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Moscow Restaurants: Georgian Charm at Kazbek

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Kazbek is the latest offering from esteemed restaurateur Andrei Dellos, the man behind Cafe Pushkin, Turandot and the ubiquitous MuMu cafe chain. A short walk from the banks of the river, when you step inside the restaurant you might just fancy yourself in Georgia rather than northwestern Moscow.

When it came to planning the new eatery, Dellos was inspired by his childhood memories of holidays in the country. The generous, comforting food given pride of place at Georgian family feasts is at the heart of the authentic dining experience at Kazbek.

A warm welcome greets you at the door, where the host hands you an envelope containing the menu and shows you to your table. The kitchen is led by the talented young Tbilisi chef Mamiya Jojua, who adds a modern twist to timeless recipes.

The kitchen is very much a family affair, with Jojua's mother acting as sous-chef. You can admire the pair bustling around the open kitchen as you hungrily anticipate your meal.

Let’s get the obvious out of the way first. It would be a crime not to order one of the traditional-recipe khachapuri (from 420 rubles) which are baked in a large wooden stove and served in all their golden, cheese-laden glory straight from a wooden paddle to your plate.

The rest of the menu features classics like the spinach “pkhali” — herb, spinach and walnuts balls — and garlic-dressed “lobio,” a dish composed of beans and various types of herbs. The pork ribs marinated with spicy adjika sauce are particularly good, as is the “odzhahuri” with pork (600 rubles) which provides a little kick for your palate.

Pair with a glass of fruity Georgian red or opt for one of the many bottled beers. Despite the nostalgia associated with the food, there is nothing outdated about Kazbek’s design. Think deliberately “aged” wallpaper covered with pictures of family life from years gone by, textured wooden floors, intricately carved heavy wooden screens and an eclectic mix of low hanging lampshades.

During the day, the restaurant is flooded with natural light, while in the evening it becomes cozier and more intimate. The waitstaff dressed in traditional costume add to the spirit of old Georgia.

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