

Bala Baya, London, UK

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INFORMATION

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Arch 25, Old Union Yard
Arches
229 Union Street

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The latest opening at newly minted Union Arches, a series of under-arch restaurants, bars and live music venues on Union Street in Southwark that's being touted as London's answer to the High Line, is a Tel Aviv-inspired restaurant.

Set up by a collective that includes an Ottolenghi alumnus, an award-winning interior design firm, a young restaurateur and a coterie of Middle Eastern artisans, Bala Baya has recreated the hot heat and the fun of Tel Aviv's all-day eateries, with a modern take on flavoursome Middle Eastern and Med cuisine, a kick-ass soundtrack and chefs who'll sling back shots with you while making your dinner.

The look, that Afroditi Krassa calls 'desert Bauhaus', emulates the White City's sun-drenched evenings, using plenty of white with pops of burnt orange, lush green palm fronds and bespoke lighting that casts a warm glow on diners. Pink-and-black terrazzo floors, black slate table tops and a breezeblock fresco are imported from Israel, while chrome and leather stools and banquets are by Spanish firm Missana.

Split into two distinct areas, downstairs is fast-paced and loud, with a gently curving zinc counter wrapped around the open kitchen, while the cantilevered upstairs is more intimate. By day Chef Eran Tibi's creative menu (Braised beef shoulder with whipped tahini, pulped tomato, crisped onions and herbs for example) is served in impossibly light pittas, but the evening is when the fun starts.