

CHECK IT OUT

PITHAS

Steamy cups of latte, multiple layers of warm clothes, chilly fog-filled mornings and long freezing nights - winter brings along with itself an eccentric essence that makes us fall in love with the very frigid vacuity of it. The season is welcomed in Bangladesh after the deciduous trees have shed off their leaves and the season of Hemanto (Late Autumn) bids farewell for another year.

Having celebrated Nobanno Utshob (a joyous festival that marks the jubilation of harvesting new crops) just recently, Bangladeshis embrace 'sheetkaal' with just as much exuberance.

Winter in the city brings about a change in the culinary scene. This is the time when steamy, hot dishes replace cold ones, and pithas take centre stage in this seasonal culinary scene. A 'chittoi' with some mustard paste or a piquant mixture of minced, salted coriander leaves, gingers, and green chilli peppers - maybe the savoury variant of 'bhaapa' with some curry! These make up the quintessential winter food.

Making pithas often involve elaborate cooking methods and it can be said with utmost certainty that it is not for the faint hearted. On the streets of Dhaka, women, men or children start selling delectable pithas from the early months of winter. Hygiene issues aside, this is one of the best street foods that Dhaka has to offer.

And this is where we come in. If you are looking for some delicious pithas these are the places you should get out to, or in some cases, log onto!

BAILEY PITHA GHOR

This is probably the best known and most popular pitha house in the city. Having branches in Bailey Road, Gulshan 1, and Bashundhara, Bailey Pitha Ghor sells over 30 different kinds of pithas starting from the 'nokshi pitha' with its intricate and fascinating patterns, to the plain 'chittoi' and 'bhaapa', which are undoubtedly the seasonal favourites.

Pithas with floral titles like the 'Shurjomukhi (sunflower) pitha', 'golapful (rose) pitha' and simply 'phool (flower) pitha' are also sold at the Bailey Pitha Ghor. They are open to orders for different events or festivals. Moreover, they also make special menus for special occasions like wed-

dings and birthdays. *Contact: Bailey Pitha Ghor, 10/1 New Bailey Road, Dhaka 1000. #028322082.*

ADDA

Adda, a concern of Prabartana and established in 1989, is an eatery serving as the platform where individuals of all ages assemble to enjoy pithas along with a cup of tea or coffee. While the front part of the eatery is laden with wooden benches and



tables, there is a spacious dining and hall inside where the walls are lined with striking traditional paintings and the floors are decked with comfortable cushioned mattresses to seat the patrons.

Adda has a short menu for pithas, but long enough to satiate the demands of any foodie. 'Narikel kuli', 'Mukh pakon', 'patishapta', 'tel' and the exceptional 'biscuit pitha', alongside the more common ones. For weddings or any other event orders, one can call/visit Adda and specify their



requirements to avail their catering services.

Contact: Prabartana, 6/8 Sir Syed Road Mohammedpur, Dhaka 1207. +880-1910911002. prabartana@gmail.com

UTTARA PITHA GHAR

Having branches in Banasree and Uttara, this pitha corner began its journey in 2011. They sell all sorts of seasonal pithas, offering a diversified menu of over 40 different

(ones which resemble momos, having a beef/chicken filling). Other exquisite items include 'lobongo', 'malpua', 'jhuri', 'mera', 'dim puli', 'kaan lotika', 'kolapata' and 'jhaal-jamai pithas'. Uttara Pitha Ghar also takes customised orders for various events according to the requirements of the customers.

Contact: House# 148, Road#19, Block# K South Banasree, Main Road, Dhaka. #01617-736847.

DESH PITHA GHOR

An online store based in Mirpur 1, Desh Pitha Ghor is run and owned by the versatile cuisinier Irin Chowdhury who has infused some creativity in revamping traditional pithas. Since 2013, Desh has been in the pitha business, selling a range of goodies including 'nokshi', 'mukhpakon', 'jhinuk', 'lobongo-lotika' (a pitha with an egg and vegetable filling). 'Bibikhana' and the exclusive 'machh pitha' (a pitha having a savoury filling made from hilsa).

In addition to these, another unique item is the 'chingri pitha', which is made with one, large shrimp. They have participated in various pitha fests like the Prince Bazaar Pitha Utshob, Jatiyo Pitha Utshob, etc. Desh Pitha Ghor makes customised pitha 'dalas' (baskets) for weddings and is also open to bulk orders for other events.

Contact: facebook.com/DeshPithaGhor; 01941096978, 01816720068.

Besides these, sweetmeat shops like Bikrampur Sweets also sells a number of pithas and readymade boxes packed with pithas can be found in super shops like Meena Bazar and Agora. This season, you can also keep a lookout for upcoming Pitha Utshobs (festivals) such as Radhuni Pitha Utshob and Mojo Pitha Utshob which will be taking place in January 2017 at the Rabindra Sharobar, Dhanmondi.

By Nafisa Faruque

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

