

New Dhaka's Culinary Secrets

No true Dhakaite who possesses a bittersweet attachment to this busy bustling city is oblivious to the taste of the delectable delicacies found in the nooks of Old Dhaka or as it is commonly known, 'Puran' Dhaka. True to its name, it is literally the oldest part of the city and likewise, holds on to the most historic Bengali bits and pieces of Dhaka. One can take a walk down the scanty lanes and discover a treasure trove of the best street foods as well as more traditional items like Hajir Biryani and Kacchi (which has been perfected in that very ground in my opinion) at affordable prices.

But which are some of the notable eateries found in the rest of the city? This pushed us to explore New Dhaka and its culinary secrets. New Dhaka has its own particular essence, taste and patrons. How do you categorise something as 'New Dhaka' food? A food item that symbolises a certain traditional and cultural root and yet successfully pulls the urban contemporary crowd of consumers towards itself time and again, in my opinion is a New Dhaka food item. Looking around, we found a number of restaurants which serve exquisite meals to the New Dhaka crowd.

Chittagong Express

Chittagong Express began its journey back in May, 2014 and was the first restaurant in Dhaka to serve mouthwatering 'Mezbaan' meals with the remarkable 'Chatgaiyya' essence. A group of friends got together and first started this venture in Bashundhara and served free meals for about the first whole week of operations just to see how well they can do in the market. As more and more people gathered to get a taste of their authentic food, Chittagong Express finally found their place in the market as well as the hearts of many foodies. 'Mezbani Gosht' is the popular pick among customers of all ages. This special dish is made with an abundance of exotic spices in large quantities. It costs Tk 140 per plate and a clay pot which serves 5-6 people costs Tk 800. Besides this, another regional favourite is the Akhni Biryani. In the Mazaars or shrines situated in Chittagong, there is a custom of collecting different kinds of rice from various households and combining this with meat into a fusion biriyani which is known as the Akhni Biryani. A full plate of this specialty is priced at Tk 200 while the half plate costs Tk 140. Kala Bhuna is yet another delicious delicacy made with beef costing Tk 200/plate and Tk 1000 per clay pot. Chittagong Express also has a number of seasonal specialties like Jhura Mangsho, Hilsa and Spicy Duck and takes catering orders for official and other events. Chittagong Express has recently opened up their 2nd branch in Gulshan 2.

Address:

Branch 1: 422, Dhalibari Madrasa Road, Near Apollo Hospital, Close to Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka.

Branch 2: 2nd floor, Barun Tower (Beside Land Mark), Gulshan-2 Circle, Dhaka. (NEW)
FB : <https://facebook.com/chaatgaexpress/>

Choi Jhal

It is the only restaurant in Dhaka that strives to keep the traditional cooking style of South Bengal alive and available in the fast changing modern city. All the items here are

cooked with the bark of a stem of Choi plant which is specifically found in the South and South Western regions of Bangladesh. Once added to a certain dish, Choi Jhal works its magic, enhancing the flavour and spicing it up, resulting in a unique taste for each dish. The main ingredient (Choi) is brought in from Khulna to cook these exquisite delicacies. Choi Jhal beef, chicken and mutton are the highlights of the menu and cost Tk 120, 130 and 140 per piece respectively. The entire bowl is brought to the table when serving and patrons may pick their desired piece to have with a plate of steaming rice/khichuri. There are two active branches of Choi Jhal in Bashundhara and Dhanmondi.

ter in Dhaka kicked off in 2015 and has been booming ever since. The two-storied establishment in Gulshan is made primarily of bamboo and concrete. There is an unshakable natural aura about the place and besides the tabled seating arrangement; half of the 2nd storey is open terraced while the rest lies under a shed with floors lined with mattresses where the patrons can be seated in a comfortable and homely 'cushioned' setting. The most hyped about item on the menu is 'Chumath Kurahera' or Bamboo chicken which is actually cooked and served in real bamboo stems. This dish is cooked on the rooftop on an outdoor charcoal grill and customers can watch the process live on the

fried ice creams rolls, Dipsydo's came into being in 2015. Back then, it was an absolutely new concept for Dhakaite and quite an incredible one too. These modern ice cream rolls are made on specialised teppans or steel grills that were flown in from abroad. The process is very different from the conventional one and requires specific measures to ensure that the milk is churned well. All ingredients used for the ice cream are 100% organic and every flavour is a new invention in this ice cream parlour. Triple Chocolate, for instance, is an ice cream that has the combination of three different kinds of renowned chocolates. It is a popular pick and costs Tk 315. They have introduced a Ferrero Rocher flavour that is priced at Tk



Address:

Branch 1: Jaynab Ali Road, Bashundhara Road (Opposite to Jamuna Future Park)
Branch 2: 2nd floor, Green Taj Centre (Almas building), Road 8/A, Dhanmondi R/A
FB :

Contact: 01711929394

Peda Ting Ting

'Peda Ting Ting' is a humorous idiom originating from the Chakma dialect which means 'Bhuri-bhoj' in Bengali or as the Chakmas would say - to fill up your tummy with so much food that if you poked it, it would make a 'Ting Ting' sound. The restaurant was first opened in Rangamati, Chittagong in 2000 and since then, it has been serving authentic and indigenous dishes that hail from the hill tracts. Its chap-

spot. Another specific kind of cooking technique 'Hebang' is used to make the 'Boda' (egg) and Fish Hebang. In this item, the egg or fish is marinated well and wrapped up in banana leaf and baked like a pudding. Peda Ting Ting is also focusing on a number of exotic seafood delicacies. As most of the key ingredients have to be transported all the way from Rangamati to the Dhaka branch, the prices differ between the two branches.

Address:

Branch 1: Balukhali, Kaptai Lake, Rangamati, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Branch 2: House 69, Road 26, Gulshan 1, Dhaka 1212

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/PedaTingTing/>

Dipsydo's

Having adapted the Thai way of making

300. In addition, another new flavour 'Kinder Bueno' has been recently launched at the Lalmatia branch. At this amazing ice cream parlour, you can order your favourite ice cream and watch it being made live while hanging out with your friends or family.

Address:

Branch 1: Block-D, Lalmatia, Dhaka 1213 (Behind Meena Bazar)

Branch 2: Captain's World, Mohakhali (near Jahangir Gate)

Branch 3: Tess, Mirpur DOHS

Branch 4: House # 34, Road # 10, Block # D, 3rd Floor, Banani, 1213 Dhaka

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/dipsydos/>

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Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel

Food: Chef Md Boshir, DS Café