

Overrated Iftar Items

SALMA MOHAMMAD ALI

After abstaining from all forms of food and drink for around half a day it is up to iftar to provide us with a well-balanced meal in terms of taste, energy and nutrition. So are our everyday iftar favourites cutting it?

The muri-chhola mix: Chhola is rich in vitamins, protein and minerals but when cooked for an extended period, most of these benefits are greatly reduced. That mixed with a large amount of puffed rice will leave you feeling bloated. Regular (boiled/steamed) white rice is more nutritious than its crispy counterpart and paired with vegetables and meat will not only give a well-balanced meal but it's easy on the digestive system. Slightly cooked gram after it has been soaked in water for around eight hours will provide you with much needed vitamins. You could have a mouthful of that on its own or if you don't like the taste of almost raw gram (I despise it) but are fed up of the traditional chhola-muri try adding them to some salad or boil, mash, add minimal spices to make a hommus and serve with bread.

The deep fried stuff: Many move on to the famous piyazu, beguni, alur chop right after breaking the fast with dates/water. These deep fried favourites are terrible for your empty stomach and could cause acidity problems, not to mention they are fattening and bad for the skin. Potatoes have carbohydrates which are important since you'll be drained of energy by sunset, so potato salad is a much healthier alternative to the oily alur chop or you could even try mashed potatoes coupled with some

chicken or vegetables.

Boro baaper polay khay: While this is not an everyday iftar item for anyone (I hope), it is certainly one of the items that make Chawk Bazar famous. Is the hype surrounding it justified? Probably not. This odd mixture usually contains almost anything you can think of – muri, chhola, pieces of chicken, brains, liver, kebab, eggs, ghee, over ten kinds of spices and more.

This super-rich dish contains too many flavours and you can't really taste much except the overpowering spices and many complain that days-old ingredients are dumped into this concoction. And it costs around 400 taka per kg.

Most of these traditional items have become an integral part of our iftar menu, but they are certainly not something you can't do without. If you find healthier, tastier substitutes to haleem or Rooh Afza, who's to stop you? After all, breaking your fast after a long day especially in this weather is not a matter that one should take lightly.

Salma Mohammad Ali fears she is becoming a crazy cat lady and uses writing as a means to grasp on to sanity. Send her your views/hate/love at <https://www.facebook.com/salma.ali209>



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