Cooking proper *Mezban* meat demands a certain skill.



The Mezban beef is intensely hot and spicy.

He claims cooking proper *Mezban* meat demands a certain kind of skill which only chefs from Chittagong possess. All the dishes are tart and intensely hot, cooked with special chilli powder and spice which are only home to Chittagong.

The second dish is a less hot, but a bit tangy beef stock with marrow bones (locally called *Nolar soup*). The culinary delicacy of the process makes the tallow or beef fat come out of the veal bones and makes the stock even more tongue-singeing. Previously, the tradition was to place the biggest ' pipe bone on the *Matbar* or the respected person's plate.

The third dish is a *dal* with beef parts, says Hasan Baburchi. "But to most of the people this dish is superfluous as they get overloaded with beef."

The dishes are served with white rice. For some non Muslims and the people who cannot eat beef for physical condition, *Mezban* also offers chicken, mutton or/and fish.

There are two kinds of *Mezban*: *Hazia* (Fresh) Mezban and *Bai* (stale) *Mezban*. *Hazia* is the one where food is served right after cooking whereas in *Bai Mezban* the meat is cooked at night and gets served the next morning Unlike other stale things, *Bai Mezban* gets special preference to people as the meat is marinated and cooked for a longer period which makes it sufficiently softened and tenderised.

Mezban's invitation is also very interesting. In many parts of Chittagong, the organiser invites all the villagers through loudspeaker announcement. In the urban areas, people nowadays send invitation letter. The invitation is open, whoever invited is more than welcome to bring along his extended family and friends. In many *mezbans*, guests come with boxes and bags clutched to take home some of these mouth-watering delights.

The organisers arrange Mezban in such a way so that at a time a great number of people can sit, eat and leave. Don't wait for anyone to call you over to the table, help yourself to find a seat. The best course of action might be to stick to a chair until the person on the chair does not leave!