

# CHANGES THAT MAKE US #NOWINLIFESTYLE



DHAKA SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 24, 2018  
FALGUN 12, 1424 BS

24

## Explaining Bangladeshi cuisine



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### BANDARBAN

They love their barbecues, be it beef or pork, and the recipes for marinating are usually quite simple, as they use some lemon, ginger, chilli and salt for seasoning, crushed together.

### CHITTAGONG

When I think of this place, my mind quickly remembers the last time I had 'kala bhuna,' shutki or even mejbani. As the conversation between us progresses, words such as 'do machha, lakhha shutki, chhuri shutki, loitta maach' surface. And the truth is that food wise—shutki, seafish, and beef are probably the closest way to describe Chittagong's cui-



sine. During religious festivals, beef is cooked in large batches and everyone is invited, from beggars to their wealthy counterparts. This preparation of beef is known as 'mejbani' and follows the philosophy of 'ain, boin, khain' (all are welcome to sit and have a meal).

The main spices in mejbani include, mustard paste, poppy seed paste (posto), ginger, garlic, garam masala and jeera, just to name a few.

Khaishha is another dish made with seeds of string beans and shutki.

There are also a lot of Burmese influences like 'chow chow' a dessert made with coconut milk.

### BARISAL

In Nahid Osman's words, "Barisal can be considered as the Venice of Bangladesh because of all the rivers interlacing the district," and therefore there is an abundance of fish, both sweet water and saltwater variants, due to their proximity to the sea.

On the Bhimrole River, lies a floating guava market that can be dated back to 250-300 years in time. Coconut is a staple in this region, aside from paanchphoron, mustard paste and poppy seed paste. Coconut is also used in many forms including a spice. According to the renowned culinary expert, "Prawn malai-curry originated from Barisal!"

mangoes, wax gourd, pumpkin, and even betel nut (supari)! They prepare pudding using the juice of ripe jackfruits and mangoes.

Nahid Osman talks about one of her favourite pithas from Barisal, 'dudhkhejuri'. Rice flour is boiled in coconut milk until it has a doughy texture, and then a little bit of coconut paste is added. Banana leaves are separated from their stems and then the dough is pressed and rolled out in small amounts onto the ridges of the banana leaf and fried in clarified butter or oil. They are then soaked overnight in jaggery sauce and served.

### KHULNA

Choi jhaal is a herb found in Khulna, and the roots and stem of the choi shrub have a taste very similar to wasabi. It is often used in mutton and beef dishes. A lot of fish is farmed here; seafood like crab make regular appearances in the food scene as well.

### BHOLA

The food consumed here is very similar to the other divisions, but Bhola's specialty is a curd made from buffalo's milk that tastes very close to cheese.

### BOGURA

Mahasthangarh's food is influenced heavily by the Hindu Zamindars that once ruled over this place, for which reason, they primarily eat a lot of vegetables like sajna, potatoes, khichuri. 'Alubori', (which are small sun dried dumplings made with pulses and potatoes) are also cooked with in vegetable dishes with sajna. But they also have Mughal influences and love to eat polao, korma and roast.

Bogura to this day is still considered to have the best sweet curd and it is simply known as "Bagurar doi."

One such Mughal inspired dish is 'lebu daal,' which is made by boiling masur daal and straining it, using a fine cotton cloth separating the thick liquid like cream from the pulses.

A little bit of water is then added to dilute the liquid and chilli, garlic and ginger paste is mixed into the thick concoction for flavouring. As it thickens further, hot ghee is poured in and then slices of paneer and fragrant lemons are added.

### DINAJPUR

As famous as the district is for their lychees, they do prepare one of a kind

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# Maggi

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