

'Saravanaas' restaurant has introduced breakfast

By Reshmi Menon

Mornings are never going to be the same for Mathaiah Ramaiah (franchisee owner of 'Saravanaas') and his team of chefs at 'Saravanaas' at 81 Lexington Avenue on the corner of 26th street. The restaurant has introduced breakfast to its offerings, a striking move for an Indian restaurant in New York. *Idli, vada, dosa, uppinna* and a range of steaming South Indian dishes are now available at the restaurant from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

And it was not just Ramaiah who wanted to introduce a breakfast menu. In an interview with *Desi Talk*, Ramaiah said that there have been instances when people have knocked at the restaurant door in the early morning hours to ask if they served breakfast. "Saravana Bhavan" is known the world over, from Chennai to Singapore, for its early morning breakfast service. So we decided it's up to us to give New Yorkers the feel of 'Saravana Bhavan', to introduce breakfast to our menu," he said.

Following tradition, the restaurant serves its breakfast dishes with coffee and tea. "Anything we serve for breakfast goes with coffee, tea or soda," Ramaiah said. Breakfast starts at \$ 6.95 for two idlis plus a choice of coffee, tea or soda and goes on to \$8.95 for Mini Tiffin, "the favorite among the customers" Ramaiah said. With an assortment of dishes like *rava kichidi, mini ghee idli*



'Mini Tiffin,' The favorite breakfast dish according to Ramaiah. (Photos: Courtesy, Saravanaas restaurant)

Breakfast starts at \$6.95 for two idli plus coffee, tea or soda and goes on to \$8.95 for Mini Tiffin, "the favorite among the customers" Ramaiah said. With an assortment of dishes like *rava kichidi, mini ghee idli, mini masala dosa* and sweet the dish gives the customer a bite into most of all the dishes.

idli, mini masala dosa and a sweet, the dish offers the customer a taste of most of the dishes.

The lunch special - the south Indian *thali* with 13 items for \$9.95 is the most sought after among afternoon customers. Between 70-100 *thalis* are served between 11:30 a.m. to 3p.m. on weekdays, and on weekends the service is extended to 4 p.m. due to popular demand. *Masala dosa* (\$6.95), *rava masala dosa* (\$ 8.50), *kaaima idli* (\$ 6.95) and mixed vegetable paratha (\$7.95) are also great favorites.

'Saravanaas' is not only the first East Coast franchise of the well-known Saravana Bhavan chain, based in Chennai - which has almost 40 outposts around the globe; it is also the first branch of the chain to serve beer and wine to its customers. "We just want to cater to our customers needs, and in New York there is always a demand for them," said Ramaiah.

Sadasivam, who has been with the chain 'Saravana Bhavan' since its inception is the head chef. And Paramasivam, who has 25 years of service with the chain, is the *dosa* master.

Veena Ramaiah, Managing Partner, and her father, Mathaiah Ramaiah, who have a majority interest in the restaurant, opened this New York location two years ago. Ramaiah also has a stake in Bombay Tallie, his older daughter Sunitha's restaurant in Chelsea. He is also the franchisee owner of the 'Saravana Bhavan' restaurant in New Jersey.