

They want moments with a lot of emotions, friends and family opinions about them, and how the bride and groom feel about each other to come through in the videos.

Another interesting part of modern weddings is the now "Do it yourself." It is more interactive with the guests and it looks more personalised and practical décor rather than the larger-than life structures. Rustic and minimalistic designs are also in. Couples are opting out of reception stages and going in for more table-to-table greetings.

This winter, Dhaka is getting ready again for many big fat weddings which are just getting grander by the day. Usually, one would think of the basic functions - the engagement, a sangeet, the mehndi ceremony and the wedding followed by a reception. But now, modern-day brides are delving deeper into traditional auspicious practices and bringing them back to life. Thus, the number of functions and the varied list of formalities keep growing, as do the costs and themes for décor options.

Well to be honest, these days, everything is about style; from bridal outfits to colour themes and table arrangements, everything speaks of the couple's style and likings. Wedding couples are moving towards more contemporary, tasteful elegance in place of excessive boldness, whilst maintaining the

ous and surround the main functions. Some of them are:

Family Sangeet: An evening for family performances and cocktails.

Mehndi: Afternoon brunch where the bride's hands and arms are intricately decorated with henna.

Bidai: The ceremony where the bride is bid farewell.

Reception: A dinner for family and friends of the groom.

One interesting fact on different wedding rituals-- in Romania, the bride's family pretends to kidnap her, and the groom must win her back through romantic gestures.

Growth in this segment is huge because everyone just spends and does not think of returns. Three decades ago, people hardly thought about a lavish wedding function, but that has now become a trend and a general expectation. A person spends one-fifth of the wealth accumulated in a lifetime on a wedding ceremony. It means a tremendous opportunity for event management companies/ retailers to capitalise on.

Global tastes have filtered into our clients' psyches with frequent travels abroad, and the wedding preferences are gaining new and premium tastes. Guests who come to these weddings are now better travelled, exposed to a variety of exotic cuisines, and have much more evolved palates. That makes it imperative to design an avant-

from décor to food. Modernisation is also hitting the industry with the revamping of retro drapes, minimalist silhouettes, and bold colours. There is also a growing demand for new cuisines at weddings in order to stand out from the crowd. For food, most guests have a preference for international cuisines apart from traditional spreads. Often, the menu includes international exotic fruits for the health conscious and use of exotic vegetables in the menu. The maximum footfall is in the 'live' counters. As a result, the number of options for live counters has significantly gone up.

Roasts, tandoors, chat, biryani and other food counters are well thought and designed to excel the clients' expectations. There has been a new style of preparing wedding cakes and cutting them by the bride and groom to serve them to guests. The history of wedding cakes goes all the way back to the Roman Empire. At that time the "cake" was a simple loaf of unsweetened wheat bread made with flour, water, and salt. The groom would break the loaf over the bride's head to symbolise happiness, fertility, and prosperity for the couple. The wedding guests would scramble to get crumbs from the loaf as tokens of good luck. During the middle ages, guests brought small sweet breads and stacked them up. The high stack of pastries symbolised prosperity, and the bride and groom had to kiss over the pile of "cakes" to bring them good luck in their marriage. Only recently did wedding cakes as we know them come into existence. As baking technology improved, the single-tiered plum cakes of the 1800's turned into the multi-tiered, decoratively iced and multi-flavoured culinary creations that form the wedding cakes we love today.

Through all these changes, the wedding cake remains an important part of the symbolism of the wedding ceremony. As a bride and groom cut the cake together and feed each other, they symbolise the joining of their lives and their commitment to each other. And in sharing with the guests, the bride and groom bring their friends and family into the covenant of mutual support and love.

KOOBIDEH (IRANIAN MEAT KABAB MADE FROM GROUND LAMB)

Ingredients

400g lamb mince
100g lamb fat



½ onion
1/3 tsp baking soda
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp black pepper powder
1 stick celery
½ egg
1 tbsp saffron water
1 tsp salt

For garnish-

Onion rings coated with chopped parsley

Method

Marinate lamb mince, lamb fat, onion and baking soda, celery and pass it through mincing machine thrice to get a finer consistency. Now add garlic powder, black pepper powder, egg, saffron water and mix it all thoroughly. Keep the marinade overnight and the next day put it on skewers and roast at 200 °C for 15 min.

MACAROON DOME

Equipment

Piping bag fitted with a 1cm nozzle

Baking trays

Baking paper

Electric mixer

Whisk Oven type: Fanned electric oven, pre-heated to 170°C (preferred)

OR

Gas oven, pre-heated to gas mark 3

Ingredients

125g icing sugar

110g caster sugar

125g ground almonds

90g egg whites

2 tbsp liquid food colouring (optional)

150ml double or whipping cream, whipped

Method

Line a large baking tray with baking paper, setting the baking tray aside for now.

Mix the ground almonds and icing sugar in a food processor until well combined.

Once blended, set aside.

Separate your egg whites and using an electric whisk, slowly whisk 90g of egg whites into a large bowl.

Keep whisking until peaks form when the whisk is removed.

Gently fold in the food colouring and blended ground almonds and icing sugar while keeping the mixture fluffy.

Spoon the macaroon mixture into a piping bag fitted with a round nozzle.

Pipe small circles onto the baking tray that was lined earlier with a baking paper.

Smooth down any peaks with a wet finger and tap the bottom of the baking paper to release any air bubbles.

Set aside the baking tray for 1 hour.

Once your macaroon shells are not sticky to touch, they're ready to add to the oven.

Pre-heat the oven and once heated, bake for 12-15 minutes, or until cooked through.

While baking, whip some whipped cream in a bowl. Carefully remove the macaroons from the oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Now peel from the baking tray and allow to cool further.

Sandwich the macaroons shells between some whipped cream and refrigerate for half an hour.

They will keep for a few days (if not eaten before that!)

Experiment by decorating macaroons with coconut sprinkles or sandwiched between chocolate fillings.

(You can also colour your whipped cream fillings to create unique designs.)

Make a hard board dome.

Coat it with white chocolate.

Coat one side of the macaroons in white/ milk chocolate and stick onto the dome to create a macaroon dome.

Photo courtesy: Subhabrata Maitra



traditional elements of their ceremonies and steering away from purely fresh floral displays to statement props that create a 'wow' factor.

A year back, I attended a wedding reception in Dhaka organised by one of the biggest local event management companies, and that too, for their own daughter's wedding, so naturally they went all out. I found the groom entering the venue astride an old scooter and whisk away the bride for a round and then various musical events following one another. In terms of trends, people are requesting new décor concepts and unique concepts for the bride and groom's entry. Flowers are slowly being replaced by LED lights. Stage seating is becoming more grand, while eating tables are fading away fast.

Rituals for regional weddings are numer-

garde and well-thought-out menu. A new line of thinking is in vogue that attempts to bring a small selection of dishes cooked fresh and healthy, instantly appealing to the modern palate. Favourite dishes shrunk down to bite-sized servings delight guests. At the same time, couples want to integrate their regional heritage, culinary and otherwise, into the wedding theme. The concept of brunching at weddings is winning over other options as this menu offers a mind boggling variety. Global trends are consistently being looked at for inspiration. A significant proportion of the market is getting away from traditional themes and going for corporate-style weddings. People are going for personalisation, decreasing the number of guests but increasing their per-person spend, and incorporating their personal stories and interests in everything