

## **South African**

### **Chakalaka**

**Location** 136 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, SW15 2SP

**Tube** East Putney

**Tel** 0208 789 5696

**Open** Mon-Fri 6pm-10.45pm; Sat & Sun noon-10.45pm

**Web** [www.chakalakarestaurant.com](http://www.chakalakarestaurant.com)

**Email** [info@chakalakarestaurant.com](mailto:info@chakalakarestaurant.com)

South African restaurants are few and far between, so to find myself in Chakalaka restaurant in the heart of Putney was a treat. Painted with a zebra print effect, the place is an extraordinary sight to behold. Deep-orange walls and African artefacts scatter the dining room, while a large zebra skin hangs as a statement piece.

Diners are warmly greeted by quirky, conscientious staff. The crowd is a mixed bunch of regulars, newcomers and local South Africans looking for a taste of home. Lucky then that Chakalaka caters for everyone, even the most adventurous eater. There is always an air of excitement here, and we were in the mood to pamper our palates with some new and unfamiliar cuisine. The menu is a free-for-all for the tastebuds, with a spectacular variety of curious meats, game and poultry – including some that you might have only seen on nature documentaries – on offer. Expect to tuck into ostrich, antelope and springbok, all imported from South Africa

I opted for the game duo from the specials board – a combination of chargrilled ostrich and springbok, served on a bed of sweet mash in a red wine and juniper berry jus. My companion went all in for the ‘25oz rump steak challenge.’ Along came a magnificent, ‘lazy aged’ 25oz prime Namibian steak, served with colossal French fries and a monkey gland sauce; the challenge was to finish it in 25 minutes. The deliciously rich and tender meat went down so well that in just 11 minutes the plate was clear. We followed our feast with one of Chakalaka’s delectable desserts – a Malva pudding and an Amarula creme brulée – and washed everything down with a specialist South African wine. Needless to say, we left with smiles on our faces.

Rare is the restaurant that serves faultless food, yet Chakalaka certainly delivers – we will definitely be back.