



THE PERFECT FOODIE WEEKEND

Coca-Cola Foodiez Winter Fest powered by Wowbox

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Good food, good music and football – it would be hard to find anyone who doesn't love at least one of these, if not all. Last weekend, on December 11 and 12, Dhaka Foodies welcomed the people of this town to an affair that brought all of these together. The outcome was one of THE spectacular events Dhaka has had to offer this winter.

Banani Bidyaniketon School and College hosted this exciting event, its premises brightened up by a number of tents acting as stalls. A large number of restaurants and food brands set up stalls to offer customers a vast array of different cuisines and a taste of Dhaka's restaurant experience in one place. Visitors walked around the premises, exploring the offers at different stalls, and picking their preferred kind of food.

Afiat Maishah, who came with her friends, described the affair: "It's very 'food-full', for a lack of a better word. I'm enjoying this because they have a lot of different cuisines, including Italian, which I'm really fond of."

Other than the obvious availability of food, what people seemed to enjoy a lot was the unique atmosphere. People started pouring in on both days as evening set in. The hazy winter air was well complemented by music in the background, and with 5-a-side football taking place on one side; it felt like a celebration of a lot of good things.

Fatimah Akhtar, a BRACU student explained the turnout: "A big part of hanging out with friends in Dhaka involves eating out at restaurants. With the food here as well as the music, it creates a pretty perfect setting for a hangout."

The organisers attempted to get the visitors involved



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA

as much as possible. Cooking classes were arranged for children under the age of 10, where they were taught fun and easy recipes they could try at home. There was a home chef contest for amateur cooks, and a lot of people – old and young – participated with much enthusiasm. Coca-Cola and Wowbox, two of the sponsors of this event, arranged games and gave away presents. Wowbox had a walk-in audition booth and presented visitors the opportunity to be cast in the next Wowbox drama.

The music set the tone for the unique experience that "Coca-Cola Foodiez Winter Fest" offered. The lineup on the first day included Martian Love, Bivishika, and Nemesis; Arbovirus and Minerva hit the stage on the second day. The crowd, as usual, went crazy for Nemesis and sang along to all their songs. Arbovirus received a similarly enthusiastic reception from the crowd the next day. The quality of music on the back of the great food on offer made sure that the event delivered on its promise of being a true festival. As the night grew older, the music got louder, the football got

more competitive, and people enjoyed the festival more and more.

The spacious nature of the venue made for a pleasant experience altogether. Visitors moved from one stall to another without any hassle and even when the crowd was heavy, things looked under control. Talking to Z.M. Rizwan, one of the organisers, we learnt that crowd management was a priority for them and it worked out well.

"Having more people come here serves our business purpose well but if they aren't satisfied, it's counterproductive. That's why we wanted visitors to feel comfortable here," he said.

Rafat Mahmud Alvee, one of the owners of Awesome Kitchen, shared his views about the event: "It's amazing to see and connect with so many consumers and contemporaries at one place. It's a well thought out initiative by the organisers."

The Daily Star had its own stall which people visited, and browsed through the collection of books that were on display. SHOUT came up with an "Answer and Win" contest and young foodies participated eagerly.

Judging from the visitors' level of satisfaction and the turnout for either food, football, music or all three of them, "Coca-Cola Foodiez Winter Fest" was a smashing success. This is the sort of event that needs to happen more often because it solely concentrated on providing a setting where people can spend some quality time, something that is rare in our city.

This event was organised by Dhaka Foodies, and partnered by Wowbox, Knorr, Radio Shadhin, Bongo, Shohoz.com, Project Kombol, and The Daily Star.

When he's not obsessing over football, Azmin spends his time devising way of not getting mugged, only to fail miserably. Give him advice at fb.com/azminazran