

NEWS FLASH

Cookups: A story of homecooking

Casting a spin on home-dining to revolutionise it, Cookups is an online, homemade food delivery system that seeks to introduce thoughtful dining onto our platters. An initiative of Misha Ali and Namira Hossain, Cookups aims to shine light on home cooks with exceptional recipes, fit for any fine-dining restaurant, but in reality, are only passed down in the confines of personal kitchens and family tables.

Cookups serves comfort foods like alu chaat with chutney, mutton haleem and ilish polao, hot to your plates. Traditional cravings of coconut sambol, lemongrass chicken, and pata rice can be satiated and coupled with gulps of kalojams as the perfect dessert. Even catering to a small brunch or party of 20-40 can be handed over to Cookups to achieve happy guests sure to rave about the food!

Although the app boasts about 1500 certified and registered cooks, once downloaded, Cookups will serve about 200 online cooks ready to cater to your food needs, with recipes that are sure to remind you either of your grandmother's kitchen or an exotic, foreign restaurant.

Speaking of food needs, Cookups is not to be confused with the host of food delivery apps sweeping across Dhaka. Here, the primary difference is the simple fact that Cookups brings you authentic homemade food with freshly-sourced ingredients straight from the kitchens of its registered cooks.

Seeking mere house cooks worthy of chef's hats, Cookups is open to anyone with a true passion for cooking. For you to show your salt's worth on the other side of the stove as a certified Cookups cook, all you need to remember is quality being above everything else.

"We have a really low acceptance rate when it comes to taking on home



cooks because they need to meet certain standards in order to be involved with us. They need to pass kitchen inspection tests where we check hygienic conditions of the kitchen and inquire if they have proper trash disposal, amongst other things. After that, we also have taste tests where the cook is given approval on a particular dish they have prepared. Only after the approval can the option of that meal be put up on the app for our diners to order. We also ensure

that real pictures of the food as prepared by our home cooks are used instead of ones taken from glossy food magazines," elaborates Nahita Nishmin, COO of Cookups.



Once you have been given the green light, using your own kitchen to champion your skills as a chef and feeding hundreds if not thousands of diners all over the city is just a stove away. And this culinary independence is exactly what has given many cooks at Cookups a sense of empowerment.

"Being a mother of six and a practitioner of purdah that restricts me from a public life, food has always been a passion. I want the food I prepare to speak for itself and channel my talent in a useful way," says Rezwana Kabir. Being associated with Cookups has introduced Kabir to financial independence through homemade chocolates and shahi pakki biryanis.

Alpana Habib, author of an award-winning cookbook shares her take on being at Cookups, saying, "Women who cook for their families every day without much appreciation now deserve a platform where people of all walks of life can enjoy their food. And this is exactly what Cookups gives them."

Cookups is the definition of culinary empowerment through kitchens. Whether you are a mother of two desiring recognition for your cookery or a stay-at-home dad taking equal control of the kitchen, your passion for cooking could be the answer to hungry diners looking for a taste of home on their platters. And, if you are one of those diners, a plethora of mouth-watering goodness now lies at your fingertips with Cookups!

By Ramisa Haque

Photo courtesy: Cookups

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