



## #FOOD REVIEW

# Why everyone's talking about MONA MAMA'S EGG-TOPPED HALEEM

So recently, there has been this haleem on Mohammadpur's Salimullah Road that has taken social media by storm. You know the one I'm talking about—the bowl of thick, aromatic treat, perfectly measured with three pieces of beef and topped with a small, boiled quail egg!

Curious, I decided to see if the hype was real! So, following the buzz, I rushed to Salimullah Road, the street already famous for its kababs and spice-filled air. At the centre of it all was Mona Mama, the man of the moment, serving bowl after bowl to an eager crowd. The excitement in the air was indeed palpable.

The interesting fact I realised after reaching there was that this was not some new craze; Mona Mama has been selling it here for over 30 years! His shop name is Mona Mamar Haleem and Soup, owned by Abdul Mannan, who is basically our Mona Mama.

So, I approached him with a polite smile, hoping to learn more about the

inspiration behind his unique addition of a quail egg in his haleem. However, he quickly dismissed my curiosity with a casual, "Ekhonna mama, pore (Not now, dear, later!)" Slightly embarrassed, I just stopped there and waited until the crowd thinned out. Meanwhile, I asked some of his customers for their opinion.

"Social media brought me here," said Nabila, a university student, snapping photos of her steaming bowl. "But one bite, and I know I'll be back even without the hype. It's actually *that* good."

After taking one spoonful, I realised that she was not exaggerating. One bite of meat and egg in, and I was hooked too. The dish was thick, flavourful, and perfectly spiced, with the quail egg adding a unique touch that made it feel like comfort food fit for a winter evening.

"Honestly, the egg makes all the difference," said Sanchay, a corporate executive who had come straight from work. "It's what takes this from good to

unforgettable." Sanchay almost summed it up perfectly, but for me, it's not just the egg but also that balance of beef. Those three pieces changed the game for me.

Mona Mama's shop is not grand. It's a small, humble roadside shop that cannot accommodate more than 25 people at once! And apart from his famous haleem, Mama also serves a signature chicken soup with wonton that has people coming back for more. But here's the catch: Mama has a quirky rule—he won't serve anyone until he is inside and seated. So, if you are unlucky, you will end up waiting outside, watching people enjoy their meal while you twiddle your thumbs and pray for them to leave. And let me tell you, waiting can get pretty frustrating!

A customer, clearly fed up, shouted, "Why don't you get a bigger shop, Mama? Koto khon daray thaka jay?" (How long do I have to wait?) Mama responded without missing a beat, "Bharar teka den Mama,

dokan baraitasi! (Give me the rent; I'll expand the shop!)"

Mama's response got me choking on my own laughter, and I was about to spill my haleem on me.

Finally, when Mona Mama got some time off from serving, he opened up about the quail egg idea. Well, that was not quite opening up. Honestly, I was expecting some deep, dramatic backstory. But no, Mama just casually dropped it, like it was no big deal: "One fine morning, I just thought—quail egg on my haleem!"

And that was it. No grand speech, no big reveal. Just an idea that popped into his head! Disappointing, right?

But whether it's the flavour, the charm of Mona Mama himself, or the social media frenzy, this haleem is officially a sensation. And if you have not tried it yet, trust me—you are missing out!

**By Jannatul Bushra**  
**Photo: Jannatul Bushra**