



# OLD DHAKA WEDDINGS

## Of flavours and traditions

Star Lifestyle, in partnership with the Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, brings you a flavourful journey into the culinary traditions of Old Dhaka, from the grand feasts of traditional weddings to the vibrant rooftop gatherings of Shakrai.

We also delve into the distinguished food heritage of Dhaka's Nawab family, whose kitchens once set the gold standard for culinary excellence in the region. Dive in to discover more about these rich traditions



and the timeless flavours that continue to define Old Dhaka's identity.

In Old Dhaka, while couples unite in holy matrimony, family and friends celebrate

over a hearty helping of polao and meat dishes. Kachchi biriyani has emerged as the quintessential wedding dish, but a flashback to the bygone days will probably remind one of saffron-infused murg polao. So, how did Old Dhaka's palate change from a love for decadent chicken recipes to a mutton staple? This is that story — one of taste, family, and much more.

### A history of flavours

From Chawk Bazar, an eight-minute walk through Jail Road will take you to our destination: 48 Abul Hasnat Road. Residents of this establishment are the illustrious Syed family. Their household is a witness to the confluence of culture that has taken place in the old town, as they have lived in this same location for more than three centuries.

"If you talk about wedding food, you must appreciate that assimilation of

traditions has taken place and there is no longer an exclusive 'Dhakaiya menu.' This was not the case even five decades ago," said Syed Ahmed Ali, who himself is a food connoisseur. "True, certain customs are still very much in place, but at the end of the day, it is kachchi, chicken roast, and rezala that reign supreme," he added with a smile.

Perhaps, the diversity in an Old Dhaka wedding lies not in the preparation of the dishes, but in its epicurean culture, how a long list of food-related rituals makes it the centre stage of all Old Dhaka weddings.

### Unique events, delectable foods

Zeenat Parveen serves as the president, Jahanara Foundation Museum located at Bangshal and has been a keen observer of the Dhakaiya lifestyle for decades.

"Weddings are an elaborate affair for the people of old Dhaka, starting with the paanchini, jamai khawon, balabali,