

#FOOD & RECIPES

NIHARI'S FINAL CALL: Respond before winter waves goodbye!

Forgive me, readers, for luring you with the villain of every cholesterol chart — nihari! Drenched in ghee and spices, this popular dish is made with the feet and bone marrow of cow, goat, or sometimes lamb (hence their alternative name, paya). If beef is considered a cholesterol bomb, nihari is a grenade. There's a reason why some people steer clear of it — and honestly, their arteries might thank them every day. However, this slow-cooked meat stew is the kind of delicious sin we all are willing to commit, aren't we?

We are only human — flawed, hungry, and blissfully defiant. And let's face it, nihari is not just a dish, it's an emotion that warms the body and the soul. One spoonful bite or sip of this decadent dish is worth every raised eyebrow from the doctor (in my opinion, of course!). Besides, winter is the ultimate green light for guilt-free indulgence.

Now, as the season is packing its bags and waving its chilly goodbyes, it's practically begging you for one last delicious hurrah. Be it at Lalbagh's famous roadside eateries or Puraan Dhaka's beloved Peshwarain — a bowl of nihari with naan or paratha is all you need on a foggy winter morning. Because really, if you are not diving into a bowl of nihari during winter, are you even doing winter justice?

We spoke to a few die-hard nihari enthusiasts from the city about their take on the dish as a winter delight, and their thoughts were as oily as nihari itself!

"Dhaka's winter barely lasts, but my love for nihari knows no season!" says Minhaz Ahmed, a middle-aged, corporate executive. "I grew up in Lalbagh. Having nihari in the early winter morning with chaler ruti (flat rice flour bread) is a ritual in my house. Just squeeze lemon juice in it and have it with flaky paratha or ruti. You, too, will forget to keep your cholesterol in check."

For many like Minhaz Ahmed, nihari is an essential winter ritual. For others, it is an essential year-round ritual.

Then, of course, there were those who saw it as an act of winter survival.

"When winter gives you chills, fight back with a bowl of nihari. It's self-defense!" declared Ismot Hasnain. Another fan, Rakibul Islam, joked about how this indulgence doubles as a workout: "Eating nihari in winter is my

cardio — lifting the large bones counts, right?"

And the romanticised foodie, Jemim, said, "The first time I heard Brooklyn Nine-Nine's Charles Boyle ramble about the 12 components of food satisfaction, I thought, 'This guy's nuts.' But then I had nihari for breakfast and realised Boyle was onto something."

"Food isn't just about chewing and swallowing — it's a full-blown sensory symphony, and trust me, nihari hits every note! I never miss having it on a chilly morning."

Hamidur Rahman, a sixty-something retired college teacher, shares with a cheeky grin, "My doctor has strictly instructed me to keep my cholesterol in check, and I do my best. Every morning, I jog around Dhanmondi Lake to stay healthy. But when it's time for breakfast, I head straight to Star Kabab, where paratha and nihari are non-negotiable. It's a national breakfast."

Well, you have to admit, Rahman does deserve a little treat after all that jogging. For those who are unaware, it is assumed that nihari's story begins in the opulence of the Mughal kitchens, where it was prepared as a powerful breakfast for soldiers to ensure they had the energy they needed for the day.

So, honestly, can we really blame Rahman and the others? After all, what's life without a little indulgence on a chilly morning? Because let's face it — surviving in Dhaka is no less than fighting a war. And if Hamidur Rahman's weapon of choice is a plate of paratha and nihari, we'd say he's earned his victory breakfast, so should you all.

Any cardiologist reading this, please forgive us!

By Jannatul Bushra
LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

