

Dining out - at Pollsmoor!

 By [Justin Williams](#)

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Pollsmoor Prison is a high security prison situated in Cape Town's southern suburbs, which we know to be one of the most violent in the world, thanks to TV shows such as Ross Kemp's episode on life inside the prison, as well as many others that highlight the negative aspects of life behind the bars at Pollsmoor.



Negativity aside, have you ever heard of the standalone restaurant inside the prison that is open to the public, which is staffed by "trusty" (inmates who have earned the right to interact with the public) prisoners?

I hadn't heard about the restaurant until recently - my trusty food guru confidant, Shirley, had heard about the experience and was eager that we try it.

Heavily fortified cell blocks

Shirley, a friend Bianca and I arrived at the gates of Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai at brunch time on a Saturday. After getting the nod from security at the gate, we drove past the heavily fortified cell blocks inside the complex and made our way (with a bit of directional help from a friendly warden) toward the restaurant. A large Coca-Cola sign indicated that we had found our destination, which is situated inside the prison's Mess Hall.

Walking into the restaurant, we were welcomed by a warden who told us that we would be served shortly. The restaurant is very homely - the furniture, curtains and general decor remind me of a living room. Our waiter made us feel comfortable by cracking jokes in his first sentences. He was friendly and likeable. The menu is one that I probably will never forget. The dishes offered are fairly simple and straightforward, but there's one major selling point that sets this restaurant apart from any I've ever been to: not one dish costs more than R35!

Family-style favourites

The main meals cost between R22 and R35, and includes most familiar family-style favourites: burgers, steaks, sandwiches, curries and seafood. After ordering main courses from our waiter (calamari and chips - R27, original burger and chips - R23, and cheeseburger and chips - R20) we enjoyed a R3.50 cup of coffee and two cups of tea (R3 each) while we waited.

The food arrived within 20 minutes and, wow, it was epic. My calamari was tasty and tender with a generous portion of chips, served with garnish, and Shirley's and Bianca's burgers were very sizable, not to mention incredibly tasty. They both agreed that Pollsmoor's burgers could put most of Cape Town's gourmet burger restaurant offerings to shame. I had to agree after having a taste - both were superb.

Overall, a very pleasant experience - unbeatable prices, a no-nonsense menu and a simple, yet functional setting: 9/10.

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ABOUT JUSTIN WILLIAMS

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