

Glory of India buffet a flavourful surprise

MILES PITTMAN

I often find Indian buffets to be on the risky side of dining. The naan is usually fresh and hot, but if the food sits in chafing dishes under heat lamps for too long, it can turn into greasy slop or dry out entirely (leaving hungry diners parched and ordering large bottles of Raj beer). In the worst case scenario, the chefs cater to the lowest common denominator, so the food is bland.

I was therefore disappointed when I arrived at Glory of India (515 - 4 Ave. S.W., phone 263-8804) for lunch because the only thing you can get is the buffet — but that turned out to be good news.

Not only is the buffet plentiful, it's not for the weak-kneed. The dishes all had varying degrees of heat — so much so that one dish caused one of my dining partners to break out in a full sweat. It's a testament to downtown lunchers that they're much more willing to take risks and have spicy food. The place was absolutely crammed (and it must seat at least 100 people), so definitely phone for a reservation.

The buffet has a salad bar, consisting of greens and some pasta salads, which is generally ignored. This isn't because it looks unappetizing, but because everyone's rav-



Not for the weak-kneed — Glory of India spices up its lunch buffet

enous for curry — and understandably so, because for a big restaurant that's churning people through the buffet line, the food was high quality and very complex.

The *pindi chole* (chick pea curry) was absolutely fantastic. It had a

scent of cumin and turmeric, and a little sweetness from mango powder, combined with an appreciable level of heat from chilies.

The butter chicken was rich, with large pieces of boneless breast rather than the mystery

poultry I've been served at other establishments. Butter chicken is turning into an Indian version of ginger beef — it's crazily popular in Calgary, and just another dish anywhere else.

The beef *panjars*, a ground beef curry with onion, was spicy and scented. The vegetable curry, on the other hand, was Chinese-influenced, with soy sauce forming the base of the flavours. The yogurt curry was rich and had little vegetable pakoras throughout — this was the tamest curry we had, and it contrasted perfectly with the chick peas.

Even the chai was offbeat and complex in that the cardamom wasn't overpowering.

The best part about Indian buffets, of course, is that you can eat as much as you want. For \$11.95 at Glory of India, you can gorge on top-quality Indian food and not need to eat dinner. But slowing down to appreciate the complexity and depth of the dishes amid the din and chaos is worthwhile. I'll be back, for sure.