

SHOUT Quiz: An Achar for Every Mood

RASHA JAMEEL

Spicy, sweet, sour, or a mix of all three? Let's figure out the right fit for you, shall we? Attention, attention! The following quiz might tickle your tastebuds and cause your mouth to water uncontrollably. Please proceed with care. Here we go.

1. It's sunny outside, how many jars of achar are perched on your windowsill or left to dry on the rooftop?

- Oooh, all of my favourites, so about 37467947538
- Lord knows
- Three. The standard. In a triangle formation.
- None because my recipes differ from the traditional ones

2. Which particular street food are you craving at this exact minute?

- Fuchka
- Jhalmuri
- Shingara-samucha
- Bhelpuri

3. The summer heat is making you dizzy, which beverage do you reach for?

- Coke-Pepsi
- Whatever's in my line of sight I guess
- Lebu shorbot
- Mango lassi

4. You sense that it's about to rain, how do you prepare?

- Getting cozy with a book
- All I know is that there's nothing new left for me on Netflix
- Cooking khichuri, of course
- Participate in a water war

5. Pick your preferred side-dish to go with a plate of piping hot khichuri.

- Chicken/Beef bhuna
- Dim bhuna
- Begun bhaji
- You can't make me choose between labra and aloo er dum

6. What are you watching while you scarf down your khichuri?

- A cheesy romantic comedy from the 90s
- Did I not say that there's nothing good on TV?
- Anything directed by Satyajit Ray
- A documentary about multicultural food

7. It's now 7 PM and you have guests to entertain. What snacks or food are you serving?

- Tea and piyajua
- Toast biscuit...
- Noodles. Can't go wrong with noodles.



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8. If the neighbour's mischievous toddler were to ransack your abode, which personal item would you not miss?

- Anything that doesn't remind me of home
- How about I get back to you after I figure out what is where?
- My middle school report cards
- Uh, I don't have a neighbour

9. The weekend has arrived, and the sound of traffic outside wakes you up at--

- 9 AM
- I can sleep through anything
- Noon, because it's the weekend every day anyway
- I never fell asleep in the first place

10. What are you having for breakfast?

- Payesh. Oof!
- Cha-muri
- Porota-mangsho-niramish
- Ordering in from my favourite fusion cafe *heart emoji*

11. How are you dressing for the day?

- In casuals
- The same way I dressed yesterday, and the day before, and the day before, and the...
- According to personal comfort
- Experimenting with OOTDs, be right back

12. Pick a colour that you'd like to paint the walls in your room with.

- Blue. Always blue.
- Grey
- Any pastel colour
- An edgy wallpaper for me

...and we're done! Let's round up all our responses for the final result.

If you've mostly picked a's, you're possibly longing for some sense of comfort. Some mishti achar made from fruits such as *boroi* (Indian jujube) or *chalta* (Elephant apple) might just give you (well, your taste buds really) the warm hug you're looking for. Pair it up with a plate of steaming polao for the best results.

If you've mostly picked b's, then your life can probably use some spicing up. Why not dare yourself to try a pinch of *naga morich er achar*? If *morich* isn't your thing, you can always reach for some *roshun er achar* instead. Whatever you pick, make sure it's *jhaal*.

If you've mostly picked c's, you've given yourself away as a bit of an *achar* purist. Only *tok achars* for you, my friend. But don't be too sour about it, okay? The classic *kacha aam* or *jolpai er achar* should do the trick, but feel free to go overboard with the sour quotient by indulging in *lebu* and *shatkora er achar*. That thing is divine.

If you've mostly picked d's, I imagine you're not easily impressed with conventional options. I suggest you go for a bit of *Kashmiri achar* to suit your adventurous palate. If you're in the mood for something even more outlandish, Keka Ferdousi's iconic *noodles er achar* could be a more exciting option.

If your choices are all over the place, perhaps you'd like to sample some *tok-jhal-mishtii* mixed *achar* eh? The goodness of green mangoes, limes, and even some chopped vegetables, all lathered up in a savoury mix of spices and oil, mmm. Bon appetit!

Rasha Jameel is your neighbourhood feminist-apu-who-writes-big-essays. Remind her to also finish writing her bioinformatics research paper at rasha.jameel@outlook.com



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