

FYI

# The quintessential summer drink

The “sharbat” or “sherbet” is commonplace on everyone’s table during this time of stifling heat of the monsoon season. The sherbet acts as a cool drink composed of fruits and herbs serving as a stimulant and energiser at the same time.

Sherbet is not limited to South Asia only and is drank with relish in the Middle East, Central Asia, Indonesia and diasporic deshi communities. It is derived from the Arabic word “shariba” which translates to drink. Fruity and floral at the same time, the sherbet has been a popular drink throughout millennia with a multitude of different names and cultural traditions associated with it. In many ways, it is considered the world’s first soft drink.

The sherbet has been a favourite of

numerous fictional and non-fictional personalities alike, from Lord Byron who wrote a short couplet on it to the gullible King Shahryar in *A Thousand and One Nights*. Both today and historically, sherbet is perhaps the most widespread drink in the Muslim world.

The Moors introduced both the word and drink to Europe around 1,000 years ago but the drink holds special significance here in South Asia, and it was us who popularised the beverage elsewhere as diasporic communities sprung up in the West. The sherbet has since undergone multiple modifications in its tastes, flavours, packaging, and gradual commodification.

Sherbet became popular in the Indian subcontinent during the rule of emperor

Babur who started the Mughal Dynasty that held swathes of land under its rule for a long period. Sherbet was a favourite drink of Babur, as stated in his autobiography, and he would have people sent to the Himalayas to fetch ice in order to make this refreshing drink to quench his thirst in hot and humid climates in which he was ruling. During the Mughal period, sherbets were held in high esteem and were available to all. The reason for sherbet’s wide popularity was simply that, until the early 20th century, there were few means of preserving and transporting fresh fruit.

Today, the sherbet has undergone changes and can be called an iced dessert and palate cleanser in addition to a drink. The sherbet common to our palates is the

esteemed Rooh Afza, which for generations has been around as our favourite drink during iftar. A syrup with a good and solid concentration of sweetness in it, it acts not only as a thirst quencher but also as a beautiful topping for desserts. A perfect complement to subcontinental iftars, it is indeed a refreshing and medical drink, packing in ingredients from fruits and herbs of Unani medicine.

Sherbet has journeyed across faraway lands, all of which have added different coloured and storied layers to its vibrancy. A witness to the testament of history, synthesis of cultures, and our taste palates.

By Israr Hasan



## CHECK IT OUT

# Do you have a night time ritual?

Bangladesh has been an emerging sector for comfortable designer pyjama suits (PJs), but there has not been a single clothing line that solely caters to this.

‘Pinky Promise by Nity’ started its journey in mid-October 2019, with a vision of sharing Tazrian Binte Ishaque’s dreams

of putting PJs into daily lifestyles for women.

With a great support from her friends and family, especially her husband M Azmat Hossain, Tazrian, along with her constant help, Emarah Siddiqui, has been able to introduce designer sleep wear in Bangladesh.

These are not only sumptuous silks, but also lyrical linen and cotton fabrics, which are lightweight and breathable in texture and in countless variants.

Tazrian Binte Ishaque Nity has thought of the name, Pinky Promise, as to promise to everyone that the PJs she designs would be the comfiest and most reasonable, yet stylish and available anyone in Bangladesh.

Tazrian has been able to deal with the difficulties to make these PJs right here in the country. Yet, she has launched three seasons that had about twenty-one variants of beautiful designer pyjama suits through a successful online store where it has been feasible for all the women to get their hands on one of these suits.

She says, “No matter what silver lining I try to see, it is always scary. Being an entrepreneur has been difficult and an eye opener for me, but not impossible, which I thought it was. I am overwhelmed by the responses for the pyjama suits. If you do enjoy the first experience, order one for every day of the week. You’ll love them!”

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