

WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Saccharine-sweet desserts are passé. This season, make room for sweets that come laced with salted caramel sauce

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Salted caramel has slowly climbed its way up from being a novelty that was available only at five-star buffets to something that you now find at most city dessert outlets. It's clearly the hot new thing to try, and is being stocked in jars, sold at supermarkets, piped onto cakes, pushed into doughnuts and even swirled with our coffees.

What differentiates it from regular caramel is that, apart from being made with sugar (like any caramel is), the amber sauce is hinted with a fat pinch of salt. The salt used can be kosher; sea salt, table salt or fleur de sel — a French speciality.

PHOTO: PRODIP GUHA

WHAT: Salted Caramel Cake and Macaroons

WHERE: Le 15 Patisserie, Elphinstone Road If you are turning older, why shouldn't your birthday cake too? Keeping this in mind, baker Pooja Dhingra has notched up the cake-cutting experience by making it more adult-like. To add a touch of uniqueness, she fuses chewy sheets of salted caramel between layers of chocolate sponge and ganache. In essence, the caramel layer tastes exactly like mou (a popular French toffee made by cooking sugar). It's then flavoured with fleur de sel. The final cake comes garnished with pieces of roasted almonds that play up the textural drama by adding crunchiness. Apart from cake, Le 15 Patisserie uses salt to flavour their chocolate and caramel tarts and sea salt macaroons.

PRICE: ₹650 for 500 gm of salted caramel cake, ₹95 per tart and ₹60 per macaroon.

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PHOTO: PRODIP GUHA

WHAT: Salted Caramel and Cookie Dough Jar

WHERE: Country Of Origin, Napean Sea Road Whether you are having a movie night with your girl gang or getting over a bad break-up, give ice cream tubs a ditch and grab a dessert jar instead. Filled to the brim with lethal layers of cookies, cream and salted caramel sauce, the jar from Country Of Origin cheers you up in no time. While the first two layers of this dessert (cookies and cream) are tame and cloyingly sweet, the last one is wild, salted caramel sauce. The dessert has a portion size that is good enough for four people and is also available in an eggless version.

PRICE: ₹750 per jar

CONTACT: 2364 2221



WHAT: Salted Caramel Verrin

WHERE: Yauatcha, Bandra Kurla Complex

Tall, dark and handsome gets a new meaning with a glassful of this dessert. Verrin is a dessert of French origin and stands for anything that comes layered in a mould. At this dim-sum and tea house, the confectionery comes set in highball glasses and has multiple layers. Its bottom-most pit is filled with crumbs of hazelnut brownie followed by a rocky layer of pounded peanuts. To balance out these crunchy elements, the chef then tops it with a coat of smooth, salted caramel sauce that is brown and sweet with a salty overtone. And this is not the only savoury element in the dish. The dessert also has piquant pieces of gingerbread and a spicy cremeux (cream sauce spiked with cardamom, star anise and cinnamon). Together, the elements work to take the sweet edge off the verrin and give it an aftertaste to remember.

PRICE: ₹175

CONTACT: 2644 8888



According to Kiran Salaskar, owner of Mumbai-based bakery and gourmet store Country of Origin, "Since salted caramel has a well rounded flavour and is a perfect balance of sweetness and saltiness, it has found many takers." Salaskar's Napean Sea Road bakery was one of the first to make use of salted caramel sauce in its desserts in March last year.

So we went on a dessert hunt in the city, looking for the best varieties made using salted caramel. Here are five that you just have to check out.

WHAT: Salted Caramel Waffles

WHERE: Fenix, The Oberoi Mumbai, Nariman Point It's not a Sunday unless it is spent lazing around a lavish brunch buffet. Available as part of Fenix's weekend spread, the Salted Caramel Waffles are quite the show stealers. While the morning cake is typically served with maple syrup or honey, at Fenix, it comes with a drizzle of deep, brown and briny caramel emulsion. The addition gives patrons a chance to dig into something unique and provides respite from typical accompaniments. Height-wise, the waffles are a store shorter than the fluffy Belgian variety, but their taste and pairing makes the bite worthwhile.

PRICE: ₹70 per cupcake and ₹300 per jar

CONTACT: 2418 0655

PHOTO: SHAKTIYAN

WHAT: Salted Caramel Cupcake

WHERE: Not Just Desserts by Sabina, Wadala

Cupcakes are no longer a novelty. So the best way to wow your audience is to serve them in unheard-of flavours. One such is baker Sabina Gupta's salted caramel cupcake. The dessert is set on a regular base of chocolate cake but the frosting sets it apart. Made by whisking together salted caramel with butter cream, the brown icing is sweet with an overtly salty aftertaste. The swirl has a topping of crispy, concentrated caramel sheets that create textual contrast and elevate the savouriness of the dessert. Apart from cupcakes, Not Just Desserts also sells salted caramel pudding set in little jars.

PRICE: ₹70 per cupcake and ₹300 per jar

CONTACT: 2418 0655

PHOTO: SHAKTIYAN

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