

Culture Club by The Food Talk

The Food Talk, a popular Facebook group that is abuzz with food enthusiasts, restaurateurs, home cooks, and the like recently hosted a culture mixer called "Culture Club" on Saturday, 18 February, 2023. The idea of the event was for epicures from all backgrounds to converse and connect, while the stalls portrayed how a massive part of our culture is defined by food.

"Food is the biggest form of entertainment in Bangladesh, and we want to build conversations around culture and palate, which are reversible — culture can produce palate and vice versa," said Taskin Rahman, founder of The Food Talk.

Seldom do epicures get the chance to interact and mingle with foodies from all spheres such as chefs, restaurateurs, food enthusiasts, and cloud kitchen owners. Culture Club provided just the right platform for people with the same likings to get to know each other and the food they relish. More so, it also gave a chance to cloud kitchens to make a physical appearance and meet their customers in person.

The lineup constituted both local and international cuisines that gave people the opportunity to explore new and diverse palates all under one roof. Tri-State Eatery, Tiffinbox, and Dhaka Metro brought with them meals for all occasions including



tehari, jilapi, khichuri, chaap, and luchi. Complementing these, The Eastern Pickle Company displayed an impressive lineup of pickles.

"In our country, we are more inclined towards Western fast food, but our deshi food is no less, such as our very own shingara and samosa can make up our fast-food culture," shared Ashfaq Rahman Asif, who brought his brands Dhaka Metro and Arax to the event.

For Tripti Catering, it was a first-time appearance and they cooked up halwas of all shapes and colours.

Adding modernity to the event, Basic Kneads served an array of delicacies. As always, they had something completely new on the menu and used the event as their launching pad for a fresh orange crème croissant with caramelised orange slices.

B.B.Q Express gave guests a peek into delicacies from around Bangladesh that are rich parts of our culture, such as their beef and chicken mungdi, which is a staple food of the Marma community.

"Our food culture is still growing, and we are very privileged to have six seasons that



come with seasonal variety of food and colours. This enables us to have a seasonal menu where we use local and fresh ingredients," said

Arpon Changma, chef of B.B.Q Express.

For desserts, Banglar Mishti brought with them an array of delectable Bengali sweets and on the other hand, the delicious aroma wafting from Waffle Up invited visitors to try out their waffles on sticks. Other participants in the event were Couch Potato and Picnic.

Our food culture is constantly evolving and it has come a long way in the past decade. "The food scene has changed here massively. Now we have so many more options and cuisines, and an abundance of fusion food and street food!" exclaimed Tina, who visited Bangladesh after a decade.

Our food culture is unique and we take great pride in having a rich history in food. Culture Club provided the platform to explore new food and connect with people in the food industry, to celebrate the food that we all love and enjoy.

By Fariha Amber
Photo: The Food Talk

#PERSPECTIVE

Tea breaks and the rise in productivity at the office

A high-octane, high-pressure, 9-to-5 job, wrought with rivalry and competition can burn employees out sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, that is what most workplaces nowadays look like, and managers and employers must know how to break the tension from time to time and bring some team spirit and warmth into the atmosphere. They do this by luring employees into the pantry with cake, a creamy sugar bomb that gives people an instant spurt of happiness.

Associated with jolly occasions and milestones such as birthdays and weddings, a cake is an important addition to celebrations and get-togethers and can lend a competitive office space some cheer. A study conducted in the UK found that about 83 per cent of office-goers felt that having some cakes in the office pantry from time to time helped cut the tension and bring in employees from different departments in one room for conversation.

Having an informal space in which to reconnect with colleagues can act as a mood booster and enough research has shown that those who eat together show higher levels of co-operation, performance levels, and trust in each other.

Of course, one cannot discount the health negatives associated with the



cake culture at work. Research suggests that a third of all office employees stand to gain weight due to excessive sugar consumption, while for a 59 per cent of the employees, the perk makes it difficult to stick to a diet.

As advocates rally for a healthier



work environment for employees, there is another psychological concern that questions the value of cake in the pantry too many times a month or for too long in the day.

Imagine a situation where there is cake available all day long in the office

pantry, versus one in which the treat is available only for a 30-minute window. In which scenario would the office see its bonds strengthened, and in which, would employees be tempted to seek out their favourite co-workers to grab the dessert at a mutually convenient time?

For a cake to work its magic and bring about feelings of togetherness at work, there need to be more people in at the same time in the pantry. More than that, employees must be given time to look forward to the treat, instead of simply expecting after every few days. This means that the instances need to be surprises, and ones that are given sparingly.

In the end, however, it is important to realise that cake can only make the workplace pleasant, not happy. HR experts emphasise the need for employees to feel engaged and empowered in their jobs at all times in order to put their best foot forward at work. With healthy competition, empathetic leaders and an appropriately rewarding career trajectory, cake need not even be in the picture. On second thought, maybe it does!

By Munira Fidai
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