

## Dhaka's lively bakery scene

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Shadman Shahriar, co-founder of Basic Kneads, a specialty food shop, remarked, "There exists a customer base for the authentic taste of global cuisines, and then there are ones who would rather prefer an infusion of our local tastes. However, overall, the preference for international cuisines has seen a good acceptance rate from people."

One major addition from foreign cuisine that altered the bakery scene of Dhaka is the humble bread – apart from plain white bread, we now have a host of options to choose from including sourdough (which is the oldest bread in the world!), ciabatta, baguette, brioche, and a surge in liking for croissants.

Foreign influence in Dhaka's bakery scene has shaped it up for the better.

### From passionate bakers to entrepreneurs

Over the last few years, the introduction of e-commerce has made starting your own business extremely easy and affordable. Taking advantage of platforms as such, a surge in the number of home bakers turned entrepreneurs was seen. This was also fuelled by the pandemic when people started to explore food and try their hand at cooking.

Now, we see a lot of bakeries that are operating virtually and providing all sorts of delectable items, from humble homemade cookies to fancy multi-tiered wedding cakes. Making cakes that look like edible pieces of art using fondants and decorations got the cake business booming. From plain vanilla

pastries that we had during the '90s, we can now turn anything we imagine into a cake using fondants!

There are many bakers out there who started online out of sheer passion but then converted to brick-and-mortar stores based on their massive success, and one such example is Sugar Shots.

"It took us a few years, but we got there. Sugar Shots has moved out of their home kitchen and is now ready to bake from a commercial kitchen!" remarked Naba Habib Belim, co-owner of Sugar Shots.

More so, many avid bakers are now pursuing professional degrees in the culinary arts, something that was once upon a time unthinkable by many. This has produced several brilliant homegrown bakers; take The Flourist and Dessert Boutique by Nadia Lakhani for example.

### What is next on the table?

The bakery scene has evolved massively over the past few years, especially in the last three decades, and it continues to do so. While these changes came through, knowingly or unknowingly, we have embraced the coffee culture, and it seems like a promising practice that is here to stay.

Embracing the coffee culture so vastly can be credited to the new generation of people consisting of millennials and Gen Z, who are too busy to cook and are always on the go. Thus, it is foreseen that shortly, more pop-up bakeries will open up that offer food on the go – maybe a quick croissant, sandwich, etc. We are already seeing



this trend in Dhaka – think of the success of Waffle Up!

Apart from that, cloud kitchen is another phenomenon that has grasped the bakery scene of Dhaka. The advent of cloud kitchens has enabled so many keen bakers to turn their passion into a profession and provided a host of

options for people to choose from when it comes to ordering online. Cloud kitchens and coffee shops are mushrooming all over the city and it is a matter of time before pop-up stores jump on the bandwagon.

The bakery scene of Dhaka has seen massive progress and has come

a long way, a journey that was filled with several milestones and surprises. We cannot wait to see what the future holds!

By Fariha Amber  
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed  
Food: The Flourist

