

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

Play hard to get or risk getting hurt. Travel for business or pleasure. Look into new philosophies. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



TAURUS
(APRIL 21-MAY 21)

Uncertainties in your life are probable. Attend seminars to expand your network. Make excellent purchases. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Don't jeopardise your health trying to please everyone. Get help to finish a project. Look into family outings. Your lucky day this week is Sunday.



CANCER
(JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Try to be reasonable. Avoid spicy food. Take care of any pressing health problems. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



LEO
(JULY 23-AUG. 22)

Residential moves will be advantageous for all concerned. Job changes are in order. Do things to your liking. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Romance will blossom at work related activities. You can expect opposition at work. Send out your resume. Your lucky day this week is Tuesday.



LIBRA
(SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

Don't fall for damaging rumours. Refuse to get involved in gossip. You should look into a healthier diet. Your lucky day this week is Thursday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Love could develop with someone from a different culture. Listen to what others are saying. Don't overload your plate. Your lucky day this week is Sunday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Socialise more with friends. You won't have to look for the action. Keep your emotions in check. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't overspend. Make decisions to avoid feeling unsettled. Spend time with your partner. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Relationships will be erratic. Take personal decisions wisely. Your dynamic, determined approach will win favors. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MARCH 20)

Business partnerships may be quite lucrative. Control your temper when dealing with supervisors. Promote your ideas. Your lucky day this week is Tuesday.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Bring in Baishakh with boundless Bangalianaa!

What is your earliest memory of Baishakh? Is it of soothing Tagore songs playing in the background, the sight of your mother adorned in her festive red and white Gorod sari, fragrant with the heady scent of Beli strings wrapped around her hair, or is it the pungent smell of Paanta Bhaat spiked with fiery, smoky Shukna Morich Pora? Most likely, it's all of them, but most vivid is the memory surrounding food. We Bengalis love to eat; it is a fact universally acknowledged, and our fondest, earliest memories are mostly tied around food. Every festival is inadvertently associated to it, and whether we admit it or not, food plays a key role in our culture, our psyche and everything else in-between!

The beginning of the Bengali calendar is a phenomenon close to every Bangali's heart. As much as we like to celebrate the start of the Roman calendar, it is our own one that truly tugs at our collective heartstrings! And this, I speak on behalf of my people, the entire nation. It isn't merely



a celebration, but one that celebrates our very being, our unique identity. সুস্বাদু (Sushwadu) to say, it warrants grandiose festivities and we never really disappoint. At the heart of this matter, all things gastronomically delightful, reign supreme. And one fit for a Bengali royalty might I add! Most households dish out an elaborate spread that is Bangali in every sense of the word. And need I remind you that it is not just a marker of our identity, but an emotion that runs deep? Food unites this nation like nothing else (Okay, maybe cricket), and for Pahela Baishakh, we return to our roots with much gusto!

So, in order to put together a meal that is so much more, setting the tone is essential. Let's begin with the basics shall we? Planning things out ahead of time is a good idea. Decide the theme you want to go with. Every dining table requires a centrepiece that sets the mood, and is the fo-



cal point of the whole setup. Ditching the French linen and lace, choose instead an organic, ethnically sourced tablecloth that speaks volumes about our culture. It could either be a basic neutral cotton one with block prints, or a muslin one with subtle hand embroidery. For placemats, go with a similar palette and material; contrasting is an option too. Aarong is a treasure trove of traditional table linens that run the whole gamut of our heritage weaves, patterns and fabrics. You could use banana leaves instead of placemats; it will lend a rustic Bangali feel to the table. With that settled, choose a centrepiece. It could be a collection of little items such as terracotta figurines,



clay pots and pans, cleverly placed on a koola with candles, a little prodip and fresh local flowers. Or single pièce de résistance like an ektara or dhol, placed on a small peeri for height, decorated further with flowers, candles and such. Choose items that have a decidedly Bangali feel and add to the overall ambience.

Now, on to the food. Start off with a welcome drink. 'Kacha aam er shorbot' is a crowd pleaser, as is tetul er shorbot. Serve it in a terracotta jug or a brass one. A bhorta platter is necessary; it isn't really Pahela Baishakh without one! Include some unusual ones such as ghoinna shutki, narikel as well the basics. Fish is manda-

