Dhaka's Best Bread launches at Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport

Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport launched Dhaka's Best Bread, a range of artisanal sourdoughs and baguettes, at its Connexions venue on World Bread Day, 16 October.

James Goldman, deputy high commissioner and development director at the British High Commission, Dhaka, was chief guest. Sakib Ershad, the commission's director of trade and investment, was guest of honour.







Ashwani Nayar, area general manager of IHG South West Asia and cluster general manager of Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport, said the idea began earlier this year, during a bread tasting in the hotel's bakery. Chef Philip had brought out hot rolls straight from the oven.

That tasting settled it. "We really wanted to stake a claim to Dhaka's best bread," Nayar said. The aim, he added, was a bread that carries tradition and heritage and can stand beside any in the world.

Romano Kreutz, the cluster director of culinary, said the loaves would be baked fresh each day and served throughout the day, not only at breakfast. Guests could eat them at the hotel or take them home.

Nayar traced bread from the flat, unleavened loaves of this region to the larger, leavened breads that arrived with European influence. "What could be better than bringing Dhaka's best bread to Dhaka?" he asked.

The project, he said, would not stop at a bread counter. "It's going to be the launch of a new era."

Philip Gomes, the cluster executive pastry chef, presented five signature breads, each pairing traditional baking with local ingredients. The Dhaka Sour Bread starts with a flour-and-water starter left for three to four days, which gives a chewy crumb and a crisp crust.

A multigrain loaf uses about eight grains and seeds, including millet, barley, sesame, sunflower, and pumpkin seeds, with local honey such as Sundarbans or mustard honey. A third contains quinoa, chia, and oats soaked overnight. A savoury loaf carries roasted garlic and provolone, and a soft bread is made with coconut milk, fresh turmeric, and ginger.

Gomes said about 80 per cent of the bakery's products use the same mother dough. A sourdough takes roughly four days from starter to loaf, including a night proofing in the chiller.

A sixth option lets guests design their own loaf. They can tell the chef whether they want it nuttier, sweeter, or sourer, and the order stays on record. "Your bread, your way," Nayar said.

Custom orders need between 8 and 72 hours, depending on the bread. "If you want something that requires effort, then that effort requires time," he said. Gluten-free versions could follow, depending on how guests respond.

Kreutz said the team gave trial baskets to regular guests before the launch and took their feedback. That led to local accompaniments such as caramel, pineapple cinnamon marmalade and local honey.

The tasting at the event also included sandwiches and dips, among them tomato chutney and cream cheese.

Tastes, Kreutz said, had changed. Bread in Bangladesh once meant mostly milk bread and toast, but now "people are more open and enjoying the taste."

Nayar said IHG is a British company working with its local partner, United Group, which caught the interest of the British High Commission's trade office. Beyond RMG, he said, food is an important part of trade between the two countries.

He likened the idea to the corner bakeries of his childhood. Children carried dough from home, and the baker knew each family's taste on sight. "Bread as bonding," he said.

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