

# Not all mothers can cook

SHOAIB AHMED SAYAM

Look, I like my mother. I think she has made invaluable contributions to my life. Now that I've got myself off the minefield, let's talk about her cooking. Her cooking skills are by no means bad, and I have no problem eating meals prepared by her. The problem arises when people proclaim the ever-popular statement that "there's nothing like mom's cooking". I can think of hundreds of dishes I had which were better than my mother's, and not just my mother's, everyone else's mother's as well.

Just think about it for a second, does it really make sense that the best cooking we've ever experienced were our mothers'? Our mothers aren't professional chefs [well, most are not, any way]. Sure, they have probably honed their cooking skills through the unconstructive criticisms from their in-laws, but what about the people who have devoted their lives to this craft? Are you going to ignore all the traditional Puran Dhaka eateries where the recipes and techniques have been handed down through generations? Are you going to look down upon the pizzeria chef who has been flipping dough for a decade? Stop it. Your mother's homemade pizza is probably not better than Pizza Ghor's.

"Hey, isn't this all subjective? A person may prefer his/her mother's cooking without it becoming an objective proclamation." That's not the point here; it's the cognitive dissonance that bothers me. You'll hear people saying that a particular kacchi was the best kacchi they ever had. At that moment if you ask them if it's better than their mother's, they'll reply with a quick and loud "no". Sometimes I imagine to what extent they'll go. If Gordon Ramsay prepares them a meal, will they tell



## What's your favourite restaurant in Brazil? Ronaldo: My mother's food is the best

him that he's good but not better than their mother?

Nostalgia comes into play as well. All of us used to like some TV shows which were objectively bad but we still watched them as kids. The same can be said about meals we had back then. The difference between these two situations is that we can acknowledge that they were actually bad shows. We can't do this with our mothers probably because we don't want to hurt them but I'm not calling for everyone to demean their cooking. I'm just requesting to not claim it as THE BEST.

Throughout my life I've had lots of meals at my friends' places, and they were delicious; I'm very thankful to all the mothers. The meals turn sour the moment their children boast that their mother's cooking is the best. I'm pretty sure they themselves had better biryani at some wedding. So, what's happening here? Are they all lying? Well, it's not as simple as that. My theory is that at some

point in their life, they deluded themselves into believing that nothing can top ammu's khichuri.

Furthermore, if everyone's mother is the best, by default no mother is.

I get it, we all love our mothers. But you don't have to force yourself to believe that your mother is the best at everything she does just to love her. Moreover, by doing this you're disregarding the people who have actually dedicated their lives to serving magnificent meals like the Michelin-starred chefs and the royal Mughal biryani baburchis. Although, I wonder if it's the love and compassion that go into the meals cooked by our mothers that make them the best. If that's the case, I have no problem accepting something as intangible as that.

*Shoaib Ahmed Sayam tortures himself by watching fake sports and Vietnamese cartoons. Help him at [fb.com/ooribabamama](https://www.facebook.com/ooribabamama)*

*the secret ingredient is always love*



**MY MOTHERS MENU**  
*consisted of two choices*  
**TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.**  
*Buddy Hackett*



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