

Recipe collecting through the ages

Growing up, you have probably seen your mother resort to a special drawer that is only opened before special occasions or when you had guests over. Occasionally, you would see her stuff pieces of newspaper cuttings, or even take a journal out every time there was a cooking show on TV.

Years later, when you open the drawer just out of curiosity, you watch in amusement as a huge stack of dusty old newspaper cuttings and multiple journals fall onto the floor. Upon closer inspection, you see that they are all cooking recipes, whether cut out from magazines that are decades old, or carefully handwritten on crumpled pieces of paper.

Recipe hoarding — as the phenomenon is called — is nothing new in a Bengali household. In fact, that is how the culinary secrets have been passed from generation to generation. That is also how your mother is an excellent cook. It's not only years of

mom's secret was!" said Ridwana, who works at a corporate firm.

While magazines, books and TV shows were the only medium for collecting recipes even a few years ago, the technological revolution has brought with it new mediums that are far more efficient and vast in terms of content.

You now have an array of exotic salads, mouthwatering cheesecakes and delicious steaks to master as well. Whether you are an amateur trying to make simple dishes or an aspiring enthusiast following world-class chefs, there is now plenty of content thanks to YouTube channels, Pinterest and food blogs.

"I have my mother's tendency to hoard recipes, but instead of newspapers, my search is limited to boards on Pinterest. I've always enjoyed Mediterranean cuisine, and I've even tried making them once in a while. What's so great about these sites is that not

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only do they give you detailed descriptions on how to make things but also give tips on presentation," Ridwana explains.

With cookbooks from masterchefs and various YouTube channels, finding recipes from Western cuisine or even Indian cuisine is rather easy. For Bengali food, the number of such channels are quite limited. However, there are a few that can get you started on your cooking journey!

household?

"I think I should re-phrase into what has entered — chopping boards, knives, and stools! The whole approach is to give an ergonomic twist to the traditional kitchen, and that also means cabinets, racks and more drawers. I think, my kitchen got a facelift and a health boost with all the change."



BANGLAR RANNAGHOR

With over thirty thousand subscribers on YouTube and 1.1 million likes on Facebook, *Banglar Rannaghor* is the ultimate go-to place for every beginner cooking enthusiast. The mouth-watering recipes simply presented in videos that are only about 2-3 minutes long are sure to get you running to the kitchen immediately!

From basic everyday necessities such as cabbage fries and parathas to more complicated Bengali delicacies, they have it all.

Whether you are a housewife searching for a quick traditional dessert for your house-party or a struggling student trying to cook khichuri for the first time, this is the channel to go to, especially if you are short on time.

Once you start the video, the soothing background music, along with the aesthetic cinematography, will make it really easy to focus on the relatively simple steps.

Ideal for those who find cooking too daunting, the channel covers chicken recipes, beef recipes, fish recipes and even traditional pithas and mishtis!

www.youtube.com/channel/UCcf99XTO-KPPAGs03HcNXdA

COOKING STUDIO BY UMME

For those of you who prefer a personal touch to cooking, *Cooking Studio by Umme* is the channel for you! With over 400,000 subscribers, this channel not only covers a variety of content but also explains the reason behind each step, at times even suggesting alternative methods of cooking

the same dish. Ideal for those with a bit more experience in the kitchen, *Cooking Studio* by Umme will help you try out more complex recipes.

From making baby food like Cerelac from scratch to vibrant *patishapta pithas*, this channel will definitely help you hone your cooking skills.

The videos are about 8-12 minutes long and can be on kebabs, Bengali street food or even Bengali wedding food! Yes, almost anything Bengali you can think of, this channel has you covered!

www.youtube.com/channel/UCYtF9WkDFA6kEeyulEh3Ynw

SPICE BANGLA

Although their food journey is only nine months old, *Spice Bangla* already has a growing fan base with over 100,000 subscribers. From yummy pickles to traditional biryanis, the channel not only focuses on just Bangla food, but also covers continental delicacies including Indo-Chinese cuisine, fast food and so on. You can count on *Spice Bangla* to come up with unique food ideas that can rock your house parties.

Whether it is a Spanish *leche frita* or a homemade cappuccino, *Spice Bangla* is definitely a step forward in your culinary journey. The videos, which are about 7-12 minutes in duration, are intricately detailed with instructions, thus making it easier for even beginners to try them out.

www.youtube.com/channel/UC2FrqldzfmXVaOzOqSqiZYg

By Adiba Mahbub Proma
Photo: Collected



practice, but also years of searching, collecting and preserving the best recipes found.

"My mother had a huge collection of recipes and every weekend, she would try one of the dishes out. Not all of them would turn out well though, but that never stopped her from trying a different one the following week. The good ones would then be presented at family parties. The other relatives could never quite know what

Recipe for change

FROM PAGE 6

But then the whole after-work cooking became a family activity and everyone, including my young daughter, joined in. I think this whole routine is not only helping my marriage, but also instilling valuable lessons in sharing responsibility in my girl," said Salam.

And what else has changed, in the Salam

A FUTURE

Speaking for myself, I testify that I no longer cook. No surprises there, but my love for food stayed. I still love to call myself a foodie, for truly that is what I am.

I always feel that as time is passing by, we are developing an aversion to 'deshi' food and culture. Oil and spice is the first notion that hits our minds when we speak 'deshi' cuisine. But what of the watery-

curries with little or no spices? Our traditional love for vegetables and bhortas! Small fish, once a staple, is slowly disappearing from kitchen markets.

We should be all for change and mindsets. Let us embrace everything that adds to culture, tradition, and of course, good health! Let 'No Reservations' be our new motto.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif