



#FOOD & RECIPES

Bangladeshi-origin Sabina Khan of “Flavour Lab” Steps into MasterChef UK 2026 Spotlight

The 22nd series of MasterChef UK 2026 has just begun, and one contestant is already grabbing attention: Bangladeshi-origin Sabina Khan, the person behind the popular Instagram page Sabina’s Flavour Lab. She is capturing attention with a journey that is a mixture of heritage, sustainability, and culinary imagination.

Born in Bangladesh and now based in the UK, Sabina Khan’s story is as layered as the dishes she creates on one of the world’s most competitive cooking stages. She described herself as a “global flavour explorer”, a phrase she used to explain herself during her interview that perfectly portrays her culinary identity.

“What you are eating on the plate should have ultra-immersive flavour,” she said, highlighting that her focus is not just on fusion or labels but the depth of the food. For Khan, cooking is not about boundaries. She believes different foods can co-exist on one plate because it is more about the flavours and connection instead of just a simple dish.

The food journey, however, was deeply connected to a life of movement and exposure. Growing up in Bangladesh, studying across India, completing graduation in the United States, and later settling down in the UK, Khan’s culinary lens formed cultures across continents.

“I got a lot of exposure to different cuisines in different cultures,” she shared. Also explained how her mother’s diverse cooking back in Bangladesh first sparked a curiosity in her.

That curiosity eventually transformed into Sabina’s Flavour Lab, which she describes as both a creative space and an

experimental kitchen.

“It is called a lab because I want to have the option to experiment,” she said. “Sometimes I make mistakes, but then I start again to build the recipe.” For Sabina, food is all about the progress of learning rather than perfection.

Sabina Khan’s approach to living a sustainable life is equally personal. Working as an environmental consultant, she feels a need to really expand those values into her cooking.

“In Bangladeshi culture, it is all about sustainability,” she said, pointing to the traditional dishes like bharta as an example of resourcefulness. “Bhortas originally came from leftovers. We were always trying to use up what we have available in our homes.”

This philosophy also moulded her everyday kitchen habits.

“If I buy a chicken, I am going to use all the parts,” she shared, describing how nothing goes to waste in her kitchen, from chicken skin to the bone for stock — everything is used for different recipes. This practice is not modern sustainability; it’s her inherited wisdom!

Sabina Khan’s Masterchef UK 2026 journey began with an emotional return to a dream that she once had to abandon. Sixteen years ago, she had applied to the competition bar, but due to her pregnancy, she had to withdraw. This year, Khan was encouraged by her children.

“When I got the call, I felt like God was reaching out to me,” she said, describing it as a moment of destiny.

In her first round, she presented lentil and onion fritters — peyaju — a staple dish, a deeply familiar and loved Bangladeshi dish, especially during Ramadan and moments of gathering.

“British citizens have had onion bhaji or dal bora before, but they have not had these two things together in one dish,” she said.



The judges, Grace Dent and Anna Haugh, were shocked and highly impressed with peyaju that one of them wanted to rename it to “bullets of joy”. This dish secured her a place among the top contestants advancing in the competition.

In the quarter-final round, she chose to present a very creative and experimental dish, “harmony salad”. She combined elements like falafel, kala chana, and quail eggs with pickled beetroot, mustard oil dressing, and garnished with garlic using a French technique and muri on the side. This dish was her attempt to show how a mix of cultures can be together on one plate.

Despite the immense pressure of the competition, Sabina Khan describes the experience as transformative.

“You press yourself to do something new, you will learn so many things from it,” she said, explaining that once she entered the competition, she found herself growing

and learning in unexpected ways. “I am heading into the 50s now, and I started a new chapter of my life, a new career,” she further added.

Khan’s ambitions expand beyond MasterChef. She hopes to publish a cookbook rooted in her “Flavour Lab” philosophy, create her culinary series and also continue writing about the history behind a food.

“I don’t want it to be just a Bangladeshi cookbook,” she shared. “I want it to be a flavour-exploring cookbook where you can see every flavour of the world.”

She spoke passionately about empowering Bangladeshi women in food, especially those whose cooking skills remain unrecognised.

“There are women in every corner of Bangladesh who are amazing cooks, who are not using their talent enough and earning money from it,” she said. She further added, “Why can’t they try to become professional chefs or start a catering business?”

As 22nd series of MasterChef UK 2026 unfolds over the coming weeks, Sabina Khan’s journey is clearly more than a competition. It is about identity, memory, sustainability, and flavours. We are sending her best wishes from Bangladesh and eagerly waiting to see her wonderful journey ahead.

You can watch MasterChef UK 2026 on BBC iPlayer and on BBC One.

By Faria Nowshin Tazin
Photo: Courtesy