

# Branding Bangladeshi cuisine



There are several Korean eateries in Dhaka, as there are considerable number of Chinese, Thai and Indian restaurants serving their respective authentic cuisines. These cuisines, and those of many other regions, enjoy a worldwide reputation and are well sought after. This brings forth the question, why can't we brand our Bangladeshi cuisine like that?

It is, in many ways, unique from the rest of the world, different even from the cuisine in West Bengal. Indeed, there are many similarities in the cuisines of the two Bengals - since they are neighbours and the people, to an extent, have a shared history and culture - but there are differences too.

"Their food is milder and sweeter than ours," Shawkat Osman, a culinary expert and author, points out how Bangladeshis love their food to be hot and spicy.

The use of spices is a bit different too. For example, the use of asafoetida (hing) is more popular and prevalent in West Bengal than the East.

From bharta to hilsa to pitha, we have a lot to offer to the world.

It goes without saying that we need the government to step up and embark upon this project. One of the first things that need to be done is research. We need a knowledgeable and creative organisation that could assist in setting standards for Bangladeshi food (in terms of taste, ingredients used, etc), decide what constitutes a Bangladeshi meal, taking into account all the regional variations and the delicacies (such



as the exclusive ingredient 'chui jhal' in Khulna, 'mejban' in Chittagong and the mangoes of Rajshahi) and so on. Government support is therefore very crucial.

Other than in research, proper marketing and promotion is also important.

In Dhaka, there are very few popular restaurants that specialise in Bangladeshi food. And while eating out is a trend running wild and rampant, how often do we opt for a Bangladeshi menu? The most common reason cited is that we always get 'desi' food at home everyday.

"There is a lack of demand for Bangladeshi foods in restaurants. They are readily available at home: there is always someone in the house to cook them, be it the domestic help or someone from the family," Osman says.

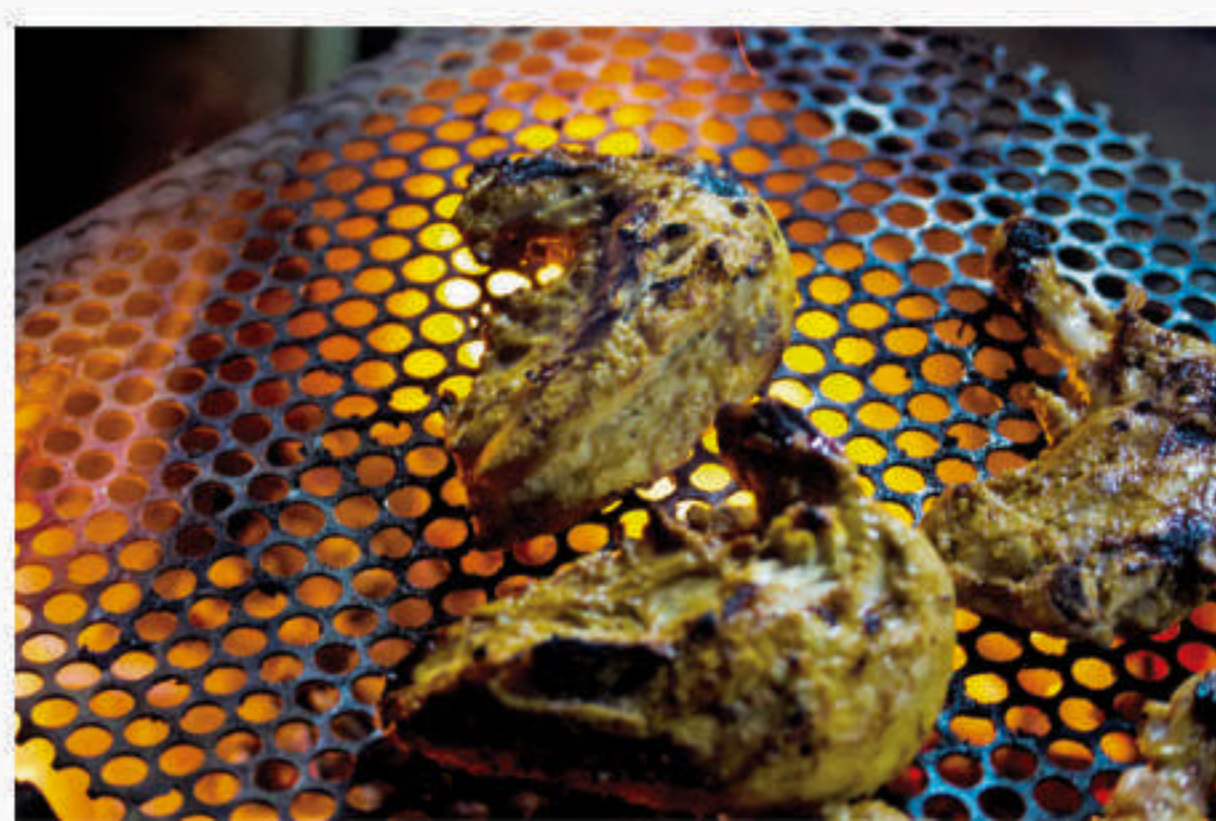
"When this trend is going to change, and when more people will want to eat Bangladeshi food in restaurants, more eateries will open up to cater to that," he states.

Having a well-reputed cuisine also helps tourism of the region or country. Travelling is of course not just about visiting beautiful places and sites of heritage; it is about the experience you attain. And an important part of that experience is the food, the culinary endeavours you embark upon.

Promoting a country's cuisine is promoting the country itself.

**By M H Haider**

**Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed  
Special thanks to Shawkat Osman for sharing his insight and opinions.**



**Dettol**

**Gives 12 hours protection from odor causing germs**

**12h ODOUR PROTECTION**

**NEW lasting fresh**

Recommended By:

**B P M P A**

Proud Partner of **icddr, b**

[www.dettol.com.bd](http://www.dettol.com.bd)

**dettolBD**

BE 100% SURE  
Daily protection from a range of germs

**Dettol**

**12h ODOUR PROTECTION**

lasting fresh  
TRUSTED PROTECTION with e

† From odour causing germs