



optimum.

Support your local businesses. We do.

See Patricia's story

Things To Do

Food & Drink

Arts & Culture

Film

Music & Nightlife

Shopping & Style

City Guide

Tickets & Offers

Tanoreen

Book online

Restaurants

Bay Ridge



ENTER FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN PASSES TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL!



Photograph: Caroline Voagen Nelson

Tanoreen

Time Out rating:

Not yet rated [Be the first...](#)

Critics' pick

0 Comments

[Add +](#)

Like 0

Tweet 0

0

Time Out says

Thu Mar 15 2012

Though New York's food scene may be the world's most diverse, not every type of cuisine is well represented. Since 1998, Tanoreen—a cult destination in Bay Ridge—has been alone at the top above other Middle Eastern establishments, a standard bearer in a category that has few.

Despite its far-flung locale, near the end of the R train, as of 2009 the restaurant's tight quarters could no longer accommodate its immense popularity. Last fall the family-run enterprise moved up the block into much larger digs, generically bland, like a catering hall, with Middle Eastern--style sconces and wall art that seem catalog-sourced. But despite its neutered vision of the eastern Mediterranean, the hospitality remains as warm and familial as ever.

Palestinian-born Rawia Bishara, who runs the restaurant with her daughter Jumana, prowls the dining room nightly, a maternal hostess generously handing out hugs, handshakes, and big party platters lavishly garnished in

Get up to a \$500 allowance to help you switch.

Limited time offer **1st month free** Business Internet & Phone **\$59⁹⁰/mo.** your first year

Or call 866.294.0515

optimum.

Near Tanoreen

Bars and pubs

[Restaurants and cafés](#)

[Shops](#)



Remy Lounge



Skinflints



Peggy O'Neill's



Henry Grattan's Bar and Restaurant



Delia's Lounge

[10 others, see all](#)

tomatoes, parsley and *za'atar* dust. Her cooking—Middle Eastern soul food, you might call it—is based on tradition but not enslaved by it. While many dishes are just like what her mother made, plenty of others chart their own course. Attention to detail distinguishes all of them.

Bishara goes the extra steps in reviving the flavors of her Nazareth childhood—charring eggplants in charcoal, rolling out pita, hand-making savory yogurt. Her efforts pay dividends in an endless variety of bountiful meze, in silky spreads—lemony *labna*, beautifully smoky baba ghanoush—in miniature grape-leaf packets, rolled tight like cigars, filled with fragrant rice and delicious slow-simmered lamb; in an ethereal spin on *musakhan*, a sort of Palestinian pita-dough pizza, topped with shredded roasted chicken, toasted almonds, sweet caramelized onions and plenty of citrusy sumac.

The secret to her almost-narcotic meals, insists Bishara, lies in her own signature spice blend—essence of Tanoreen, if you will—a proprietary mix tossed onto everything. How else to explain why a simple fish pilaf—with fried shredded tilapia, almond slivers and caramelized onions—is so compulsively craveable? Or why even basic grilled chicken casts other poultry kebabs in such a shameful light? That flavorsome breast meat shares equal billing, on an enormous combo platter, with tender cubed lamb and ground *kofta* torpedoes. The remarkably tender meat trio arrives with a fluffy mountain of golden rice pilaf and a bright salad of chopped tomatoes and cucumbers. These sides accompany just about every entree, a delicious refrain, yes, but too much of a good thing when you're passing around platters banquet-style, as you should when you dine here.

Rather than loading up on main courses, the best bet is to double down on a vast meze spread—throw in a few extra dips, a platter or two of roasted, tahini-drenched vegetables—before sharing a pilaf, some grilled meat and one of the more offbeat entrees from the very long list of “Rawia’s specials.” On a recent visit those specials included a delicious, labor-intensive combo featuring tiny cracked-wheat lamb kibbe and mini *shushbareks* (delicate handmade lamb dumplings) floating in a wide bowl of warm, velvety yogurt.

Although there are top-notch Middle Eastern bakeries all over Bay Ridge, Tanoreen’s honey-drenched sweets are, like everything else here, all made in-house. While the date roll and baklava are both outstanding, they’re no match for the restaurant’s *knafeh*, a baked-to-order sweet-and-savory treat—copious enough for a four-top—featuring warm, gooey cheese under an intense buttery layer of shredded honey-soaked phyllo. You’re not likely to find better outside the West Bank.

Thanks to Bishara’s *knafeh*, her pilafs, spreads and gorgeous grilled meats, the new Tanoreen remains just as packed as the old one. In fact, demand seems to have swollen to fill the much larger space, a reality that’s not surprising in the least.

Cheat sheet

Drink this: Tanoreen has a well-stocked bar and a pretty decent wine list. A light, easy-drinking Akakies Greek ros (\$34) is a fine, breezy match for the amply spiced food. Mint tea is de rigueur when it comes to dessert.

Eat this: Baba ghanoush, lamb grape leaves, *musakhan*, fish pilaf, *knafeh*

Sit here: The best seats in the house are in the glass-enclosed atrium just off the dining room.

Conversation piece: Although well-known for her dinner parties, Rawia Bishara—who learned to cook from her mother—had never run a professional kitchen before opening Tanoreen in 1998.

See more Restaurant reviews



Everyday Americans.

Book now



Number of people

Date

Booking Time

Venue location

Address: Bay Ridge
Brooklyn
11209-30

Cross Street: at 76th St

Phone: 718-748-5600

Website: tanoreen.com

Opening hours: Tue–Fri noon–10:30pm, Sat 10:30am–10:30pm, Sun 10:30am–10pm

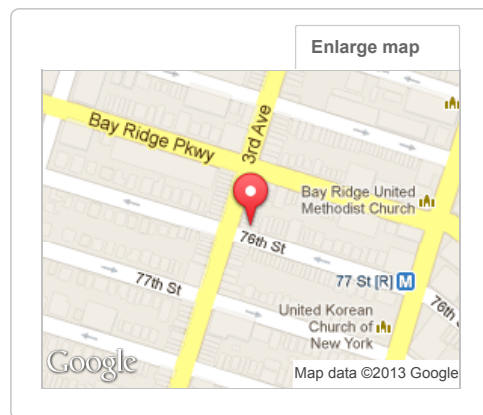
Transport: Subway: R to 77th St

Price: Average main course: \$15. AmEx, DC, MC, V

Categories: Food & Drink

Facilities: Restaurant & bar facilities. Catering. Full bar. BYOB. Notable chef. Take out. Brunch. Lunch. Dinner. Vegetarian-friendly. Delivery. Accessible facilities. Wheelchair access

Good for: Dating. Date night. Socializing. Going in a group. Going solo. Lively scene. Mood. Chill. Off the beaten path. Kids



Be the first of your friends to like this.

Share your thoughts

Your rating

Name *

Email *

Comment *

* mandatory fields

Submit

Things To Do

Events & Festivals
Attractions & Days Out
Walks & Tours
Classes
Time Out New York blog
Promotions
Time Out Offers

Food & Drink

Restaurants
Bars

Arts & Culture

Theater
Art
Museums
Dance
Opera & Classical Music
Books

Film

Music & Nightlife

Live music
Clubs & Nightlife
Comedy
Gay & Lesbian
Sex & Dating

Shopping & Style

Shopping
Style & Design
Health & Beauty

City Guide

New York Neighborhoods
Travel Information
Hotels & Accommodations

Tickets & Offers

Site map

[Time Out New York Kids](#) [Time Out Boston](#) [Time Out Chicago](#) [Time Out London](#) [Time Out Paris \(Français\)](#) [Time Out Worldwide](#)

[Subscriber services](#) [Book store](#) [Terms + Conditions](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [About Us](#) [Media Kit + Advertising](#) [Get Listed](#) [We're hiring](#)