Star LIFE Style

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 41, TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025, *CHAITRA 4, 1431 BS*
A publication of The Daily Star
E-mail: lifestyleds@yahoo.com, 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215

#REVIEW

The great jilapi debate: Chikon vs. mota

Have you ever thought about how jilapi manages to divide a nation? If you haven't, then let us push you to think that way. Despite sharing the same fundamental ingredients of ghee, flour, and sugar, jilapi, with its two swirly variations, has somehow become the most controversial item on the iftar table. Just drop a mota jilapi into the murimakha and watch the chikon jilapi lovers storming out like an opposition party boycotting a parliamentary session. But let's not go into politics now; today we are here to shed light on this age-old debate of chikon vs. mota jilapi!

To understand the pulse of this debate better, we have asked some jilapi loyalists for their takes. The results? A swirly explosion of opinions!

"Chikon jilapi fried in ghee is the real deal. It's crunchy and does not feel like you are chewing on a rolled-up sponge," argues chikon jilapi loyalist, Ismot Hasnine. "Mota jilapi is for people who don't understand jilapi. It's like choosing a sweater in the summer—completely unnecessary!"

Hasnine's friend Rakibul Islam, a health-conscious individual, is also rallying behind chikon jilapi. "If I'm going to have something deep-fried and sugary, at least let it have some structural integrity," says Rakibul. "Mota Jilapi just collapses under its weight, like my willpower in front of a plate of biriyani."

Jemim, a seasonal writer and student, says, "Thick jilapi is just fried dough pretending to be dessert. True jilapi should have an airy crisp, a delicate crunch that melts in your mouth — not sit in your stomach like an edible brick."

Biva, a student says, "Chikon Jilapi is like poetry in a spiral—light, delicate, and doesn't make me feel guilty after eating five—or ten," says Biva. "I absolutely love it with rabri."

Now, on the other side of the battlefield, mota jilapi fans scoff at the so-called "crunch revolution" of chikon jilapi!

"Chikon jilapi? That's just a brittle excuse for dessert!" says Nusrat Shahana, who firmly believes bigger is better. "A real jilapi should be fat, juicy, and unapologetically soaked in shira (syrup). If your fingers aren't sticky, are you even eating jilapi?" Shahana says.

Then there's Hasan, a banker who swears by the slow enjoyment of a thick jilapi. "Chikon jilapi is over too quickly! Mota jilapi is an experience. You take a bite, you chew, you let the syrup melt in your mouth—it's practically therapy!" he declares.

"Mota jilapi is real substance, not just crispy air! Mota jilapi gives you something to chew on—literally!" says Tanvir, a snack champion!

Even children are in on the debate. "Chikon jilapi breaks too quickly! I like how mota jilapi lasts longer," says little Ayaan, with a mouth full of syrup.

Who knew that a simple concoction of sugar syrup, ghee, flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and an ungodly amount of oil could ignite such a passionate rivalry? There are accusations of moral superiority on both sides — mota jilapi lovers call their rivals superficial, chasing empty aesthetics over real taste.

Chikon jilapi fans retaliate by calling the other side lazy, and unwilling to appreciate culinary craftsmanship. Meanwhile, the undecided few simply eat whatever jilapi is available, watching the debate unfold with amusement.

So, where do you stand in this swirly debate? Are you Team Chikon or Team Mota? Or are you the rare soul who believes all jilapis deserve equal love? Whether thick or thin, soaked or crispy, one thing is for certain: no jilapi escapes the ultimate fate of being devoured!

By Jannatul Bushra
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed