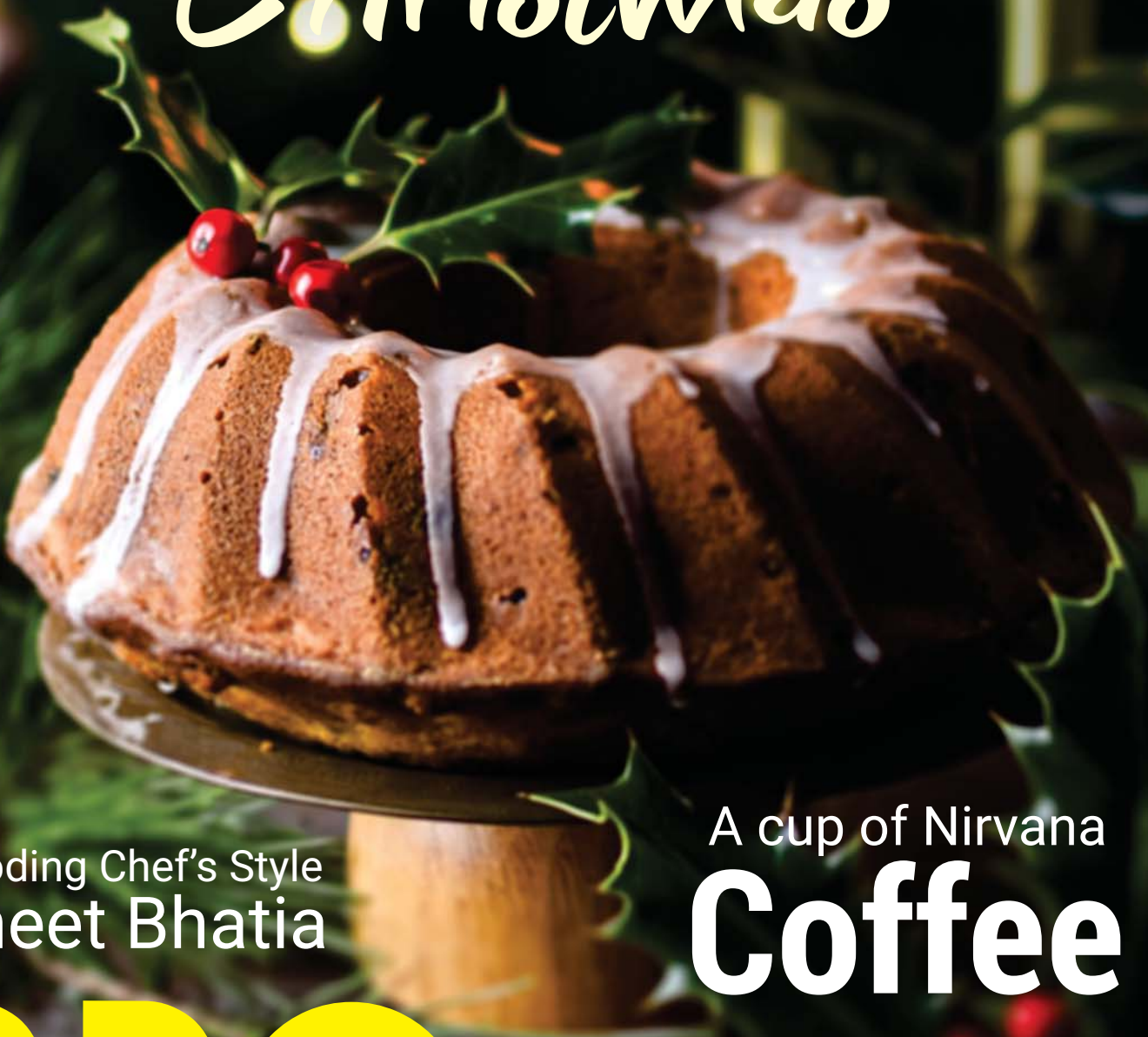


foodism

DECEMBER 2020 | ISSUE 7

We wish you a desi
Christmas



Decoding Chef's Style
Vineet Bhatia

A cup of Nirvana
Coffee

BBQ

WINTER
COCKTAILS

foodism



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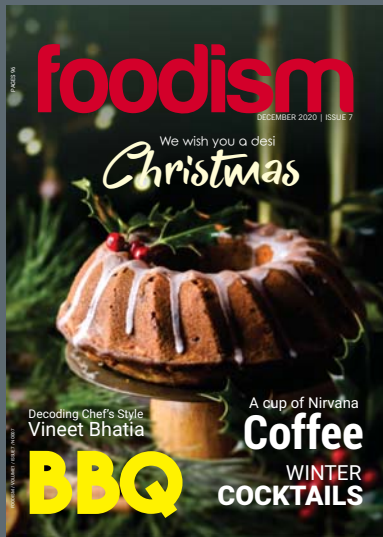
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Dear Food-fanatics,

Congratulations on getting through 2020!

I think all of us deserve a hearty pat on the back to have navigated this uniquely dysfunctional year successfully.

On our part, as you may have noticed, we have managed to keep ourselves thoroughly occupied throughout 2020. From the launch of the magazine, to a brand new website with a number of upgraded functionalities, to an even stronger social media footprint, Foodism has continued to grow from strength to strength.

The November issue saw a lot of love come its way from our loyal readers. The Diwali lead story was very well received, so were the features like High-on-Chai as well as the Kashmiri Pandit Gastronomy. It is these stories that give us a great insight into the kind of food content that the readers really enjoy. And this understanding has been crucial in helping us create our soon-to-be launched mobile and web application to unite food lovers and professionals.

This month's issue is special not just because we are bidding adieu to a year that is on the blacklist of half the world, but also because of one merry little reason – Christmas! December is synonymous with Christmas and New Year's and to continue with the spirit of celebrations we are thrilled to bring forth our December issue.

In other news, our Festive Bakes contest for Christmas has seen some incredible submissions, and we can't wait to share them with you! foodism.xyz has seen some amazing recipes being shared, and I sincerely hope you are one of them. As more and more home chefs, and food lovers, join the bandwagon, we continue to work tirelessly to make the Foodism experience even more valuable for you.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that 2020 is ending on a happy note for you, and that 2021 brings with it all the happiness that you desire!



Vyom Shah

Vyom Shah
FOUNDER, FOODISM




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**HOME CHEF RECIPES
SHARED**



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FOOD

In The Time Of Corona



It was a muggy March afternoon when the news broke – India was going into lockdown.

The scenes that followed are firmly etched in the collective consciousness of the nation. As families rushed home, stripping grocery stores, and vegetable markets on their way, it soon became apparent we were in for the long haul.

If people were to be divided solely on the basis of what they ate, the lockdown gave us two breeds – the cooks and the wannabe cooks! While there was one section that was cooking up a storm in their kitchens and on social, there was another that was struggling to get the basic khichdi right. What was common, however, among them all was the need and desire to be cooking their own meals.

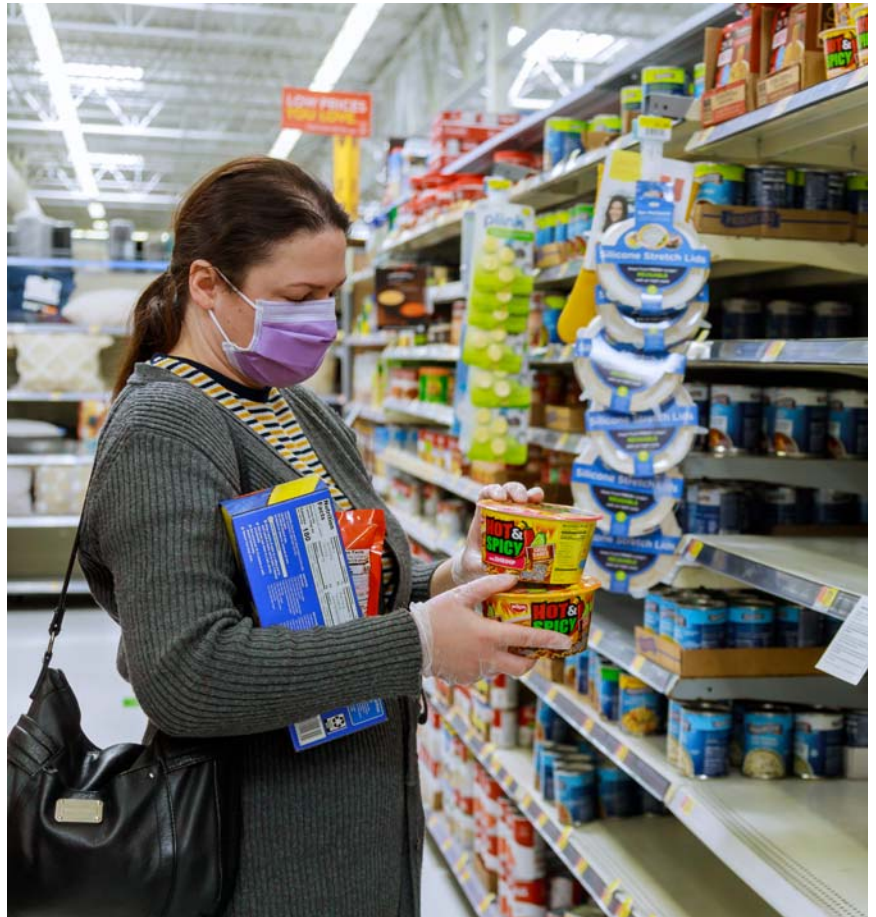
Matthew Merrit-Harrison, Chair of FSCI UK and Ireland said, “At the beginning of the pandemic, you couldn’t buy toilet rolls or antibacterial spray. And then within a couple of weeks you couldn’t buy flour. There was a huge surge in home cooking and people making their own bread. Now that may continue if people have enjoyed it, but it depends how life develops for them.”

From Browsing to Focused Shopping

As prices surged, and the risk of infection became more prominent, the way we shopped for provisions changed drastically. Instead of taking our time browsing the shelves for the best produce, we began working from focused shopping lists. As soon as home deliveries of groceries began, more and more people began ordering online.



The typical Indian habit of storing an year's supply of pulses and grains came to the rescue of many a household. "With the conflicting information surrounding how to clean vegetables, we instinctively shifted to pulses and stored grains. Sprouted pulses, dal and other variants became common fare for us." Says Krishna Thakar, a tuition teacher in Ahmedabad. "Shopping almost felt like walking into war, which is why we kept our trips to the store at a minimum and made do with what we had stored in our pantry. That led to some very interesting experiments."



"Walking into a store changed completely. As compared to the pre-corona leisurely browsing of what's available, the focus was on purchasing what was required and head home." Says Charvi Brahmhatt, a furniture designer from Vadodara. "On my part, I was largely dependent on ordering groceries online. It was no longer a matter of options, but of what was available."



Food as Medicine

As the supply of fancier superfoods like kale, chia seeds and berries dwindled to barely a trickle, Indians began looking homeward for healthier options. Ayurvedic kadhas became the national drink and it was almost as if the whole nation collectively rediscovered the miracle plant that is Tulsi.

While the nation continued to indulge in comfort foods trying to stave of the oppressive paranoia of the time, for once it was balanced out by a conscious awareness of the need to eat healthy. As the news spread that vitamin C helps boost immunity, vitamin pills began selling like hot cakes, and the prices of citrus rich lemons and oranges soared.

“Hot water with lemon and honey was a staple in our house during the lockdown. Considering that there was only the pantry to find all the healthy ingredients we wanted, we resorted to identifying the best products on hand to help us boost our immunity.” Says Anjali Dulwani, a higher education professional from Ahmedabad. “Of course, packaged food like biscuits and cakes was definitely a part of our intake, we were also acutely aware of consuming healthier, protein rich and



immunity boosting items.”

The nation as a whole began to develop a whole new respect for locally sourced ingredients and the importance of health-positive foods. Jaggery and ghee replaced traditional sugar consumption and wheat was just as easily replaced by bajra and other healthier grains.



Meet the Kitchen

One of the salient features of the lockdown was the complete unavailability of restaurant-ready food. With no eateries, cafes or food carts open, and provision stores working with bare minimum supplies, it was no surprise that many turned to the kitchen with a new fervour.

“Before the lockdown I was completely dependent on my cook. But since there was no such option during the lockdown, my husband and I began cooking together and slowly got the hang of it.” Shruti Prabhala, a freelance digital marketer from Delhi. “One of our first attempts, a pumpkin dish, turned out to be so spicy that no amount of tomato puree could help it. But with the help of YouTube along with tips from my mother and friends, we managed to get pretty decent in the kitchen.”

Instagram is flooded with stories of people who used the pandemic to increase their familiarity with the kitchen. In a world where you are homebound with no option of being able to order food, cooking your own becomes a near mandate.

Home Chefs Unleashed

One of the biggest effects that the pandemic had was to push foodies to pursue their passion of becoming hardcore home-chefs and food bloggers.

“While I used to bake regularly, the pandemic pushed me into doing this in a more focused way. With more time on hand I was able to try out more recipes. It was then that I started my baking venture. Honestly, if there wasn't a pandemic I would never have done this.” Says Aditya Bhardwaj, an engineer turned baker from Delhi.

The lockdown was a tough time for everyone, but tough times often become the fodder for great ideas. As people increased their interaction with food and began spending more time in the kitchen, more and more people began to

explore and share their journey with food. Many among these even took the plunge to start their own food business.

“I was working in event marketing for some time, but during the pandemic I decided to go ahead and start baking full-time. During the first unlock I started baking professionally on order. I realized that more and more people wanted to indulge but do it safely, and at a time like this home-chefs had an added advantage.” Says Krisha Zaveri, a baker from Ahmedabad.



Food – A Necessary Indulgence

While the pre-COVID era was replete with food bloggers and home chefs, the pandemic added a whole new twist to it. It was no longer merely about flaunting a well-made dish at a restaurant, the focus shifted to cooking at home

and cooking healthy.

Our relationship with food has seen a hastened evolution over the period of the pandemic. From widespread food insecurity and panic buying, to a large-scale focus on health and wellness, it is almost as if we as a populace matured in our perception of food.

This shift, though imperceptible on the large scale, was largely reflected when the lockdown began to be lifted. As shops began to open up and the food supply chain was reestablished, the idea of eating healthy, seeded during the pandemic, put down roots. Small changes like eating healthier, cooking for yourself, and focusing on nutrition have become ingrained in the minds and hearts of the people.

With that being said, it is not like we have completely stopped looking at food from the perspective of indulgence. The rise of innumerable food bloggers and home chefs from around the country stands testimony to the fact. As we continue to indulge, we should remember to temper this indulgence with the awareness of the importance of having a healthier relationship with food.



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WE WISH YOU
**A DESI
CHRISTMAS**



India has the uncanny habit of taking any festival and making it her own, and Christmas is no stranger to this. Christmas in India is celebrated by over 32 million people, and more if you consider the foodies who are just waiting for an excuse to scarf down some biryani and rum cake.

For a nation of myriad cultures and food habits, Christmas celebrations have an altogether unique flavour in India. Just like how Merry Christmas becomes, Subh Krismas in Hindi, Anandi Natal in Gujarati, Shubho Borodin in Bengali, Kiristumas Valttukkal in Tamil, the Christmas meal too, finds firm roots in the local culture.

We spoke to foodies, home chefs and professionals from around the country on their traditional Christmas celebrations in an effort to identify how India typically celebrates Christmas.



Christmas Fruitcake

"My earliest memories of Christmas are from Kanpur, when I was 4-5 years old." Reminisces Rohini Benjamin, operations manager at an Indo-Canadian bakery in Delhi. "I recall walking the narrow market lanes with Nani to buy dry fruits, dried cherries, orange peel etc. for the Christmas cake. My mami, later that night, would chop and clean them and have them ready to be soaked in bottles of rum. I remember being given a sip of the rum and how the elders laughed as we ran away screaming with the rum burning in our throats."

The Christmas fruitcake is a tradition that continues to find a strong hold on the Indian sweet tooth. Be it Kolkata, Delhi, Panjim or Mumbai, the fervour that surrounds a rum soaked, fruit loaded slice of cake remains undiminished. Christmas cakes have always been a family affair, be it in terms of cooking them or of course, eating them.

Traditional cakes, while becoming rarer by the day, have seen a resurgence in 2020. With more and more people spending the holidays with their immediate family, the need to hold on to traditions has been stronger than usual.

When speaking about Christmas cakes in India, it would be sacrilege not to mention the incredible Allahabadi Cake. The secret ingredient to this spice infused cake is the sugar bomb that is the Petha!

If we are to delve into history, the first Christmas cake to be baked in India was in Thalasserry in North Kerala, by a baker named Mambally Bapu. Having never made a cake, an Englishman named Murdoch Brown asked Bapu to make him a plum cake like the one Brown had brought from England. Intrigued and challenged, Bapu agreed. He went on to give the cake he was creating a regional spin by using a range of local spices and a local brew made from cashew, apple and a local variety of banana.

Midnight Mass

The Midnight mass before Christmas Eve is a firm

tradition among Catholics and inspires many a memories. Jonathan Verghese, an associate professor at Lady Shriram College, DU says, "On Christmas Eve, our family, like every other family, coagulated into an indeterminate procession of half-awake parishioners, the youngest and the most vulnerable, the children, found themselves funnelled into the church hall. The whole episode was orchestrated by the parish priest and if the circumstances did not unnerve us, the garrulous rhythms of the choir certainly did. The whole congregation was a remarkable feat of social engineering."

If the Christmas meal was the end goal, the midnight mass was the mandate that made you eligible for it. "Christmas celebrations begin from the 1st of December at home." Shares Ruben Rodrigues, a food blogger from Goa. "A traditional Christmas lunch is repelete with traditional dishes like pork sorpatel, pork vindaloo, sannas, green peas pulao, stew, chicken xacuti, verdure (veg caldin). And to top it off, for dessert we have bebinca, pudding and of course, the Christmas cake."





Desi Christmas Snacks

While still saturated with cookies and cakes, Christmas snacks in India definitely have a strong local connection. "All year round the children were put to bed by 9 pm, but around Christmas we could stay up as long as we wanted." Remembers Rohini. "The women of the house would sit on the living room floor with a kerosene stove and fry Christmas snacks. Namakparas, shakkarparas, bajre ki tikiya and ghujia are an all-time favourite. I would steal a ghujia every 5 minutes, despite Nani scolding me half-heartedly."

Kulkuls, or sweet curls, a variation of the Portuguese filhoses enroladas are a staple Goan snack during Christmas. Even the Acchu Murukku, sweet and the spicy Thukkada are also a very popular snack during the festive season. "We are a family of foodies, and mom usually prepares a variety of Christmas sweets ranging from doce, kormolas, bebinca, nankhatai, dodol, coconut barfi, perada (guava cheese), batica cake, besan laddoo, pinagar and more!" says Ruben.

Christmas in the north-east has a menu vastly unlike anything we have in mainland India. "Pork is a staple in the north-east during Christmas meal. Most families have their own recipe that has been passed down from generations." Says Rikesh Pegu, a foodpreneur from Guwahati. "For the Nagas, pork cooked with fermented beans, or Axone, while an acquired taste, is a favourite among Naga households. The Assamese love their chicken cooked in banana flower, or koldil. The Garos of

Meghalaya prepare a fish called Kappa, a pork or chicken dish."

In Vino Veritas

Wine forms the cornerstone of all the binging that happens during Christmas. From the regular burgundy to home brews to mulled wine, there is a long list of festive tipples that is common across Indian Christmas households.

"When I think Christmas I think of Amma's grape wine. Served after every meal, it was a gastronomic ritual within the family." Shares Jonathan. "No amount of food discouraged our appetite for wine, and anyone who had amma's wine could ever forget it. The sweet sting that began in your mouth, continuing all the way to the stomach was incomparable. Its rum like thickness, the faint sweetness of the cloves, and the unassuming persistence of the nutmeg coupled with the teasing eddy of the citric acid, this was the definition of Christmas afternoon."

A Very Merry Indian Christmas

India has a long-standing habit of making any festival from around the world of their own. Christmas in India has been a tradition that has largely been resonant of the local culture where it has been celebrated.

Traditional Christmas meals differ from nation to nation. If Christmas in the US features a stuffed turkey with cranberry sauce, UK loves its Yorkshire pudding and mince pies.

From the beaches of Goa, to the hills of Kerala, to the busy by lanes of Kolkata and the plains of Allahabad, Christmas has managed to find a voice that is typically Indian.



MEMORIES OF A CHRISTMAS MEAL

There is no winter in Kerala. No mid-sized Christmas pine, cut in its prime, and ceremoniously planted in the living room. There is no fireplace or chimney. Certainly not the kind that any bearded, white geriatric from the North Pole would want to crawl down at night, bearing gifts.

I live along the Malabar coast, and enveloped as it often is in embarrassingly humid air, the December air tends to smell like fresh sardines.

Sardines.

I could go on about sardines, but I prefer the plebeian sophistication of the mackerel. Somewhere between the two, demanding my attention, is the humble, yet indispensable, anchovy—roasted, grated, and carelessly placed at the edge of every plate, every day of every week.

However, if I am to talk about fish, I would have to abandon Christmas. Fish is a whole different story and, in my own biased view, a better story, but let's save it for another day.

As I was saying, my Christmas story isn't about the living room with decorated pine trees and warm lit fireplaces nor about shopping malls thronging with scrambling parents and kids.

My Christmas begins at the breakfast table with the warm, inviting aroma of appams (cushiony white hopper



Jonathan Koshy V, Kerala

made of rice batter fermented in lustrous, freshly-tapped, acidic palm wine). It is just after 8 a.m. when my sisters and I are still recuperating from the church service of the previous night.

On Christmas Eve our family, like every other family, coagulated into an indeterminate procession of half-awake parishioners with the children being funnelled into the church hall. The whole episode was orchestrated by the parish priest and if the circumstances did not unnerve us, the garrulous rhythms of the choir certainly did. The whole congregation was a remarkable feat of social engineering.

On such evenings - somewhere amidst that solemn crowd, sandwiched between my Catholic mother and my Syriac Orthodox father - my sisters, and I tried to keep alive our own diminished Christmas solemnity.

So, when we sat at the table at 8 a.m. on Christmas morning, only one thing made sense, and that was the smell of palm wine infused appam. My sisters and I would exchange half-awake smiles because we knew what came next.

Sure enough the faint probing aroma of the appam complemented the airy softness of its sour milk-white texture, but what truly completed the appam was a large spoonful of the pale and olive green duck gravy. If appam was the bread, the roasted duck gravy was its wine, and, the table transformed to the site of the holy-communion.

If there ever was a perfect Christmas tale for me, it existed at the table, with my family.

Even before my mother brought it to the table, we already knew what it smelled like. Freshly ground pepper corns diffusing into the air, baptizing the breakfast table, gently teasing its way into our nostrils, until the whole genealogy of this culinary triumph unravelled in front of our young eyes. Until every stage of its realization played out in front of us.

The slow steaming of the duck in freshly ground turmeric, allowed the meat to release its delicate fat into the broth, separating the stock from the still glistening body. It set up the familiar sequencing of flavours — onion sautéed with ginger, garlic, and freshly minced green chillies into a gentle and harmonious concoction. The whole combination accompanied by fresh coriander, powdered cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, and is finally blessed by a generous amount of freshly ground black pepper.

Then came the final and most crucial step that mother performed with grace unrivalled.

The stock was gently reintroduced into the pot and mother watched as the liquid film gently caressed the duck. Once the bird was sufficiently submerged in the delicate broth, she took out the secret ingredient - green

pepper corns. Freshly plucked and finely ground in a mortar, the delicate aroma of the young pepper needed to be liberated from its firm green coat before it was allowed to slip into the pot and envelop the meat in a pale olive green glaze.

Even as the exquisite process played out in my head, my hand slipped onto the plate and even without realizing, the fingers tore into the airy, hive-like centre of the appam. A perfectly synchronized action, conditioned by years of gastronomical experience. I always loved to begin at the fleshy centre of the appam where it was the softest. It was my way of ensuring that my first bite was also the most luscious. From the centre I loved to work my way to the caramelized crispy periphery. All this while the faint hint of palm wine saturated the insides of my mouth.

It was my firm belief then, just as it is now, that there is nothing as sophisticated or indulgent as a well-made appam.

With the appam between my fingers, I clipped some of the bird's gravy soaked flesh. In one continuous movement the hand slipped the combination into my mouth. It was a couple of seconds before the flavour squeezed its way into my mouth. And then it all came together.

The green pepper corn paste soaked in by the appam pressed along with the soft firmness of the meat, burst into a delightful emotion.

This was not just food. It was memory in the making.

You knew then that this was a beginning to a new day and a new Christmas.

The church bells swept through the air and you knew that a certain Palestinian Jewish reformer was born again in this thin slice of civilization, sandwiched between the thickets of the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. You knew then that this was a preface to all that was going to come later — the delicious homemade grape wine and mother's special rum soaked plum cake.

You knew then, with your family at the table, that it was Christmas and that everything was going to be alright.

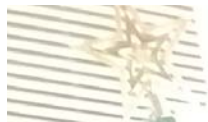
CHRISTMAS IN KANPUR

Christmas at The Refuge in Swaroop Nagar, Kanpur, was not a one-day celebration but a month-full of festivities.

My earliest memories of Christmas are from when I was 4-5 years old. I recall going to the market's narrow lanes with Nani to buy dry fruit, dried cherries, orange peel, etc., for the Christmas cake. Mami would then sit at night after dinner to chop and clean it up, ready to be soaked in bottles of rum. My cousins and I would each be given one cap of the old monk rum to taste, and we'd run away screaming as it burned our throats and the elders laughed.

The dry fruit mix would then soak in rum for weeks before Nana would take it at night to the famous Model bakery to be baked. The cake would be ready by morning around the 15th of December and stored in big steel trunks. Memories of our entire house smelling like butter, cinnamon, and sugar are still vivid in my mind. This was the scent of Christmas!

Around the 15th, our Christmas tree would go up with other decorations of wreaths, Christmas cards, lights, streamers, and socks. We didn't have fancy stockings back then, so our ugly socks would have to suffice.



Rohini Benjamin, Delhi

All year-round, the children were put to bed by 9 p.m., but we could stay up as long as we desired around Christmas. The ladies of the family would all sit in the drawing-room on the floor, and there was a chulha (the one where you had to pump kerosene) where they would be busy frying Christmas snacks. Namak paras, shakkar paras, bajre ki tikiya, and ghujia. At the time, they had those metal ghujia moulds and spoons with a little wheel attached to the back to cut the dough into small triangles for the namak and shakkar paras.

Running in to steal ghujias every 5 minutes, I would fold my top up and fill my little fists with everything I could grab and scuttle away so I could sit in a corner in peace and munch on the goodies. It was incredible - the smell of delicious food, the beautifully decorated house, and all the little details that went into making Christmas joyous.

By the last week, Christmas would be closer than ever, and Church activities would be in full swing. The Nativity play, the Christmas carols, Santa Claus (whom we called Father Christmas) would bring us gifts. I never really had the patience to wait to go home and open my gift, so I'd sit there, right in the front pew with my feet dangling in the air and tear the gift wrap excitedly to reveal a brightly colored present.

One of my favorite memories is of the time when the Christ Church choir took me caroling. Frank nana (I never knew his real name) was a tough choirmaster and a brilliant musician. I think he was Anglo Indian. This must have been 1995-96. We had hired a truck. The back of which was lined with mattresses, blankets, and pillows. There were at least 15-20 young people, and I was the youngest. Everyone a better singer and musician than the other.

The idea was to reach a family, assemble outside their door late at night and sing a Christmas Carol in a loud voice with harmonious musical accompaniment, clapping and cheering to wake the family up. They'd come running to the door, their excitement palpable. The kids would scream in joy and join the crowd, singing and dancing as we walked into their homes. We would sing a couple of songs, drink delicious hot coffee and eat cake and other goodies; then we bid adieu as we set out to visit the next family.

On Christmas Day, we would go to church in

our best clothes, meet all our friends and celebrate with them. While the atmosphere would be cheery, the best part was yet to come. We would all head to my Nana's house for an early dinner and party. A throng of chaos and madness would ensue until you heard a faint bell in the distance. It was the sound of Santa Claus (usually my Mamu, as I would discover years later). I would be so anxious; I thought my heart would explode. We would get lots of presents and money (maybe Rs. 10 or 50) from the elders, which was too much to bear. We were rich beyond measure and happy beyond comprehension until it was the end of the year, and then we would wait eagerly for another December to begin all over again.

My father had a little blue diary (He still has it) with everyone's addresses and phone numbers. Every year around this time, we would send our loved ones Christmas greeting cards by post. I think he carried the tradition until the early 2000s. Sadly no one uses the postal service anymore, and stamps are redundant. Christmas has been reduced to quick WhatsApp forwards without any real thoughts or feelings. Christmas has suddenly become too cold, isn't it?

We invite some friends over, with the usual biryani and korma - it's still Christmas without nostalgia. I feel like technology robbed us of real experiences and efforts that made Christmas so wholesome and fun in the first place. Maybe when I have a family of my own, I will re-start these traditions, and my children will talk about Christmas memories with the same fondness.

I know this year has not been the best or the kindest, but I hope my words transported you to happier times and you can find a ray of hope for the coming days. I wish all those reading a very Happy Christmas and an even better New Year.

HAZELNUT LINZER COOKIES

by Priyamvada Atmakuri

Yields 11 sandwich cookies

Time 1.5 hours

INGREDIENTS

All-purpose flour 1¾ cup

Hazelnuts ¼ cup

Cornstarch 2¾ tablespoons

Cinnamon powder 1 tsp

Ground nutmeg ¼ tsp

Salt ½ tsp

Room temperature butter ½ cup

Granulated sugar ½ cup

Yogurt ¼ cup

Baking soda ½ tsp

Vanilla extract 1 tsp

Berry jam ¼ cup

METHOD

1. Add the hazelnuts to a food processor or a mixer grinder and pulse a couple of times until you have a fine powder without any chunks of hazelnuts.
2. In a mixing bowl, whisk together all of the dry ingredients along with the ground hazelnuts.
3. In a separate bowl, using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar until the sugar is mostly dissolved.
4. Mix the yogurt and baking soda together, add it to the butter and sugar mixture. Incorporate the vanilla extract next.
5. Add the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and mix it using the electric mixer.
6. Transfer the dough onto a sheet of plastic wrap and wrap it snugly. Press it into a rough rectangle or square.
7. Refrigerate the cookie dough for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease and line a baking tray with parchment paper.
8. Transfer the chilled cookie dough onto a floured surface. Flour the rolling pin too. Let the dough sit for a minute and then roll it into a ⅛ inch thick sheet.
9. Cut out 3-inch circles with a round cookie cutter. Gather the scraps, roll the dough and cut out more cookies.
10. You should have roughly 22 cookies. Cut out smaller circles from the centre of half of the cookies using a medium-sized piping tip or a smaller cookie cutter.
11. Place the cookies onto the prepared baking tray, half an inch apart from one another. Refrigerate the cookies for 15 minutes.
12. Bake them at 180°C for 10-12 minutes. Chill the baked cookies on a cooling rack until they've come down to room temperature.
13. Place the cookies with the holes on a separate baking tray, and dust them with icing sugar. Turn the remaining cookies flat side up and pipe about ½ teaspoon of the jam in the centre of the cookies, spread the jam lightly.
14. Top with the icing sugar-dusted cookies.



The recipe for these Hazelnut Linzer Cookies has been submitted by Priyamvada Atmakuri - a young and upcoming voice in the food blogosphere.

A passionate baker who rediscovered her love for food during the pandemic - this 20-year-old aims to follow her dream of enrolling in a culinary school, post getting her liberal arts degree.

You can follow her gastronomical journey on Instagram @priyamvadatmakuri



GOBBLE

UP



COCKTAILS EDITION



T X L J R T R L A S T W O R D
B B B E E S K N E E S P A D D
L R G F P E N I C I L L I N U
O A P U M I A U S F X M H B M
O M A Y X A F A Z V S O Z O E
D B L X Y M I S Y Y X J T U A
Y L O U T N H T X C I I D L V
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A S A Z E R A C V I B O R V A
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C M A N H A T T A N M Z I D O
P K A M E R I C A N O T R I N
S H N B M A R G A R I T A E X
V T B I K Z U G H B E Y S R U

BOULEVARDIER

VIEUX CARRE

BLOODY MARY

PENICILLIN

MARGARITA

MANHATTAN

LAST WORD

AMERICANO

SAZERAC

MAI TAI

BEES KNEES

AVIATION

BRAMBLE

MOJITO

PALOMA



W I N T E R

COCKTAILS



by Chef Parul Pratap
from Music & Mountains, Delhi

"Tis the season of Clinking Glasses

“

**The
problem
with the
world is that
everyone is
a few drinks
behind.”**

~ Humphrey Bogart

Chef Parul Pratap's culinary journey was all about exploring her passion. Her experiments in the bar and kitchen have led her to the humble cucina of one of the most Avant Garde cafes in Delhi - Music and Mountains.

Consider this article as an appreciation post for the winter staple that are cocktails. Talking to us about these ambrosial drinks is notable mixologist and chef of Music and Mountains, Delhi - Parul Pratap.

Her Journey

Her initiation in the culinary world happened due to her family's love for high-spirited get-togethers where the focus has always been food and drinks.

She explains, "I grew up in a home where good food was the norm, my mother was an excellent cook and since we had a large extended family, we would always have friends or family over for meals which meant my mother was in the kitchen for most of the day."

Having always wanted to be a part of the hospitality industry she did a lot of stints involving food styling, food writing and freelance projects where she created menus for various kitchens. These work opportunities eventually led to her sojourn with Music and Mountains.

The Genesis of The Bourbon Chef

Parul has always fused her two loves - alcohol and gourmet food to form unique concoctions. Her signature has been her creations using Bourbon, hence the nom the plume - The Bourbon Chef.

She elaborates, "Music and Mountains is a conscious effort to reminisce and recreate the tranquillity and solitude of the mountains. Started as a passion project by a software engineer, our food menu is a diverse mix of European and American dishes while our cocktail menu changes with the season."

"The bar is a place where founder and partner, Amit Rekhi has always been deeply involved. His involvement encouraged me to make tinctures, bitters and shrubs from scratch as far back as 2015, back when it wasn't as trendy as it is today. Among our cocktails, all the creations with Bourbon are my personal favourites."

Since Christmas is here, she has very generously shared four incredible winter cocktail recipes that will surely make your Christmas and New Year's Eve memorable.

Chef Parul Pratap, Delhi



RUM HOT TODDY



CANDIED RED WINE



APPLE SPICED BOURBON ALE



MINT MAPLE WHISKY

RUM HOT TODDY

Makes 2 cocktails

INGREDIENTS

To Blend & Simmer:

- 150 ml **Apple Juice**
- 200 ml **Orange Juice**
- 2 **Cinnamon Sticks**
- 1 **Star Anise**
- 1 tsp **Whole Black Pepper**
- 120 ml **Rum**
- 2 **Orange wedges** for garnish

PROCESS

1. Heat the juices and spices in a saucepan, simmer on low till reduced to half. Strain and set aside.
2. Pour 60 ml each in two glasses and heat with the warm spiced juice.
3. Serve warm with a garnish of an orange wedge.



CANDIED RED WINE

Makes 2 Cocktails

INGREDIENTS

- 600 ml **Red Wine**
- 100 gms **Candied Fruit**
- 2 **Star Anise**
- 1 stick **Cinnamon**
- 2 tbsp **Honey**
- 15 gms **Orange peel**
- 10 gms **Ginger**, thinly sliced
- Grapefruit slice** for garnish

PROCESS

1. Soak all the ingredients in red wine, refrigerate, and store for 2-3 days in an airtight container.
2. Check the infusion on day 2; it should be aromatic.
3. Strain the wine into two glasses; you can add the spice and fruit mix as they do in a sangria (Ideally served warm).
4. Garnish with a slice of grapefruit.



APPLE SPICED BOURBON ALE

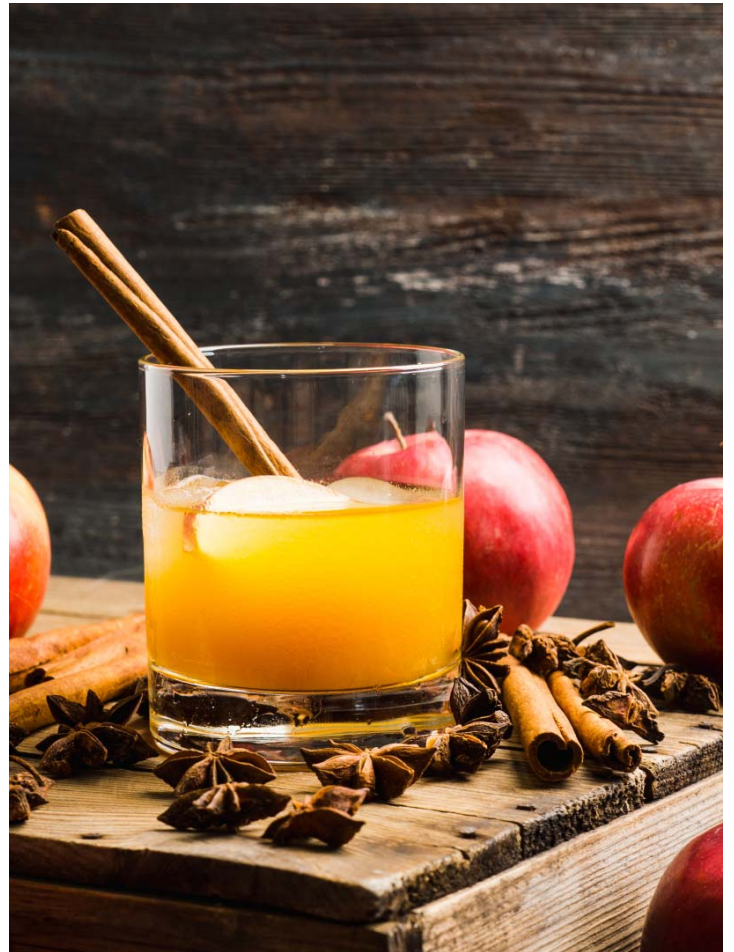
Makes 2 cocktails

INGREDIENTS

1 large **Apple**, peeled and cut into small pieces
 1 tsp **Cinnamon Powder**
 1 tsp **Clove Powder**
 ½ tsp **Ginger Powder**
 1 tbsp **Lemon Juice**
 120 ml **Bourbon**
 250 ml **Ginger Ale**
Dried Apple slices for garnish

PROCESS

1. Toss the apple pieces with the spice powders and lemon juice.
2. Blend to a puree; you can add 1-2 tbsp of water to make it smooth.
3. In a shaker, add the puree and bourbon with two cubes of ice and give it a hard shake.
4. Remove the ice cubes and pour the blend into two glasses
5. Top with 60 ml bourbon each, then with 125 ml ginger ale each, use a stirrer to mix well.
6. Float a dried apple slice on top and serve.



MINT MAPLE WHISKY

Makes 2 cocktails

INGREDIENTS

8-10 **Mint Leaves**
 2 tbsp **Maple Syrup**
 1 tsp **Lime Juice**
 120 ml **Whisky**
Vanilla Bitters
Mint sprig for garnish


PROCESS

1. Muddle the mint leaves with maple syrup and lime juice till nicely pulverized.
2. Add in whisky with six cubes of ice. Slowly shake for a minute.
3. Strain into a whisky tumbler.
4. Add a dash of bitters to both drinks and garnish with a sprig of mint.
5. Serve cold.



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STARBUCKS INDIA'S

Signature Hot Chocolate

The thought of a cold December rain brings to mind frothy cup of hot chocolate. Unlike the monsoon where a cup of tea is the ideal companion, the unique chill of a winter rain demands it be accompanied with hot, sweet and creamy concoction. Let it be known, second to warm hug, the warmest thing one can get this winter is a mug of hot chocolate.

Coffee is the eponymous hero of the international coffee brand – Starbucks. While the norm may have been reviews of their endless range of coffees, but on a rainy winter evening we decided decode their underappreciated but brilliant hot chocolate.

As a long workday wound down to a chilly, rainy evening, the Foodism team escaped to the warm coffee-scented confines of Starbucks. We wanted something hot and sweet to compliment the weather and their Hot Chocolate hit the spot!

The festive fervour of Christmas notwithstanding, Starbucks' signature Hot Chocolate is more like hot cocoa. However, the dollop of whipped cream and accompanying sweetness make it an absolutely luscious

drink. Added on top is a sprinkle of cocoa powder giving the perfect understated punch.

What's Inside

Four pumps of Cocoa, freshly steamed milk, a dollop of whipped cream on top with a light sprinkle of cocoa powder.



Packaging

The beverage comes in two types of packaging:

1. In-house mugs
2. Christmas special reusable drive-thru cups

Variants

They also have a White Hot Chocolate variant which, as the name suggests, is made of white chocolate chunks. Other than that, they have four variants based on the size of the cups namely - Short, Tall, Grande, Venti - in ascending order.

Our Verdict

Perfect for the chilly winter evenings.

We would have loved some hunks of melted dark chocolate and mini marshmallows to the concoction. Having said that, if you are looking in make your winters extra cosy, you would definitely want to try the Hot Chocolate at Starbucks.

Price

Short Hot Chocolate - Rs. 225
Tall Hot Chocolate - Rs. 250
Grande Hot Chocolate - Rs. 280
Venti Hot Chocolate - Rs. 310

AN ETHEREAL SAGA OF DARK DECADENCE

If sins could have a flavour, it would be the flavour of dark chocolate.

Nothing brings out the beauty of dark chocolate better than pairing it with ingredients that clash as well as compliment its unique taste and texture. The combinations, carefully crafted and curated by experienced chocolatiers are often compared to having a classical symphony playing out on your palate.

And this is exactly the kind of evocative adventure promised by **Ether**.

Prateek Bakhtiani's unique venture has made a lot of heads turn, and rightly so. His journey as a chocolatier and pastry chef had unconventional beginnings to say the least. Always academically inclined, Prateek was on track to pursue his Ph.D and dedicating his life to academia. Destiny, however, had other plans.



Prateek Bakhtiani
Mumbai

His Culinary Journey

His affection for academia translated into him being the perfect student to learn the culinary arts. He toiled for a long time taking tutelage under some of the best pastry chefs that the culinary world has to offer. It did not take him long to turn a hobby into a well-researched and developed business module.

"I took a year off and decided to follow a passion that I had long forgotten - food. I learned professional baking from some of the most renowned patisserie stalwarts in the world and then set up **Ether** in Mumbai." Said Prateek.

Unlike popular perception, the creation of flavours is all about experimentation and is a beautiful combination of art and science.

“The Atelier is a space for creativity and innovation in the sensory exploration of desserts. We explore the origins, terroir, and compositions of chocolate and study them in the service of inspiration. We also host a small viewing gallery for people that would like to witness and be involved in the creative process here at Ether.” He says.

A Global Tutelage

When you get a chance to assimilate knowledge from some of the most legendary chefs that the world has ever known, your product will reflect this pedigree.

He states, "I moved to Ireland to study under Pastry chef extraordinaire Rachel Allen and Sommelier Colm McCann. Rachel convinced me to take a course for three short months and leave my life behind for the love of cake and pastries."

That was the beginning of a love story that continues till date. "I moved to Paris, where I studied at Le Cordon Bleu and subsequently staged at Le Meurice with Cedric Grolet. I followed it by the T'Zilte in Antwerp, Belgium, the Chocolate Academy, at Juniper (a Gin and Tonic bar) in Vancouver, BC, and Atelier Melissa Coppel in Las Vegas, Nevada. I have done countless courses and masterclasses. Two of the most significant ones were the EPGB Masters series in Tijuana, Mexico, and the Advanced Gelato Diploma that I did at the Carpigiani Institute in Bologna, Italy."

Product Range

His extensive product range is an amalgamation of sterling produce and sophisticated flavours. He reveals, "At Ether, we do a series of chocolate bars inspired by the single origins of the chocolates we use and a series of preserves inspired by the seasonal bounty of fresh

fruit that we are blessed with, here in India. We also have a wide range of cakes and other interesting desserts that will blow your mind!"

When quizzed on his bestseller, he shares, "Perhaps our most popular tablet is the **smoke tablet**, which is a subtle twist on the classical dark chocolate and orange peel. Here, I use single-origin Madagascar chocolate that has been smoked overnight with cherry wood. Paired with it are fine house-candied organic Malta oranges that linger on the palate long after the smoke has petered out."

Future Plans

His 2020 Spring Summer Collection was a huge success. One look at his Instagram page will make you lust after his decadent creations. With a host of plans in place for 2021; he adds, "We are planning to launch our 2021-2022 collection in early January and are working on developing a series of cakes that will soon be available in Mumbai."

As someone who embarked upon his journey of food after giving up a promising career, he has some interesting insights for chefs fresh-out-of-the-oven. He said "Whether it's your first-day doing pastry or you've been doing it for years, there are three things you should never forget:

Have something important to say: Figure out why you're baking a cake and what drives you. Don't compromise on your ethos. Don't be afraid of losing business and becoming mediocre; stick to your voice, and the clients will follow.

Don't be a copycat: Trends will come and go, don't copy them; stay timeless.

Quality ingredients make quality desserts: Don't compromise on your components' quality, as that will diminish your product's worth. You can charge higher prices later. While you might lose some clients this way, the right ones will surely come."



OAK SMOKE DARK CHOCOLATE GANACHE

INGREDIENTS

Guanaja Valrhona 430g
Oak Chips 5g
Cocoa Butter 29g
Cream 310g
Butter 45g
Maple Syrup 29g
Dextrose 101g
Bourbon 29g
Salt 4g

METHOD

1. Smoke the callets with oak wood twice and allow them to rest overnight.
2. The next day, place cocoa butter and chocolate together in a bowl and smoke. Leave for 2-3 hours.
3. Place the cream and butter in separate containers in a bowl and smoke with oak chips.
4. Take the Guanaja in a 2-liter jug. Melt the cocoa butter, lightly warm the cream.
5. Lightly caramelize the maple

6. Deglaze with warm cream. Take the mixture to 45C, whisk in the dextrose.
7. Heat this mixture to 60C.
8. Pour over the chocolate, add the melted cocoa butter, and blend.
9. Temper the ganache to 35C before adding the butter and bourbon.
10. Sheet to 1 cm. Allow 24hrs to set completely.
11. The next day, remove the frame and allow it to dry out overnight.

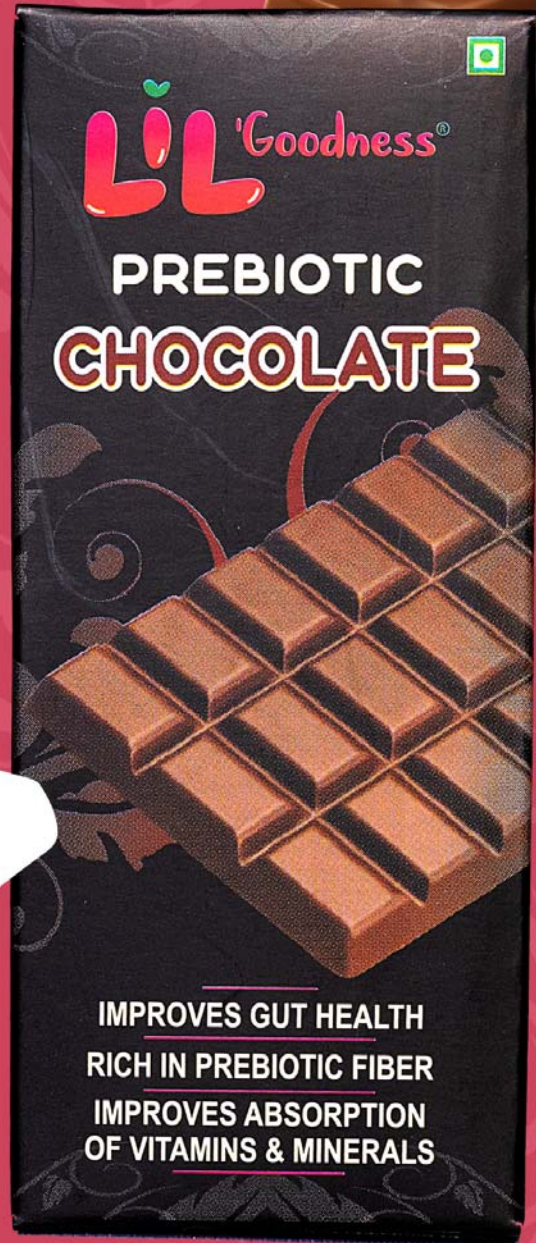
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Torte à la Vanille Miel

Indulgent tortes and patisserie items are a delightful amuse-bouche and Vanilla Miel rules the roost when it comes to these gorgeous creations.



Isha Shetty (L) & Mansi Shetty (R)

Desserts have the unique quality of redeeming even the most mundane meals, lending a happy ending to the dullest of culinary sagas. Mansi and Isha Shetty are the proprietors of Vanilla Miel, a fascinating pâtisserie and chocolaterie in Mumbai. With a family that has been in the food industry for over 45 years now, they are likely heirs to a tradition of good food.

Their Journey

While both come from different professional backgrounds they are true-blue gourmands who always wanted to leave their mark on the food

industry. Isha studied under world-renowned chefs from Switzerland, Paris and Australia. When she came back to India, Mansi, a lawyer by training decided to join hands with her.

The word 'Miel' is French meaning honey. Since the two have always loved the subtle flavours of vanilla and honey in their desserts, they joined the two and named their establishment Vanilla Miel.

The Repercussions of the Pandemic

The pandemic slowed down the pace of a lot of ventures but they handled it well. Thanks to a legacy in the hospitality and food industry, they managed to bear the brunt of the pandemic much better than others.

Mansi explains, "The fact that we've had the right kind of guidance from a restaurateur family has helped us sustain our business without any significant hurdles. Our biggest challenge was to decide whether we wanted to reopen because there is a limit to how much you can sanitise items. But we somehow managed to stay afloat."





“Our idea was to empower women in the most real sense and train them in such a way that they would understand French cooking in a lucid and vernacular way. A lot of brands provide excellent baked products but what makes us different is our drive to give back to the community.”

Women Rule the World

The sister duo always wanted to make a substantial contribution to the cause of Women Empowerment which is why they hired an all-girl team. “Ours is an all-women team and a lot of women belong to a disadvantaged class.” Said Mansi. “Our idea was to empower women in the most real sense and train them in such a way that they would understand French cooking in a lucid and vernacular way. A lot of brands provide excellent baked products but what makes us different is our drive to give back to the community. Now our team manages the production while we concentrate on the R & D of our menu.”

Their Product Range

Their striking range of tarts, cakes, entremets, customised chocolate bars and pastries will surely win you over once you go through their Instagram handle. Minimalist in their design aesthetic, their social handles are an example of uncluttered design.

They have designed exquisite chocolate bars and cakes for a lot of esteemed clients and one of the establishments that they catered to was Verve. Both of them are inherently artistic and that led to the creation of their current bestseller - hand-painted cakes that revolve around animals and nature.

Desserts are the cornerstone of happiness. We hope that Isha and Mansi Shetty keep making these sweet delights and continue to captivate the hearts of foodies everywhere.



SMOKEY CHAR-GRILLED WINTERS

There is a chill in the air, the woollens are out, and mornings are flush with fog, god bless the winter season! A time for grills, barbecues, hot chocolate, and bonfires.

Nothing spells winter weekends better than standing under the open sky with your family and grilling a yum skewer of fresh veggies and patties. The music, the smell of freshly grilled food, and the laughing voices of loved ones echoing under the winter skies spells peace.

Are you Barbecuing or Grilling?

Let's get one thing straight, barbecuing and grilling are vastly different from each other. While both employ an open fire for cooking, the means employed for the same, vary.

Barbecue is used to slow-cook tough meat through creating a bubble of hot air around it for long hours. The wood used, helps maintain temperature and give it that unique smoked flavour. Grilling, the practice Indians usually employ, can also be used for veggies, where pieces, or cuts, are roasted over an open fire. Let's elaborate this using a vegetable that can be cooked in both these ways.

Whole Smoked Cauliflower is a slow-cooked head of barbecued cauliflower with loads of spices and a marinade.

If you are short on time you can also use a grilling technique for the same vegetable. Cut cauliflower-like steaks and marinate the pieces with a garlicky spicy marinade. Grill the cauliflower steaks on an open fire, sprinkle it with some chaat masala and there you have it, Cauliflower done two ways.

Today, we have a huge array of dishes with a core component of grilling. From elaborate skewers of vegetables, tofu, cheese, and even patties to chicken and meats, grilling has grown into a versatile form of cooking.

Here are a few hand-picked recipes from our home-chefs that will make your winter grilling sessions a lip-smacking success.



CHEF'S SPECIAL MARINATED TOFU

INGREDIENTS

Butter 10 gm
Tofu 150 gm
Zucchini 20 gm
Mushroom 20 gm
Fragrant chilli sauce 35 gm
Chopped ginger 10 gm
Chopped basil 2 leaves
Oyster sauce 8 gm
Banana leaf ¼
Salt to Taste
Black Pepper to Taste



METHOD

1. Marinate the tofu with ginger, basil, oyster, and the fragrant chilli sauce.
2. Wrap it in banana leaf.
3. Place the tofu in a pan and steam for 5 to 6 minutes.
4. Slice the zucchini 1-inch thick and cut mushrooms in one by two-pieces.
5. Thread each piece of zucchini and mushroom onto the skewers, alternating zucchini, then mushroom.
6. Unwrap the tofu from the banana leaf.
7. Arrange the grilled skewer and tofu on a serving plate.
8. Ready to serve.



AJWAINI PANEER TIKKA

INGREDIENTS

Paneer 400 Grams (Cut in Cubes)
Green/Red Peppers 2 (Cut In Chunks)
Onion 1 (Cut In Chunks)
Yogurt 3 Tbsp
Ginger-Garlic Paste 1 Tsp
Kasoori Methi 1 Tsp
Ajwain/Carom Seeds 1 Tsp
Garam Masala 1 Tsp
Red Chilli Powder 2 Tsp
Cumin Powder ½ Tsp
Chaat Masala 1 Tsp
Coriander Powder ½ Tsp
Turmeric Powder ½ Tsp
Chickpea Flour 2 Tsp
Salt to Taste
Oil 2 Tsp

METHOD

1. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl except the oil and marinate the paneer, onion, and pepper cubes in it. Keep the marinade aside for 30 minutes.
2. Thread the cubes of paneer, onion, and peppers on the skewers, brush it lightly with oil, and let them grill on each side till they get an even char on every side. It should take 10-15 minutes depending on the heat of the barbecue.
3. Serve hot with green chutney.

MARINATED GRILLED VEGGIES

INGREDIENTS

For The Marinade:

Salt to Taste
Pepper to Taste
Thyme 1 Tsp
Rosemary 1 Tsp
Oregano 1 Tsp
Chilli Flakes 1 Tsp
Olive Oil 2 Tbsp
Lemon Juice 3 Tbsp

Vegetables:

Aubergines/Eggplants 1, Sliced
Button Mushrooms 300 Grams
Onion 1 (Cut in Chunks)
Red/Green/Yellow Peppers 1 (Cut in Chunks)
Zucchini 1 (Cut in Cubes)

METHOD

1. Mix all the ingredients for the marinade.
2. Use half the marinade and marinate your veggies in it.
3. Either grill the veggies directly on the barbecue or use skewers if you have an open fire.
4. Keep rotating as and when they get a good char on each side.
5. Remove the skewers' from the grill and add the rest of the marinade as a sauce if needed.
6. Serve hot with a dip or chutney.

GRILLED CAULIFLOWER STEAK

INGREDIENTS

Cauliflower 1 Big Head
Ginger Garlic Paste 2 Tsp
Kashmiri Red Chilli Powder 2 Tsp
Turmeric Powder ¼ Tsp
Black Pepper Powder to Taste
Chaat Masala 1 Tsp
Garam Masala ½ Tsp
Salt to Taste
Butter 2 Tbsp
Lemon Juice 1 Tbsp



METHOD

1. Cut the stem of the cauliflower and cut them in thick slices just like a steak.
2. Prepare the marinade by adding all the ingredients in a bowl except chaat masala and mix well.
3. Marinate the steaks with the mix and keep it aside for 15 minutes.
4. Grill the cauliflower steaks on each side till you get a good char and the steaks become tender.
5. Sprinkle chaat masala on the top and serve hot with green chutney.



Ishita Bajaj (L) & Naina Lamba (R), Delhi

a long time during the lockdown of summer 2020. This necessity, while the mother to many an invention, also sired a world of food-appreciation for Naina Lamba and Ishita Bajaj.

JAB THEY ATE

A Chance Connection

This food connoisseur duo weren't always the best of friends. Acquaintances at best, their paths crossed a few times when they were in college, but there wasn't much to it. A true connection was formed when both of them were far from home.

Ishita was pursuing a designing course in Italy, while Naina was studying for her master's in the UK. They connected over their love for food, and decided to explore Italy's gastronomic delights.

"We bonded deeply over our love for food and cooking. We thought we should meet and explore the rich Italian culture together. That was actually how we became best friends." Said Naina.

It is a crisp Roman evening, you are at a quaint café in Testaccio having sat down after ordering a pizza. As you await your food in muted impatience, a server walks past carrying a tray of creamy, Mushroom Tagliatelle. As you salivate at the sight, your eyes meet a similarly ravenous pair staring at the very same dish. A smile slips from your lips, a sheepish wave, et voila – a connection!

That's the power of good food, nary a word needs to be said for lifelong friendships to be sired.

Food connects people from all walks of life. Before the pandemic skewered 2020, none of us had imagined a life without the ability to order food in a few clicks. But a complete dependence on our kitchen was our reality for

The Homecoming

As luck would have it, when the two returned to India they discovered they lived barely 5 minutes from each other. While their careers took off, so did their love for food. It became a ritual for them to meet every week to tuck in on delicious fare. Great home-cooks themselves, their meals became more and more interesting every time.

Lockdown Beginnings

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. And when life gives you a bowl, fill it up with your favourite comfort food and wipe it clean, literally! That is how **@BolBabyBowl** came into existence- during the pandemic.

The duo decided to make the most of their time and got together during the lockdown to cook up a storm in the kitchen. They recreated a lot of classic and fusion recipes from their stays in different countries and chronicled it on Instagram.

"We believe in using the best of ingredients and focus a lot on healthy and gluten-free options as both of us are health-conscious, and Ishita's father is allergic to Gluten. During the Lockdown, we used whatever ingredients were easily available but still made it

healthy. That makes our approach quite different." Says Naina.

Ishita and Naina, found a way they could express their love for food during the lockdown. A pursuit of passion led to a point where they are considering a range of activities to diversify [@bolbabybowl](#), including stationery, curating recipe books, to sauce jars.

In the words of Naina and Ishita

“We just hope we can inspire others to express their love for food, and the incredible flavours from around the world.”

The pandemic has brought all of us closer to the food we eat. It is a passion that cuts across all cultures and ignites a singular fervour. As much of a misery the pandemic was, it is heartening to see we have come out of it with a greater appreciation of the food we eat, and with the passion to share the message with the world!



Photo: Naina Lamba & Ishita Bajaj
December 2020 | ISSUE 7 52

SUNDAY SOBA SALAD

INGREDIENTS

For the dressing

Unsweetened Chunky Peanut Butter 2 tbsp
Tahini Sauce 1tbsp
Light Soy Sauce 1tbsp
Spring Onion Handful
Thai Basil Handful
Black And White Sesame Seeds 1 tbsp each
Extra Virgin Olive Oil 1tbsp
Lemon Juice 1
Sweet Chilli Sauce 1tbsp
Red chilli flakes 1 tbsp
Red chilli powder 1 tsp
Minced garlic and ginger 1 tbsp

For the salad

Soba Noodles
Edamame Beans
Cucumber 1
Zucchini 1
Red Pepper 1
Yellow Pepper 1
Green Pepper 1
Red Onion 1

(Other things you can add)

Carrot
 Red cabbage
 Tofu
 Chicken
 Rocket leaves

METHOD

The Dressing

(Serves 4 portions)

1. In a jar or bowl, mix all the dressing ingredients and give it a good shake or whisk.
2. The dressing can be stored for a week.

The Prep

Veggies

1. Finely slice all the bell peppers.
2. You can use a spiralizer to get ribbons of zucchini, cucumber and carrot.
3. Shell the edamame beans.
4. Slice 1 red onion and soak in vinegar.
5. Take a handful of fresh basil and chopped spring onion

Soba Noodles

1. Bring water to a boil and add the soba noodles for 5 min.
2. Cook till they are soft
3. Once boiled, transfer the noodles to ice cold water to stop the cooking process.

Assembling the Salad

1. In a salad bowl add the veggies along with the noodles.
2. Empty the dressing and mix.
3. Dress the salad with sesame seeds, chopped herbs and peanuts.





Chitragada Kundu
Kolkata

Chitragada Kundu's Instagram page **@colorandspices** demonstrates her love for food and her passion for food photography. Her strong taste for traditional recipes is matched appropriately with her passion for learning new tips and tricks on how to best present her culinary creations.

OF COLOUR AND SPICES

Like most food bloggers, Chitragada's journey into food blogging stemmed from a long-standing love for food. Ably supported by her daughter and husband, she took the plunge in the world of food blogging and has been actively sharing recipes, photographs as well as tips on her Instagram page and blog.

Born from Passion

Having started a blog back in 2012, Chitragada was no stranger to the influence of content on the internet in the digital age.

"I started blogging after a lot of my friends asked me to collect my recipes and share them. Being a thorough foodie, I love to cook and experiment with new recipes wherever I can find them." She shares. She took a long break from blogging because of health reasons, but slowly she has begun to get back in the mix.

"My blog is all about sharing the joy of cooking and finding the creative pleasure that cooking good food can give one. I personally believe cooking is like painting with raw ingredients and spices. Passion and love are the most

important things one should have while cooking." She says.

Keeping it Simple

Her signature style is to break down recipes, wherever she may have found them, into something that is easy to understand and create for her audience.

“For anyone who wants to become a food blogger it becomes important never to measure your worth by numbers. If you are going to get into the numbers game this can totally ruin your creativity.”

"I try each and every recipe more than once till I have perfected it, before posting it on my blog. Whether that's a family heirloom recipe or something I have learnt from a cookbook. I make sure even a novice in the kitchen can cook the dish. So I measure all the ingredients and try to describe as lucidly possible." She shares.

Having grown up watching her mother, grandmother and aunts cook finger-licking food, she was inspired to take her first steps. "Later on when I used to watch Sanjeev Kapoor, Tarla Dalal, and cookbooks by Nita Mehta as well as traditional Bengali cookbooks. My husband is a food connoisseur and always encourages me to share my recipes, and now even my daughter is helping me out in cooking as well as for food photography." She says.



Photos: Chitrangada Kundu



All Time Favourites

"If I had to choose a single favourite dish, that would be a little difficult, but I guess I would have to go with Mutton Biryani, Kolkata style." She says. "Apart from that some of my favourite eateries are the Royal Indian Restaurant for their biryanis. Mainland China also ranks highly for their Indo-Chinese food. Apart from that I love food from roadside dhabas, and food stalls, especially fuchka and rolls."

"I also have very fond memories of the Mexican food I ate when I was in the US. Especially the fare served at Chuy's and Baby Acapulco." She concludes.

When pressed to disclose her favourite recipe she says, "All the recipes I share are close to my heart which makes it difficult to choose one. But if I were to share just one recipe I would definitely pick the Orange and White Swiss Roll, keeping in mind the season. It's just simply delicious!"

Parting Words

As she continues to work on her blog and curating more and more recipes for her audience, Chitrangada is also making plans to invest more time and energy in food photography and styling.

As she continues to experiment with different photography styles and recipes, Chitrangada continues to inspire many with her unique take on food blogging.

ORANGE AND WHITE CHOCOLATE SWISS ROLL

INGREDIENTS

To make the cake:

All purpose flour 1/3 cup
Corn starch 2 tbsp
Eggs 4 (separated)
Sugar 1/4 cup + 2 tbsp
Vanilla extract 1/2 tsp
Orange extract 1 tsp

To make the filling and topping of the cake:

Fresh cream 1 cup
White Chocolate 2 cups
Oranges (peeled and pith removed) 1 cup
Edible flowers, mint to garnish

METHOD

1. Grease a cookie sheet (1 inch depth), line with parchment paper, keep aside. Pre heat oven to 200 C.
2. Separate the eggs. Add the sugar to the yolks and beat with an electric beater or on a stand mixer till it turns smooth and almost white, over high speed for 5-7 min. Add vanilla extract and orange extract and beat.
3. Shift the flour and cornstarch to the beaten yolk and gently fold in.
4. In a separate bowl beat egg whites and two tablespoon of sugar till peaks are formed.
5. Add the egg white to the yolk-flour mixture and fold in very gently.
6. Pour the batter in the

prepared pan and spread it evenly with spatula. Bake for 7-8 min. Take out the cake after 5-6 min, if you insert a toothpick it should come out clean.

7. Dust the cake with confectioners' sugar. Lay a clean kitchen towel on your work surface, invert the cake from the cookie sheet pan on the towel. Very gently but tightly roll the kitchen towel wrapping the cake. Keep the roll wrapped in towel on a cooling rack, let it cool down completely.

8. In a bowl take the cream and heat in the microwave for 2 mins. Add chopped white chocolate and mix it with cream. Let the chocolate melt in the cream. If needed heat the mixture a little more to melt all the chocolate. Let the mixture cool down, add orange extract and whip the mixture with the help of an electric mixer.

9. Take the cake lay it flat on a clean working area, spread the white chocolate ganache and pieces of oranges, roll the cake gently. Cover the cake with the rest of the white chocolate ganache and keep it in the refrigerator for at least 4-5 hours.

10. Take it out. Garnish as per choice. Slice it, and serve cold.



Sameerra Anandhan
Banglore

Sameerra Anandhan's **@spoonfulsofhappyness** brings together classic gourmet cuisine and top-notch styling. A food enthusiast and doting mother, she is constantly on the lookout for new skills to add to her already formidable culinary repertoire.

A Sweet Message for Aspiring Bloggers

Sameerra has always been well connected with her inner self and that has helped her immensely in her journey so far. She shares,

“Giving importance to yourself should also be a part of your self-discovery and well-being. Comparing your growth with others is futile, instead, focus on your own journey. Always be thankful for feedback or criticism that comes your way, as that will surely help you grow.”

BANGALORE FOOD DIARIES

Sameerra Anandhan's food blog perfectly encapsulates what Bangalore stands for - a confluence of rich culture and cutting edge technology.

Bangalore has always been a place where food is taken very seriously. A thorough cosmopolitan city with strong roots in the Dravidian culture, Bangalore has a fantastic food culture.

Sameerra has always been on the lookout to evoke the strong emotions associated with food. If a dish manages to do that, it has realized its purpose. Her primary goal has been to propagate the idea that good food is always trending!

The Drive to Create Something Beautiful

Having always been a food enthusiast, she believes that life is too short to waste. As soon as her daughter came of age, she began dedicating a chunk of her time to learning new skills every year. "I believe that learning new things is what makes our existence worthwhile."

Today she creates sterling recipes, making them look aesthetically near perfect. Her Instagram handle @spoonfulsofhappyness, is a testimony to how gourmet food requires the foundation of classic styling to support it.

The fact that she has cooked these dishes helps her understand the intrinsic and cultural value of all these recipes. She leverages these insights to create the most appropriate styling for her dishes. Her husband has always been her pillar of strength; he was the one who bought a DSLR camera for her to help her realise her true potential.

The Pandemic and Its Repercussions

A lot has changed since the pandemic knocked us out of our comfort zone. The whole world is still reeling from the

adverse effects of the same and Sameerra's vocation also hit a roadblock. But she took this misadventure with a pinch of salt.

She explains, "Even completing home assignments initially was tough as the stores were closed, shipping of products purchased online wasn't happening." She kept her head down and managed to ace all her personal and professional responsibilities effectively while steadily growing her culinary credentials.

Future Plans

While she has come a long way chasing her passions, her constant curiosity and hunger for knowledge have set her aspirations high.

She says, "I hope to have a quaint little place someday that caters to services that matter to me and my audience. I would like to model a pet-friendly diner with good music, along with delicious, wholesome food, and a library with curated books, with a nook where artists share their art with others."

Her Recommendations

A warm bowl of zesty Pepper Rasam with steamed rice has the potential to heal all kinds of blues; this followed by a helping of creamy baked yoghurt will definitely take away your sorrows. Sameerra swears by these dishes and wouldn't mind consuming them for the rest of her life.

Asked to list her favourite gourmet restaurants, she takes a pause to go through what seems to be a long mental list. Here's a list of five gourmet restaurants she can't do without:

1. **Nagarjuna** for their exquisite meals
2. **Marriot** for their lavish dinner spread
3. **Green Onion** for their range of Indo-Chinese dishes (American Chopsuey here is a must-try)
4. **Truffles** for their burgers and shakes
5. **Corner House** for their Ice Creams



SPROUTS SABJI

Sprouts are a powerhouse of nutrients. They pack fibre, vitamins, proteins, calcium and help lower sugar levels/ blood pressure and aid digestion. Sprout sabji is a winter favourite at home and is easy to cook, delicious and wholesome.

INGREDIENTS

Onions 2 large, finely chopped
Green chillies 4-5 finely chopped
Curry leaves A few sprigs
Ginger garlic paste 1 tsp
Tomatoes 2 large, diced
Potatoes 2 large, diced
Mixed sprouts 400 grams
Sesame oil/Sunflower oil 2 tablespoons
Fresh coriander leaves handful
Spices
Usal masala (Pav Bhaji masala can be used as a substitute) 2 tablespoons
Kashmiri chilli powder 1 tsp
Coriander powder 1 tsp
Turmeric powder ½ tsp
Pink salt/ regular salt as per taste

METHOD

1. Add oil to a pan and once hot, tip in the onions, curry leaves and green chillies. Cook until onions are translucent.
2. Now add the ginger garlic paste and saute till the raw smell dissipates.
3. Tumble in the tomatoes now and add the spices. Cook till the tomatoes are done and oil is afloat.
4. Now add the potatoes, sprouts and 2 cups of water and pressure cook for approx 1 -2 whistles.
5. Garnish with fresh coriander and serve with pav/rotis with a topping of some finely chopped onion, little butter and a wedge of lime. Add some mixture if desired for some crunch.



Shabana Khan
UK

One of the most common adages in writing is 'show, don't tell'. This is just as true for food bloggers as it is for writers. Shabana Khan who runs the page [@storiesfrom_dastarkhwan](#), embodies this ethos.

A FOOD STORY SHOWN, NOT TOLD

"I have always been a foodie, and started cooking at the age of 13. Over the years my quest for food has only increased. I started trying out recipes other than my family recipes and began to experiment with them." Says Shabana. As she began sharing recipes and photographs of her creations with her inner circle, she began to receive even more encouragement from family and friends. This inspired her to create the page [@storiesfrom_dastarkhwan](#).

Curating a Visual Tale

Having started the page to share recipes and food ideas, Shabana soon realized the importance of having carefully clicked pictures.

"I slowly started learning about food photography, and styling. I believe in visual storytelling, so my posts are mainly about traditional recipes and how to style and present them. You will find a lot of information on the type of props that one can use or various tools and techniques for food photography." She says.

She consistently shares recipes as well as ways to style and present them. "There are a lot of bloggers in this space, and it becomes crucial to not just emphasize on the recipe but

to work on creating good attractive content in the form of photographs and videos for your blog, Instagram page or YouTube." Says Shabana.

Food Inspirations

Having grown up around

incredible home cooks like her maternal grandmother, Shabana never

had a dearth of food inspiration around her.

"My maternal grandmother is an amazing cook and I have learnt most of my cooking and baking basics from her. Apart from that, I often draw a lot of inspiration from travel and trying out their local recipes." Shabana says.

An avid traveler, Shabana makes it a point to always try local cuisine and is keen on giving these dishes her signature spin.

Pivoting in the Pandemic

The pandemic while tough for everyone, gave Shabana the time to work on her page and some very interesting new dishes.

"I am very thankful to have had a secure job and good health during the pandemic. With food being an essential service, I managed to get my hand on some great ingredients, and the time on hand allowed me to experiment in the kitchen." Says Shabana.

Favourite Food Destinations

An avid foodie, Shabana loves legacy restaurants or those that serve authentic food.

"My favourite dish is Biryani, not just because of the taste, but because of the celebration and occasions that it is associated with. Apart from that I love trying out local food joints and small restaurants. Case in point is Shree Krishna Misal in Pune that serves the most amazingly balanced misal pav in Pune." Says Shabana.

“As a food blogger it is very important to find your creative inspiration which is often achieved by travelling to new places and trying local cuisines. Or simply visiting restaurants or friends which gives us so much more opportunity to try something new.”



Shabana's click of her Christmas Cake was selected as our magazine cover for December. If you're a food photographer who would like their click to be featured in our magazine. Reach out to us at: content@foodism.xyz

Photo: Shabana Khan

A firm fan of the street food at the Mohammad Ali road in Mumbai, she also ranks the restaurant Dorabjee and Sons in Pune among her favourite food haunts.

Future Perfect

Having already created a healthy following on social, Shabana is looking to take her food reach even further. "I would love to share the heirloom recipes of my family on my blog. I am also incredibly passionate about food photography and would love to continue working on it, especially considering the huge potential in this field." Says Shabana.

With food blogging becoming a highly competitive field it becomes more important than ever before to constantly reinvent oneself and keep your content relevant. Shabana has managed to do that perfectly. Her content is a balance of recipes, stylishly clicked images and a unique personal touch.

Parting Words & Recipe

On being quizzed about her favourite recipe she would want to share with the readers of Foodism, she says, "This is very tough to choose, but considering the time of the year I would love to share with you the recipe of a Christmas Fruit and Nut Bundt Cake."

Humble as she is, Shabana makes no bones about the field of food blogging. "Don't start blogging because everyone is doing it. Do it because you really want to do it. Food blogging is a very crowded and competitive area. And it is very much required to stand out. That can only be achieved once you have identified your niche and strengths. Again, do not expect to be famous overnight, it requires a lot of patience, hard work and consistency."

With her unique combination of unique photography, delicious recipes and personal takes, Shabana's perspective on food blogging is as unique as it is informative.



CHRISTMAS FRUIT AND NUT BUNDT CAKE

INGREDIENTS

For Soaking Dry Fruits:

Dates Chopped 50 grams
Raisins 50 grams
Cranberry 50 grams
Black Current 50 grams
Candied Orange/Tutti Frutti,
Chopped 50 grams
Figs, Chopped 50 Grams
Orange, Zest Of One
Orange/grapes Juice 100 ml

For Cake Batter:

Butter, Softened 150 grams
Brown Sugar 150 grams
Curd 175 grams
All-purpose Flour 175 grams
Almond Powder 30 grams
Baking Soda ¼ tsp
Baking Powder ½ tsp
Salt ¼ tsp
Mix Spice Powder (equal
Proportion Of Clove, Nutmeg,
Cinnamon And Cardamom) ¾
tsp
Walnuts, Chopped 2 tbsp
Almond, Chopped 2 tbsp

For Simple Glaze:

Icing Sugar 100 gms
Water 3 tsp

METHOD

1. In a glass Jar, soak all dry fruits in fruit juice (Orange or grapes). You can also use brandy. Leave this to soak overnight or at least 8 hours.
2. Firstly, in a large bowl take butter and brown sugar. Beat well until the butter and sugar turn creamy. You can also add white sugar, but brown sugar

gives it a good color.

3. Add curd and continue to beat until the mixture turns creamy.

4. Now sieve together all the dry ingredients- Flour, almond powder, baking soda, baking powder and spice.

5. Add this in batches of three part to the wet ingredients gently folding it in. Do not beat it.

6. Now add soaked dried fruits along with any residual juice from soaking process.

7. Grate and add zest of one orange.

8. Also add chopped almond and walnuts and gently fold in, until well combined. Do not over mix.

9. Take a cake tin or bundt tin of 7 inches and grease it with butter and gently sprinkle some dry flour and coat the surface well. This will make it easy to un-mould the cake.

10. Place the cake pan into the preheated oven and bake at 180 degree for 45 to 50 mins until a toothpick comes out clean.

11. Cool the cake completely before un-moulding. Can be eaten as is.

12. Optionally, make a simple glaze with icing sugar by adding water one teaspoon at a time and whisking continuously until sugar has dissolved and it is of thick dropping consistency.

13. Pour on the cake and decorate with holly leaves.



Hiteshi Jalan
Siliguri

The quaint town of Siliguri has a lot of homely cafes and restaurants that cater to local and international cuisines. This mountain city in West Bengal has a thriving food community and capturing this huge wave of food appreciation is Hiteshi Jalan, a food blogger who goes by the handle [@_thefoodstory_](#) on Instagram.

FOOD FROM THE HILLS

Food and culture go hand-in-hand and India has a lot of diverse communities that have some unique recipes to share. Every city here has its own set of dishes that are highly popular and food blogging is a good way of shining a spotlight to these local gems.

Her Journey

Hiteshi Jalan's blogging journey started in college when food blogging in Siliguri was still at a nascent stage. She got into blogging because she has always been a huge fan of desserts and decided to chronicle her food experiences.

She visited different eateries, clicked pictures and put them on her Instagram page on a regular basis. Eventually, a lot of people started appreciating her critique leading to her page garnering a fair bit of traction.

Making the Most of the Pandemic

Having always been a foodie, Hiteshi loves to experiment in the kitchen. When the world shut down during the pandemic, she took it as an opportunity to make interesting recipes at home and practically lived on Instagram. She also conducted online workshops on plating and food styling which gained a lot of traction. She kept herself busy during the pandemic with her blog, curated content and conducted several interesting live sessions.

Her mother's effortless cooking inspired most of her kitchen undertakings and she also takes inspiration from some of the top chefs in India. "Cooking has always been very therapeutic for me and I developed this hobby shadowing my mom in the kitchen. She's an all-time inspiration for me along with other celebrity chefs and bakers like Chef Vikas Khanna and Shivesh Bhatia. Their versatility and

lucidity have helped me a lot in my trials in the kitchen." She says.

Her Recommendations

She is a huge fan of sweets and the top two favourites from her blog are the 'vanilla sponge cake' and 'hot chocolate'. She also cannot get enough of a rice recipe she came across a while ago called the 'triple-layered rice' and is looking forward to trying out more such recipes.

West Bengal has a lot to offer when it comes to authentic cuisines and street food. She loves gorging on Italian, Mexican and Burmese dishes and can't imagine her life without pizza. The four restaurants that recently blew her away with their food are Mezzuna, Chili's, Burma Burma and Fatty Bao.

A Sweet Message for Other Bloggers

Her life has always revolved around food and making a career out of it wasn't a cakewalk. She also believes that hard work and honesty are the foundation of any vocation and we need to have a dynamic approach towards whatever drives us.

“Waiting for things to happen will never take you anywhere. You need to hustle for the right reasons and be prepared for all kinds of opportunities.” She concludes.



BEST EVER HOT CHOCOLATE

INGREDIENTS

Milk 2 cups
Powdered Sugar 1 tbsp
Cinnamon Powder 1 tsp
Dark Or Milk Chocolate compound 30g
Fresh Cream 2 tbsp
Cocoa Powder 1 tbsp
Vanilla Extract 1 tsp
Salt a Pinch

METHOD

1. In a pan, take 2 cups of milk, powdered sugar, cinnamon powder and heat it.
2. Add 30g dark/milk chocolate, fresh cream and keep stirring it.
3. Bring it to a boil, add cocoa powder and a pinch of salt.
Lastly, add a few drops of Vanilla extract and stir continuously on medium flame.
4. Bring it to boil twice or thrice until the texture of the hot chocolate is creamy and smooth.

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A CUP OF NIRVANA

What do the shepherds in Ethiopia's highlands, Sufi mystics of the Middle East, Pope Clement VIII, the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire, and the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan have in common?

Coffee!

Hipster cafes and multimillion-dollar chains like Starbucks cater to a coffee culture that spans across continents and generations. The origins of this beloved drink and its journey through cultures, ages, and socio-political influences, however, is a tale that has spawned scores of treatises.

From its fabled discovery by a highland shepherd in Ethiopia it acquired its current stature as a staple drink in Yemen in 14th and 15th CE. Much like its Arabic roots from the word 'Qahwat al-bun' (wine of the bean) to its acceptance by the church in the 17th century and being re-introduced as 'Caffe' – the coffee bean has seen it all.

Talking about its connection to the Indian subcontinent – the advent of coffee has an interesting story to tell.

Qahwa Touches the Indian Shores

Historical accounts tell us that the coffee plant held such high esteem in the eyes of Middle-Eastern culture that no one was allowed to carry its seeds out of the Arabian Peninsula. This ensured the region's monopoly over coffee production – so much so that even the coffee-loving Mughal Emperors had to import it.

All of this changed in the 16th century when the Indian Sufi mystic Baba Budan from Chikmagalur traveled to Mecca for the Hajj. On one of his journeys, risking life and limb, he managed to bring back seven raw seeds from the ports of Mocha in Yemen, hidden expertly in his robes.

The seeds were planted on the slopes of Chandragiri hills in Karnataka, where coffee is still grown today, and in reverence to the mystic who brought it, the area is known as 'Baba Budangiri.'

Colonial India and the Resurgence of Coffee

Up until the 17th century, growing coffee for commercial purposes was dominated by the middle-East. However, from the 17th century, coffee production saw itself spreading rapidly to wherever the European traders went. The 'Columbian Exchange' that talks about the intermingling of thoughts, flora, and fauna between the Old World and New – saw the production of coffee shifting from the Arabian Peninsula to the Western Hemisphere.

As the Mughal Empire declined, so did the popularity of coffee. With the onset of the Age of Imperialism, the British established Arabica coffee plantations across the hills of Southern India. The popularity of these efforts by the East India Company revived coffee consumption in the subcontinent again, with many upscale clubs sprouting up in the 18th century, offering coffee as their choice of beverage.

The widespread prominence gained by coffee in India would be incomplete without mentioning India Coffee House chains that have been instrumental in the spread of coffee in modern India. Started by a government body (the Coffee Cess Committee) in 1936 – at the peak of its popularity, the chain operated 72 outlets across the country. The gradual introduction of coffee to a tea-loving nation heralded the changing milieu of Indian society. India Coffee House sat at the heart of pre-liberalization India – where

raging debates regarding literature, art, and social welfare were held.

Modern India's Love for Roasteries

Today, India ranks as the sixth-largest coffee producer globally and is home to 16 unique varieties that are predominantly grown in Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Apart from the original offering of Arabica, the other variety cultivated in India is Robusta (which literally gets its name because it is less susceptible to coffee rust, a disease that often plagues Arabica hence more robust).

The year 1996 saw Café' Coffee Day's entry into the Indian coffee scene and take it by storm – much like how Starbucks took over the American coffee arena. A range of home-grown brands and roasteries continue to cater to the ever-growing demand for coffee in the country today, as aficionados continue to seek newer and better brews – sampling global and local offerings alike.

From the Ethiopian highlands to the famed Qahwahkhanas of Shah Jahan's Shahjahanabad, to the Italian cafes and unknown Americas, the humble bean has traveled the world. Coffee has enjoyed unparalleled popularity wherever it has been consumed and continues to be the world's beverage of choice.

Standing as the most traded commodity in the world after oil, while it continues to evolve in form and flavor, its role remains ever-constant. Be it the narrow bylanes of Mughal Old Delhi, Calcutta's Colonial coffee clubs, or a chic café in a posh cosmopolitan locale, coffee continues to steer impassioned conversations and casual get-togethers with as much fervor as it did centuries ago.

With a plethora of coffee offerings available around the world today, one might be spoilt for choice when looking for a suitable brew to sample.

*Though a tough call to make, here are Foodism's top 5 picks for unique **'Must-try Coffee Preparations'***

Affogato

Affogato is made with a shot of hot espresso poured on chilled gelato or ice cream. This Italian dessert became wildly popular in North America as a beverage when Starbucks introduced its Affogato-style Frappuccino blended drinks on their menu.



Freddo

Freddo was invented in Greece to seek relief from the balmy sunny Grecian summer.

Freddo can be made either as a cappuccino or an espresso. Freddo Espresso is made by blending a hot double espresso shot with ice and sugar in a drink mixer, lending it its unique foam. Freddo Cappuccino follows a similar process but is topped with cold and foamy milk.





Irish coffee

Chef Joe Sheridan created the Irish coffee in 1943 at Foynes Port near Limerick, Ireland. It is a delicious cocktail consisting of hot coffee, Irish whiskey, and sugar gently topped off with cream so that it doesn't sink to the bottom. The ideal way to drink it is through the cream - as it slowly dissolves in the hot coffee at the bottom.

Espresso Romano

Despite its name, Espresso Romano doesn't originate from Italy or Rome. While its origin may be debatable – what isn't disputed, however, is the appeal of its unique piquant taste. It consists of an espresso shot served with a slice of lemon in it, which purportedly accentuates the flavour of the espresso.



Vienna Coffee

Vienna coffee is prepared with two strong black espresso shots infused with whipped cream instead of milk and sugar until the cup is full. The cream is often twirled on top with additional chocolate sprinklings, making it an indulgent treat fit for a sweet tooth.



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THE BAKER NEXT DOOR

The fragrance of freshly baked cookies wafting out of a neighbour's window has been the foundation stone of the age old adage, love thy neighbour.

Now instead of just cookies imagine being ensconced in the scent of fluffy doughnuts, freshly baked bread and a host of other goodies. Wouldn't it be an absolute dream to have a baker par excellence in your neighbourhood? Hridey Nanda aka, the Neighbour Baker, is one such wonderful neighbour.

Hridey Nanda started her journey as a home baker in college. She always felt like she wasn't cut out for a 9-5 job, so instead of pursuing a career in Applied Psychology, she chose baking. After having sold many home-made cakes at her college fest, the Neighbour Baker felt like the right way forward.



Hridey Nanda, Delhi



It Is All In The Name

When quizzed about the name of her venture, she gushes, "It's simple really. I have always dreamt of being recognized and loved for my craft - though fame was never the end goal! Neighbour Baker hopes to be that quaint little homely bakery in your neighborhood that everyone comes to for their fresh bakes every morning." Instead of a distant, even sometimes aloof restaurant, Hridey's Neighbour Baker aspires to create a tangible connection between the baker and the consumer.

YouTube To The Rescue

One look at her desserts, and you know that a lot of love and care has gone into each little nibblet and that the idea is to have something for everyone. She is a proud self-taught pastry chef and credits YouTube videos for making her what she is today. Interning at prestigious restaurants and patisseries also added to her skill set immensely. She still wants to gain professional training in the future, as and when the opportunity arises.

Her Product Range

Although she has a vast array of desserts tucked up her sleeve, her first love has always been cookies. She also loves to bake fudge layered brownies, bombolonis, choux pastry, celebration cakes, etc.

Her bestseller, Italian doughnuts or bombolinis sell like hot cakes (no pun intended). She remarks, "Delhi loves everything chocolate, so I have multiple chocolate items on my delivery menu. My best seller has to be the epic Nutella bombolonis and NB's signature chocochunk Cookies. No order goes out without these two items, and everyone who's never fails to fall in love with them. Another popular item has to be the lemon love cake. It makes me so happy to see so many people appreciate lemon flavored desserts, as they hold a special place in my heart."



She is yet to venture into the healthy, vegan, or gluten-free options right now, but plans to tap into it shortly. For now, there's just one gluten-free option on her menu, and that's the chocolate chip cookies.

Future Plans

Brimming with plans for the future, Hridey wants to make her patisserie a household name across the country. She is looking to expand her team and fill it up with people who are passionate about baking. She explains, "I'm so grateful to see NB growing, and my plans are all about building a bigger NB team and reaching out to more and more people all over India and curating the most decadent and comforting desserts for them." A philosophy we can definitely get behind.

A Sweet Message For Our Viewers

"If there's anything you have your heart set on, do it. Honestly, there's no other way." She says. This is the underlying theme behind Hridey starting Neighbour Baker. "It doesn't matter if you're starting extremely small. Step out of your comfort zone because that is where the magic happens. If you keep at it, you'll get there, and when you do, you're going to have the biggest smile on your face – a smile that comes after having achieved your dreams."

For now the smile we have on our face is largely inspired by the Neighbour Baker's Chocolate Chip Cookies.

Fluffy Buttermilk Pancakes with Caramelized Bananas and Fresh Blueberries



INGREDIENTS

For pancake batter:

All-purpose Flour ½ cup
Wheat Flour ¼ cup whole
Baking Powder ¾ tsp
Cinnamon a pinch
Caster Sugar 1 tsp
Milk ½ cup
Vinegar ¾ tsp
Baking Soda ¼ tsp
Egg 1
Vanilla ¼ tsp
oil 2 tsp

For the topping:

Caster Sugar 2 tsp
One banana, sliced
Fresh blueberries or fruit of choice.

METHOD

For the Pancakes:

- To make the buttermilk, combine milk and vinegar in a small bowl and set it aside for 5 minutes.
- In another bowl, add all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and sugar. Mix all of these together.
- For the wet ingredients mixture, bring back the buttermilk mixture and add baking soda, egg, vanilla, and oil. Give the mixture a good

whisk to make sure everything is combined.

- Make a well in the dry ingredients bowl and add in your wet mixture. Mix everything only till it is just combined (do not over mix it). The batter will be slightly thick, so don't be tempted to add any more liquid.

- Heat a non-stick pan on a medium-low flame and grease it with butter. Once hot, add in ¼ cup of batter per pancake.

- Flip your pancake once you see bubbles on top. Cook on the other side for another 2-3 minutes.

For the topping:

- Add sugar in a non-stick pan and make sure it spreads evenly across the pan's base.

- Slice bananas in slightly thick circles and place them on top of the sugar.

- Start cooking the sugar and bananas on low-medium heat.

Once you see the sugar turn golden brown, using a spoon, flip each banana slice and let it caramelize for another minute.

- Turn off the heat and let the pan cool down completely.

- Once cooled down, serve it on top of your pancakes with some fresh blueberries or any other fruit of choice.

A MISHMASH OF CREATIVE CONFECTIONS

Imagine this, it is a chilly December evening and you have spent the day craving something gooey and sweet. The doorbell rings, you open the door and there sits a box wreathed in the smell of warm cupcakes the undertones of dark brownies and just a hint of almond cookies. That's the stuff dreams are made of.

Shikha Murarka's Mishmash Bakery is here to do just that.

Based out of Mumbai, Mishmash Bakery's repertoire is all about creating apt symbols for happiness and celebration.



Shikha Murarka, Mumbai

Her Journey

She never really believed she would be pursuing baking as a career, as life would have it, this was just a beautiful accident.

While happy with her boutique design consultancy, she continued to feel there was more to her career than just catering to the demands of clients. She wanted something that would satisfy her creative hunger.

Mothers never stop surprising us with the gifts they bestow, and with Shikha and her mother, this gift came in the form of a happy coincidence. "I remember my ever-so-curious mother telling that she had signed up for a full-fledged 'professional' baking class, but had to drop out of it at the last moment owing to some prior commitment." Reminisces Shikha. "She wanted me to attend it on her behalf and come back to teach her everything I'd learn. I'd barely even set foot into the kitchen before that. Little did I know that my first baking class would make me fall in love with the rush that creativity and baking could bring in my life."

Her Tutelage

Baking, like any other art, needs patience, practice and persistence. In the all-in spirit of creative endeavours, Shikha shut her firm and invested all her savings in understanding the science of baking.





"I was driven towards the 'artistic' side of the baking world." Says Shikha. Her journey of education began with workshops across Bangalore, Kolkata and Delhi. She also pursued individual courses at Sophia College and School of European Pastry, Mumbai as well as some short term courses and hands-on sessions at PME Sugarcraft Institute.

"Later on, instead of a regular baking course, I got in touch with some of the most prominent artists around the world across Singapore, Italy, London, Portugal and Turkey and applied for internships and learning opportunities with them. Since I had no legacy or experience to boast of, I placed heavy emphasis on constant learning and innovation to stand out."

"For a while, I was comfortable doing part-time roles, teaching and baking with more prominent names from the industry from the comfort of my home kitchen. Still, my most significant breakthrough came when a corporate order of 900 cupcakes came through, and for the first time, I realised I needed more than a nine-inch oven to make it work." Says Shikha about her big break.

Her Product Range

Her assortment of products is a beautiful melange of designer cakes, fusion desserts and bakery favourites such as bread, cupcakes, brownies, cookies, tea cakes and more. She has also created a variety of festive hampers handcrafted for occasions like Diwali, Christmas, and Halloween.

Mishmash's gelatin flowers, tower cakes and fusion desserts like the rasmalai cake and gulab jamun - bundi cake are a revelation. During the lockdown she kept busy supplying Mumbai's populace with daily breakfast delights, DIY kits for donuts, hot cocoa bombs, brownies and pull-me-up-cakes.

The Pull-Me-Up Marvel and Other Bestsellers

While her bestseller dishes vary from seasonal flavours such as strawberries, mangoes and passionfruit to all-time favourites such as Nutella, Lotus Biscoff and tiramisu, their fusion desserts have always been a hit with customers. From rasmalai cake, gulab-jamun

and rabdi jars and even jalebi-rabdi pull-me-up cakes, they have seen an unprecedented rise in the orders!

Shikha even added a cool twist to the pull-me-up cakes by coupling them with Indian desserts. She says, "I think that food is not just for the tongue, but all the other senses and the very act of creating your cake and playing with the flavours resonated with people and has created quite a few fantastic Instagram moments."

Future Plans

She intends to expand her business by setting up an industry level kitchen and establish a pan-India presence. She explains, "The Mishmash team has been an all-women team from day one, and I intend to ensure that we grow this team even bigger to help more girls achieve their dreams, empower themselves and be self-sustainable."

A Sweet Message for Our Readers

She has learned a lot from her arduous journey in the industry and believes that hard work, honesty and passion are the only things that will help one survive in the baking industry.

"The night is darkest before the dawn. Never let naysayers stop you from following your passion. The only way to stay and make a mark in any industry, especially a creative one, is to keep your focus on the one thing that matters: Innovation and Persistence; Everything else will follow."



LOTUS BISCOFF COOKIES



INGREDIENTS

For the cookie base:

Flour 150gms
Butter 70gms
Brown Sugar 95gms
Cocoa Powder 1tbsp
Dark Chocolate 65 gms
Baking Powder ½ tsp
Lotus Biscoff Spread 2 tbsp

Milk 1tbsp
Biscoff Biscuits 5

METHOD

1. In a bowl add butter and melted chocolate. Melt it together.
2. Add in the flour, brown sugar, cocoa powder and baking powder.
3. Add the lotus biscoff and mix

well.

4. Add the milk to the mixture if needed.
5. On silpat add the cookie dough and add the biscuit crumbs. Bake the cookies 150 degrees for 12 minutes.
6. Once cool add the biscoff spread.

THE SEA SALT BAE

Gorgeous desserts, scrumptious munchies and a scalding cup of aromatic coffee that will start your day with a bang - that is what Anokhi Shah's Sea Salt Cafe is all about.



Anokhi Shah, Ahmedabad

A blessed streak of serendipity is something that we all yearn for and Sea Salt Cafe's proprietor, **Anokhi Shah** has had a first-hand experience of the same.



Her Journey

The cornerstone of Sea Salt Cafe was laid while she was pursuing her MBA. It started as a casual assignment submission where she had to come up with a business proposition for an F&B venture. She gushes, "The business plan was a part of my curriculum. The idea was to create a space that would bestow young professionals with a wide range of flavoursome baked goods, coffee, breakfast and lunch options. This half-baked idea became my reality later on and the rest is history. We envisioned the cafe to be a full-fledged culinary experience and not just a casual eatery."

The tag line of her cafe goes "Made from Scratch, Infused with Love" which is quite apt for what they stand for. Everything they make is in-house with no preservatives used. Her idea was to be a part of the slow-food movement and be sustainable in her approach.

Her Tutelage

Anokhi truly believed in her venture but wanted to make sure she cultivated the right kind of skills and knew baking/cooking inside out. Good quality research and tutelage indeed lead to a strong repertoire which is why she pursued a couple of esteemed courses in baking under renowned chefs.

She shares, "I spent a couple of years studying. I first did a Diploma in Culinary Arts from the *Institute of Culinary Education* and then worked at *Jean-Georges Vongerichten's ACB Cocina*. I later went back to school to study Culinary Management, Pastry and Baking while also working at *Patisserie Chanson*. I am also a trained Barista from *Joe Coffee Company*."



Her Product Range

Her menu is a combination of gourmet desserts and lip-smacking snacks. She elaborates, "The idea behind the space we created was to have dishes that paired well with coffee. Therefore, we have an extensive coffee menu with limited food and dessert options. A small menu also ensures the quality of the products served, so fewer ingredients go to waste and the freshness is maintained. Our bestseller is the Sea Salt Cookie."

She also loves making fresh brick oven pizzas because she associates the entire process with a gleeful evening spent with her family, where they roll out the dough and come up with exciting toppings together.

What makes her food unique is her approach towards healthy and vegan options. She adds, "We take the nutritional aspect of our food seriously, making sure it is freshly prepared, hygienic, and flavourful without being unhealthy. The dishes focus on the highest quality, locally sourced ingredients and I love adding twists to some of my French classics."

"We are a Vegan-friendly place and have milk substitutes for our coffee and a couple of desserts as well. Some of the savoury dishes like our salad, burger and avocado toast can also be made vegan upon request."



Future Plans

The pandemic was a difficult time for her cafe and she had to shut it down temporarily but she is planning to re-open it soon.

She is overwhelmed with the kind of love she has received from her customers and thrives on their positive feedback. For now, we can't stop gawking at her creations and would love to see her bustling about the Sea Salt Cafe once more!



ORANGE JAM

(since it is that time of the year)

INGREDIENTS

Grated Orange Zest 2 Tsp
Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice 1 Cup
Sugar 2 Cups
Figs 1 Kg, stem removed and cut in half

METHOD

1. Place the orange zest and orange juice in a medium (10-inch) heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven.
2. Add the sugar, and figs to the pot.
3. Cover and bring to a full boil over medium heat.
4. Stir the mixture and boil hard for 1 minute, stir well to dissolve the sugar.
5. Lower the heat, and cook uncovered at a full simmer for 50 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. You want the little bubbles to be throughout the pot, not just at the edges.
6. After 45 minutes, refrigerate a small amount of the liquid to see if it becomes syrupy.
7. It should be like a soft fruit preserve.
8. Keep cooking just until the liquid starts to set like a gel when cold.
9. If the liquid is too firm, add a little orange juice or water, cook for a minute, and test it again until it's right.
10. Depending on how ripe the figs are, they will probably keep their shape, but it's fine if they don't.
11. Serve and refrigerate.

WHO MOVED MY CHEESECAKE

Velvety pink swirls of blueberry and cranberry compote; candied slices of lemon; a firm, baked filling of eggless cream cheese and a crumbly layer of buttery crust - if this doesn't make you want to order a luscious cheesecake, then nothing ever will. Meet Shimoli Mehta, the proprietor of Sushimolay, a company that specialises in making eggless New York cheesecakes.



Shimoli Mehta, Ahmedabad

Shimoli Mehta, a food blogger-turned baker from Ahmedabad, was always fond of quality desserts. This affinity for all-things-sweet led to the opening of her cloud kitchen in Ahmedabad that only caters New York-style cheesecakes.

Check out @sushimolay on Instagram to know more about her range of eggless baked cheesecakes.



Her Journey

Shimoli Mehta had it all planned: A degree in IT and Management from UCL, London, a career in business development and aspirations of a good life. What she didn't keep track of was her irrevocable love for desserts. We all love eating gourmet food but how many of us would leave the corporate world behind and start a cloud kitchen to follow our passion? Hardly any. It was this very approach that made her unique.

Her food blogging journey started during her stay in London. Being a

vegetarian in a country that didn't have a lot of vegetarian options led to a lot of experiments in the kitchen. She also had the opportunity to roam around the world and get introduced to all the authentic dishes that these international cities offer.

"I realised that there was a huge gap in the market. Cheesecake as a dessert might be easily available in Ahmedabad but the authenticity and quality differed." She says. It was this that helped her pivot to the food and beverage industry once she was back home.

Her Product Range

What makes her range of cheesecakes different is the fact that they are eggless. Gujarat is predominantly a vegetarian state and providing an eggless variant of any dessert is surely a great hook.

Her classic New York cheesecakes are drizzled with some strong as well as subtle flavours like lemon, mango basil, blueberry, Nutella and more. Apart from these basic flavours, what will make you want her creations instantaneously are her showstoppers. Variants like the Crimson cheesecake - made with real flowers and candied lemon; the Dalgona Martini cheesecake - a Tiramisu cheesecake with Dalgona cream on top; the Cosmopolitan cheesecake - a zesty rendition of the

classic cocktail with cranberry and lemon segments and the Pinacolada cheesecake - an ode to the classic combination of candied pineapple and coconut.

Her USP lies in her homemade drizzles and coulis, a unique offering paired with the cheesecakes as per their flavour profile.

Future Plans

She is looking forward to expand her business soon and wants to invest in sound infrastructure to be able to set up cloud kitchens in other major cities of India.

"I would want to brand Sushimolay solely as a cheesecake company and accordingly expand my business. The idea is to explore and

introduce different flavour combinations through an array of cheesecakes." She explains.

A Sweet Message for Our Readers

Shimoli believes that working hard and being prepared are two things that will take you a long way. "The most important thing to remember while planning your business is to stop looking for the right time, and just start something. Taking the first step is crucial. Apart from that, research and execution are key. Your ideas may be beautiful but if you are not clear on who your target audience is, your entire business model might fail miserably. Take that well-planned plunge first. You can always polish it and make it better as time goes by." She concludes.

PITAYA CHIA SEED PUDDING

INGREDIENTS

Mixed chia seeds 40 g
Pitaya (pink dragon fruit) 1/2
Milk/coconut milk 1 cup
Yoghurt/coconut yoghurt 1/2 cup
Pomegranate seeds (for garnish)
Banana 1

METHOD

1. Soak chia seeds in milk for 2 hours with mashed banana
2. Once fully soaked, you will get a slimy consistency.
3. Divide the mix into three bowls of equal quantity
4. Add Pitaya in each bowl to create the ombre colour. You can also yoghurt as a base.



SETTING OFF ON A BAKING TRAIL

Imagine biting into a cake and having the flavours of a motichoor laddoo explode in your mouth.

Vishakha Gopalka Shah of the 'The Bake Trail' specializes in fresh-from-the-oven eggless goodies showcasing a range of interesting flavours.



Vishakha Gopalka Shah, Ahmedabad



Her Journey

When Vishakha was pursuing her civil engineering, she realised that she wasn't enjoying studying it. In contrast, baking felt therapeutic to her and became her go-to stressbuster.

She reminisces, "As a kid, I used to enjoy baking with my mother and it brought me immense joy when people enjoyed eating my desserts." It was with the support and encouragement of her family that she started her baking business.

"Today as well, my mom is the driving force behind my brand. With her help and motivation I can perform well. I started this business to see the happiness on the faces of people when they eat my desserts. My family has always supported me in my career options which has become the main driving force behind my business."

Her Tutelage

Baking is all about accuracy and precision. Interestingly enough, that is precisely what she enjoys. After concluding a diploma in patisserie from Lavonne Academy, Bangalore, she went on to do internships under different Lavonne alumni as well as Sugarbliss in Mumbai.

Her Favourite Product to Bake

"I love to make desserts and cakes which are not theme-based as it gives me the liberty to try new designs for my clients." Gushes Vishaka. However, she also finds it exciting when her clients give her challenging designs challenging designs that work as a catalyst as a catalyst for her to perform better.



Her Product Range

The Bake trail has a variety of pies, tarts, desserts, bread and dips. Some of her famous desserts are motichoor cheesecake, mini bundt cakes, petit four and brownies.

She shares, "I had decided to use only premium ingredients and not use substandard ingredients like compound chocolate. Using good ingredients make the products expensive, but the taste is so much better that it makes the products worth the money!"

For her celebratory desserts, she shares, "We make celebration cakes in exotic flavours like French Biscuit, Raspberry, Salted Caramel, Guanaja and Ruby Chocolate apart from the classic flavours that we offer."

Her bestsellers are the Babka, Motichoor Cheesecake, The Bake Trail Tart and French Biscuit Cake.

Her Range of Healthy Options

Since her father is a diabetic, Vishaka knows exactly how important it is to have a healthier option for sugar in her recipes. With that in mind she introduced jaggery cakes at The Bake Trail specifically for people who want to avoid sugar. Moreover, she also makes vegan goodies for clients who request these products.

Out of the Box Creations

Vishaka has always been acutely aware of the

importance of keeping up with the rapidly changing trendscape of baking.

She says, "I introduced Babka, a sweet Jewish bread that was not known by many people at that time. I also introduced savoury options in it like cheese and herb babka or even pesto babka."

Having said that, her fusion desserts like Motichoor Cheesecake are also bestsellers among all age groups. "Keeping the holiday vibes in mind, we have also introduced our Christmassy Dessert Edition. We have Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, mini Christmas trees, and of course, plum cakes. We have also made chocolate stirrers, strawberry desserts, and date truffles to keep everyone warm and cosy during the winters. After all, the most wonderful time of the year deserves the most wonderful treats." She says.

A Sweet Message for Our Readers

Indian celebrations are incomplete without sweets. Be it weddings or christenings, the tradition of baptizing happy occasions with something sweet continues to be a firmly rooted Indian tradition.

She concludes, "It's just that the meaning of sweets has changed from 'Mithai' to 'Delicious Baked Desserts'. But the secret ingredient of love never changes."

The Bake Trail Tart

Yield Two 4" tart

For Crust

Bourbon Biscuit 200 g
Melted Butter 50-60 g

For Feuilletine Layer

Melted Chocolate 20 g
Feuilletine 50 g

For Ganache

Couverture Chocolate
(55%) 120 g
Fresh Cream 100 g
Butter 10 g

METHOD

1. Crush biscuits in a blender till it becomes a fine powder. Add melted butter to this slowly and mix it.
2. Transfer this mix in two 4" tart rings. Press it firmly with your hand and level it. Keep it in the chiller for an hour.
3. For the feuilletine layer, melt chocolate and add feuilletine and mix it well. Layer it on a silpat and keep it in the chiller for half an hour.
4. Meanwhile, melt the chocolate in the microwave in 30 seconds bursts for making the ganache. Mix fresh cream (room temperature) once the chocolate melts.
5. Add butter and heat everything together till they mix well. Once cool, transfer the mixture in a piping bag with star nozzle and keep it in the fridge for 30 mins to chill.

Assembly

1. Remove the feuilletine layer from the silpat and break it in small pieces with your hand.
2. Apply very little amount of melted chocolate



- on the biscuit layer and spread small bits of feuilletine layer on it. Keep it in the fridge for 10-15 mins.
3. Pipe the ganache on top of the feuilletine layer.
4. Sprinkle sea salt and garnish with silver foil.

CHEF



STYLE DECODED

Image Source: Google



Image Source: Google

VINEET BHATIA

You have to question things in this day and age. You can only break a rule or bend a rule if you understand the rule first.”

The face of progressive Indian cooking, Chef Vineet Bhatia wears a number of hats. Having earned his first Michelin star in 2004, Chef Bhatia has written a number of cookery books, recorded a host of TV shows, and opened a number of restaurants around the world.

Vineet Bhatia landed in the UK with a beat up old suitcase and an unflinching passion for cooking. Staying true to classic Indian flavours Chef Bhatia has managed to take Indian dishes and make them truly international cuisine.

Over and above being an absolute star in the field of culinary arts, Chef Bhatia manages to carry an incomparable sartorial sense. Be it on the Masterchef set, lounging at home, or even at a public appearance, his style quotient is about as toothsome as his food.

Keeping it Simple

If there is one chef who can make t-shirts appropriate for all seasons, it is Chef Bhatia. He has the perfect tee for all occasions! He pairs these wonderfully with a scarf, or a classic blazer.

Not only is it the perfect look for any casual or semi-

formal event, but also works to give the wearer a greater degree of comfort. If you are feeling particularly daring, pair a t-shirt with a blazer, and roll up the sleeves to get an even more informal look about it.

Making Colours Work

Some of his signature tailored looks, be it on Masterchef or Netflix, Chef Bhatia manages to effortlessly nail the formal look. He usually works with a mixed colour palette of dark and light shades. It resembles a lot of the 80's-style power dressing with boxy, masculine cuts.

He indulges in a lot of colour blocking along with his tailored looks, and this makes him stand out in a crowd.

Giving Traditions a New Take

Chef Bhatia loves showcasing his Indian roots, be it through his culinary expertise or sartorial tastes. His enviable collection of kurtas paired with stylish denims are an absolute hit. He usually prefers a monochrome look sticking to khadi and cotton.

In the words of Chef Bhatia - One should develop their own definition of what style means to them because at the end it's about being comfortable in your own skin.

Foodism Talks

Foodism Talks is a segment where we collate interactive live sessions held on our social media platforms with renowned faces who're also hardcore foodies. Offering you a sneak – peek into their lives, our sessions give you an insight into their fitness secrets and overall healthy lifestyle.

Unfolding food stories from various celebrities' of the TV and Film fraternity, we hosted the following names across the month. Here are a few snippets of our live chat with them and what they had to say about the talks.



Karan Wahli
Actor

This multifaceted actor had a freewheeling chat with us on a variety of food related topics. 'I love food, and experimenting with my food choices. Foodism had some very interesting questions and the session was absolute fun!' says Karan.

Being the fitness conscious actor that he is, he also fielded a lot of questions on his dietary habits and exercise regimen. His insights into how he manages to balance taste and health were nuanced and helpful.

An artist, writer and freelance journalist, Shweta Rohira was an absolute delight to speak to about travelling and food. "I love voyaging and attempting various cooking styles each time I travel to new places." Shweta said. With the lockdown helping her spend more time in the kitchen with her mother and sister, she managed to cook up some amazing dishes.

She also discussed her exercise regimen during the lockdown. "With gyms being shut during the lockdown, I continued my fitness regime by eating in small proportions and doing yoga and cardio in the form of brisk walking or cycling," said Shweta.

The live session concluded with a discussion on nourishing food and the importance of prioritising health. It was very interesting and informative having Shweta on for a conversation.



Shweta Rohira
Social Activist



Archana Pania Sharma
Rj, Singer and Actor

A versatile performer, Rj, emcee, singer and actor, Archana Pania Sharma's live interaction was all about health and gratitude. For someone who travels a lot, she had great insights to share on how one should be perennially grateful about the kind of travel and food experiences one has.

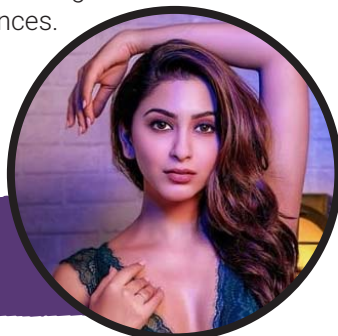
'It was such a fun conversation with Foodism where we talked about the various ways to take care of our health and remember our travel and food experiences with gratitude.' She says. It definitely gave us a great approach on food and travel experiences.



Esshanya Maheshwari, a popular South Indian actress spoke to Foodism about how intricately travelling and food are interrelated.

For me, travelling and food go hand in hand. I, being a foodie, take travelling as an opportunity to try the cuisine of the place I am visiting.' She said. Since the lockdown dismantled any plans she had for travelling, she spent this time with her mum cooking some interesting dishes in the kitchen.

She spoke about how she managed to keep healthy during the lockdown through Zumba, cycling, and yoga. 'I had a wonderful interaction with Foodism about the work they were doing and our favourite foods, fitness and mental health.' She concludes. All in all, it was a fantastic experience having Esshanya talking to us about her food and fitness experiences.



Esshanya Maheshwari
Actress

Rouble Nagi
Social Activist & Artist



Rouble Nagi, a social activist and artist, shared that she is ever so grateful to God for providing us with the gift of food. "I enjoy simple food like dal chawal but it should be well-made and tasty," says Rouble.

She reminisced about her mother cooking for their family, which served as an inspiration for her to cook as well. "Being a Kashmiri I enjoy eating Rajma chawal the most." She said. "People's tastes differ and they should create a healthy lifestyle by eating nutritious food and cheat once in a while." Her perception of leading a healthy lifestyle for physical wellness as well as sound mental health was well-received all around.



Tina Ahuja
Entrepreneur & Actor

Tina Ahuja, an actor and a food entrepreneur, shared about her new food venture called Healthy Crush stating, "There is a range of healthy food out there which can help people in weight loss and improving their skin."

She concludes, "Foodism is a unique platform to know everything about food which encourages good food ventures by featuring them in their magazine." And we couldn't agree more!



Will this month be sweet, savory or sour – let's find out!

ZODIAC FUN FOOD FORECAST

ARIES



The 'WFH' system has made you restless, and you are in a party mood because 'tis that time of the year ***hums Falalalalala***. Boredom has made you want to ram your head into the wall (pun totally intended) and binge-eat to glory. Instead, fill your larder with healthy snacks for the entire month so that you can tuck in a fair amount of party snacks on Christmas and New Year's Eve.

GEMINI



You are indecisive when it comes to food which irritates your friends because they know this confused ship ain't sailing anytime soon. Our humble suggestion for this month is that you see this as an opportunity. Instead of choosing between two dishes that confuse you, surprise yourself with a new dish altogether and bamboozle your indecisive mind. Pizza Or Burger? How about Glazed Paneer Bao instead!

LEO



Leos love all things shiny and lustrous, and your food isn't any different. You look for enticing dishes, but you know what wise people say, 'All that glitters isn't gold.' Sometimes, all your gut needs is some simple home-cooked food. So give your stomach some rest and lap up all the home-made Sarson Ka Saag & Makke Ki Roti; made with love to improve your food karma!

TAURUS



Your fun and hardworking nature has led you to cook up a storm in the kitchen. Your interesting food experiments will lead to some delicious desserts this Christmas but stay away from cold drinks and frozen desserts. Dried fruits & nuts are what you need to make things warm & cozy. So bake a fudgy Plum cake and make your Christmas merrier than ever.

CANCER



O' Emo cancer babies, take care of thy nerves with copious amounts of luscious chocolate and some good ol' red wine! Treat yourself this month with some gourmet desserts and open a bottle of Pinot Noir. Chuck all the negativity out of your system, and bid adieu to this mistake of a year called 2020. Let dark chocolate fill your heart with glee and your mind with happy endorphins.

VIRGO



Your practical approach to life and love for structural integrity will take you places this month. If you are thinking of baking Christmas pies and tarts, follow the recipe to the T as that will keep your OCD under check! But don't over do it, as it might spoil your pie completely. Let your hair down and enjoy a few meals cooked by others dear Virgo (Sans the nitpicking, of course).

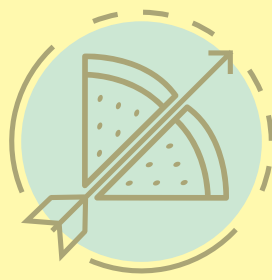
Will this month be sweet, savory or sour – let's find out!

LIBRA



The eternal peacemakers that all Librans are - salvaging extensive fights between your siblings that are mostly food-related will be on the top of your priority list. Try to strike a healthy balance between health and pleasure, and make sure your family doesn't venture out a lot (damn this pandemic!) for special festive meals. Instead, divide all the recipes amongst yourselves and have a merry little Christmas!

SAGITTARIUS



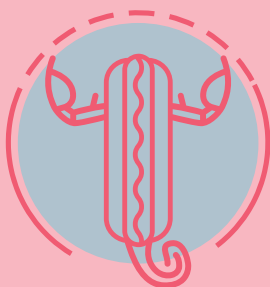
No party is complete without your optimism and jolly nature, and this will keep the Christmas spirits high. We know you've been thinking about Winter cocktails a lot lately (call us psychic!). So a good Old Fashioned drink will do you wonders, or maybe you could go a little wild and make yourself an Espresso Martini as well. Don't let the pandemic take away that gleeful grin of yours.

AQUARIUS



Be creative this festive season and take a leading stance in the kitchen! Your open-mindedness will lead to a lot of dazzling recipes, and you might end up becoming a food blogger/influencer as well! Keep away from microwave cakes and ready-to-eat recipes like Dal Makhani or Paneer Tikka Masala because these might just reduce your credibility and take away your fame and popularity.

SCORPIO



Your friendly nature has helped you connect with your loved ones during the pandemic, and your food recipes will probably make you famous because they are oh so good! So keep whipping up a dish or two in the kitchen, but keep a check on your health as well. Have some hot Ginger Herbal Tea every morning to keep the flu away. Eat loads of citrus fruits, since the colours yellow and orange will bring you good health.

CAPRICORN



Your cardinal nature makes you stand out amongst your peers, and so do your trending food recipes. We suggest a recap of some of the most popular food trends for your friends and family because that way, you will indeed have a beautiful New Year celebration and end the year on a nostalgic note. Whip up some Dalgona or unravel some Pull-me-up cakes and win hearts!

PISCES



We know you love day-dreaming and cooking a 'khayali pulao,' but you need to wake up and smell the coffee because we see a strong possibility of you making a Tiramisu cake on Christmas, which is a dream come true itself. Do share it with your loved ones to help you come out of your shell and make more friends. We believe that sharing your food is a saint-like virtue anyway.

**This is a fun writeup that our edit team has put together and must not be considered as authentic forecast. The content of this article is not targeted towards any profession or individual and is meant to be taken with a humorous pinch of salt.*



The Last Supper of 2020

We are almost done with the abomination that has been 2020. A year where we discovered an all new respect for comfort food, and acknowledged the importance of indulgence. So, if you are looking at ending 2020 with indulgence, we have the perfect spread for you. Take your pick, dearies, 'cause 2020 is done.

By Khushi Kothari





The First Breakfast of 2021

Okay, so if 2020 has been all about quenching existential fears under a ton of chocolate sauce and cheese, 2021 is all about giving your body the culinary respect it deserves. Healthier fare, and indulgence for the mind, body and soul, that's the theme for 2021. And here's a spread for you to take your pick from.

By Khushi Kothari





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