

My big fat deshi wedding

FROM CENTRE

They can be an exhibition, especially the 'Big Fat Deshi Wedding' types, where one spends tonnes of money on creating memories, sprinkled over a few fleeting days. Some say it's a pure waste of money or an exercise of vanity, while others vouch for the moments. Whatever it is, as long as you have a bank balance to back it up, why not spend it on sharing some of your happiest hours with the loved ones?

There's nothing inherently wrong with that. It's easy to spend money on anything, without a thought process, but that is exactly where we go wrong. If you spend some time pondering on the course of action, the end result is sometimes much better than expected. My personal logic is — if I am to spend money on an occasion, why not do it in such a way that the memories linger?

Let's go over a mini scenario.

Consider a destination wedding. If you are wondering where to in Bangladesh,

why not the Mirza Mahal, or the Tajhat Palace?

Sounds impossible? Well, pulling a few strings and knowing all the right people is the trick here.

Why travel up to North Bengal for a wedding, you may ask. Well, if a regal wedding in a regal setting is not what you are looking for, what about the sandy beaches of Cox's Bazar?

After all the positive nods, send out the cards to near and dear ones all over the world. If you think there's no hassle in disseminating cards, then you are definitely an amateur. Order your cards at least three months ahead of the programme, as it takes a lot of time to make lists, and send those out as personalised invitations.

In an all-out expensive wedding, cards are not just glittery pieces of paper. They are exotic boxes with all kind of goodies, ranging from dates, chocolates, perfumes...be as creative as you want to be.

After sorting the issue of the elaborate invitations, it's time to concentrate on other events, like the bridal shower, the holud, the mehndi, the rongkhela, and whatever else you wish to include. Typically, all these events can be merged into one, but why spoil the fun, we say.

Another major point to note is that the photographers and the videographers hired must be no less than any Hollywood entourage. They must be able to produce good quality pictures and videos where they make you and your spouse look like Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone. Anything short of that warrants taking them to court for ripping you off!

To make events interesting and not repetitive, try segregating the content. Like professional qawwali for mehndi, DJ for the holud, playing immaculate music to go along some well choreographed dance moves, or reputed professional singers render timeless romantic numbers.

There is also the matter of purchasing

that wedding trousseau, or the preparing for the dreamlike honeymoon. There's no boundary with any of these either. Whilst you can go for a Euro Tour, or the African Safari, whichever seems appealing, you can also shop from Givenchy, Chanel, Malhotra, Sabyasachi, or whoever you consider as your go-to fashion favourite.

The main idea in an all-out wedding is to make everyone happy, including yourself, only because you can. That means not being selfish, but actually more selfless — if you are getting a Chanel gown for yourself, the bridesmaid's or the besties should at least get a little something from the same couturier as your token of your appreciation.

The idea is to be specific, and materialise anything that you have wanted to do all your life. This is your one chance; that is of course, if you are not intending to renew your vows in 2019!

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Jamai khatir

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1 tsp turmeric powder
2 tsp Kashmiri red chilli powder
½ tsp garam masala powder
4 tbsp yoghurt
Salt to taste
2 tbsp fresh cream
4-5 drops kewra essence
Fresh coriander, for garnish
3-4 boiled eggs, cut into halves

Method

Soak poppy seeds, musk melon seeds, and cashew nuts in warm water for 30 minutes. Grind to make a paste.

Heat oil and ghee in a pan. Add cloves, green cardamoms and fry for a few seconds. Add onions and fry till translucent. Remove the pan from heat and let the onion mixture cool.

Now, mix in a grinder along with little water to make a smooth paste. Transfer the paste in the pan along with the seeds and the nut paste. Add little water, if required.

Cook for a minute. Add turmeric powder, Kashmiri red chilli powder, garam masala powder and salt, cook for another 3-4 minutes. Add the chicken pieces and cook on high heat for 2 minutes. Add yoghurt, half cup of water. Cover and cook the chicken for 15 minutes. Keep stirring in between.

Add the cream and cook for another 5 minutes. Add kewra essence and mix well. Garnish with fresh coriander and eggs. Serve hot with rice, naan, or paratha.

MUGHLAI BEEF FILLET DUM CURRY

This is an authentic Mughal dish with all the signature flavours. The beef yoghurt marinade ends up making rich wonderful gravy and almonds give the Mughal touch. It is especially meant for beef lovers, and perfect for post wedding feasts.

Ingredients

1kg beef, fillet
20g fresh coriander
2 tsp ground red chilli

1 tbsp hot spices
¼ cup green masala (blend coriander, mint, and green chillies)
¼ cup almonds and sesame paste
2 large onions, chopped, ½ cup yoghurt
2 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
4 tbsp ghee, 2 tbsp oil
Salt to taste

Method

In a bowl, put green masala, almonds, sesame and salt, and mix well with spoon. Then, put the beef fillet in the mixture and marinate it for 2 hours. Heat oil and ghee in a pan, add onion and ground red chillies, fry for few minutes. Now add the marinated beef fillet in it, mix well and cook for 10 minutes with the lid on. Add yoghurt, ginger-garlic paste, hot spices and salt. Mix well. Cover and cook on low heat till beef is tender. Once done, garnish with the coriander leaves and serve hot with rice, naan or paratha.

HYDERABADI SHIKAMPURI KEBAB

Ingredients

500g mutton (boneless; cut into small cubes)
½ cup chickpeas, soaked for 30 minutes
2 green cardamoms, 2 cinnamon sticks
2 tsp red chilli powder, Salt to taste
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tbsp chopped ginger
1 tbsp chopped garlic, 1 egg
Oil for frying
For the filling —
2 onions, finely minced

5 green chillies, finely minced
3 tbsp coriander leaves, finely chopped
1 cup hung curd

Method

Take a pan and add mutton, chickpeas, cardamom, cinnamon sticks, salt, red chilli powder, turmeric powder, ginger, garlic and 2 cups of water. Cook till the mutton is done and the daal is soft. Allow to cool and grind it to make a fine paste. Add egg and mix well. Set aside.

For the filling

Mix the hung curd with finely minced onions, salt, green chillies and coriander leaves. Now take a ball of the kebab paste. Flatten it between your palms like a disc, place a small filling of the hung curd. Take the edges of the disc and cover up the filling. Fry in oil till golden brown on medium heat. Serve hot.

TANDOORI POMFRET

Ingredients

2 pomfrets
2 tbsp butter
¾ cup yoghurt, 1 egg
1 tbsp ginger paste, 1 tsp garlic paste
½ tsp carom seeds
2 tbsp roasted chickpea flour
2 tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp red chilli powder
Salt to taste
¼ tsp garam masala powder
2 tbsp mustard oil

Method

For preparing this easy recipe, trim tails, fins

and discard them and wash thoroughly. Make incisions on a clean fish. Keep aside. In a bowl, add all ingredients. Adjust the amount of chickpeas flour and yoghurt to get a nice thick paste. Apply this marinade well to the fish on both sides, and keep in the fridge for at least 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180° Celsius. Grease the pan or rack. Place the fish on the grill and cook for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Serve hot, garnished with onion rings and lemon.

KASHMIRI BADAMI KHEER

Ingredients

2 litre milk, 30 almonds
¼ tsp powdered green cardamom
4 tbsp sugar, 1 pinch saffron
20 sliced and slit almonds

Method

Wash the almonds and soak them in water for 3-4 hour or overnight. Soaking is important as it not only increases the nutritional value of the nuts, but also makes it easier to cook them.

(You can also soak the almonds in milk. In this case you must keep the soaked almonds in the fridge.)

Peel to remove the outer cover, wash and grind them to a paste. Use a little milk if you feel the mixture is too tight. Now bring the milk to a boil. Allow it to simmer on low flame for 10 minutes. Add the almond and cook on low flame till milk is reduced to less than half. You must continually stir it or the milk will stick to the bottom.

Now add the powdered cardamom, sugar and reduce further by simmering on low flame for another 10 minutes. When the mixture starts to thicken, add saffron strands mixture and sliced almonds. Stir well. Remove from flame. Garnish with sliced almonds and pistachios. Serve chilled.

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

