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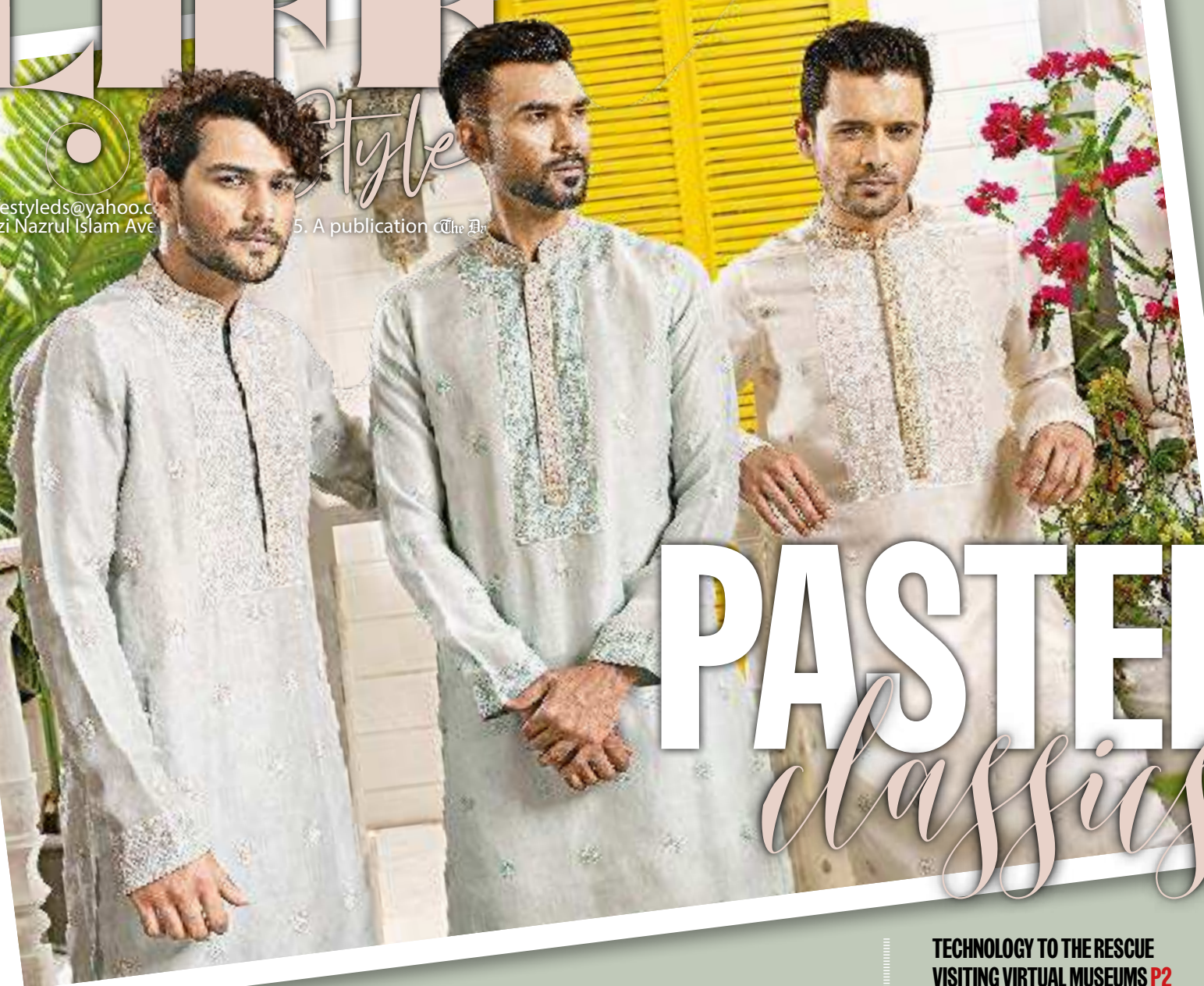
Star

LIFE

Style

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PASTEL classics

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**ঘরে থাকুন
নিরাপদে থাকুন**

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Museum hopping online

In times of self-isolation, every activity we would find worthwhile — watching films/series to playing video games to reading books to even testing up some new savoury recipes — seems to become tiresome at one point. No matter how many films or books we lap up, we constantly badger for the world outside the confines of our home.

As the pandemic races on and puts us in a quagmire of uncertainty, with governments shutting off borders and most importantly, travelling both within and across borders, we are generally shut off from the world and its various overlapping mysteries and histories around us. However, even if physical travel is restricted on conspicuous terms, virtual travel can be an attractive option.

With one click of the mouse, we are able



to indulge in the grandeur of civilisations that have saturated our planet since time immemorial as museums throughout the world have begun to allow virtual tours. With virtual exhibitions and resources open to us, we are free to explore the world from the comforts of our couch via computers or smartphones.

GLOBETROTTER AROUND THE WORLD

Virtual tours and exhibitions bring the world to us during the quarantine period. While it is true that some tours and exhibitions were already available online or on their respective websites, the



recent lockdown triggered by Covid-19 has made many more landmarks, museums, and galleries accessible online. Most of the exhibitions are digitised in collaboration with Google Arts and Culture, helping as our virtual tour guide in this journey.

The tour around history usually starts with one's own backyard, as numerous world-renowned museums have opened up virtual tours in neighbouring India with the famed Victoria Memorial Hall museum and Indian Museum, both based in Kolkata offering beguiling voyages through history and time. Mesmerise yourself with intricate artistic designs created by the mutual intermingling of cultural synthesis. Exhibitions are presented with slides and punctuated with descriptions and explanations. Travel through the annals of history from the pre-colonial to colonial period, presenting a flux of changes in the lived experiences of people as presented in lithographs and portraits.

Virtual independent exhibitions have also sprung up with collaborations from

different museums around the world to give us the best taste of the intersection of fashion, art, and history. One such project is the We Wear Project, a portal of discovery of the stories behind the various attires worn throughout history. With more museums roped in during this quarantine, it offers a fascinating encounter with the world of fashion and design as we never experienced before.

Encompass borders, continents, and cultures as you seek the treasure-troves of the world. The famed Louvre Museum in Paris, France, allows cruising through its majestic halls and corridors and its tempting sections such as the ancient antiquities and grande gallery. As the lockdowns have gotten more intense, famed art museums such as the National Gallery of Art in Washington have had its renowned art works viewable from its gallery on the Google Arts and Culture platform to provide a scope for art lovers and enthusiasts to plunge deep into the world of art, accompanied by curator commentary and helpful resources adding

another layer of acumen. From works by Da Vinci to quirky rebellious art styles to pop culture derived art, one can simply have a good day in art paradise.

ONE CLICK AWAY

While many of us might miss strolling inside the museums themselves and the quiet murmurs and soft giggles, the virtual museums are a comforting feel, acting as a vicarious window to the outside world.

Many of our little ones find staying indoors a rather painful experience, with no glint of hope of seeing their friends and running outside. With the opening of scientific museums online such as the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, children can peer deep into the wonders of history. With dinosaurs, fossils, artifacts and mummies, this is an educative and transformative tool for the child's insights about the evolution of the world around us.

We have all had moments of the silent awe when seeing a hypnotic multi-layered piece of work, which we would have loved to see upfront. Many renowned and well-known museums throughout the world, from the British Museum to the Dalí Theatre and Museum to Sultan Abdülhamid II's Yıldız Photography Collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have opened up, granting access to the rarest and richest collections of visual archives on digital media to serve as a reminder to not give up hope in the darkest of times, and to keep on striving to do art, and seeking inspiration from art itself.

Be it sitting in your pyjamas coiled up in the room, or having a small fun family activity, the museum is always open for your own viewing, acting as a constant symbol of our entrenched connection with the world outside.

By Israr Hasan
Photo: Collected

us on /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় অভিজাত্য মানেই

স্যান্ডালিনা

সোপ

রূপচর্চায় অভিজাত্য...

RAMADAN PLANNER

Week 2

Getting into the flow

PRODUCTIVITY AROUND THE HOME

With roughly two-third of Ramadan ahead, it's the perfect time to do some essential tidying up and have a look at the things you have or need to buy. There is nothing worse than leaving things for the last week and ending up with a hodgepodge of activities.

DE-cluttering

Half-empty, almost empty bottles and containers of various things — these can be found in a number of places around the home. Shampoo bottles, toothpaste tubes, eyeliner tubes, cracked eye shadow palettes, bottles of sauces lurking in the



refrigerator; these are all just waiting to be tossed out.

Collect every item like these, put them in one visible place, use up the remaining part if possible, and most importantly, throw them out. Some are sure to be way past their expiry date, so be sure to throw those out beforehand in case you do not mistakenly use them.

Inventory

For a worry-free Eid, this is just the right time to list out various essentials. This way, even if something is overlooked, there will be plenty of time to fix it. Head to your kitchen, and start taking notes. Once you clearly see everything you have, you will know what you need. Make the best use of online grocery websites to get your products delivered. Keep in mind that online orders may take longer than usual given the circumstances. One tip would be to break down the list of products into two or three separate orders.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTFULNESS

Understanding one's spiritual connection and engaging more deeply with faith and spirituality through personal reflection is one of Ramadan's many teachings. With hard times, it is more important than ever to engage in thoughtful activities.

One call away

Just about any one would want a week off from the daily grind, but not the way it is happening right now. This time and distancing have clearly marked how much we need to socialise with our near and dear ones. Make the best use of your phone and calling apps, call up friends and relatives, colleagues, and acquaintances. It's been repeated over and over again, but technology has made basic communication easier than ever. A simple gesture like this has immeasurable positive effects on the mind.



THE WEEKLY CHECKPOINT

A lot of us target certain lists of supplications we want to complete in this holy month, or want to complete reading the Qur'an in Ramadan. This is a good time to check on the progress. Make sure that you are not involved in a competitive mentality or just engaged in completing a goal of reciting suras without paying mind to the meaning and the inherent teaching.

CHILDREN AND RAMADAN

For quite a number of youngsters, this may be the first time they are fasting. It is a very special milestone for them, but it can also be a little difficult when they are young.

Make sure they get enough sleep and go to bed early. This will make waking up for sehri easier. Letting them sleep a little late in the morning can also help.

Having a large meal in an unusual time can be particularly difficult for first timers, especially with almost 12 hours of fasting ahead. Parents need to make sure that their children have high energy, filling items which are essential to go through the day. For iftar, include simple food items like dates, milk, fruits, a weekly treat or two, but nothing heavy. Later on, for supper, keep a few of their favourite dishes on the menu. As children take this as an opportunity to become more involved in an 'adult activity,' make the best use of it.

CHANGE FOR GOOD

More often than not, there remains one or two sour patches that make the Eid day bad. It is evident that Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated in a limited manner this year. So do think ahead to ensure that you are able to celebrate with an unburdened mind. Try to apply this for other situations you know you have control over.

By Anisha Hassan and Iris Farina

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



SPECIAL FEATURE



An Extra Special Mother's Day

Mothers are the epitome of love. So, celebrating 'them' for a just a day seemed illogical, but then a friend explained: there is nothing wrong in making her feel extra special!

And finally, I was on board.

Since then, I have been celebrating the day religiously every year. And you know what? My mom secretly enjoys the treat, or so I have been told by my 'informant,' aka her help.

So, every year, on 10 May, I get her a bouquet with a combination of white and pink roses, her 'favourites,' and certainly a rare find in Dhaka.

One year, I had difficulty sourcing white roses, but then, my florist had an interesting idea of dipping the pink roses in white colours and somehow churning out a fresh set in a magnificent ivory hue. Of course, I did come clean to mom regarding the dubious measures, and if anything, she might have been prouder because I went to such lengths to make her feel special!

Are flowers 'all' that I give her? No!

Apart from the extra love from her grandchildren, whom I tirelessly teach to sing a song for her, she also gets a special card from our family, including my husband.

This one gets her emotional and teary, and to be honest, it does it for me too!

This year however, things are different. The pandemic put a stop to our customary practices and forced me to think of something different.

I can't say if that is actually a good or a bad thing.

Since she stays far away from where we live, and social distancing bars us from meeting, mother's day would be different, but not forgotten!

And so, we plan on cooking something special for 'mommy dearest' as a family, and send it to her on the day. Maybe a chocolate cake from me and my sons, and chicken alfredo pasta from the hubby. And of course, the card of 'gratitude' still goes.

That's my family's plan for Mother's Day 2020.

I hope that each and every one of you would be able to celebrate it to the fullest, despite the inconveniences that Covid-19 throws at us.

People who are staying with their moms — 'people who I secretly envy,' cook up something special for mom; something that screams love and gratefulness.

If none of these are possible, then at least a special video call, or an extra special hug is definitely due. For where would we be in this world without these wonderful ladies giving us the gift of life?

To those whose moms are resting in heaven, my special heartfelt hug, but I'd suggest this day can also be special for you too, if you dedicate an extra special time to pray for her — it is Ramadan and the timing couldn't be better.

By A Thankful Daughter

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Etiquettes of re-gifting

A gift is a unique way to deliver love. Spending time choosing the appropriate souvenir, carefully wrapping it, and attaching a tag with a note that brings joy to the receiver is the package of love we term as a gift. It shows how much someone adores you.

However, despite all these efforts, some gifts just disappoint us. Surely, all of us have found ourselves in a situation where we faked excitement and forced a smile upon receiving a gift because it was far away from our liking. These gifts can be termed as more of a burden than a present. Neither can you return it, nor can you get rid of it. Fortunately, something you can do is pass it on to someone else, or re-gift it.

At first, this idea seems amoral, but it does not have to be. Think about it — why not pass on something you have kept aside and will likely never use to someone who can make good use of it? If it ends up being worthy of usage,



there is nothing wrong with it. The purpose of gifting is to show you care and if the same purpose can be attained through re-gifting, there is nothing

wrong about this exchange.

Other than that, you can get creative with the gift! Modify it or revamp it in order to enhance it into a better version of its original self. Speaking from personal experience, I once received a very tacky hairclip made out of artificial seashells and could not fathom what to do with it. So, I detached the shells and used it to make a miniature model of a beach using sand, pearls, stars, and those seashells in a round fish tank. Upon receiving, my friend only loved it, but was delighted to see the creativity and effort behind creating this unique gift.

However, you must keep in mind

that not everyone will be appreciative of receiving a 'second-hand gift.' Some may even accuse you of being a miser, while others may take it personally, which will tarnish both their self-esteem and your well-built relationship. Thus, it is necessary to assess the reaction of a person beforehand to avoid adverse situations as such.

Nonetheless, if one finds it useful and attractive, there is no chance of being cross about re-gifting. If you can explain the thoughts and motives behind re-gifting a certain item well enough, you can avoid any uncomfortable reaction. Some things at first sight make you think, "Oh! This would be perfect for him/her!"

Whether you buy it personally or receive it from an alternate source, whatever the case maybe, that is the essence and purpose of gifting.

All this being said, to maintain appropriate etiquette, it is always wise to mention that the material is a gift passed on in the best way possible. It is not a crime, but some people are sensitive regarding this. Besides, storing it carefully, rewrapping it, and adding a personal note mitigates any negative representation and portrays the pleasant intention behind re-gifting.

By Fariha Amber
Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Take the first step in order to become friends. Avoid travelling. Don't evade issues. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Do what it takes to restore your relationship. Don't overspend. Your moods are likely to fluctuate. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Plan thoroughly to make financial gains. Your family members need your attention. Make time to contact loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Children will be difficult to manage. Turn things around. Relax and have a plan of attack. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Focus on forming business partnerships. Keep your options open. Bring work home if needed. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Uncertainty about your relationship is prevalent. Misunderstandings can happen. Plan a trip later in the year. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Be earnest in your requests. Social interaction can be satisfying. Keep your finances in check. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Focus on moneymaking ventures. Stress could create stomach problems. Try to be reasonable. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Work on your own. Find ways to gain knowledge. Communicate clearly with relatives. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Avoid talking about private matters. Your skills will bring about increased self-esteem. Sidestep any troubling situation. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Make changes to your home. Get involved in creative projects. Discuss your intentions with loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Put your place in order. Your talent will be recognised. Elaborate on your ideas. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

LS EDITOR'S NOTE

Cool meals for summer fasts

Similarly, watermelon with mildly salty feta cheese sprinkled with Vietnamese basil is a match made in heaven. Caesar salad, coleslaw, shrimp cocktail, crunchy vegetables wraps in rice paper rolls are all dainty comforting snacks for summer iftars.

As iftar times are awfully close to dinner, opting for a Buddha bowls or hippie bowls meal is a great choice. It is made of several



kinds of food served cold. Essentially, you just throw in a hodgepodge of vegetables, healthy grains, and protein that is just plain good for you. If possible, get creative with your ingredients by adding crunchy vegetables, sautéed leafy ones, nuts, and seeds. While these are a great option for vegetarians, adding a few slices of poached chicken, steamed fish, beef cold cuts, complemented with either roasted potatoes or potato salads are as filling as any fried traditional iftar items for meat lovers.



Buddha bowl can have different recipes or ingredients depending upon one's choice, but mainly, it is a vegetarian meal, served on a single bowl or high-rimmed plate, consisting of small portions of several foods, served cold. These may include whole grains such as quinoa or brown rice, plant proteins such as chickpeas, lentils or tofu, and vegetables,

but meat is a welcome addition for those who are not vegetarians. Named for its big, round Buddha belly shape, a "Buddha bowl" is a one-dish cold meal, loaded with a tonne of different kinds of food that can be filling, right up till sehri.

Our 3 AM meal should also be light, like oats, rice porridge with chicken, flat rice with yoghurt, or cereals. A long glass of banana shake laced with vanilla ice cream is also fun, and while that is my second favourite sehri item, my personal favourite is chicken pâté, spread generously on light crackers and a cup of strong orange pekoe. Pâté, which is a mixture of ground meat and fat, minced into a spreadable paste, is most commonly made out of liver.

There are literally endless combinations of other base ingredients — vegetables, herbs, spices, other meats can all be candidates for this mixture. It is also easy to make; I make mine with poached chicken breast, flavoured with a slight hint of ginger and garlic paste, a dash of olive oil and seasoned with salt and pepper.

After cutting the poached chicken in



chunks, I put them in the blender with a clove of fresh garlic, few sprigs of mint or coriander or sweet basil or whatever herb is handy, sliced green chilli for a little heat and blend them all. It is a great spread on crackers or bruschetta.

While these are definitely unconventional iftar and sehri items, amping up your everyday menu and recipes with a little innovative touch is no doubt exciting. Cooking is an art, and no art can survive without creative twists. So, try sauces, spreads and salads, the wide array of cold foods, and go easy on fried heavy stuff. And while you are doing that, read about our in-depth story on the food industry.

— RBR

**Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Food and styling: RBR**

A tropical summer iftar necessitates cold food; food that would go easy on your stomach and refresh your palate. After all, the long hours of fasting leaves us exhausted and dehydrated, and anything invigorating and energising as a bowl of thinly sliced cucumber with freshly made mozzarella or feta cheese is welcome. This light salad, if you add a dash of lime juice with a hint of green chilli and toss in some fresh mint leaves, becomes an uber chic iftar item, replacing your regular cucumber cuts.



Restaurant business *and* PANDEMIC



The easily observable fact that during iftar hours, most restaurants in Dhaka have around 100 percent occupancy, says a lot about the business opportunities of the culinary industry during Ramadan. But this year, the scene has completely flipped, with most restaurants shut or empty, and people stuck inside their homes, often resorting to posting online about the favourite platters and deals they miss from Ramadans past.

Star
LIFE Style



The ongoing pandemic and lockdown have affected all sectors of the economy, including the restaurant industry. The otherwise busiest month of the year has turned out to be the most hard-hitting, especially in terms of lost projected revenues.

How is this sector coping? We decided to ask some insiders.



EERIE, EMPTY AND UNSETTLING

Usually, there is a sense of celebratory urgency — an air of festivity — around town during iftar.

There is perhaps no better illustration of this than the sights and sounds of Old Dhaka, from the time of iftar to the last hour of the night for sehri.

But things are obviously different this year. Abed Ali Khan, Vice Principal of Old Dhaka International School who is from Kayetuly, speaks of the bleak situation. "Ramadan has always been a time when not just Muslims, but both Muslims and non-Muslims alike relish the many culinary delights that Old Dhaka offers. But this year, the otherwise teeming streets are empty; creating an eerie atmosphere."

There is also the worry about the hundreds of tiny iftar businesses that spring up throughout Dhaka. In a corner of an alley, for example, a small table is set up a few hours prior to iftar and typical iftar items are laid out on the table for sale. Such businesses, which are rather ubiquitous during Ramadan, operate on a relatively small scale.

Many of these pop-ups are run by people with limited income. Some of them run it,



simply with the aim of earning extra during the month so that they can have a decent Eid celebration.

Not only that, roadside tea-stalls all over Dhaka have been greatly affected.

Back to Old Dhaka, Khan says that being a resident, he misses the buzz and the community feeling. "No one can attend



the late-night prayers at the mosques nowadays. In other years, street vendors selling *maatha* and what not are seen busy catering to the crowds coming in for the congregations."

According to a recent notice issued by Dhaka Metropolitan Police on its website, showcasing and selling iftar items on the footpaths is not allowed.

The same notice, which has come in the context of the ongoing pandemic and lockdown, informs that restaurants are allowed to prepare and sell iftar items as takeaways, but dine-in is not allowed.

"Allowing takeaways may be helpful to a certain extent. However, I am not very hopeful since a lot of potential customers are still unwilling to take the risk of coming out of the house. There is also a concern among customers regarding safety and handling of food, given the circumstances," owner of a prominent biryani place in Old Dhaka said.

Preferring anonymity, he added, "Many restaurant owners in Old Dhaka are not generally keen to be on the online delivery apps; there is a question of feasibility and practicality for some, and a lack of basic awareness of the technology for others."

Meanwhile, restaurants, being businesses, had to make that call about what to do with their employees in this harsh reality. "Letting go of employees in our sector actually started happening a few days prior to the lockdown, sensing what was to come," says a veteran restaurateur anonymously. "But most of these workers have not been outright fired; many got leave-without-pay, many were compensated. And many workers have been called back again, to facilitate for takeaways."

A sense of uncertainty looms over all stakeholders, from owners to employees, and customers, to a certain extent.

EMERGENCE OF CLOUD KITCHEN

Three friends, with restaurants at a prominent space in Dhanmondi, faced major dilemma when the lockdown was announced on 26 March, as their dine-in customer flow was eliminated to nothing overnight. "It was one of the scariest experiences of my life," said one of the owners, wishing to remain anonymous.

Waiting for the pandemic to soon be over, all three friends, crossed the two-week quarantine period, 'just waiting it out!'

"Meanwhile, some of our staff left for their hometowns, while the rest stayed back, but we had to pay all of their wages, and the expenses were piling up, with zero income in the backdrop," the entrepreneur said.

To survive the pandemic, three of them got together to partner a new concept of a cloud kitchen, an online restaurant, to attract patrons who otherwise preferred to dine-in, under normal circumstances.

"Since our customers could no longer come to us, we decided to go to them, to sustain through the pandemic, pay wages and utility bills," remarked the entrepreneur.

The concept of a cloud kitchen, already popular in many developed countries, was clear and concise. "We initiated service from the first day of Ramadan. Currently, we only have a set iftar menu, which will be elaborated once the concept gets traction. Our team in the kitchen strictly follows precautionary measures to keep the food healthy, safe and clean. Our delivery teams follow a similar protocol. This is for the current times; in the future, we have plans to take the concept forward, making it bigger and better," the restaurateur said, looking to a better tomorrow, saying "The future is online."

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

When every restaurant in the city was closing down, Mehreen Mansur stayed afloat with both her brands, Horse and Horse Patisserie and Sushi Samurai; she



credits 'adaptability' as her secret weapon.

"The effects of Covid-19 were first felt in the restaurant sector and this was long before the lockdown, sometime between mid-January and early February. Travellers stopped flying in and out of Bangladesh, causing a major interruption to the high-end dine-in facilities. Business was interrupted," Mansur elaborated.

However, residents of the capital still frequented the restaurants, revealing an interesting statistic — dine-in for one of her restaurants, Horse and Horse Patisserie, actually increased for a duration.

"Maybe it was comfort that they were looking for! A way to stay away from the panic and the information overload; our fuchkas, cakes and latte served as comfort food to calm down the nerves. But of course, that wasn't long-lived," Mansur added.

The strategies changed as the government introduced a total lockdown. "It was a scary decision-making moment for me," she said.

"All expats were being called back to their countries, and being a US citizen, I really didn't know what to make of the announcement. But I decided to stay back, against all odds, because I had to take care of my employees, who depended largely on my restaurants for their living and welfare," she added.

And maybe, that precise decision to stay back and her willingness to remain steadfast through uncertainty gave her a unique strength to endure the blow.

"And my struggle against the obstacles began! Half of my staff went back to their villages and half remained out of their own volition. I developed a system to pay all of their wages, in full, with an extra service charge, to those who stayed back to fight against the pandemic alongside me."

Mansur thanked the landlord of one of her restaurants for being cooperative, allowing a significant reduction in rent for the time being. "While I have to pay in full for the other one, I do understand their constraints, as well. Nevertheless, I had to pick up the pace of the business to stay sustainable and things worked out well for us, ultimately. When the entire restaurant scenario was shut down, we were the only ones running in full form and delivering food to the customers," revealed the restaurateur.

She also spoke of a few of the major barriers that business operations are facing for the crisis; such as the delivery team being harassed on the roads by law enforcement, to being reported to the police for keeping her restaurants open.

Elegance at the House of Ahmed

The House of Ahmed, in the time-span of eight months, has become the talk of the town with their premium yet intricate ethnic-wear pieces. Due to using locally sourced materials as well as using the skills and craftsmanship of local artisans and 'karigars', the general public seems to love House of Ahmed even more, as they no longer have to buy premium ethnic-wear pieces, including bridal couture from abroad. The latest Eid collection has been trending for their uniqueness, ever since its release.

The men's Eid panjabi collection 2020, showcases mainly five collections; the white panjabi collection, the blue panjabi collection, the premium Muslin line-up, and last but not least, men's Kabli sets. To name a few, some of the most premium high-quality fabrics used in the collection are luthai, supima cotton, and Muslin.

All of the designs were made and produced several months prior to Eid, by House of Ahmed's founder and commercial director, Ahmed Tuhin Reza, as well as his wife and co-founder Tanzila Elma. Ahmed Tuhin Reza has always had a knack to find one-of-a kind designs to incorporate into



we had to come up with alternative ways to produce and deliver by ensuring the safety of our employees and customers."

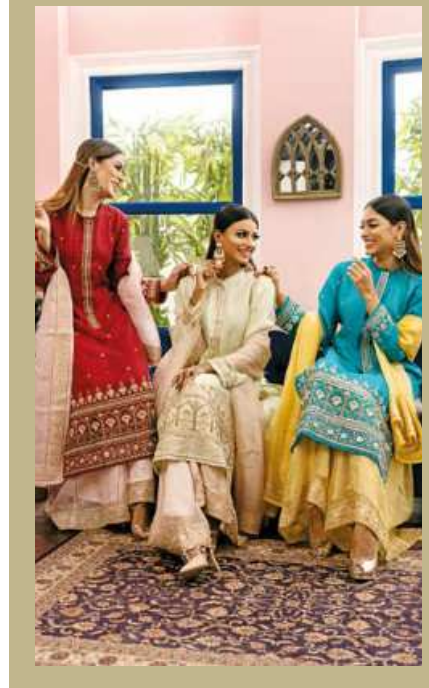
As for the ladies, the women's ethnic wear pieces for Eid Collection 2020, at House of Ahmed, revolve around the theme of intense zardosi work and heavy dupattas, also inspired by Islamic architectural designs.

Their women's white handloom collection, black premium raw-silk collection and muslin line-up are nothing short of radiating elegance and the aura of



the men's line. This year, the theme for the men's collection was to incorporate summer vibes and the zardosi detailing and embroidery for the panjabis centralised around Islamic architectural structures.

Reza, during conversation, mentions, "We had major plans for Eid, as we put a lot of hard work and effort along with our dedicated craftsmen, and we felt this is our best Eid collection yet, however due to this unfortunate Covid-19 pandemic that grasped everyone abruptly and globally,



royalty for Eid to come. They also alternate and have created a wide variety of kameez's with zardosi work in palettes of pastels. Their core fabrics for Eid being premium raw-silk, Muslin, and handloom cotton.

Ahmed said during the conversation, "I really wanted to highlight the juxtaposition of contrasting colours for the women's Eid line and bring out more of the heavy zardosi detailing. The dupattas are the highlight for most of my atelier pieces for the Women's Eid Collection 2020. Each dupatta has had several man hours put into its creation."

As the women's line has a lot of intense zardosi detailing, they were the most time-consuming to produce for Eid by House of Ahmed. Several man-hours have gone into producing their women's pieces very delicately, to produce nothing short of the best.

The House of Ahmed has indeed started practicing certain policies to deal with this pandemic, which are very commendable and an example for retail companies suffering all around. They have first and foremost introduced, "Store Appointment" which has the sole purpose to allow you to book appointments at the store. During your time slot where only you and two of your family members or friends will be allowed to view and purchase for a certain period of time where no other customers shall be entertained.

They are also offering "Home Appointments", where a tailor and delivery man will be available to come to your house at the appointed time with a maximum of 200 pieces of Men's/Female's ethnic wear. They will be sanitised and will be following every Covid-19 precautions and protocols for your safety and you can order from the sanctity of your own home. Ans last but not least, they are also doing "Home Delivery" where your orders along with measurements are placed online and will also be delivered using our delivery team who will be following Covid-19's safety precautions and protocols.

By Troyee Chowdhury
Content provided by House of Ahmed
Photo Courtesy: House of Ahmed

Distance shopping

Getting ready for Eid

One of the best ways of combating Covid-19 is by practicing social distancing. Such times have seen a boost in online shopping, encouraging people to resort to the internet to make sure they can shop while avoiding the risk of coming in contact with crowd.

Even though these are difficult times, our optimistic selves want to believe that we will be able to fight out of this adversity and celebrate our festivities with utmost happiness.

Gorur Ghash

How can a livestock feed brand help us with our Eid wear you must wonder? Well, amazingly, they are in fact a fashion house. Gorur Ghash is an interesting amalgamation of humour and fashion. While their advertisements are a dose of freshness and chuckle, their collection is equally tasteful.

Gorur Ghash essentially focuses on casual and western wear and brings in a very niche collection of ethnic wear which they call 'Rare Ghash.' You can find panjabis, which are a major throwback to the classic cut with clean designs matched with stylish, metal buttons.

Price: Tk 1500-1800

Illiyeen

Illiyeen is sure to give you a premium shopping experience even from home. They specialise in ethnic wear, bringing in panjabis in four tiers — Premium, Luxury, Platinum, and Sahara — all of these are sure to meet your needs.

Their website, ilyn.global puts forth their entire collection in a way that you can navigate with convenience and can find your way to exactly the style and cut you want. In addition to the plethora of panjabis they have to offer, Illiyeen has a wide range of footwear, consisting of loafers and slides to complement your panjabis. Putting together a diverse collection is easy but doing so with suave and finesse is what makes you great.

Panjabi: Tk 2950 – 6450

Footwear: Tk 1950 – 3750

Gentleman's Wardrobe

Gentleman's Wardrobe's label, Nawab, has a well curated collection of panjabis. Nawab aims for excellence. Their kurtas and Kablis are crafted with summer friendly fabrics which are sure to scream dapper and elegance.

For those who are willing to take it up a notch can opt for their panjabis or Kablis with their waistcoats, timeless statement pieces recommended by fashionistas, which can give your overall look a new dimension.

Panjabi: Tk 2200 - 3750

Waistcoat: Tk 2500

Footwear: Tk 2500

House of Ahmed

House of Ahmed is an exquisite designer offering you the best of the best. Their detailed handiwork and stitching uphold Bangladeshi traditions with their Jamdani and Muslin pieces. Their zardozi work testifies for their attention to detail and their artisanship.

House of Ahmed's high-end panjabis are the epitome of excellence, offering premium fabrics in an array of striking colours that are bound to brighten your day and uplift your spirit.

Price: BDT 6500 - 10000

By Ali Sakhi Khan

DISCLAIMER: Due to the prevailing lockdown for COVID-19 prices, availability, and delivery options may vary.



LS PICK

Panjabi with a twist

The panjabi — a timeless and traditional attire for any occasion, is an embodiment of the Bengali culture. Just as the sari is close to any woman's heart, the panjabi bears the same essence for men. Be it for a casual day out with friends and family, or for a special event, the panjabi is always a safe option and is the go-to comfort outfit for men of all ages.

Even though the time-honoured attire appears to be drab and dull on its own sometimes, it can be accessorised with a few simple embellishments. These additional accessories elevate the simple panjabi to give it a more extravagant and elegant look, while maintaining its cultural integrity.

On its own, a panjabi can look homespun and too simple, especially for formal events. Wearing a classy waistcoat or vest over a panjabi can elevate the ensemble. A sleeveless upper-body garment not only adds



rubies, diamonds, and pearls it was mainly a show of status and wealth and mostly reserved for women. As time progressed, the brooch developed into a more stylish and elegant jewellery appealing to both men and women.

Brooches for men can be found in diverse, elegant and simple patterns. Some brooches have chains attached to add a little extra glint. Such an adornment does not overwhelm the panjabi, but because of the sophistication and simplicity it brings, redefines the overall look to give a more graceful, artistic, and urban demeanour.

To pair the panjabi, a pair of well-fitted pants is always necessary. However, instead of sticking to the usual jeans or shalwar, opting for a pair of churidar would give a more chivalrous and courteous appearance. If one is uncomfortable with well-fitted pants, there are always dhoti shalwars for a nonchalant and breezy vibe.

As for shoes, nagras are classics to complement any panjabi getup. Be it a chic leather pair or a voguish bejewelled one with lace and other shimmers, a narrow footwear with a pointy end is a must to bring the entire look together.

A variety of scarves and shawls or a traditional gamucha, watches or bracelets, rings, headpieces, sunglasses for sunny days and other small ornaments hold the potential to uplift an orthodox piece of clothing.

The panjabi has undergone multiple alterations throughout the years. Despite that, it's true essence as a favourite and traditional Bengali attire remains intact at its core. The ornaments only exist to highlight the simplicity and elegance. The heritage and cultural trademarks added with a modern and contemporary twist, makes one feel close to home and look debonair at the same time.

By Puja Sarkar

Photo Courtesy: House of Ahmed



dimension to the look but also adds elegance and sophistication. The vest may be chic black or dark maroon, a vibrant gold or blue or any other colour

to complement the panjabi.

The traditional vest comes in a wide range of designs and patterns. Starting from solid colours to floral designs to bejewelled patterns, these vests and waistcoats come in diverse motifs. For the extra 'desi' Prince Charming flare, a pocket square or a handkerchief could fit perfectly in the vest pocket!

Similar to the vest, necklaces can also be worn to fancy-up a panjabi for a more grandeur look. To be more specific, pearl necklaces add a certain elegance and splendour, revamping the entire outfit, especially for weddings or during celebratory events, where a little touch of shine adds to the festive aura.

For anyone wanting a more subtle look, other necklaces like heavy gold chains, pendants and such can also be paired. It all comes down to what looks best with the panjabi and what kind of appearance one hopes to achieve.

Brooches are one of the oldest forms of body adornment, making its first appearance during the 5th century in England. Bejewelled with

Restaurant business and a pandemic

FROM CENTRE

"But I didn't give up. Then, there were building owners complaining about our riders (food delivery men) coming in and out of the kitchen, throughout the day and so much more. But we managed through all that and more, and developed a concrete system that is currently acceptable by all," Mansur said.

Today, when things are getting slightly better in the restaurant sector, Mansur and both her restaurants, are already well experienced.

"Adaptability is the key and maybe, just maybe, this will help us pull through the pandemic," Mansur hoped.

DELIVERY DILEMMA

Food delivery and online purchases of provisions are like parallel lines. Both have to exist together in harmony for businesses to carry on. While in Bangladesh, online delivery of 'anything' is a relatively new concept; it is gaining traction. We decided to speak to Ambareen Reza, CEO of Foodpanda Bangladesh, to explain the situation from the other side.

"We are trying our best to continue business as usual in the current scenario. There are challenges — we are observing some restaurant closures and slight dips in supply in metros, but it is not alarming," said Reza.

Inquired about the delivery staff and their willingness to work through the pandemic, she seemed positive. "At a time like this, we have been proactively reaching out to riders on preventive measures for Covid-19; providing the entire fleet of riders across Bangladesh with facemasks and hand sanitisers; we are also in the process of procuring PPE as mandated by the government. Besides, riders have been undergoing temperature screening daily at the hub offices before commencing work, and because of this, they feel safe and are willing to work for us," Reza explained.

However, as customers, we have all noticed a significant drop in the number of enlisted restaurants with the Foodpanda app, and we were curious as to their strategy to tackle this drop in registration. Reza promptly replied, "Few restaurants are facing operational issues because their kitchen staff have gone back to their hometowns during the lockdown. Some are facing inventory issues such as supply chain restrictions because of the pandemic. We are working closely with each of our restaurant partners to ensure their availability and helping them adapt their operations and streamline their menus so that they can still serve customers with the best quality food and service."

But are Bangladeshi citizens ready for the future?

"This pandemic is teaching everyone to adapt fast — whether that be working from home, maintaining social distancing, sanitising regularly or even using online payment methods. We have seen a significant increase in the 'opt-ins' for online payments and contactless delivery on our platform. The need for adopting online payments was never this crucial — the pandemic has definitely sped up the process for Bangladesh," Reza elaborated.

Putting all eggs in one basket has never

been a good 'decision making strategy' and Reza seems to agree, while discussing the future of Foodpanda Bangladesh to remain afloat, come what may.

"As all other businesses, of course we are impacted too, but I am more worried about the Covid-19 impact on the restaurant ecosystem in Bangladesh. We are trying to scale our business in other verticals to ensure that the livelihoods of our delivery drivers are not severely impacted," she said.

While food delivery is their core business, the company has decided to rapidly expand to delivering groceries and medicine as well, due to the need of the hour, and hence — Pandamart. The delivery company plans to keep on introducing more 'verticals' such as home chefs for home cooked meals and cloud kitchens to stay buoyant in the long term.

THE NEW WORLD OF HOMECOOKING

Over the past few years, the importance and health aspect of home cooked meals have come into public focus more and more, leading to less frequent consumption of restaurant food and increased spending on home-cooked meals. Realising a potential in that, many companies have emerged in the market, catering the healthy

means of earning. Yet, "thankfully, things have improved, and now there is actually a greater demand for their food — safe home cooked meals," Hossain added.

THE BLOW TO SUSTAINABILITY

Up until now, all the stories shared were that of struggles, but for the more established restaurants. But a large section of the restaurant business that was booming before the pandemic hit comprises of newbies. The reality is that much more difficult for them, with huge fixed costs; a cut-down on revenue and sales is yet another injury to add to the bruise.

We decided to speak to the owner of one such high-end restaurant, in the centre of the capital and discuss their strategy for survival through the pandemic.

Sausan Khan Moyeen is one of the partners at O' Play Restaurant, a new Italian cuisine venture that opened quite recently. She owns this restaurant, along with Navin Ahmed, Azrin Alom and Samira Hamid.

"Initially, we didn't know how to handle the situation, and since O' Play is a family restaurant, it was a bigger concern for us, as we couldn't take any risks with children. First, the big parties with large gathering

because spending personal money on business is not an efficient way to run it," she said.

Given the current situation, the entrepreneur was naturally fearful of the future. "For a long-run solution, especially if the pandemic continues, we need government assistance and/or some sort of bail-out package. This is my second business and that's why I am still standing, I can't even bear to think about (the troubles of) others whose first business is restaurants," said the anxious entrepreneur.

HARD-HIT HOTELS

Hotels too are part of the restaurant industry, to the extent that these establishments have eateries operating within them. And hotels too, are feeling the same plight — along with a bunch of other hotel-related losses due to the plunge in the hospitality and tourism industry the world over.

Dine-in is out of question; some hotels are not even enthusiastic about offering takeaways and home deliveries.

Seeking anonymity, a staff from an upscale hotel in the city said, "By the time the first lockdown announcement was made in our country, there were barely any guests remaining. We have closed our kitchens. We are not yet keen on takeaways or home delivery either as it will be challenging to ensure the same premium quality and service."

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

Times are bleak. The Food Talk, a reputable and exclusive Facebook group, is a mirror of all this. Taskin Rahman, the group's founder, says these are 'dark days' for his online community.

"Our group is extremely active during Ramadan. It is generally easy to start off vibrant conversations on food in this month. However, this year, even the very nature of conversations has changed," he said. "It is no longer, for example, about the 'best haleem in town' but rather 'who is delivering haleem in town! That's not really a food-related question; it is a logistics-related question."

He feels business has dropped substantially, even if one takes into account takeaways and delivery services.

"It calls for government intervention. If a chunk of restaurants shut down completely, imagine the effect it will have on the overall industry. Therefore, the government needs to provide protection for this sector," Rahman concluded.

After all, restaurants are not just about recreation and culture. It is also not simply limited to chefs, waiters, et al. It is also, directly or indirectly, about large suppliers and not-so-large butchers and farmers and everyone involved in the supply chain, and a whole range of other organisations surrounding the core ecosystem. The culinary industry encompasses a wider array of stakeholders and economic issues than meets the eye, and a majority of them are struggling through troubles of an unforeseen scale at the moment.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury and M H Haider

Photo: Foodpanda, Horse and Horse Patisserie, Sushi Samurai, Cookups, Air Kitchen



and homely. That is the story of Cookups, the Bangladeshi platform for home-cooked meals, as well.

The unique platform took the market by storm, but how has the modern, healthy, and homely platform been faring during Covid-19?

Namira Hossain, CEO and Co-Founder of Cookups had a lot to share. "The first week of the lockdown was difficult as we had to suspend operations. However, since then, things have changed and we have been back on board and running. We were quick to respond to the crisis not just in terms of products offered but also with our focus on quality — both in terms of hygiene and taste. We furnished our cooks with information regarding hygiene practices and gave multiple trainings to our riders on best practices. This earned the trust of our diners," she said.

It is common knowledge that most of the homecooks in Bangladesh are women, especially homemakers, who use this platform to be financially independent, while doing something that they love, and a lockdown definitely affected their livelihood, stripping away their primary

were halted, then dine-in facilities were cancelled, and then finally, delivery was also stopped, because we couldn't track the staff properly and were unsure as to where they came from; an area under lockdown or not," Moyeen explained.

"Then, as the situation began to progress, we decided to do something about it. Our staff, who hadn't left, were asked to go through a 'two-week' quarantine process before joining back," she added.

"And then we began our delivery services again, especially because there seems to be no quick end in sight to the pandemic. Meanwhile, we had to pay rent, utilities, taxes, wages — everything," the restaurateur elaborated her troubles.

On how they have been able to cope through the pandemic, even with zero sales, Sausan was a bit sceptical about sustainability. "We have been able to pull through with personal funding, and since we are a partnership of four at O'play, it was convenient for the moment, because we all shared the liabilities equally. However, being an entrepreneur, I also know that this means our business is not sustainable,

DÉCOR

Trends that need to be on your radar

Home décor is much like fashion; it changes with each season, bringing with it something new to keep our surroundings fresh. But when we step into a new decade, small changes are not what we expect. As more time pass, we see new trends blooming and popping out of different corners of the world, all of which we can incorporate into our own homes, or at least take inspiration from.

A NEW FORM OF MINIMALISM

Minimalism has been a huge trend as of late. But minimalism on its own in décor can seem sparse, especially when you are deprived of the elements you love. This is where the occasional splurge comes in. Minimalist décor involves lightweight and functional furniture, little décor elements and basic colour palettes, which can get boring.

Add in some velvet furniture in jewel tones, statement showpieces in bold



as people went crazy covering every inch of every wall they could find. This time however, it is a bit different.

Wallpapers are being used wisely and in small sections, sometimes in shapes to create affects, at other times even on ceilings. Use bright and bold colours that you love being around in small spaces, like a row behind a foyer mirror, or in a rectangle behind your TV, and our favourite — in an arch behind a sofa or your bed's headboard. But do make sure that the colour schemes match with the rest of the walls. This makes you see the design of the wallpaper and appreciate it for what it is — a beautiful piece of art, while not being too overwhelming.

THINK SUSTAINABLY

Sustainability today is a huge global concern, and interior decorators are also taking it into account. One of the top priorities of home décor in 2020 is to make sure our homes are not only beautiful to live in, but is one we can live in for long times to come without causing harm to the environment.

Buying cautiously is the most important thing here. Avoiding plastic furniture and boxes and opting for natural wood, bamboo or rattan, purchasing furniture and décor items from flea markets, repurposing home goods etc. are some easy steps. If you get bored of the same things over and over again, consider giving them away to someone who would value it instead of throwing it away when purchasing new items.

Fresh, natural and sustainable are the key words when it comes to décor in 2020 and hopefully it is a trend that will stick in the long run.

By Anisha Hassan
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



to mother nature and her beautiful hues that bring us peace. The year 2020 brings back all the tones of different woods and stones with its natural finishes in furniture, décor accents, as well as interiors like ceiling beams or doors. The different natural shades and textures have a way of making us feel at peace, while bringing in a lovely warmth to any atmosphere, that no other colour palette can ever achieve.

A CLASSIC MIX

Ever visit your grandparent's place and fall in love with some of the furniture pieces? Like that heavy old arm chair, or the four-poster bed, only to think they would never fit in with our current interiors?

Well, this year, we are looking into pieces that have some form of a sentiment attached. Pieces like these always have a place, you just have to tweak the surroundings a bit— like making sure the textures of the furniture are similar so these do not stand out oddly. Traditional furniture tends to be bulkier than modern counterparts, so having just the two types would be too much of a contrast. Bring in furniture that are not too bulky, or too light, so there is a transition and the space looks well balanced.

WALLPAPERS ARE BACK

When the wallpaper trend first started in the country, it used to be all we could see



metals, and maybe some marble on your table tops, and the space will visibly come to life. In other words, just the right mix of minimalism and elaboration to keep you happy.

AU NATUREL

No matter how much we look up those beautiful colour palettes on Pinterest or drool over Instagram-perfect bedrooms, at the end of the way, we all bow down

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* Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

RECIPE

Of tomatoes and vegetables

GAZPACHO

While summer is here already, some of us may still crave a bowl of heart-warming soup. As the weather is already too warm to devour a hot bowl of soup, this recipe features the ultimate cold soup, perfect for May. Gazpacho is a cold soup originating from Andalusia, Spain. It is equally delicious and refreshing, loaded with tomatoes and other hydrating ingredients.

Ingredients

- 1 red beefsteak tomato
- 1 green beefsteak tomato
- ½ red bell pepper
- ½ green bell pepper
- 1 medium cucumber
- 1 small onion
- 2 loaves stale bread
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp chopped mint leaves
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper

Method

Cut the loaves of bread into small cubes and soak them in water for 5 minutes while you prepare the rest of the ingredients. Pour cold water in a blender and add roughly chopped bell peppers, tomatoes, mint leaves, peeled and diced cucumber, and onion. Then, squeeze the water out of the soaked bread and add it in along with salt, cumin, and black pepper and give it a whiz. After 30 seconds, remove the vapour cover of the blender lid and pour in olive oil and balsamic vinegar while it is still on. This will emulsify the gazpacho and give it a creamy texture. Serve it cold in a bowl topped with freshly chopped mint and tomatoes. You can also serve this

with herby croutons.

SHAKSHUKA

Shakshuka is a popular breakfast and brunch item in Israel and other parts of the world. Debates still rage over whether it originated from North Africa or the Middle East. Wherever the origin though, it has become a popular dish all over the world because it is amazing how such a scrumptious dish can be so easy to put together.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion
- 2 cloves garlic



- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp paprika powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- ½ tsp sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley

Method

In a non-stick pan, heat olive oil and add finely

chopped onions and garlic. Sauté them until fragrant and add tomato paste and sliced bell pepper. Once slightly cooked, incorporate canned tomatoes and stir for a couple of minutes. Next, add in all the spices one by one and let this mixture cook. After 5 minutes, make three small indents on three sides with the help of the back of a spoon and crack eggs on them individually. Cover with a lid and cook for 10-15 minutes on medium heat. Once the eggs are fully cooked, remove the lid, turn off the heat and sprinkle with fresh, chopped parsley. You can serve this with naan or pita bread.

RATATOUILLE

If you have ever watched Disney Pixar's movie Ratatouille, you may have wondered at some point how this lip-smacking dish is made that let an ordinary chef attain tremendous recognition in the culinary world! Well, this French dish isn't as complicated to make as it may seem. In fact, the ingredients are basic and no fancy techniques are required.

Ingredients

- 1 Italian eggplant
- 2 Roma tomatoes
- 1 medium zucchini
- 1 carrot
- 2 small potatoes

For the sauce —

- 1 cup tomato purée
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 medium onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley
- 1 tbsp fresh basil
- ½ tsp chilli powder
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper
- ½ tsp sugar

Once the skillet is hot, add the olive oil and cook the onions until they start to sweat. Add the butter and keep cooking, make sure the onions do not burn and are caramelised. When the onions start browning, add the broth slowly, one cup at a time. This helps the process of reduction. Keep cooking till the broth is almost down to two cups and add the fresh cream, stir well. Add the salt



and pepper while cooking, keep stirring so the cream does not curdle. Add the meatballs to the gravy and coat them with the gravy well. Garnish with freshly chopped chives.

The meatballs can be served with mashed potatoes and a berry jam, the traditional way. However, it can be used to make versatile dishes, since the meatballs can be frozen, it is an easy fix for a weeknight meal. The meatballs are extremely filling. It can

For the dressing —

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper

Method

First, preheat the oven to 160° C for 10 minutes. To make the sauce, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a pan and sauté finely chopped onions and garlic until translucent, and add in diced red bell pepper.

Sauté for a couple of minutes and pour in the tomato purée. Then, add 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon crushed black pepper, chilli powder, and sugar. Stir to combine and finally add in the fresh herbs after turning off the heat. Purée this mixture in a blender, when it is slightly cooled, to get a smooth paste.

To make the dressing, combine 3 tablespoons of olive oil, ½ a teaspoon of crushed black pepper, and 1 teaspoon each of dried thyme, rosemary, and salt.

Slice the eggplant, zucchini, potatoes, and carrot using a mandolin, except the tomatoes, as they must be sliced using a knife. All of the vegetables should be of the same thickness. To assemble, start by spreading the puréed tomato mixture on the base of a baking dish or casserole. Then, create the single layer of vegetables by placing and overlapping the vegetables in a fixed pattern. They should be loosely packed. Finally, pour in the olive oil dressing on top. Wrap the top with aluminium foil and roast for about 40 minutes. Then remove the cover and roast for an additional 30 minutes. You can serve this as a side dish, or with carbs of your choice.

By Fariha Amber

Photo: Fariha Amber

be cooked in a variety of sauces or gravies, accompanied by pasta, rice, vegetables or salad of choice.

CITRUS GLAZED SALMON/BONELESS FISH

Ingredients

- 100-200g salmon/boneless fish
 - 1 tbsp olive oil
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- For the citrus glaze —
- 1 tbsp butter
 - 1 cup orange juice
 - ¼ cup lime juice
 - Orange and lime zest
 - Dried rosemary
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Method

Pat dry the fish and place a medium skillet on low heat. Add the olive oil and wait till the oil is hot. Fry each side of the fish for 2 minutes, and while frying, season with salt and pepper. Cook for longer if the fish still looks raw. Once the fish is fully cooked, place on a plate and let it rest.

Over medium heat, in the same skillet, add 1 tablespoon butter, the zest of orange and a lime. Then add the dried rosemary and the citrus juices, keep cooking on medium heat until it has reduced to a light syrup. Add salt and pepper before adding the fish back onto the skillet, cover with fish with the glaze and serve with a salad or fresh vegetables for a light and nutritious meal.

Photo: Sobia Ameen

IN SEARCH OF COMFORT FOOD

BY SOBIA AMEEN



Weekday Ramadan dinners

SWEDISH MEATBALLS

Ingredients

For the meatballs —

- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 cup fine bread crumbs
- 2 red onions (grated)
- 1 kg minced red meat of your choice
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp ground cardamom
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Butter to grease

For the gravy —

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 red onions (chopped)
- 2 tbsp salted butter

- 4 cups broth of your choice
- 1 cup fresh cream
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Chives to garnish

Method

For the meatballs —

Start by preparing a slurry. In a big mixing bowl, crack two large eggs and start whisking, gradually incorporate the milk. Add the fine bread crumbs and the grated red onions to the slurry before adding the minced meat. Start mixing the meat in with the slurry using a wooden spoon or hands to get best results. Mix all the dry spices in a bowl (ground allspice, paprika, ground nutmeg, ground cardamom, salt, pepper) and add it to the minced meat mixture. Once all the ingredients are well incorporated, cover the meat and let it rest for 30 minutes.

When rested, they are ready to be made into meatballs. A small ice-cream scoop or a tablespoon can be used to get similar sized meatballs. While making the meatballs, set the oven to 180°C to preheat the oven. Once the meatballs are made, transfer to a flat baking tray that has been greased with butter. Bake for 20 minutes. Once cooked through, leave out to cool and rest for 30 minutes. The meatballs can be reserved and frozen to be used later during the week.

Tip: You can also make burger patties with the meat mixture and freeze it for later.

For the gravy —

Place a medium sized skillet on low heat.