with a name like "jerked chicken," it would be like beef jerky, but it wasn't at all like that; it was more like jerked pork, because the bones are still in the chicken. It was a little difficult to eat with knife and fork, but I still found it delicious. There was so much flavor in the chicken. At first I thought it was only a little spicy, but gradually I grew to more fully appreciate the seasonings. After half an hour, I had finished the chicken along with the accompanying rice and cabbage, and I was satisfied. In addition, I sampled some goat curry. It's a unique taste; like barbecue. Because the bones are still in the meat, it's easy to eat with hands. I thought that with a name like "jerked chicken," it would be like beef jerky, but it wasn't at all like that; it was more like jerked pork, because the bones are still in the chicken. It was a little difficult to eat with knife and fork, but I still found it delicious. There was so much flavor in the chicken. At first I thought it was only a little spicy, but gradually I grew to more fully appreciate the seasonings. After half an hour, I had finished the chicken along with the accompanying rice and cabbage, and I was satisfied. In addition, I sampled some goat curry. It's a unique taste; like barbecue.

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RHYTHM AND SPICE
315 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge.
497-0977 (incl take-out).

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