



SOJIB/29

ILLUSTRATION: SOJIB ROY

THE HEART OF THE HOME

How refrigerators have transformed our daily living experience

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Over the last few decades, refrigerators have transcended mere convenience to become an integral part of daily life in Bangladesh. From urban dwellings to remote rural areas, their affordability has ushered them into homes across the country.

Yet, their significance extends beyond their price tag. Refrigerators have emerged as the beating heart of the home, offering not just chilled beverages, but also a promise of convenience, freshness, and food safety.

Indeed, the refrigerator has woven itself seamlessly into the fabric of Bangladeshi life, touching every aspect of daily existence and enhancing our quality of life in ways both subtle and profound. It is a testament to the transformative power of innovation, and a silent yet indispensable companion in our homes, shaping our routines and rituals with every cool breath it exhales.

COOKING MADE EASY!

Imagine coming home after a long day of work and commuting. Cooking your dinner from scratch feels like the biggest burden. This is where a refrigerator has become our everyday companion. With a fridge, our families can buy more groceries for longer periods, store leftovers from meals, and reduce the number of shopping trips.

TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S LIVES

Refrigerators have also helped shape and transform traditional gender roles. A new Université de Montréal study, titled "Household Technology: Was it the Engine of Liberation?", reveals that modern appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators had a profound impact on 20th-century society. Plug-in conveniences transformed women's lives and enabled them to enter the workforce, says Professor Emanuela Cardia from the Department of Economics of the University. Bangladeshi women have similarly reaped the benefits of refrigerator technology.

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PREVENTING FOOD SPOILAGE

In a place like Bangladesh, where humidity levels are high and temperatures sometimes reach 40 degrees, food spoilage poses a critical issue. The solution came in the form of refrigerators, which help prolong the life of perishable items such as vegetables, fruits, meat, and dairy products. This not only limits food waste but also ensures a steady supply of fresh food.

Additionally, families can now purchase food in bulk at cheaper prices. Refrigerators have also made storing seasonal fruits and vegetables much easier. Thanks to them, some seasonal produce is now available throughout the year, whereas previously it would only be available during certain seasons.

PRESERVING HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Beyond just keeping food cold, the refrigerator has a profound impact on our health. Fresh produce, dairy, and proteins are kept safe to consume, preserving not just food but also our well-being. With the fridge, we can plan balanced meals that nourish our bodies and keep our immune systems strong.

FEASTS AND FUNCTIONS

As a nation that is always celebrating something, whether it's the countless Eid invitations or the occasional family functions, all food-related planning has been made easier with refrigerators. We can now cook some dishes, mostly desserts, ahead of the actual event and store them in the fridge. We now have the option to store the leftovers from these hefty feasts to save a few days of cooking as well. During Eid-ul-Adha, fridges serve us tremendously in storing the meat for later use or distribution.

KEEPER OF PRECIOUS MEMORIES

A fridge is often the hub of a home, where family members congregate multiple times a day. In a metaphorical sense, fridges are also a keeper of our fondest family memories that get passed on from one generation to the other.

The front is often adorned with children's artwork, magnets from family vacations, and schedules of busy lives. Each time we reach for something inside, we're greeted by a collage of family moments and milestones. It's a gallery of our lives, ever-changing and always growing.

It's amazing how quickly an object can become like family. Indeed, there isn't a day that goes by when we don't need a fridge.

KEEPING IT FRESH

Healthy and effective food preservation in the refrigerator

Imagine returning home after a relaxing weekend getaway, expecting to face the usual post-vacation blues. You open your fridge to find that the produce and leftovers you stored before leaving are still in peak condition, vibrant and fresh as if bought yesterday. Surprisingly, this isn't just a happy coincidence but the result of employing the right techniques for preserving food in your refrigerator. Effective fridge management extends the shelf life of your groceries and ensures they retain their nutritional value and taste.

AYMAN ANIKA

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FRIDGE'S LAYOUT

The first step to effective refrigeration is understanding your fridge's layout and temperature zones. Different sections have different climates, each suitable for various types of food. For example, upper shelves maintain more consistent temperatures and are ideal for drinks, ready-to-eat foods, and herbs.

It is important to note that the door is the warmest part of the fridge and should be reserved for condiments, juices, and other items less affected by slight temperature changes. Crisper drawers are designed for fruits and vegetables and can have different humidity settings.

PROPER AIR CIRCULATION

Good air circulation is vital. Try to avoid overpacking, as overcrowded shelves can block airflow, leading to uneven cooling and increased temperatures, which can affect the food's shelf life. A well-organised fridge not only ensures better air distribution but also helps you keep track of what you have, reducing the chance of overbuying and wastage.

In this regard, Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd, adds, "We use food-grade virgin plastic material instead of silicone, which helps keep food fresh. Our refrigerators incorporate Nano Health Care technology to maintain a hygienic environment."

PROPER FOOD PREPARATION

How you prepare your food before storing it can impact its shelf life. Saikat Azad, Category Head - TD Category at Transcom Electronics Ltd., informs, "Our models are equipped with state-of-the-art technology such as the Vacuum Sealed Compartment, Aero-care Vege Compartment, and Moisture-Guard Vegetable Compartment. Each feature is meticulously crafted to maintain optimal conditions within the fridge, ensuring your groceries remain fresh and nutritious for longer periods."

For long-term storage, blanch vegetables by briefly boiling them and then plunging them into ice water. This method kills bacteria and preserves color and



texture. Moreover, portion out large quantities of food before storing. This reduces the need to open and close containers frequently, which can lead to contamination and spoilage.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Handling produce can be tricky due to their diverse storage needs. For example, some fruits, like apples, emit ethylene gas that speeds up ripening in nearby produce. Keep them away from ethylene-sensitive items like lettuce and carrots.

Tahasinul Haque, Chief Business Officer at Walton Refrigerator, highlights that humidity primarily affects fruits and vegetables. "We have included humidity controller sliders in some of our models on the vegetable box cover that can be adjusted based on the contents. Other models feature built-in design elements to prevent excessive moisture accumulation or the drying out of vegetables," he says. Additionally, specially designed bags for vegetables and fruits help regulate air exposure, extending shelf life. Some items, like potatoes, onions, and tomatoes, fare better outside the fridge, as cold temperatures can change their texture and flavor.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Keeping your refrigerator clean and functioning optimally is crucial for maintaining the freshness and safety of your food. Begin by removing all items, which allows you to clean all surfaces thoroughly and check for expired or spoiled foods.

Wipe down shelves and drawers with a mild disinfectant and promptly address spills to prevent bacteria and mold growth. Regularly inspect all food items for signs of spoilage and discard anything that is expired or unsafe to eat.

Mastering your refrigerator's use can dramatically improve how long your food lasts and how nutritious and tasty it remains. By fine-tuning your storage practices - from correct placement to cleanliness and proper food wrapping - you can turn your fridge into a tool of culinary preservation, ensuring that every time you reach for a bite, it's as fresh and healthy as possible.