

ELEGANTLY INTELLIGENT

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The hedonists of Dhaka

You will spot them everywhere — at all upscale parties, openings, holidays, weddings, receptions, birthdays, and everything else in between. Dressed to the nines in season's latest threads and made up beyond belief by the makeup artist everyone wants to get dolled up by but can't ever get an appointment with, these ladies are the denizens of the Dhaka social scene!

Usually moving in packs, their snooty noses turn up at the sight of a lesser mortal dressed in last season's kaftan or a dated designer handbag. Flaunting the latest it bag and diamond-encrusted watches, they sure look the part of well-heeled socialites. I will give them that!

One might argue that nothing is wrong with having a great fashion sense and affinity with designers' duds. In all honesty, there isn't. Who doesn't want to look their absolute best, especially in the age of social media when appearance matters the most?

And then an incident comes to mind that I had the misfortune of witnessing. There I was, at yet another sangeet, sipping *gur er cha* and enjoying my *bhapa pitha* while listening to a well-known Indian artist crooning away, when all of a sudden, I realised, I was sitting next to a pair of aforementioned well-heeled, chirpy little birdies (hawks more like!) regarding every guest passing by.

Snippets of their conversation came into my earshot (lest one accuses yours truly of eavesdropping!), which essentially was a discussion at length about who wore what. Regarding each lady present, they were



having a grand laugh about how some of them were, a) repeating old designer outfits, b) wearing 'inspired' dresses and c) worst offenders by their standards, wearing generic clothing!

Gasps and shudders ensued in varying degrees, which left me incredibly amused at first.

What followed after this policing turned my amusement into horror when I noticed them joining other members of their clique, pointing at some guests and laughing out loud at their poor fashion choices, much to my chagrin. And this was not the only instance such misfortune befell me, mind you. Time and time again, similar mockery has been made of lesser-dressed beings around me on various occasions.

Such is the pitfall of hedonism — in pursuit of the finer things in life, one loses one's head and starts feeling superior to others.

My darling readers, do not misunderstand me. At the risk of being stoned by some of you, let me clarify my stance.

In 2026, when all has been said and done, surely how one dresses and looks should not be the only marker of one's personality? Is it not high time we move on from such petty nonsense and start to care about deeper things like how kind a person is, what the good qualities they possess and how someone makes others smile?



What is it about some stylish women in Dhaka that the moment they spot a person dressed in simple clothes, their claws come out and crave blood? Have we become so depraved in our thirst to keep up with Indian and Pakistani fashion that our age-old Bangladeshi values of compassion and genteel ways are behind us?

Perhaps, in the era of late-night dopamine hits from doom-scrolling mindless TikToks, we have lost our sense of integrity.

Bangladeshis are known all over the world for being culturally superior, with a rich legacy of gifted writers, musicians, poets and artists and yet our collective love for literature, music and art is dying at an alarming pace. We are slowly but surely, in our continuing struggle to look like the trending Indian or Pakistani 'it' girl, losing our uniqueness, our own essence.

In our relentless hunger and pursuit of appearing fashionable, are we losing our conscience? Or, maybe I am asking too much of the 'Gen Z', so engrossed in being woke that they have lost their sense of identity? Only time will tell.

In the meantime, let us enjoy all the *gur er cha* and *bhapa pitha* at yet another 'sangeet' while enjoying super hit Hindi and Pakistani dance numbers!

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan

#FOOD & RECIPES

Pineapple on pizza isn't a crime—or is it?

If you consider yourself a food enthusiast, then you surely are no stranger to the pineapple on pizza debate. While some refer to it as a culinary revolution, others describe it as a complete abomination driven by gluttony. So, today, let's delve into the controversy of melted cheese and tropical rebellion to understand why it divided humanity into two clans.

Hawaiian Pizza, the centre of discord, was first invented in Canada in 1962, topped with pineapple, tomato, mozzarella cheese, and a choice of meat. Since then, a group devoured it like a celestial delicacy, whereas others loathed its mere aroma.

"I just don't get what all the fuss is about. Why do people keep going on about mixing salty and sweet?" Anik, a 21-year-old, stuffed the last bit of Hawaiian pizza into his mouth and said, "I mean, haven't you ever tried *doi-fuchka* or salted caramel popcorn?" he grimaced.

Perhaps a sweet fruit over pizza is the source of all the hate. Or it could be that some people can't train their taste buds enough to tolerate the sticky bits bathing in cheese and tomato. The cheese melts on



the soft crust in a while. But the pineapple remains smug all through, oozing sugary syrup all over the pizza. Critics insist this is not just a topping, but an act of sabotage. Thus, they shoo the pineapple away.

However, those who scream "authenticity" are just fanciful, or what the Gen-Z would say "delulu," because pizza has already gone through numerous evolutions in the course of time. Stuffed-crust, deep dish, gluten-free, or cauliflower crust are not the ideas the people of Naples came up with. It seems a bit unfair how these are called culinary jazz, leaving the poor cheerful pineapple bits to all the hate.

When asked about it, Nancy, a

psychotherapist, took a deep breath and answered, "You know, I'm very, very empathetic, I don't care what atrocity you do with your food. You can go eat that custard; I won't judge you."

Meanwhile, the pro-pineapple rebels chime in by saying that pineapple on pizza represents how life should be — improvised, bold, and slightly irksome to the purists. They wholeheartedly believe that ordering a Hawaiian pizza, while ignoring all the eye rolls and comments on being a lunatic, needs guts. On top of that, when the baked pieces of sunshine touch your senses, the pizza slice does not remain just a treat; it becomes an experience.

Ayan, a software engineer, with a questionable number of pizza boxes scattered around his room, shrugged and said, "Pineapple on pizza is not a mistake. It's science. The acidity cuts through the grease, the sweetness crashes into the salt, and suddenly, the pizza isn't just food — it's this awesome balance of taste."

The war of words keeps on going, but some deal with it like mature adults. Shahna, a self-proclaimed connoisseur

has had enough of it and said, "What truly fascinates me is the intensity. They speak about pineapple on pizza the way others speak about ethics or politics; with narrow eyes and raised voices," she shook her head in dismay, "Someone says, 'I'm just saying,' right before saying something extremely unnecessary. Meanwhile, the pizza gets cold; the real tragedy no one cares about," she added.

Between all these, the truth is indeed boring; taste is subjective. Some enjoy experimenting with flavours, while the rest are inclined towards the traditional palate. Neither side is superior, and neither of them has ultra-developed gustatory cells. It "depends," sometimes on the mood, sometimes on the company.

In the end, let's all have our food in peace — because life is already chaotic enough without putting a moral crisis on a slice of pizza. Just be sure not to order a Hawaiian pizza for anyone on a special day without knowing their preference, and you should be good to go.

By KT Humaira
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