

# Riding the wave of uncertainty

**OH MANGO, MY LOVE...**



**HIYA ISLAM**

Let's face it, a virus with the same name as an alcoholic drink has got us all indoors. We have got lost internships, deferred graduation and zero paychecks. And we accede to Your Highness. It is after all, a killer microbe with spikes making it look like a crown. That being said, are mangoes really cancelled this summer?

An average Bangladeshi is said to be made of 90 percent mangoes in summer time. Mangoes are an emotion or, as millennials like to call it, a "mood". You can never go wrong with mangoes. Slice it into the salad, plop it in milk or blend into a smoothie. Might as well dunk it in chocolate; if strawberries taste sublime, so will the 'goes. Step up the game. Sticky rice with mangoes, anyone?

However, this summer, it is more than likely that we cannot feast on pounds of mangoes in ways we had dreamt all along the year. Much worse, there'd be little to no stack of pickle jars in the pantry. A few months ruined has come to a high price that is to be paid until the next season. Imagine the joys of picking slices of fresh mangoes in the kitchen, the aroma teasing the buds until hunger caves in. Yeah, none of that is happening. It'd be just *khichuri* with passable, store-bought *achar* for the rest of the year.

The possibilities do not end here. You can literally write a book on "1001 Ways to Eat a Mango". There's *aam bhorta*, there's *mango lacchi*. *Aamshotto* and chutney. While we are still at the subject of unripe mangoes, the recipes for *kacha aam er shorbot* would top the list of "Useless Recipes of 2020". And of course, *aam-doodh-bhaat* would be a major missing at *sehri* hours.

Here's to hoping our summer gets drenched with *himsagars* and *lengras*. May our fruit baskets never pass a day (or a little longer is acceptable, given the times) without an *amrapali* or a *fazli*. *Gopalbhog*, *rajbhog*, *mohonbhog* and the rest of cultivars, do you have a type? Do we even need to have a type? They are all beautiful. There are 152 varieties of mango in Bangladesh; only 31 are mostly grown and it is still a lot to digest.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going; it'd be a hard catch but we sincerely hope to bag a few kilos of this wonder fruit during "mandatory" grocery runs. It would last a little while in the face of fierce appetite (quarantine side-effects). And, it is in our everyday prayers that the mangoes reach Dhaka on time, unhurt. That is, to elaborate, minimal damage to the glorious harvests due to transportation hokum plus a decent profit for the angelic growers. Is that too much to ask for?

*Hiya thinks if you're not a fan of mangoes, you're not human. Send her your favorite mango recipes at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com*

**FAIZA ADIL**

With the grappling fear and uncertainty of what the future holds for us looming over our heads, it can become increasingly difficult to look forward to the future we once had all thought out. Before the uncertainty of now, our lives were packed with classes, goals, exams and plans on plans - once stressful things. With most board exams being cancelled and confusing alternative grading measures not seeming to be in most of our favours, there's not much to look forward to each morning.

Who would've thought the cancellations of the exams we dreaded most would bring about such unease?

Having short-term goals, be it an exam session or even an event, academic or otherwise to work towards adds a great deal of focus and drive to our lives besides just the stress. Now stuck in this monotonous daily routine of almost nothing, no school, exams or social gatherings - the sudden change can take a toll on our motivations and aspirations. Well, yes, some of us are making great use of all this free time, but productivity isn't coming to everyone which in itself is a challenge and that's okay.

Barely grasping what's going on with the state of our education is likely taking a huge toll on most of our mental health. A lot of us around the country were due to give our first board exams and with them being cancelled we have almost no control on the final outcomes. All of our university prospects and plans feel murky amidst all of this doubt and uncertainty about what the future holds. The future we once looked forward to and worked towards could not seem more out of reach.

And even if you've gotten into your universities, the pandemic means actual classes aren't starting anytime soon, but tuitions are. With most businesses taking a huge hit in these uncertain times, paying the hefty sums for universities is a burden for both the student and their guardians. Lockdowns mean that applying for student visas and permits are even more complicated and worrisome, with our final grade not being in our hands anymore, conditional offers from universities seem far

more out of our reach.

For the average student in final years, our higher education prospects seem to not be in our favours. If you're pessimistic about your future too, it can be hard to feel hopeful and motivated stuck at home with nothing to do to help ourselves. While the future feels grim, learning to cope with this plaguing feeling is increasingly important.

I can't tell you that it will all work out, our futures haven't ever felt this bleak and out of control. But we must all learn to cope, the absence of short-term goals is far more demotivating than one might think. Start with setting your own goals, anything at all, focus on an art, a hobby, even something academic - focus on what you can still control. Stuck at home in this monotony, at times we don't even know what day or time it is, we've all faced it but adding structure and a working timetable to your daily life at home will help with the sometimes overwhelming feeling of uselessness.

While it's easier said than done, don't dwell on what isn't in your hands. Know that while it is uncertain - the future is coming, and whatever it brings your way - you aren't alone in this.

*Faiza enjoys the lazy company of her overweight cat and the crippling fear of tomorrow, reach her at faiza2421@gmail.com*





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