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White DAME!

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RICE GRAINS

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED
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STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
MAKEUP: NOYON AHAMED



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Office days are hectic and people are tired of staying at home for a long time; most are starting to roam around in the weekends to refresh their tired minds. So, it is necessary to ensure safety and cost-effective, time saving transportation.

Ridesharing companies like Uber are working to ensure all the safety measures and offering different services which are very much relevant in this new normal. To travel to the nearest places outside Dhaka like Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Savar, Uber Intercity is a convenient, affordable and

safe option.

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For details, on how to avail Uber intercity services, download the Uber app.



Buffet at BAHAR multi-cuisine restaurant

The BAHAR multi-cuisine restaurant at Renaissance Dhaka Gulshan Hotel has introduced a new normal buffet, which requires zero contact. This buffet is now serving multi-cuisines, international to local scrumptious dishes, with a contactless experience.

BAHAR buffet dinner features delicious kebabs, pastas, noodles, steaks, sushi, and many signature items. There is a station for mouthwatering desserts and ice-creams.

BAHAR's open kitchen concept provides a memorable dining experience with creative preparation done by their executive chef.

The buffet dinner is available daily at Tk 3,999 net per person and BDT 4,999 net per person on weekends. Buy One Get One (B1G1) offers are available with selective bankcards!

Prior booking is required. Considering the present situation, they maintain proper social distancing at the restaurant; the capacity has been brought down to 50 percent. They have implemented several hygiene measures as per Marriott's Commitment to clean standards to ensure safety for all.

For more information, call +88-0170-4112646

Shikhbe Shobai awards 5 female freelancers

The country's top freelancing training institute "Shikhbe Shobai" has awarded five promising women with "Successful Female Freelancer Award 2020." The award giving ceremony was held recently at their Banani Branch on a limited scale, in compliance with hygiene standards.

Shikhbe Shobai selected and honoured five women as successful female

freelancers in the country from those who posts and provide data to its freelancer community on a regular basis.

When the whole world has come to a standstill due to the coronavirus pandemic, female freelancers have passed a hectic time. The number of women freelancers is increasing day by day, though they currently amount to only 9 percent here in Bangladesh.



ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

ম্যান্ডালিনা

সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...

us on f /Sandalina

INSIDE LOOK at Kiva Han



In conversation with Samit Bin Salam

What inspired you to become a restaurateur? Where did it all begin?

When I was in England for my Bachelor's degree in Architecture & Civil Engineering, I got entrenched in their coffee culture. There was an established student culture, where we went to café's nearby the university during our break time to do our course work or brainstorm ideas. While going there regularly, I realized there were no café's that were upscale and only focused on coffee back home. It was the early 2000 and coffee culture in Bangladesh was almost Non-existent. Hence I wanted to establish something similar to those Café's in England that solely focused on coffee. That was my first reason for opening Kiva Han. At the same time I read an article on "The Economist" about Commodities. It was mentioned there that Coffee was the 2nd most traded commodity in the world after Oil, which I had no idea about since I was a student of architecture. From reading a random business article, the

inception of the idea occurred and I started thinking of doing something with coffee when I go back to Bangladesh.



Then I dove right into the world of coffee and started researching about coffee, coffee beans and the culture surrounding it. Whilst doing my research, I unearthed Kiva Han from the history books. Kiva Han is a Turkish word that means Coffee House, and it was also the name of the first coffee shop in the world. I



was surprised to learn that nobody in the world was using this name to establish a coffee brand, not even the world's biggest brands like Starbucks, Costa Coffee was using it. Therefore, I saw a golden opportunity here and started establishing Kiva Han as a Brand in Bangladesh. Turkey was rich in Coffee culture and I thought I would emulate that rich coffee culture in Bangladesh through Kiva Han.

I also wanted to highlight my own architectural expertise by exhibiting art and culture related to coffee in my interior of the shop. You will see if you visit all of my outlets that I tried to portray infographics or art related to coffee, its culture and its history. Thereupon, Kiva Han started its journey here in Bangladesh.

What challenges did you face initially?

My family was very skeptical in the beginning because my background was not related to food and beverages. Other than that, Real Estate was a major



challenge since I had no partners and I had to procure the budget myself. My father helped me out at launching my first outlet in Gulshan-1. I wanted to open Kiva Han in 2007, but had to wait until April of 2013 to properly collect the funds to get the balls rolling. We started to get a lot of corporate contracts from the end of 2013 and never looked back. These corporate contracts has helped us in opening more outlets throughout Dhaka. We have contracts with corporations like GrameenPhone, Unicef, British American Tobacco etc.

Kiva Han has managed to stay as one of the best café's in Dhaka, despite facing some formidable competition over the years. What's your secret in sustaining so well over the years, while others have not done as well enough?



My father was an Army Personnel, so I grew up in an army family. Hence, I got exposed and accustomed to working in a military style from an early age. Initially when I started, half of my operations personnel were Ex-military people and they ran the operations, procedures and developments in a style that was very constructive. I was never in the army, but I tried to run my organization like it's the army. Another competitive advantage for us is that we have reinvested almost 100% of our profits back in the business to accelerate the growth to this day. Our management has always been run on a constant development and growth mindset.

What are the steps you have taken for your restaurants to adopt to the new normal?

When we got permission reopen our café's again, we trained our full team with professionals about how to properly maintain hygiene within our café's. We have substantially invested a lot in maintaining hygiene. From the moment you walk into our café's to the moment you left, we are constantly disinfecting everything. We also "Deep Clean" all our outlets once a week, from floor to ceiling, disinfect the places from any threats and make it safe and sound for people to pay a visit. Nevertheless, the seating arrangement is still very limited to maintain social distancing guidelines.



We have seen a lot of people trying their hands in baking during the lockdown. Any advice for the aspiring Bakers of Dhaka?

Yes, I've seen that the number of aspiring bakers are on the rise right now. It's very good for all parties. It is very self-sustaining and we will see a lot of innovation coming from that side. They are kind of working like freelancers to cater to a niche, more personalized customer base, which will in turn expose more people to these type of food. Which in turn will enrich people's taste pallets and coerce them into coming to café's like Kiva Han to get a premium products at a reasonable price.



We know you are not someone to stay quiet for long. Any exciting news for Dhaka anytime soon?

Well I had an idea for an event, but it got delayed because of the Pandemic. We have now planned out that, since Kiva Han had started its journey through coffee, we are going to orchestrate Bangladesh's first coffee festival after the pandemic which will include all the other industry partners as well to make it more cohesive. The coffee culture in Bangladesh is on a rapid rise and I am certain that we will see a massive turnout of coffee lovers once we organize the festival.

KUNDALINI RISING
BY SHAZIA OMARWriter, activist and yogini
www.shaziaomar.com

The Jewel in the Lotus – A Mantra for Peace and Happiness

Om Mani Padme Hum. Known as the Compassion Mantra, or the Jewel in the Lotus, this is a powerful Buddhist prayer. This mantra is a tool to train the mind to achieve ultimate peace and enjoyment. The mind dictates our experience of happiness and sadness, so we must learn to control our mind.

OM, the primordial sound vibration, is a symbol of the unity of mind, body, spirit (A-U-M).

MANI is the wish-fulfilling jewel, your mind, which has the power to shape reality.

PADME is a lotus flower, wisdom rising from the murky waters of life.

HUM is the spirit of enlightenment, achievement of union of method and wisdom, which allows you to see the true nature of reality, the perfect view.



Remember, there is nothing outside of the perceiving mind. The mind can perceive this world as mundane or profound. This reality is a blissful nirvana if you train your mind to see it this way. A mind cultivated with compassion, kindness, prayers, meditation and mantras can overcome the three poisons — anger, desire and ignorance. This leads to the realisation of ultimate peace. Whether you are a Buddhist or not, you can benefit by practicing this mantra for relaxation and peace.

This mantra is part of the precious Dharma texts for liberation. A year ago, I attended a training by Chamtrul Rinpoche in the Bodhicitta Dharma Centre in Dharamsala. While meditating upon and

reciting this mantra, Chamtrul Rinpoche suggests we visualise the luminous Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, sitting on a thousand-petal lotus, wearing a garland of stars.

We can also visualise ourselves as a bodhisattva of compassion, sitting on a lotus, rather than on a bed of hot coal, as in, we should sit in a state of relaxed composure, not irritation or agitation, being calm and comfortable when meditating.

Meditation is an energetic bath. It cleanses the mind and body. The practice of meditation can bring profound benefits. To achieve pure view, one must also not commit evils such as wallowing in afflictive

emotions, exuding negative energy, dwelling in obfuscations and delusions; one must engage in virtuosity, activities that cause conditions of enjoyment for yourself and others, practicing generosity and other virtues; and one must subdue one's mental impulses which cling to patterns known as samskaras. Only then can we achieve freedom.

The natural mind is of primordial wisdom so why do we need to subdue it? The problem is that we acquire veils of ignorance through conditioning and socialisation that prevent us from being in the natural state. If your mind is upset, emotionally negative, this will create obstacles to your happiness, because happiness can only arise from a peaceful mind. If your mind is trapped in the past full of regrets and sorrows or trapped in the future full of fear and worries, this will also obstruct happiness. Happiness can only be enjoyed in the present moment. To detach from the past and future, this is freedom.

No one can progress into happiness alone. All those around you must also progress. Share your kindness with your family, friends, colleagues, and community. Cherish each other. Be tolerant. Avoid negative actions that hurt others. Look after those around you as you look after yourself.

May we all enjoy happiness in the heart of a lotus flower. May we never be separate from supreme bliss.

Shazia Omar is a yogi, an activist and a writer. To learn yoga from her, subscribe to YouTube.com/ShazzyOm

Photo: Collected

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆

**ARIES**
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Your partner will be demanding. Don't fall for empty words. Disputes at home will be unavoidable. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**TAURUS**
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Make time to visit family. Secret affairs won't end well. Make time for travel. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**GEMINI**
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Learn some new skills. Uncertain changes are imminent. Avoid making unreasonable promises. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**CANCER**
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Don't make promises you can't keep. Control your temper. Join groups with similar interests as yours. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**LEO**
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Keep your bravado at a minimum. Avoid dealing with family. Don't make hasty decisions. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**VIRGO**
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Your talent will be noticed. Don't lend money carelessly. Partnerships can be lucrative. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**LIBRA**
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Friends can be dishonest. Don't reveal personal secrets. Difficulties with your partner are likely. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**SCORPIO**
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Group participations can lead to romance. Keep your intentions secret. Don't forgive easily. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**SAGITTARIUS**
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Things at home can get difficult. Consider starting a venture. Avoid getting into troublesome relationships. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**CAPRICORN**
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Refrain from being judgmental. Your home can be chaotic this week. Make your life more harmonious. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**AQUARIUS**
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Make time for some entertainment. Choose groups wisely. Focus your attention at work. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

**PISCES**
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Don't ignore children. Investments may be misrepresented this week. Be careful while traveling. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

A NOTE ON NUTRITION

**BY CHOWDHURY
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Managing menopause through proper dietary

“I never had a weight problem until I turned 40. Just can’t reduce the weight like it used to!” This is a very common statement we clinical nutritionists hear while dealing with middle-age female patients.

Menopause is a natural transition in a woman’s life as her menstrual cycles come to an end. It’s confirmed 12 months after last period. However, the transition and symptoms associated with menopause can last for several years.

What happens during menopause?

The female hormone oestrogen begins to decline during perimenopause, which usually begins in a woman’s 40s. These hormonal changes increase the rate at which females store visceral fat, which surrounds the vital organs deep within the abdomen, and precipitate changes in insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism, putting them at increased risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

There are also other physical changes



including higher blood pressure, changes in cholesterol levels (increasing risk of heart disease), and losing calcium from bones (raising the risk of osteoporosis), weight gain, hot flushes, night sweats, irritability, poor concentration, more frequent headaches, and joint pains. These symptoms can last for just a few months to several years. The range of symptoms and how severe they are, is different for each woman.

The decline in oestrogen and progesterone, which leads to hot flushes in about 75 to 85 percent of women, contributes to insomnia. Hot flushes can disrupt sleep because body temperature dramatically rises, leading to night sweats that cause sudden waking. Most women experience hot flashes for about one year, but some experience them for up to five years.

Anxiety and depression at midlife also may contribute to sleep problems. The decline in oestrogen levels during menopause can increase women’s risk of fractures and also linked to decreased muscle mass and bone strength. It is important to address sleep quality because sleep loss interrupts appetite regulation by elevating levels of the hunger hormone ghrelin and decreasing the satiety hormone leptin, which can raise the risk of weight gain.

Other issues that women in midlife may face include changes in digestion. Some women develop lactose intolerance as they age, so incorporating lactose-free milk, cottage cheese, and yoghurt into their diet will enable them to continue consuming dairy products and help them meet their calcium needs. Fortunately, a range of lifestyle changes can make symptoms more tolerable for all women.

Changes one should make in their diet

In addition to participating in physical activity to maintain and build muscle,

women in midlife should also strive to eat protein during meals to promote muscle-protein synthesis, which is essential to the body’s ongoing growth, repair, and maintenance of skeletal muscles.

Guidelines recommend that women over 50 eat 0.45 to 0.55 grams of protein per pound (1–1.2 grams per kg) of body weight daily, or 20 to 25 grams of high-quality protein per meal.

Switch from saturated to unsaturated fats by cutting down on fatty meats, switching to low saturate oils and spreads, choosing lower fat dairy and grilling rather than frying the food.

Dairy products, such as milk, yoghurt and cheese contain calcium, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and vitamins D and K — all of which are essential for bone health. Dairy may also help improve sleep.

After age 50, the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium climbs to 1,200 mg/day, which makes meeting calcium needs challenging, especially since calcium supplements now are recommended less

barley, grapes, berries, plums, green and black tea and many more. Aim to get 5-a-day from a range of different coloured fruits and vegetables every day.

Swap to higher fibre foods, such as wholegrain breads, high fibre breakfast cereals and brown rice whenever you can. Oats, wholegrain cereals and breads as well as pulses like lentils, chickpeas and beans are all excellent sources of fibre and heart friendly.

Plant oestrogens (also called phytoestrogens) are very similar to human oestrogen. If eaten regularly, and in sufficient quantities, they can start to have mild oestrogen-like effects, which is useful as oestrogen levels decline. For some women, these effects could be sufficient to help relieve menopausal symptoms, particularly hot flushes. Foods containing plant oestrogens (such as soya) are also heart friendly so it’s worth trying to include calcium-enriched soya products like milk, yoghurts.

Avoiding certain foods may help



often because of potential heart disease risks.

Healthy fats, such as omega-3 fatty acids, may benefit women going through menopause. Foods highest in omega-3 fatty acids include fatty sea fish, such as hilsa, and seeds like flax seeds, chia seeds. Aim for at least two portions of sea fish per week, one which should be oily, as these are rich in omega-3 fats.

A diet high in whole grains has been linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, cancer and premature death. Fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals, fibre and antioxidants.

Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower may be especially helpful for postmenopausal women. Phytoestrogens are compounds in foods that act as weak oestrogens in your body. Foods that naturally contain phytoestrogens include soybeans, chickpeas, peanuts, flax seeds,

reduce some of the symptoms linked to menopause, such as hot flushes, weight gain and poor sleep.

High blood sugar, insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome have been linked to higher incidence of hot flashes in menopausal women. Processed foods and added sugars are known to raise blood sugar rapidly.

Avoiding spicy foods is a common recommendation for women going through menopause. However, evidence to support this is limited.

High salt intake has been linked to lower bone density in postmenopausal women. Additionally, after menopause, the decline in oestrogen increases your risk of developing high blood pressure.

Reduce tea and coffee intakes to help manage hot flushes.

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed





The white shirt

A plain, white shirt is the simplest piece of clothing that absolutely never goes out of style. With all the minimalist aesthetic going around, the white shirt has garnered a newfound love. The rediscovery of 'the white shirt,' followed by the numerous ways to make it stand out, is all the rage lately.



#FASHION

The admiration truly comes for all good reasons; it goes with everything, everywhere and at all hours. It also attempts to take on the 'modern-vintage' trend with little to no effort. One piece for endless, effortless looks — this Autumn, let's fall in love with the timeless white shirt.



LENGTHY AND BREEZY

The long and loose shirts are comfortable and easiest to style; most appropriate for those easy-going days when you do not want to take too long to plan an outfit. Get ready in a rush while beating the heat in this shirt. Head out in your breezy wear with a pair of jeans or leggings. Tuck in (just the front) to 'up style' with ease. For the busy ladies out there, this look can be your no-brainer 'go-to.' Perfect to run some errands in, it's a great choice to stay comfy and graceful all day!

BUTTON DOWN, SLEEVES UP

The basic white shirt in its staple form has to be the 'button down and sleeves up' look. Currently being one of the trendiest ways to pull off a white shirt, it really has taken over the ongoing vintage aesthetic by storm. The classiest way to style it would be to keep the whole outfit simple; wear it with your favourite pair of pants and add some layered neckpieces and look effortlessly chic. Whichever way you choose to style, this is the perfect 'girly-tomboy' crossover that will have you ready for all your hangouts and business convos.

A CUTE KNOT

Tying a knot with the two sides of your shirt at your waist screams playful; and we can't get enough of this look! Cute and flirty; pair it with your favourite high-waists for a fun girls' day. This style also accentuates your natural silhouette more!

It's definitely one of the must-try looks for those desiring to switch to something cuter and quirkier with this shirt.

SMART TUCK-IN

A formal take on the classic white shirt, tucking in looks very put-together while bringing out a serious tone. Whether you are heading for an urgent meeting or a quick bite to grab, it's the most no-brainer way to style. Pairing it with pants is typical; skirts complement this look really well. Some simple accessories and your comfiest pair of

shoes are all you need to get through a busy day in this smart-wear.

THE HALF-TUCK

Tucking-in just one part at the front is a trendier style to pull off. It's in-between dressing up and down; looks relaxed and effortless, thus, appropriate for any casual outing where you just want to enjoy.

Wear it with your comfiest pant or even a formal pair — depending on the tone you're going for. Keep in mind that it can tend to look 'too carefree,' we suggest pairing it with a stunning heel to tie this look together. But sneakers are, of course, a good option for those laid-back days!

OFF-SHOULDER MOMENT

Flaunting your beautiful bones can never hurt! Bring the shirt down by the shoulders just a notch and button up for your off-shoulder moment with this plain white shirt. This appears to be both simple and sultry; suitable to dress up for any special day. The best part has to be how easily 'high-fashion' it looks while taking barely any extra effort!

Pick your chic-est accessories and heels to pair and go around looking outright stunning all day!

By Zohaina Amreen

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Arpita
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Makeup: Noyon Ahamed

PERSPECTIVE

BY SHAHANA HUDA



The rice story



Traditionally, farmers in Bengal produced many variants of rice, many of which are fast disappearing. These grains were used to prepare dishes on special occasions. Shahana Huda Ranjana takes a walk down memory lane and remembers the agricultural heritage of this land, and the culinary delights that are now remnants of the past.

Back in the days of yore, on a visit to my paternal grandfather's house in Nilphamari, a particular sight caught my fledgling eyes, 8-10 people sitting on a floor-mat laid out in the veranda and eating heartily. They were farmers, also known as 'proja' in the area. Grandmother used to feed them with buckets full of tinted rice, vegetables, green chillies and onions. Sometime later, I

noticed a peculiarity regarding the rice — it didn't resemble the typical variant which we regularly consumed as *bhaat* or *khichuri*. The grains were comparatively smaller and rounded. Later, I came to know that it was known as the *Kaun* — a common produce in the northern regions. The poor and the underprivileged commonly enjoyed a plate of this unique variety of rice as it was nutrition heavy, and made a person feel fuller for longer.

On another instance, I saw the same people preparing a special dish out of ripe jackfruit and *kaun* rice. They sliced the fruit in half and mixed the contents with *kaun*. This certainly increased my curiosity for the special variety and my grandmother, having sensed my interest, offered me a plate,



added with onions, oil, mashed potatoes and fried egg. My aunt also offered a plate of *kaun* rice pudding with thickened milk. Oh! What a delicacy it was.

In the later years of my life, I saw the same variety of rice in the organic stores of Dhaka. The stores were selling the same thing at a much higher price. The years



have also taught me that with *kaun*, we could prepare a dish of plain rice, *khichuri* (hotchpotch) and even rice pudding. But I was still sceptical about the taste of *kaun* and jackfruit as a combination!

A similar narrative that I experienced was with chipped rice or the *khude bhaat*. Back in the day, when it was commonplace, and almost a ritual to wash and clean rice at home, broken bits were separated and fed to the poor. Sometimes even 'chipped pilaf' was cooked as a delicacy. Overtime, this ritual of cooking pilaf with broken bits of specialty rice was given a name — *boukhud*.

In Mymensingh, the same preparation is known as *boubhaat*. Nowadays, in many restaurants we get to see the same preparation of *boukhud* alongside regular pilaf rice. *Boukhud* entails, chipped rice

khichuri (hotchpotch) prepared with a dash of ginger, turmeric, dried chillies and onions stirred into the mixture. This dish needs to be accompanied with spicy eggplant, potatoes, dried fish, and a fried mixture of mashed black cumin and mustard.

This special rice can also be an exclusive item for breakfast. Another interesting menu that could be the prepared with the *khude bhaat* is the semolina-rice pudding.

A particular variety of rice that is famous in the regions of Sylhet and Chattogram is the *bashful*. The breath-taking aroma can be experienced at most restaurants in both of these districts. The specialty rice is fine-looking, almost like *basmati*. However, these look very different when uncooked; usually shorter and plumper in shape; when cooked the grains lengthen to incredible proportions, with excellent aroma and taste.

On most occasions in these districts, the *bashful* rice is often cooked in combination with fish, mutton rezala, skinny fries, thickened *shonamug* lentils, mashed-fried vegetables and *murighonto* — a spicy aromatic dish entailing fish head and flavoured rice. A vegetable concoction or a vegan *khichuri* is also a popular item prepared with the *bashful*.

Not long ago, in Bangladesh, people used to make rice cakes and hotchpotch out of *atapchaal*. Even today, the plump variety of this special rice is available at certain rice markets. However, *atap* is not a good selection for the preparation of pilaf; instead, in bigger-scale ceremonies, the *atap khichuri* is primed with a significant dose of milk.

A popular poem, 'The Servant Boy,' by Jagindranath Sarkar continuously reminds me of the *Dadkhani* rice — *Dadkhani chaal, moshurir daal, chini-pata doi...*

This very *dadkhani* rice from the poem, used to be quite popular in the yesteryears, especially because of the medicinal properties of the rice. It is full of zinc, a mineral that is useful to treat diseases. And hence, as a treatment possibility, the *dadkhani* was offered to the sick as essential food. It is still available at few notable rice bazaars.

If we closely observe the history of Bengal, we can see that there were more than 200 varieties of rice cultivated in this part of the region. Each variety was easily distinguishable from the other, based on colour, shape, and taste.

The types also varied with the seasons. Due to the tremendous increase in population and scarcity in the number of farming lands, most of the varieties, especially the sensitive ones, could not be cultivated any longer. One example could be the *raida* rice, which is commonly known as the 'mother of rice.' There is even folklore associated with this particular variety — It is said that in the regions of Khulna, fishermen used to roam around the banks of the river in search of food. While doing so, one time, they took some dry grass from the fields around them and used it as fire-starter to make fish fry. And as the ashes fell back onto the lands, it caused the *raida* variety of rice to propagate. So essentially, the folklore depicts that the *raida* grows from the grasses.

Raida is essentially a blessing for the culinary world. It helps in the preparation of excellent quality rice pudding and pilaf. Farmers have begun to cultivate this special variety again, similar to the yesteryears.

Other variants in the name of *kajal digha*, *Lakshmi digha* and *kalarai* can withstand flood. There are some more variants by the name of *vaad*, *kaloshoni*, and *kumri*, which



can be cultivated even during times of famine. Based on climate change and our current weather conditions, it is almost necessary that we take the initiative to grow these variants again.

Shifting cultivation (*jhum chaash*) helps produce a special rice variety in the name of *binni*. Upon cooking the *binni* converts into black, red and white variants of sticky rice. This type of rice is extremely tasty, quite a bit sticky and good for making hotchpotch and plain rice.

Sticky rice is expected to be eaten

warm; otherwise it becomes too thick for consumption. *Khichuri* prepared with *moong daal* (lentil) and sticky rice is out-of-the-world appetising, and so are the rice cakes and rice pudding prepared with the same item.

Yousuf, a farmer from Dubail, Rajshahi, who has been farming for the last fifty years, has been successful in cultivating over 150 varieties of rice on his lands. Yousuf wishes to see other farmers get back into the habit of cultivating the long-lost variants of rice, like himself. He wants to

celebrate the Bengali New Year with these farmers, preparing different items with the many varieties of rice, and feed the guests at the festival with their unique preparations.

If time permits, it certainly would be an honour to be able to visit the New Year's festivities at Yousuf's place in Dubail.

By Shahana Huda Ranjana
Translated by Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Food and Styling: RBR

#PRESS RELEASE

Authentic Kabab Express

This is not just your regular restaurant; Authentic Kabab Express is well known for its mouthwatering food and pleasant service. Besides the delectable kabab, they also offer a rich variety of mouthwatering Bengali dishes at reasonable prices. They have different set menus around the week, but special items such as kachchi biriyani, morog polao, tehari, etc. are offered on Fridays.

The menu takes into account the versatile taste buds of Dhaka city dwellers, and offers a plethora of delicious dishes to satiate them.

The ambiance

Authentic Kabab Express promises to give you an incredible and flawless dining experience. Authentic Kabab Express offers candle lit dinners at the beautiful rooftop/upper top areas to celebrate your special day. With a view like no other, the restaurant is offering you a place where you can enjoy the night sky with delicious food on the platter.

The space comes free with orders



exceeding a certain number. The restaurant also offers unplugged music to cheer you even during this pandemic.

COVID precautions

There is mandatory social distancing rule at Authentic Kabab Express; everyone maintaining a 3-feet distance from each other. Distancing is advised even when sharing a table while having meals.

Cleanliness is maintained to the highest degree in all spheres. Customers are required to use hand sanitisers before entering the eatery. Everything remains sanitised and cleaned after use so that customers are offered maximum comfort and assurances when dining.

At the end of the day, any food remaining is distributed among the needy.



This ensures that the food offered to the customers are always fresh. A portion of their profit is used for the betterment of the lives of underprivileged children.

All prices are inclusive of service charge, and exclusive of 15 percent VAT. Meals are cooked upon order, and customers are requested to be patient.

From 1 November, Authentic kabab Express is offering delivery right at your doorsteps. One can now choose from their extensive menu, and order via Foodpanda, HungryNaki, Pathao food, Shohoz food, efood and Evaly. On the other hand, clients can order food directly for home delivery by dialing 028836788, 01312023020.

Essentials

Address: House #115, Road #13, Block E, Banani, Dhaka.

Social media: www.facebook.com/authentickababexpress

Log onto: www.authentickabab.com

By Ramisa Maliha Bhuiyan

Stranger in a strange land

On starting, it's exciting. Tough too. A bittersweet feeling to be precise. You have always lived in the shadows of your parents, in the presence of your siblings, and in the company of your relatives and friends. It is not easy to leave the fond memories behind, especially when the calling is so sudden. Faith has its way of doing things and it happens in the most unprecedented of manners.

Never could you have imagined living apart from your family and that too, 13,219 kilometres away. Remember how you would not let go of your mother's hands on your first day of school? Or how the teacher permitted your mother to sit in class at the sight of your misery? Now, you are separated from her by oceans. Funny how life changes, eh?

Nonetheless, the anxiety seeps away and newness engulfs you. The glowing neon lights of the billboards, the towering glass structures, the diverse crowds; you wonder how drastically different your cultures are, how different life can be even though we belong to the same planet and to the same species.

When you open your eyes in the morning in a new room, for a moment the unfamiliarity of your surroundings envelops you. You push yourself out of bed realising you do not have anyone to prepare breakfast for you, no one to wash your dishes, to help you clean the room

and make your bed.

You sit at your makeshift dining/study table with a cup of coffee to go through your emails, eagerly waiting for a reply from the job you applied to a few weeks ago. You count again the number of prayers you have muttered under your breath in the last minute; your blood rushing with adrenaline, your pupils widening, your fingers trembling, you click on the new email's notification as you begin to read —

"Thank you for your interest, we sincerely appreciate your application. We have reviewed your resume and have carefully considered your qualifications. We regret to inform that you have not been selected for the position at this time."

You knew that a few rejections would come your way. You were prepared to not let rejections have the better of you and keep on going, keep on applying. There are 37 more openings that you have yet to apply to. One of them will definitely call back, right? If school has taught you anything, it's probability, the math of hope; one of them has to call back. Right?

You find yourself subconsciously going to your once redundant Gmail app and refreshing the page every few minutes. Nothing! The same routine follows until another notification flashes. Rejected. That's alright, there are 17 more places yet to get back. But it's been 20 days already.

Your application is probably archived in their database. Nine companies left now. But that should not let you down. This is the land of opportunities; your magic moment will arrive. It must.

But then uncertainty spears right through your brain. You begin to question your worth, your degree, the reputable career you built and were so proud of in your country. You knew you would have to start over in the new land, but deep inside, you knew; you knew that you can make it.

You can hear people's commentary in your head already, talking about your failure, mocking your decision to leave a safe and secure life and moving to a foreign land. You wonder if you are being compared to the alleged success stories of their children, of their relatives, of their fathers. Your insecurities start seeping into your goals and your dreams until all that is left of you is an endless dejection.

But. But what can you do when you only have barely enough finances with you to survive? When you have to shoulder your family back home? You are their only hope.

You shrug off the negativity, muster up your mental strength and strike the keys for the umpteenth time — "Dear Hiring Manager."

By Ali Sakhi Khan

Ramblings of a twenty-eight-year-old

I thought I would stay cool my whole life. Having lived through the years when Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat were invented, we millennials felt we were on top of the world. Before the world of bloggers and influencers came into being, Instagram was created for millennials when we began to think elders were infiltrating Facebook with their 'Good Morning' memes and countless blurry selfies taken with selfie sticks. Instagram was a place for us to post philosophical quotes and nature photos with countless filters and trying to pretend to find a deeper meaning to life.

The good time did not last long for us. Like any other big invention, people of all ages stormed Instagram and now, it is a world of highly curated posts and photos. I still have to think fifteen times before posting a photo lest people think it is not good enough. On the bright side, my social media posting game is strong and worthy. At least according to my much younger cousins.

I truly thought I would spend my years being different from our previous generations and change the world in my own way. Now at twenty-eight, I find myself relating to those same people in Facebook I thought were not on par with us. One day, I am feeling I am young and hip (now I'm even using the phrase young and hip like an advertisement for

hip surgery) and the next day I realise I have a favourite grocery store and going to that store counts as a holiday. Now I get giddy when I get the chance to bust open a new Scotch Brite over buying a new top. I kid! I still get excited shopping for new clothes. The difference is now I feel happy over both new dish sponges and clothes.

In my early twenties, I would look forward to brunch outings with my girlfriends in order to retell stories and updates about my dating life and career options I was still allowed to think about. At twenty-eight years, I still look forward to those brunch dates with girlfriends with fearful enthusiasm to discuss marriage options, babies, and reminiscing how fun and dramatic we used to be.

Speaking of marriage and babies, being twenty-eight and having neither a doting husband nor bouncing babies on my lap, I find myself somewhat of an abomination in my family and society's eyes. Anywhere and everywhere I find random aunties thrusting biodatas of 'good boys' in my hands.

I find it both admirable and hilarious when they look at me with pity and say something along the lines of "Sweetheart, don't wait too long to get married. Married life is wonderful!" and then the next minute, complain how tired they are of their husbands and wish they chose

someone else and how obnoxious their children turned out to be.

Funny thing is, now I do understand sometimes where their opinions come from. It is okay to want something everyone is doing around you and also complain about the very same things you ended up doing.

Being a dopamine junkie in my early twenties meant doing things to try to please people and getting short bursts of happiness from their approval, but now, it is a miracle if I can muster up enough enthusiasm for my best friend's birthday.

I pride myself on being mature now (at least according to me). I mean, I still like to think myself as the young and fun person who can kick up a storm at a party but only if the party ends at 10PM and I can be in bed by 11PM. This girl needs her seven hours of sleep to function the next day!

No one tells you how drastically your opinions and thoughts change as you grow older. Now it is a competition between my brain and heart in trying to be practical yet not accepting the realisation that I'm a full-grown adult.

Nearing your thirties means I still feel I am young, yet at the same time feel so old. In Garth Brooks' wise words: "I'm much too young to feel this damned old."

By Melisa Khan

FUSION FLAVOURS

CHIANGMI TALUKDER LENA



Desserts for those special occasions



Sweets can be part of a healthy, lifelong eating pattern as long as they are consumed in moderation.

The word 'dessert' originated from the French word 'desservir', meaning 'to clear the table' with a sweet course that concludes a meal.

Usually, all over the world, basic ingredients of a sweet dessert contain sugar such as cane or palm, brown sugar to honey, and flour or other starches; cooking fats such as butter or lard, dairy, eggs, salt, acidic ingredients such as lemon juice, and spices and other flavouring agents such as chocolate, peanut butter, fruits, and nuts.

The proportions of these ingredients, along with the preparation methods, play a major part in the consistency, texture, and flavour of the end product. Thus, a dessert differs from look to taste, shape to size from one land to another.

If you have a sweet tooth, *just pick any one of these recipes and celebrate your sweet day.*

TURKISH DELIGHT — ORANGE LOKUM

Ingredients

For sugar syrup —

1½ cup water

2½ cup white sugar

2-3 tbsp lemon juice

For corn starch paste —

1 cup water

1 cup orange juice (can be used any juice, such as pomegranate)

1 cup corn starch

1 tsp cream of tartar

1 drop orange food colour (optional)

1-2 drops of orange flavour (optional)

For coating —

¼ cup powdered sugar

¼ cup corn starch

¼ cup shredded coconut

Method

For making syrup, combine water, sugar, and lemon juice in a pot. Turn the heat on and stir until sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil. Continue boiling over medium-low heat for 10 minutes and continue stirring.

In a separate pot, combine water, orange juice, corn starch, cream of tartar and mix well until there are no lumps. Turn the heat on and keep stirring until it becomes a thick paste.

Gradually, add sugar syrup into the paste and mix after each addition. Reduce heat to low and simmer mixture stirring constantly until it becomes a thick paste.

Turn the heat off, add flavour and colour. Mix well and pour the mixture onto the greased mould by dusting the surface with all powdered coating mixture.

Let it set up for 5 hours or overnight. Dust the top as well. Cut it into small cubes and dredge the cubes into the coating



2 tbsp sugar
1½ cup water

Method

Soak mung bean in plain water at least 4 hours or overnight. Drain and steam for 30 minutes. In a grinder, put mung bean, coconut milk, ½ cup sugar, and salt, and grind finely. Heat a pan with low-medium heat. Put the mixture, add vanilla extract and boil the dough to moisture out all water, when the surface is smooth and form a fine thick paste, it's done.

Cool the dough, divide into 7-8-gram tiny balls. Form the dough into the desired shape such as mango, carrot, chillies, corn, watermelon, etc. and put a stick into all shapes to stand it straight.

Mix 2 tablespoons of water in different food colouring and colour all the shapes by dipping into coloured water. Or use brush to colour. Dry all the shapes.

In a separate bowl, take 1½ cup water, gelatine, and sugar and mix until everything dissolves. Heat the gelatine mixture for 1-2 minutes. Or turn the heat off once it starts to boil. Dip down all the coloured shape quickly into the warm gelatine mixture and keep all shapes to stand straight so that no extra gelatine can form any shape. Allow to dry, once the gelatine coating dries pull out the sticks.

JAPANESE MATCHA GREEN TEA ICE-CREAM

Ingredients

240ml milk
240ml heavy cream
100g sugar



2 egg yolks
10g matcha powder
Salt a pinch

Method

In a bowl, mix egg yolk, matcha powder, sugar and salt, and set aside. Boil the milk for a few minutes until the quantity comes to the half. Pour the hot milk over matcha mixture.

Cool down and add heavy cream. Blend the mixture in a blender for 1-2 minutes. Pour in a container and freeze it for 2-4 hrs.

After 2-4 hours, stir the ice-cream mixture with a fork or use a beater so that no ice crystals can form in the mixture. Again, freeze and repeat beating method every after 2 hours, 4-5 times.

CHINESE MUNG BEAN CAKE

Ingredients

250g mung beans
½ cup liquid milk
40g butter
40g vegetable oil
80g caster sugar
50g chocolate

Method

Soak mung bean in water for at least 5 hours, but preferably overnight. In a cooking pot, put washed and drained mung beans, milk, sugar, oil and cook in low-medium heat for 30-40 minutes.

Take off of heat. Put the mung bean in a grinder and make fine paste. Heat another pan with butter and put the paste to dry out the water. Stir constantly and make a thick dough.

Separate the dough into two parts equally. In one part of the dough, mix melted chocolate and knead finely and make 10-15 gram (each) balls for filling.

Take the plain dough and divide as well (about 25-30 grams each part). Roll all parts and put a chocolate ball into each part and make round balls. Shape the balls using any cookie cutter or cookie stamps. The mooncakes are ready.

Food and photo by Chiangmi Talukder Lena



powdered mixture and place those inside an airtight container.

THAI KHANOM LUK CHUP

Ingredients

1 cup mung bean (moong dal)
2 cups coconut milk
½ cups sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp salt
Food colouring
2 tbsp gelatine powder

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Enjoying the moment at Bittersweet Café

The iconic Bittersweet Café springs back to life by kindling emotions of old nostalgia. Taking aboard new ownership for its second voyage, the café has restored both its former site and the simply-sublime pleasure of a dine-out here.



Although Bittersweet has changed considerably from its former glory days, you will still stop to appreciate the creaky staircase leading up to the café and the faintly-optimistic neon sign next to its door — both the same as before and both touching nods to its past.

Push through the doors of Bittersweet to be in awe of what has been done to the place. The café is still elegant and softly-lit, but the bubbling dining room is now rimmed with monochrome banquettes and panelled with honey-coloured wood. Its old and familiar bordello chandeliers and regal upholsteries have been switched out for mid-century modern tables, sofas and bar stools — a different translation of the same reclined chic that made us fall in love with Bittersweet in the first place!

Bittersweet has never been, and still is not, reserved only for special occasions; in fact, it's the ideal lounging spot for anyone on any Tuesday, or any other day of the week for that matter!

It's a joy to see Bittersweet flourishing in a new setting. The duo of co-owners, Sadiq Quddus and Rummaella Siddiqui, are the ones responsible for keeping the place still ticking. Their vision is simple — to provide

a comfortable place with hearty meals that will keep their customers warm for the long winter ahead and even beyond. And their superpower is double-sided, dedication to service and a stellar rapport with diners.

"I love talking to customers and getting to know them. It's exciting but, at the same time, it's a reassurance to them that whatever we are trying to do at Bittersweet, we are doing for our customers," humbly states Rummaella Siddiqui.

It's this idea you will find the pair practicing when taking care of the café, let it be cleaning, disinfecting or serving. Not even a month old now, the café's administration is

a fantastic joint effort by the co-owners and the staff, all in service to valued customers.

Upon asking what drives her to run Bittersweet with such nuanced authority, Rummaella refers to her father's timeless advice, "Work is work and you're not above anything. If you don't get grit and dirt under your fingernails and don't feel the sweat on your back, you haven't accomplished anything."

The result of this belief? The pair's personal pull towards the café, their knowledge of the ins and outs of the place and a dependable but respected relationship with staff.

condiments that invites the diner to simply build their own! You will fork it away, lost in chatter, only to soon realise looking down at the very last scraps that you will miss it when it's gone.

A rendition of the Malaysian curry soup, laksa, with tofu, fishcake and coconut milk is another culinary delight, fit for a feast to unwind long hours and personal worries.

The classic lasagna makes a comeback in the revamped menu with layers of mozzarella and ample supplies of béchamel sauce. Also, on the list, you will find the banh mi, a Vietnamese sandwich with spicy beef cradled in the crispy crust of baguette. And their vegan option, the spinach-pesto white pizza is the perfect half-and-half blend of flavourful and healthy.

Bittersweet's delectable chocolate soufflé remains a crowd pleaser and their bite-sized profiteroles glazed with caramel and other goodness is the perfect end to a satisfying feast.

Wash your meal down with quaffable drinks, steaming coffee or bubbling sodas only to clock just how well you have been fed here!

Thank god for restaurants that lift us out of our gloom to take us on a joy-ride to someplace more affable. The world outside may roar on but Bittersweet is the 'someplace' that exists to take us away. At Bittersweet, you feel you are home, where everything is alright, just like old times.

By Ramisa Haque

Food Photo: Sayeed Siddiqui

Interior Photo: Ali Morshed Noton

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