

Turkish



Cappadocia

► **Location** 2 Station Buildings, Fife Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 1SW **Tel** 0845 201 5318 **Open** Mon noon-11pm; Weds-Sun noon-11pm **Web** www.cappadociarestaurant.co.uk
Disabled Facilities ✓

Turkey boasts a fabulously complex cuisine, which fuses its own rich traditional spices and fresh produce with influences from neighbouring places such as Central Asia and the Middle East. Combine this with the open-armed 'heart-and-soul' welcome that is also characteristic of Turkish culture, and you can see why it's hard to find Turkish dining-out authenticity outside of Turkey. Cappadocia, however, tucked away just down from Kingston station, manages to pull it off with style.

As soon as you step inside, you'll feel the authenticity of this restaurant. It's an intimate space, family run and not too huge, but packed out on the Thursday night we visited – belly dancing night. The chefs, Istanbul trained, were stationed in the open kitchen, working their magic at charcoal grills. If you don't know the food, a safe bet is the set menu or the assorted mezze that we chose to start – a fabulous selection of hummus, sliced feta, lamb's liver, a cous cous salad with fresh herbs, and salad in a walnut and hazelnut dressing. My favourite, however, was the grilled aubergine paté with garlic and yoghurt, accompanied by the amazing-looking and appropriately named homemade 'balloon bread'.

Next we tried the pide (Turkish pizza with spicy lamb sausage) before moving on to the selection of chargrilled kebabs and

doner. Tender chunks of marinated chicken and lamb were expertly cooked to create a veritable meat feast. Scouring the menu, there's also a good choice of seafood such as swordfish or giant tiger prawns. Then there's the chef's speciality, diced lamb cooked in a clay hot pot and served flaming at the table, and the odd delicious-sounding vegetarian dish lurking in between. You should absolutely sample the Turkish wines when you visit too; we sipped a beautiful Beaujolais-like red called Yakut – a real discovery.

We managed to squeeze in a saucy little baklava-type cake made of wheat, followed by the ultimate Turkish coffee, black and intense, just as it should be. This is a great venue for a party night (especially with the belly-dancing show on Thursdays), but also a great destination for friends who enjoy good company and great food. All in all, one of my favourite hidden treasures.

