

The Food Review

Hungry? Consider these, tubby...

Cubana

34 Trippet Lane, Sheffield

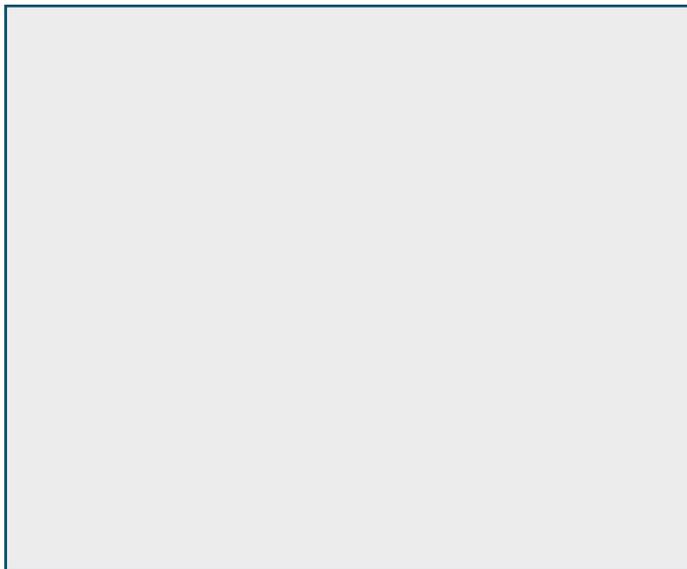
0114 276 0475

Why is it that everyone loves Cubana? It's not the cheapest bar or restaurant in town, it's not even the swankiest, but it sure is the place where you feel instantly alive.

The staff are always fab, the atmosphere is electric and the food is out of the top drawer. Tapas is the name of the game here, with plenty to choose from, but to save us the bother, our waitress suggested we pick from the set menu, a splendid introduction to what the restaurant is all about. There are actually two set menus; a regular (£17.50 per person) and a deluxe (£21.50), but being picky blighters, we went for a few from each. They didn't seem to mind. We'd barely re-adjusted our belts before the first dishes arrived, including a sumptuous black olive and mixed herb pate on ciabatta and a selection of scrumptious king prawns. We delved into these feverishly as the remaining tapas turned up, including two of my faves; Patatas Bravas and Cubana's famous

meatballs. And there was some good news on that front; my other half was already filling up and didn't want her slice of the meat action. Score. The place was busy, and yet the service was absolutely spot on. The food came quickly, and we were checked upon at just the right moments. There were 10 dishes in total, and to be frank, you'd have to be a greedy little git to polish them all off between two of you, something we didn't quite manage. As we supped on our wine, we pondered the menu's highlights... I went for those meatballs, my missus for the white wine mushrooms and spinach topped with goats cheese, but it's never easy when so much of it is so good. We rounded the night off with a shot of Sambuca, safe in the knowledge that for all it's years as one of the best places – bar, restaurant or live music venue – in town, Cubana is not about to let standards slip.

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Wokmania

West St. Sheffield

0114 275 5885

Chinese buffets can be dangerous places for the uninitiated. Eyes too big for your belly? Yeah, you're gonna struggle.

Slowly, slowly, catchy monkey. That's how we do it, my friends. A marathon, not a sprint. Sheffield's Wokmania is a cut above your average. Plasma screens, stylish décor. It's easy to see why the place is always bustling. As myself and my other half prepared to chow down we couldn't help but chortle at the doomed dilettantes hopelessly balancing a mountain of victuals back to their tables. Crazy fools. First time mate? Yeah, thought so. After starters orders (scrummy duck wraps), we were off. Chicken and sweetcorn soup was closely followed by the likes of chicken samosas, spring rolls, ribs and wings. Taking note? Get your nibbles out of the way first. They're called appetisers for a reason, yeah? Next up, chicken chow mein, fried rice, beef in black bean sauce and steamed vegetables. Tasty? For

sure. Filling? Indeedy. But, I'm something of a tardis, see? A deceptively slim (seriously sexy) exterior, yet acres of room inside. My mates don't know where I put it all. And, being something of an experienced hand at this buffet bunk, I was just getting started. Hang on. What's all this then? Rogan Josh? Tikka Massala? At a Chinese buffet? 'Tis true. This is where Wokmania takes it up a notch. On top of the standard Chinese delights, you'll also find cuisine from the likes of India, Japan, Thailand and Malaysia coyly mingling. Up to 60 dishes of an evening for a paltry £9.99. After sampling each in the name of science, we both decided that one more morsel could actually see things getting messy, so we refrained from the desserts. Not easy when they've got a chocolate fountain. Still, this is yet another fine art of the all-you-can-eat game; knowing when to call it. It's not going anywhere – live to fight another day. Weight watchers need not apply.

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