

# CHANGES THAT MAKE US #NOWINLIFESTYLE



DHAKA SATURDAY  
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## SHAHANA HUDA

"Emon Deshti Kothao Khuje Pabe Nako Tumi..." - Dwijendralal Ray

(You will never find in the world below, a land like our land of birth).

This quote readily applies to our country's rich cuisine as you will also not experience such lovely and delicious food anywhere else. Yes, I am talking about Bangladeshi food. No matter where Bengalis live in the world, the taste of their own cuisine remains to them like the proverbial honey. The eternal Bengali comfort food, khichuri-gosht-omelette, with a dash of ghee or a spoonful of achar, almost always brings a smile to a Bengali heart; more so if it is raining outside- irrespective of your geographic location.

## DESHI CRAVINGS

In Canada, most Bengalis cook khichuri

(a rice dish cooked with lentils) and beef even during -35 degrees Celsius temperatures. A friend from Boston sent a picture of a snow-day leave from work, which they spend making the perfect deshi lunch for cold days -mung beans khichuri, omelette, fried brinjal, and potato-cauliflower stir-fry along with a dash of 'Bikrampur er gawa ghee'. My friend said, "Even though I live here, I cannot have peace of mind without some good old deshi food."

On a rainy day in London, the wafting aroma of cooking Hilsa and frying aubergine steaks will tickle your nose from afar, and you would instantly know it is from a Bengali household. I know about a university in America, where all the Bengali students gather on weekends or on holidays to raise funds and organise a cooking spree of some crowd favourite

Bangladeshi dishes - with such favourites as beef bhuna, khichuri or fish curry and kolija bhuna. They often remark that this meal is the highlight of their entire week.

I know of an Italian lady, who fell in love with Bangladesh's Salehin, simply for his cooking prowess. An official who was appointed to Bangladesh said on his impending return that he would keep visiting only for the delicious food, especially singara, which is otherwise considered quite humble. Although the Mughals had their capital at Delhi, "the kacchi biriyani there cannot hold a candle to the ones found in Old Dhaka," vouches a neurosurgeon from Delhi. He says that the ones here are so good that it becomes his primary food whenever he visits Dhaka. "I cannot forget the deliciousness of the Bangladeshi preparations for various types of fish such as Koi,



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# The Love for my food

Chitol, and Ilish. I am from Rajasthan, but I am so much in love with Bangladeshi cuisine that my cook is Bengali," another Indian acquaintance of mine quips in agreement.

Kamal, a Bangladeshi expat in Germany, made mandatory annual visits to his home just so he could eat some chapa shutki bharta made by his mother. And as if coming home for the dish itself was not enough, he also found ways to take at least a month's worth of supplies with him in his luggage. Kamal says that despite trying out cuisines from various countries, nothing can compare to the taste of shutki. "If I ever go to heaven, all I want is an unending supply of shutki and rice," he says, jokingly. Milton is from Barisal, but lives in Dhaka for his work; he misses all the sweet water fish of the Padma River, and talks about it with such passion that we would accompany him on his visits to Barisal just to have a taste of all the varieties of fish.

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