



Living the Upper Class Life

Linia Baksh, 28, and a graduate from a reputed private university of Dhaka now works at a multinational company located at the central district of the capital. She is always on the look-out for appealing entertainment options. With Dhaka seriously lacking in that field, except for the thriving restaurant business and food joints, she looks for high class quality time at high-end food joints and the 5-star hotels.

With her recent promotion and increase in disposable income, her visits have now become more frequent.

"These places allow me to experience the world-class international feel right here, right at home. Without spending money on airfares and hotel bookings, I can simply visit the international chains within my reach and enjoy an equally fascinating time, only more frequently with people I like," said Linia.

Even two decades ago, before the big food chains started operating in the city, quality cuisine meant 5-star establishments. To keep up with the ever changing restaurant scene, the hotel chains have revamped themselves, shrugging off all senses of complacency.

The burgeoning middle class with their rising standard of living have certainly affected the urban lifestyle. Everyday life was different, even a decade ago, when people preferred to enjoy a cup of tea at home with friends, rather than dine outside in some fancy café or go for a high-end dinner at one of the posh dining options.

Fast forward 10 years, things have changed drastically. With the upswing in business and the ingress of foreign travellers into Bangladesh, the hotel industry has boomed, offering the locals the same level of world-class experience as they put forward to the outsiders.

PAN PACIFIC SONARGAON DHAKA
This hotel has been a pride of the nation for the longest time. In the golden times of the '80s and '90s when the hotel culture was not so rampant, Sonargaon was the only hotel standing tall, offering all that was fine and global. However, with the changing times and an update in the concept of finesse and hospitality, Hotel Sonargaon also had to revamp itself by changing the outlook and offering more exclusivity.

One such major change was its pool area, which has currently turned into a luscious outdoor pool, encouraging even the non-swimmers to take a dive.

You may have already heard praises for the on-site beauty and barber salon.

Rahim Chowdhury, a regular at the salon, says that the service is excellent. According to Chowdhury, even though the prices may be slightly on the expensive side, the excellent service surely makes up for any sort of shortcoming.

Hotel Sonargaon's Jharna Restaurant has always been famous for providing tasteful subcontinental dishes satisfying the appetite. Plus, there's also a separate lush green area within the hotel vicinity that's also quite a treat amongst all that is concrete.

RADISSON BLU DHAKA WATER GARDEN

Situated on seven acres of luscious gardens in the heart of Dhaka, the Radisson Blu provides a serene escape from the bustle of the city. Anybody who wants to enjoy curated lush greens and a glistening outdoor pool amidst city chaos should definitely make a trip to the celebrated 5-star hotel.

Our suggestion would be, in order to enjoy a perfect 5-star experience, one should indulge in the soothing spa, Sundaree at Radisson Blu, Dhaka and then go for the host of onsite dining options within the hotel.

A refreshing evening hangout idea with adults would be to unwind over pleasant conversations, refreshing cocktail, and world's finest Cuban cigars at the Cigar Bar and Blaze Entertainment Lounge and Bar.

Is it just sitting, talking and sipping? No, there's more! With a professional billiard set-up, one can easily spend time with old friends over snooker and good food.

THE WESTIN DHAKA

Gone are the days when people used to frequent authentic pastry shops to enjoy a bite of the scrumptious tart, cakes, quiche, or pies. Now they go to The Westin Dhaka, a 5-star in the 'tri-state' area to binge on pastries and desserts.

The Westin is also famous for offering authentic Italian food prepared by master chefs, and that's at Prego — an outdoor terrace with a spectacular view of the city providing a lively open

show-kitchen where hand-tossed pizzas and pastas are made to order.

SIX SEASONS HOTEL DHAKA

Overlooking the Gulshan Lake and park on one side and the magnificent views of Dhaka all around, Six Seasons Hotel stands tall at Gulshan 2.

The refreshing outlook of this 5-star establishment is the infinity swimming pool with a breathtakingly beautiful panorama. One idea would be to enjoy a sip of classic mocktails while standing on the far edge of the infinity pool, appreciating the beauty of a perfect sunset in Dhaka.

Six Seasons Hotel Dhaka's restaurant provides a delightful menu of Chinese Hunan, Japanese, Thai and Korean cuisines. The delectable entrées combined with the picturesque panoramic views of

of relaxation, Four Points by Sheraton also has an excellent Japanese Restaurant Panash on the rooftop; with skilled chefs artfully preparing traditional selections such as sushi, yakitori, teppanyaki and tempura.

Then there's Beast, another restaurant situated on floor 26, providing beautiful panoramic view to the city and also serving excellent contemporary cuisine all throughout the day.

Craving for Indian with friends?

Then the name Amrit should bounce your thoughts. With delicious delicacies offered this is certainly one restaurant to enjoy with friends and loved ones.

THE INTERCONTINENTAL DHAKA

Situated in the most prestigious location of the city, near to the downtown business district, famous Ramna Park

LE MÉRIDIEN DHAKA

After work, visitors can enjoy food at the poolside restaurant Olea. This particular restaurant is famous for providing cuisine that covers delicacies from the Mediterranean to Persia. The food can be enjoyed sitting beside the outdoor swimming pool or inside, sitting in the cabanas resembling a desert tent.

To add to the ambiance, there's Persian or Emirati music playing in the background, to be enjoyed with flavoured hookah.

If this does not relax someone and encourage them to put on their dancing shoes, then the scrumptious Mediterranean platters offered would certainly make them a believer of good times.

DHAKA REGENCY HOTEL & RESORT

The hotel offers multi cuisine restaurants, an authentic Thai Spa Centre, Health Club and a live entrainment Bar — everything that scream good times loudly.

HOTEL SARINA, DHAKA

Although located in a busy district, this hotel doesn't forget to provide all the amenities catering for a high-end lifestyle. The restaurants are classic, proving authentic multinational cuisine with a great ambience to go with it.

In the last decade, or perhaps the last few years, the cityscape has changed and so did our mind-set of urban living. With every passing day, Bangladesh is becoming more cosmopolitan and the city becoming a melting pot of myriad cultures and traditions.

With so many upcoming hotels/restaurant on the list, the restaurant industry seems like a thriving one and it surely points out towards a booming economy. What was once considered indulgences have now become the norm. And this is no longer limited to Dhaka. With international standard chain hotels, restaurants and resorts opening all throughout the country, influx of local tourist is increasing every day.

We can only hope that this trend goes on and we get to enjoy world class services, without having to move to another city.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Photo: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka, InterContinental Dhaka

