

Nawab Chatga

Taste the glory of rich Chittagonian legacy every time you walk into Nawab Chatga, an isolated diner tucked away in the shadows of a commercial lane in Gulshan 1. Customers here are prey to an infectious spread of word-of-mouth publicity raving about their exceptionally authentic cuisine. And if you have been found here once, you are sure to come back for seconds, even thirds!



Nawab Chatga vibes different than the fancy, fine-dining restaurants popping up all over Dhaka city. This diner stands humbly unwashed amid the wave of luxury interiors that inspire aestheticism in the era of Instagram. But what more than makes up for this materialism is an honest nod to the Port City of Bangladesh and the epic feast every blue-blooded Chittagonian relishes by heart.

"Nawab Chatga was born five years ago. Despite being a Chittagonian, I don't visit my hometown often. But Chittagong is a culture I was born into. I often find myself homesick, just craving the food," recalls Shahidul Islam, owner of Nawab Chatga, "After ending my corporate career, the idea of opening a Bengali restaurant in Dhaka manifested itself and I thought no one could possibly do a better job of serving the authentic cuisine of my own home than me," enlightens he.

And this is exactly what the diner prides itself on, with zero compromises in quality. Every morning is a new day at Nawab Chatga that begins with vegetables bought in bulk, fresh off the trucks from Karwan Bazaar. Cows meeting a list of

criteria are dedicatedly sacrificed every day for the butchered meat to cater to the mass demands of meat consumed here. No refrigerated meat is ever offered to hungry diners and all leftovers at the end of each day is given away to famished souls around the neighbourhood.

Raw ingredients amount to just that without the touch of a master chef running the kitchen. And it's the chef specialising in cooking Chittagonian cuisine, who Shahidul



Islam credits in upholding consistent quality throughout the diner's run. The show-stoppers selling like hot cakes on the menu that never miss to please any customer are the acclaimed mezbani gosh

and kala bhuna (braised beef in curry and spicy beef with red chilies).

If you are a tough nut to crack and the universal crowd-pleasers have not won you over, there's more on the menu that's sure to make you salivate. So much in demand it always stocks out, the akhini biryani at Nawab Chatga is a feast all on its own. Their split chickpea lentils or, chana dal, chicken rezala, the Bombay duck fried fish, locally known as *loitta mach*— all sing flavours native to the region the recipes are derived from. And their jhuna or pulled beef is an absolute must-have!

Push through the doors on the last Thursday of any month and you will be treated to the most reasonable buffet in town with chafing dishes brimming with 15 plus of Nawab Chatga's specialties. One banquet here will only set you back a paltry Tk 799.

Walk into the diner any other day anytime between 12PM and 4PM and Nawab Chatga's Quick Lunch offer will take care of you.

By Quick Lunch, the restaurant means, "Suppose a walk-in customer orders one plate of rice, one serving of kala bhuna and chana dal with some mixed vegetables and a glass of water with some dessert. After noting it down, a hand gesture signalling 'five minutes' will be shown to the customer. Within moments, the busboy will scurry to the kitchen to fetch his order and the diner's food will be served hot on the table in less than five minutes."

"Nawab Chatga is unbeatable in its Quick Lunch. Since everything is cooked in masses every morning before the doors open, our

food is always ready to go; no one can feed hungry customers faster than us," explains Shahidul Islam.

With such massive quantities in question, the restaurant pays special attention to cleanliness and hygiene. And this commitment is exactly what has kept the place afloat amid a devastating pandemic that continues to plague the world at large.

Shahidul Islam's initiative to rent the upstairs apartment sitting atop the restaurant means no employee is allowed to interact with outsiders. From the cooks to the waiters, all are nestled and sheltered in-house. Masks are dutifully worn by everyone in staff during working hours. Every table is sanitised before and after a customer sits down to eat. And, at the end of every busy day, the kitchen is hosed down clean even if that means working hours extending till 1AM. The result is zero contraction of the virus since the pandemic started among the staff at Nawab Chatga.

Good food that feeds the soul — Nawab Chatga is a hubbub bustling with laughter from throngs of people and ethnic meals so hearty, you will feel like you are home. If that's what you are missing, dash to Nawab Chatga; you won't regret it!

By Ramisa Haque

Essentials

Address: Nawab Chatga, House 29, Road 19, (behind Navana Tower), Gulshan-1, 1212 Dhaka

For reservations or mass orders: 01873-667766

Photo Courtesy: Nawab Chatga