



#PERSPECTIVE

# How I gave Mohammadpur's kebabs my heart - and half my stomach

Do you know this feeling — you take a bite of something and for a few seconds, your brain just stops registering anything — only what's in your mouth? Sure, influencers/food bloggers have it at every new establishment that opens up under the sun, but I am talking about you, the ordinary real-life-ers, who have so much else going on in life that sensations like these are few and far between.

A benefit of my line of work came recently when I was tasked with reviewing Selim Kabab Ghor. Confession time: I happen to be a kebab fanatic, so much so that most people have found that my nickname rhymes with kebab. Perhaps, my love of kebabs is simply a divine will! Which is why it was considered criminal by many that I had never tried this place before.

The plan was to go on a Friday afternoon, but this is Dhaka, so nothing happens as planned. I finally managed to go with a friend on Monday after 9 PM. When we reached, something felt amiss. As far as I know, the shop is supposed to look a little more "rustic" i.e., barebones, but this looks like a proper brick-and-mortar shop. I figured we ended up on the wrong street in front of a copycat (more on that later), and after using our necks to turn around to see the other side of the road, our error was sorted; there was that rustic store I was



looking for.

I had hoped to ask some resident Mohammadpur friends if there were certain recommendations, but the thought came too late, so I decided it was best to order as much as humanly possible. We sat down, and I wanted to kick things off with the beef roll, while the rest of the order came.

I was being extremely professional, minus the wielding of a smartphone for the photos you see here. All that ended when I took that first bite of the roll. Suddenly, the noise of the busy street was gone, and my vision only had the roll and everything else was just white. The moment my senses returned, I realised the roll was gone and I was holding my phone with oily hands, completely forgetting to take pictures.

To be thorough (read: shameless glutton), we ordered beef and chicken sheek kebabs, chaaps, and rolls. The beef

sheek kebab, in particular, rewrote the world kebab order in my mind. Perfectly cooked over charcoal, along with their secret spice mix that only the owner knows, you honestly forget that humans are supposed to have finite stomach space if these are in front of you.

The chaaps were equally, but perhaps not as stratospheric head-blowingly good, and if you ask me, stick to chicken chaap, as I feel it had a better spice profile, as well as "juicier" meat.



While I am not into offal, my friend reported that the brain fry was exceptional, and far above other places he had them. Here, it tasted fresh with no hint of smell and an excellent mixture of spices.

As our mindless feasting was coming to a close, I decided to talk to the shopkeepers, as the store, which is now 46 years old and running, was somewhat empty. I am told that the first place I stopped, and thought was the copycat, was in fact, legit. The store

I ate in, focuses on charcoal cooking, hence they make the kebabs, whereas the other newer store fries with oil, hence they are in charge of the delectable chaaps we had.

When I asked when they close, because customers seemed to be thinning at 10:30 PM, he simply laughed, stating that the next rush hour would start any time now. As I stared at him perplexed, I suddenly saw armadas of motorcycles parking up and suddenly, there were more than 40 people coming in and ordering. Out of sheer greed, I ordered three more beef sheeks, and three chicken chaaps for takeaway, with the official excuse being, "for people at home" (they did get "some").

A lot of you reading this have probably been to Selim's at some time or another, and wondering why I am making such a fuss about "yesterday's news". Sure, I didn't discover Selim's Kebab Ghor earlier, but I see it as a good thing. You see, most people who have known of it for years, are already "sick and tired" of it, and are on the lookout for something new — call it a fad — but apparently, this place no longer satisfies their palate. In my opinion they are wrong because this place is splendid, but everyone is entitled to their opinions, however wrong they may be.

As for me, "missing out" till now suits me just fine; when you are 37 and life has disappointments in every corner, you need some joy to balance things out, and I just added a fresh new joy to my life, so who's lost out?

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