

Why You Should Never Trust an Ilish Machh

NUREN IFTEKHAR

The merry occasion of Pahela Baishakh is upon us once again, bringing with it the delight of festivities and jubilation of starting anew. But with the songs and drum rolls come the fear of something a bit darker, a menace which hides under the guise of a familiar face. Yes, I'm talking about the *ilish machh*. This has always been one of the more controversial topics and it seems to quickly divide people due to the nature of the debate. On one hand, we have people hailing *ilish machh* as a blessing and a delicacy and on the other we have people doubting the true motives of the fish. I take no shame in admitting that I'm of the latter and for valid reasons. Here's why the silver coated, festival-adorning attraction is not to be trusted:

The Old Tale: There's a folklore about *ilish machh* that not many seem to know these days (I suspect foul play on the part of the fish in hiding it). Have you ever noticed a little black meaty portion in the side of your piece of *ilish*? The legend goes that once upon a time an *ilish* and a deer raced each other with the condition that the loser will have to give a portion of their meat to the winner. The *ilish* won in the end as the deer's antlers got tangled in the vines while the former swam through the river. So as a part of their deal, the *fish* took the meat from the deer and started wearing it by its sides. That's why they have a black portion of

meat on their body.

A monster that wears the meat of its opponent as trophy. Does that sound like a trustworthy individual to you?

Something Fishy: When biting into a delicious piece of *ilish*, did you ever get the feeling that there's something, well, fishy about them? Something you can't quite put your finger on. It's always as if they're hiding something behind their iron-cold stare and suspiciously-sparkly scales. They have the same calm but menacing appearance as Agent Smith from Matrix. And Agent Smiths are not people you should be putting your trust in.

Perfection shouldn't exist: Nothing is perfect. It's a simple realisation we have come to terms with in the course of our growing up. But *ilish machh* disregards this fundamental idea with the perfection of its eggs. *Ilish machher dim* has been a historic weakness for Bengalis. The slight crunch of the outer layer, granulated texture that greets you on the first bite, that mild but luscious taste that fills your mouth soon after...It's quite simply, perfect. Perhaps too perfect. Look I don't want to say much but all I'm saying is that if I wanted to secretly invade a civilisation I'd do it with food that they can't say no to.

E-lish: *Ilish* sounds like an up and coming e-commerce start-up, and if experience has taught me anything it's that how unreliable they are. Faulty products, misleading pictures,

paid reviews and what not are sure to plague whatever new venture they carry out. Would you be gullible enough to fall for the same old trick?

Terrible Parents: *Ilish machh* have always been terrible at parenting, this isn't even up for debate. They come from the far away sea to our rivers just so they can drop off their eggs and be back to their own business. No hugs or goodbyes or even a simple "Don't forget your breakfast." How is this acceptable behaviour? Doesn't this affect your trust in this species?

It's always a complicated task to judge someone and I'm never the one to jump the gun. But all things considered I think we should be more careful around *ilish machh* when it comes to these things. I'm not saying we should build a wall, but would building a dam really be that xenophobic? I will let you decide.

Nuren Iftexhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at n.iftexhar18@gmail.com



How not to be a jerk this Pahela Baishakh

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'Tis that time of the year again, when porota-dim bhaji are replaced by panta-ilish for breakfast, the time when loud and flamboyant processions are not frowned upon but become a part of everyone's to-do lists. Dhaka has a reputation for spawning a good number of infected souls. Somehow, festive atmosphere seem to bring out the worst in some folks and they graciously play the role of villains during celebrations. Do not be that jerk. Please.

Do not cause chaos on the streets
So after much anticipation when the big day finally arrives for you to unleash your Bengaliness, you decide to amplify the experience with a noisy bang which is most likely to disrupt the essence of the festival altogether. Do not be that person who collects their friends in their muffler removed car, blaring the latest Bollywood hits [or in any other language for that matter]. Generating mayhem is a socially unacceptable thing to do. Celebrations are meant to be fun for everyone, not torture for some.

Do not perpetuate ignorance on social media

You are ready. You crack your neck sideways and flex your fingers. The moment has finally arrived for you to upload the



Noboborsho status which will probably get you around a hundred likes because you have decided to add a nice "Happy New Year" GIF along with it. You type in "ShubhoNoboborsho 2k17!!!!" only to get bombarded by angry reacts. You do not know where you went wrong. Do

your research, mate. Often, one might stumble upon keyboard warriors passionately fighting it out on whether the Noboborsho posts should be uploaded at midnight or at dawn. WHY!!?

P.S. Checking in at a 5 star hotel, saying your Pahela Baishakh > mine just

makes you seem lame.

Do not be trashy

Street food is a big part of Pahela Baishakh celebration. Indulging in gastronomic activities does not mean you should litter the park or streets with ice cream sticks, plastic cups and plates, turning the venue into a landfill.

DO NOT encourage or participate in harassment

If you witness a female being harassed, before taking out your phone to record the incident – so that you could later upload it on the internet, condemning the act and look like a legit social justice warrior – DO TRY AND GATHER PEOPLE TO STOP IT. If your friend is catcalling a girl in a rickshaw *all in good humour*, please feel free to punch him in the face, *all in good humour*. If you feel an urge to harass a girl in the crowd, lock yourself up in a bathroom.

Hold yourself back from enacting the above mentioned points and I promise you, you will not be included in that the cool 'starter pack' meme next year.

Iqra suffers from wanderlust, dreams of discovering the Loch Ness Monster and occasionally complains about Economics. Send her noodles at iqra.kashmir53@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/iqra.l.qamari