

Food, fashion AND football

Jozi tourism throbs at the Joburg City Festival

OVER the past week, Gautengers from as far north as Pretoria have been flocking to the inner city to partake in the inaugural Joburg City Festival – a culmination of all the different facets of entertainment the CBD has to offer – ranging from sports, to food, to fashion.

The mammoth task of organising the festival was taken on by voluntary organisation JCTA (Johannesburg City Tourism Association), which is made up of representatives from various organisations with a tourism stake in the inner city. The JCTA's mission is to promote Joburg City as a tourism destination in itself, to the benefit of the city as a whole.

Key focus times of the festival were weekday lunchtimes and early evenings, with all-day activities over the weekend. The Joburg City Festival fell strategically between Joy of Jazz and Arts Alive, thereby activating the city for nearly three weeks.

The festival started with a bang on Sunday, August 25, with the BalconyTV music event at Randlords, undoubtedly the slickest venue in Joburg, being sold out soon after ticket sales opened. BalconyTV is a YouTube music channel that features musicians from around the world performing on scenic balconies. Since the beginning of the year, Randlords has been its Joburg venue, forming part of its global network comprising 40 cities.

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Joburgers took full advantage of being able to enjoy a spectacular Highveld sunset with a panoramic view of the city, while listening to top local artists perform, such as Newton's 2nd Law.

During the week, restaurants, hotels and spas within the inner city came to the party by hosting exclusive events at discounted rates. The Pyramid Day Spa, one of my favourite spas in Jozi, was offering a 45-minute back, neck and shoulder massage for only R200.

The very New-Yorky Doubleshot coffee shop hosted a high tea every day, while Cramers Coffee Shop was particularly innovative in its ideas – treating coffee lovers to its excellent coffee while enjoying a theatre performance on the pavement outside. Cramers also hosted home barista lessons, enabling people to get their coffee fix at home.

For those who prefer beer to coffee, Lamunu Restaurant and Bar hosted a craft beer festival. Craft beer seems to be all the rage in Jozi at the moment, but there are few places in the inner city that offer this sought-after commodity.

Lamunu overlooks the Grove, an



BalconyTV at Randlords

PICTURE: MARK STRAW

open-air square in Braamfontein.

There were three local choices on tap at the craft beer festival, including Aces and Brauhaus. Beer is not really my drink of choice, but I really enjoyed the Dragon Fiery Ginger Beer, which tasted just like a normal ginger beer, with a bit of a sting. Lamunu also had a craft beer pairing menu, with exotic meals, like wild mushroom and beer pap lasagna, ranging from R100-R120 including a large beer.

While sipping my beer, I caught a glimpse of hundreds of cyclists riding through the inner city, as part of the Critical Mass Cycling Event, which is a worldwide movement promoting the concept of a cycle-friendly, car-free city environment. The event happens on the last Friday of every month and participation is free – all you need to do is show up with your bicycle

(and light) on the corner of De Beer and Juta streets in Braamfontein.

People of all ages, including kids, are encouraged to join in – the ride comprises 20km of easily paced cycling with several stops along the way. This is not a race but a mass tour of the inner city, passing through areas like Gandhi Square and the Corporate Mining District.

For football fans, the Joburg City Festival saw the first Street Ball Championships take place, which is set to be an annual event, inspired by the immensely popular Street Ball leagues in Brazil.

The competition took place in Gandhi Square with 16 six-a-side soccer teams competing for the title of Jozi's Street Ball Champions. Street Ball gives footballers a chance to play the game in its most rustic format, and provides an opportunity for players to be spotted by talent scouts.

There was plenty on offer for the less sporty – including lunchtime

performances by SA Mzansi Ballet at the Joburg Theatre.

The company consists of hugely talented dancers skilled in both classical and contemporary dance, and is currently gearing up for their next show, *Cinderella*, which starts on September 13.

For aspiring ballerinas, there are hobbyist ballet classes offered, at a mere R60 a class.

Another highlight within the arts and culture realm of the Joburg City Festival was the Fashion Kapitol's daily fashion.

The Kapitol is situated in the Fashion District, a section of town spanning 20 square blocks, where you can purchase anything from a matric dance dress to a designer handbag.

With Joburgers hungry for something new to do in their spare time, the festival definitely achieved its aim of showcasing what the inner city has to offer, and will undoubtedly bring threes of visitors to the inner city in the months to come.

For more ideas of things to do in Jozi, visit Hasmita's blog: www.joziliciousblog.co.za

“ This is not a race but a mass tour of the inner city ”

Air-fried instead of deep-fried: great for one or two

HASMITA NAIR

WHEN I heard about the invention of a machine which fries anything from chips to samosas using air, resulting in 80 percent less fat compared with deep frying, I was immediately intrigued. We all know that healthy alternatives are seldom as good as the real deal, so I was sceptical about what these faux fried foods would taste like. I had the opportunity to review an Airfryer, and it quickly earned its place in my kitchen.

The secret behind the Airfryer is “rapid air technology”, which enables the machine to fry with air, resulting in food that is crunchy on the outside and tender on the inside. The Airfryer not only fries, but also roasts, bakes and grills. You have the option of using a basket to fry, or a baking tin to

bake or roast – both come with the machine. I enjoyed the speed at which I could prepare a meal – the preheat phase is only two or three minutes long, and food which usually takes 20 to 30 minutes to cook in the oven, like chicken, was cooked in less than 15 minutes. The temperature control allows for temperatures ranging from 160°C to 220°C.

On the down side, I found the Airfryer a bit on the small side for a family. Although the machine itself is quite large, the basket in which food is placed is relatively small – it can fit six to eight samosas or two chicken breasts. But the results are great. After some trial and error, I got my samosas to taste exactly the same as they would have had I deep fried them.

The Airfryer does tend to dry up

food, which can be remedied by placing a small amount of water in the machine. I prevented the samosas drying up by brushing them with a thin layer of oil every 5 minutes. I was less impressed with the results for chips made from scratch, which weren't as crisp and golden as I would have liked. But when I used frozen chips designed for oven baking, the results were excellent. I wouldn't have been able to tell the difference between those and deep fried chips.

The care booklet claims that cleaning the machine is as simple as wiping it with a damp cloth, but I found it tricky to clean the criss-crossed grooves of the fry basket, so I opted to pop the entire thing in the dishwasher instead.

The machine comes with a recipe

book, proving its versatility. I was impressed to see recipes for chocolate brownies and quiches – all made entirely in the Airfryer. Mostly finger foods, recipes include garlic mushrooms topped with breadcrumbs, salmon croquettes, ricotta balls with basil and Thai fish cakes.

For a health-conscious individual or couple, I think the Airfryer is a great addition to the kitchen, but for families it may be cumbersome to do numerous “rounds” of cooking – which would result in food being ready at different times. Although the Airfryer's capacity is 800g, food needs to be evenly spaced in a single layer, so one can't really use the full capacity.

The Philips Airfryer retails at around R2 000 and can be purchased from Game, Makro or Boardman's.



Samosas prepared in the Airfryer