

## **“Solidarity In Diversity – The Bengali Cuisine”**

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### **Abstract**

*Bengali cooking with its root, inception, development and the likelihood which could be utilized as a noteworthy apparatus that enhances the traveler and the travel industry. This paper causes us to comprehend the significance of the sustenance as a nearby food. The flexibility of Bengali cuisine ought to be looked profoundly and which positively examines the underlying driver of so called non-promoted Bengali cuisine. The flexible impact of Bengali cuisine mirrors the "Solidarity in Diversity".*

**Key word:-Bengali cuisine, sustenance, flexible impact**

### **Introduction**

West Bengal is the door of eastern India "The State of Bio-Diversity". Begun with the Himalayas in the north to the ocean in the southern part. With an immense variety of geological impact in the area it's turned into the common decision of the vacationer in national and universal dimension. Where Bengali sustenance assume a significance job among it. The partition of Bengal in 1905 created West Bengal, a state of India and East Pakistan, presently Bangladesh. This extensive scale removal along religious lines prompted a few changes of sustenance, in light of the fact that there were some minor contrasts in nourishment propensities between the Muslims and the Hindus. Bengali cooking is one of the best mixes of non-veg and veggie lover dishes. Bengal is known as the place where there is "maacharbhat" that allude to fish and rice. The wide verities of Bengali nourishment in different events, season, or celebration. Rice is the staple nourishment for Bengal. Aside from this it contains an exceptional component of digestion

of the world best gastronomy. Bengal desserts are world well known. While Bengal get the licenses for innovation of rasogolla.

Bengal has for some time been referred to as the place that is known for bounty and all the more so with regards to its cooking. It is a combination of surfaces - fresh bhajas, grainy mustard sauces, slick fish head gnawing into succulent prawns - and a material accomplishment of picking one's way through fish unresolved issues at fiery, delightful bits of Ilish, and thin, light luchis that put puris to disgrace.

In the month of Ashwin or Karthik (September or October) Durga Puja plays a major role to accumulate all Bengali in one thread. Goddess Durga is considered as our daughter who comes back each year to her father's house with her full family includes two son and two daughters for five days. It is quite obvious that her father would present an array of food for her daughter and please her family with variety. Vegetables, rice preparations, flour preparations, sweets, snacks, relishes what not!

Whatever number of dishes are available, it is important to eat each item separately with small batches of rice. It is always eaten from the mellow tested food to the rich and spicy food. Bitters, dal, fries, vegetable curries are the beginners. Complex vegetable dishes like Ghanto or Chachchari, macherjhol comes then. Kasha mangsho mostly at the end with chutneys or ambals to give a relax to the tongue before jumping for the sweet.

Bengalis loves to eat their food by hand and dump the chewed garbage in the plate obviously with a fashionable pattern. After a thorough meal it is a gesture to prove the satisfaction to the host with a burp.

Bengali food has uncountable dishes to offer, some of the well-known includes: Bhapeys – steamed fish with mustard; Paturis – fish wrapped in banana leaf and steamed; Malaaikari– jumbo prawns cooked with coconut; Kosha Mangsho – mutton cooked with rich and spicy onion gravy; Ambol – relish made from almost anything edible; Bori– a dal dumplings; Chachchari– a

mixed vegetable cooked with fish head; Dalna– big diced vegetables stew, and Ghonto– a vegetarian variety of mixed vegetables.

No Bengali feast is finished without taking into account the sweet tooth and Bengali desserts are notable and famous everywhere throughout the nation. Misti doi, the sweet curd enhanced with caramelized sugar; Rossogolla, the unequaled top choice; Sandesh, the sensitive contributions of coagulated drain solids and Chhana - soured drain with the water expelled, sugar and seasoning are a portion of the real sweet fortes of this district.

### **Historical Influence**

Bangla food has acquired an extensive number of impacts, both remote and Indian, from both a fierce joins with numerous parts of the creation. Bengal is genuinely antiquated; it was initially a Dravidian and inborn society that was widely settled upon by the Aryans amid the Gupta earned run average, it fell under the influence of different Muslim rule from the mid thirteenth century onwards, and was then led by the British for two centuries (1757-1947).

**(Ref. – Indian Food: A Historical Companion by K. T. Achaya; Mangalkabya: A group of Bengali Hindu religious text composed more or less between 13<sup>th</sup> Century and 18<sup>th</sup> Century; The History of Bengal by Sir Jadunath Sarkar)**

### **The Spread of Islam**

The Islamic effect came to Bengal 200 or 300 years after its arrival on the western edges of India. Bengal was under steady Muslim rule not long after the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, first under the Turks and Afghans and a while later reliably under the Mughals. After a short time, a colossal dimension of the masses had changed over to Islam. Regardless, while the religion spread in the majority, the region remained detached from the political and religious focal points of Muslim India. This inferred individual held an extensive part of their neighborhood conventions and remarkably culinary penchants.

**(Ref. – The Fall of the Mughal Empire by Sir Jadunath Sarkar; the Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth by Mr. Dipesh Chakroborty)**

### **The Influence of the Widows**

In Bengal, Hindu widows was significantly more exiled than was elsewhere. They live separated and their diet is strictly monitored. They are restricted for their hearty selection of food and they are banned from various other activities instead religion and housework. Because of the constraints of using of onion or garlic or those ingredients which has the capacity to increase body heat, Bengali kitchen produces mass numbers of food without onion and garlic. This treatment of widows in Bengal continued until acceptably starting late; the effect on the food was to shield a substantial number of the dishes and frameworks of the old in absolute best structure very much ousted from the effect of Mughal or Western systems.

**(Ref. - Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal by Mr. Dipesh Chakroborty;The History of Bengal by Sir Jadunath Sarkar; Mangalkabya: A group of Bengali Hindu religious text composed more or less between 13th Century and 18th Century)**

### **European & Other Outside Influences**

The Europeans dominated Bengal after the Mughals – obviously very less in count. The Portuguese visited the ports of Bengal as merchants and preachers, alongside the French, the Dutch and the British. The French settled at Chandannagar, however by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the British took over. Calcutta turn into the capital of India while Dutch and Portuguese priests pushed their missions and schools from Bengal. Marwari and Gujarati merchants made it their

home, Afghans visited constantly to sell dry fruits and asafoetida and as money lender, the Chinese came as quack dentists, shoe maker and furniture seller. The success of Bengal made it alluring to Syrians, Jews and Armenians as well. The Europeans brought cooking procedures, yet in addition new fixings and nourishment things. Moreover, urban communities created populace focuses of Europeans; hence this urged remote purveyors to set up locally, for example, Jewish pastry shops and English frankfurter sellers.

**(Ref. – Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference by Mr. Dipesh Chakroborty)**

### **The Partition of Bengal**

The partition of the then Bengal into Bangladesh and West Bengal caused a huge socioeconomical change. The people divided themselves from the point of view of religion rather not by their choice for lands. This huge movement have actually shuffled the entire culture – be it of any kind. This change have actually brought a new cooking style for Bengal – people started understanding different cooking style and slow but steadily the adoption happened.

**(Ref. – Swadeshi Movement by Mr. Sumit Sarkar; The History of Bengal by Sir Jadunath Sarkar)**

### **Culinary Influences**

Bengali food today has some exceptional variations - Traditional, Mughal, Anglo-Indian and Chinese.

### **Traditional Bengali Cuisine**

Bengali people were mostly farmers, fisherman etc. There are hardly families who tame animals and automatically it reflected onto the meals. The staple has become Rice and Fish.

Fish is always of the supreme choice. There are approximately 2000 varieties of fresh water fishes available in West Bengal. Some very common varieties include Rohu, Katla, Mrigel, Bata, Chitol, Sol, Magur, Saal, Koi, Chingri etc. Mostly all parts of fish are eaten in some of the form. Amongst red meat, Khasi (lamb) is more famous.

Some other famous Bengali food items are variety of rice grains, masur (dal of red lentils), moong (dal of mung beans), mustard oil, mustard paste, posto (poppy seed) and coconut. Mango is considered one of the prides for Bengal – especially the region of Malda and Murshidabad produce typical variety of mangoes which is only available in Bengal. Hilsa, which migrates upstream to breed like salmon, is a delicacy; the changed salt substance at different periods of the experience is explicitly convincing to the pro, as is which conduit. Hilsa from Padma river is considered the best among all other variants available from other rivers. The panchphoronis a delicacy for Bengal which comprises of Mouri (Aniseed), Sorse (Black Mustard), Kalo Jeera (Black Cumin), Methi (Fenugreek) and Radhuni (Trachyspermum roxburgianum).

Another very common instrument in every Bengali kitchen is bothi. It is a long sharp blade attached on a base of a log that is held somewhere around foot. Both the hands are used to cut almost anything – be it vegetables or non-vegetarian products. A typical punctuality is maintained on vegetable cuts as it has been inherited by the French dominants.

The very recent influence of adding chaats and fast food came to Bengal with the hand of Marwaris and Gujrati business class people. Bengal was always with a high priority for people to do trading and Bengali people always extended their helping hand to accept others. Hence Bengal always mixed with various other cultures and reflection of those other cultures are available on foods.

**(Ref. – The Early History of Bengal by Shri R. C. Majumdar; Hindu Colonies in the Far East: Calcutta by Shri R. C. Majumdar; History of Freedom Movement in India by Shri R. C. Majumdar; Mangalkabya: A group of Bengali Hindu religious text composed more or**

**less between 13th Century and 18th Century; Bangla SahitterItihaas by Krittibas Ojha and Maladhar Bose)**

### **Mughal Influence**

Mughal came in Bengal most likely around the mid-thirteenth century. Dhaka (Bangladesh), specifically, extended incredibly under Mughal rule. The partition of India in 1947 brought about a huge gap along religious lines. Bangladesh today shows more Muslim impact than West Bengal.

The effect on the food was top-down, and more slow than in numerous different parts of India. This prompted an extraordinary food where even the normal man ate the dishes of the illustrious court, for example, biryani, korma and bhunas. The impact was fortified in the Raj period, when Kolkata turned into the place of asylum for some, unmistakable banished Nawabs, uniquely the group of Tipu Sultan from Mysore and Wajid Ali Shah, the expelled Nawab of Awadh.

This is still available in Calcutta especially. Specialities like Chaanp(lamb ribs cooked on a tawa), Rizala (meat in a thin yogurt and cardamom sauce) and the well-known kathi move (kebabs in a wrap). There are famous old restaurants available in Calcutta who are still today maintaining those old traditions of Mughal influence. Few of them would be Nizam, Royal, Aminia, Alia etc.

**(Ref. – The Fall of the Mughal Empire by Sir Jadunath Sarkar; The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth by Mr. Dipesh Chakroborty)**

### **Anglo Indian or Raj Cuisine**

The Anglo Indian or Old English Indian cuisine gave lot of food as a staple into Bengal's diet. The outcome is an exceptional food, a new creation of Anglo Indian – Bengali cuisine which may be considered as one of the best examples of Fusion cuisine. English and Jewish bread

cooks, for example, Flury's and Nahoum's ruled the sweet shop industry which moved from British tables to ordinary Bengali ones, bringing about one of a kind manifestation, for example, the patties (flavourful turnovers). Pao Roti (Bread) has become one of the staple breakfast items with a savoury made from white peas called Ghugni. Earlier the dough for bread is kneaded with feet (hindi – pao) hence Pao Roti. Inclusion of Coverage Cutlet as Kobiraji, or Fried Fish as Fish Fry are few of the examples.

**(Ref. –The Early History of Bengal by Shri R. C. Majumdar; Hindu Colonies in the Far East: Calcutta by Shri R. C. Majumdar)**

### **Chinese Food**

The Chinese dominance is seen in the Tangra region of Kolkata. They stayed during 18<sup>th</sup> century in a town called Achipur. No other place in India hold such huge amount of Chinese people. Calcutta is the only city in India where till today a handwritten Chinese newspaper published every day. These Chinese people came as doctors, or as shoemaker or as a carpenter and mixed with Bengal and Bangalis' so well that now they are even part of all Bengal culture. It is obvious that their food is now popularised all over India but to trace the foundation – Bengal is the place from where Indianized Chinese food flourished. Now in each and every nooks and corners you will find food stalls settled selling Manchurian, Chilly Chicken, and Hot N Sour Soup etc. which is liked by mostly all people. Indianized Chinese food got a second lift when numbers of Tibetans came to Bangal to promote Buddhism. Momo, Thupka, Taipo etc. started flowing in the market with absolute acceptance of people. People started understanding the value of healthy snacks too with the hands of Chinese in Bengal.

As Bengali people started going out of their own state these days automatically their food habits started demanding. Even in New York there are restaurants which prepares Bangali Chinese dishes for the Bongs settled there.

**(Ref. –The Early History of Bengal by Shri R. C. Majumdar; Hindu Colonies in the Far East: Calcutta by Shri R. C. Majumdar)**

### **Bengali Meals**

The run of the mill Bengali admission incorporates a specific grouping of sustenance - fairly like the courses of Western feasting. Two groupings are ordinarily pursued, one for stylized suppers, for example, a wedding and the everyday succession. The two arrangements have provincial varieties, and once in a while there are lot of differences in terms of food between West Bengal and Bangladesh.

It is the Bengali housewife who craft each and every dishes according to her hearty touch and which creates all the difference in taste. The housewives love to serve food course by course. There is no Thali system available but a typical Bengali meal should come in Thala (Thali) and Bati (Small Bowls) with clear indications of separate courses.

### **Courses in a daily Meal**

Keeping rice as staple, the course moves on from a simpler item to a rich and heavier item.

The meal course must begin with bitter such as Karala (bittergourd) or Shukto (mixture of vegetables with a milky mustard gravy). There has to deep fried vegetables and fish accompanying this particular course and the system of eating this course is to use very little amount of rice. It can be considered as a course similar to French Horsd'oeuvre.

The second course has to be Shaak (Amamranth). It may be fried, braised, stewed. Often it is cooked with other varieties of vegetables too (mostly potatoes and brinjals). The fried version of Shaak has to be eaten with another Bengali delicacy called Kasundi (a mango mustard paste). Bori (gram flour dumplings) is also added after frying and in crushed form to the shaak.

The dal course is most generous course, particularly in West Bengal. It is always eaten with good quantity of rice with various supportive accompaniments. Dal could be vegetarian or even non-

vegetarian which may include fish head, dried fish, fish keema etc. Bhaja is the best accompaniment for dal. Bhaja refers to any vegetables which has more of starch content is deep fried maybe with batter such as beguni (aubergine fritters) or without batter such as begun bhaja(aubergine frit). Even at times dal is accompanied with fish fry – a Bengali style fish fry refers to round fish cut on the bone and deep fried with marination of turmeric and salt with no batter.

The next course is fish. It is a very common sayings that all Bengali people has fish bone strainer in their mouth. Yes, indeed Bengalis love to eat fresh water bony fishes. Some of the most popular and mouth-watering dishes may include ‘Doi Mach’, ‘ChingriMacherMalaikari’, ‘SorsePabda’, ‘Tel Koi’, ‘Koi Macher Ganga Jamuna’, ‘Paturi’, ‘BhapaIlish’ etc.

Bengal which was undivided before 1905 was having a typical culture of eating meat after this fish course. Eventually after separation, West Bengal people grew the habit of eating meat but it cannot be considered a typical meal till today. West Bengal strictly follows two different culture when it comes to meat eating. The followers of Lord Shiva and the followers of Lord Vishnu (Lord Krishna). The Shiva followers love to eat red meat after fish rather the Krishna followers they prefer to eat fish only.

At last comes the relish course, which is normally sweet and sour. Typically, in West Bengal almost all materials can be converted in relish which in Bengali we call it as chutney or tok or ambal. In Bangladesh when we talk about chutney we select delicately few of the fruits or vegetables to prepare chutney such as mango, amra, jalpai, chalta, karamcha etc. but in West Bengal and especially in Midnapore district almost everything can be converted into chutney.

### **Sweets**

No meal can end without sweets as like no Bengali can leave without sweets.If we look into the ‘Bangla SahitterItihaas’ wherein Goddess Durga is summoned to her father’s house with an array of sweets. Although it is believed that Portuguese people taught how to curdle milk and utilise

the caesin (chenna) but according to Bengali mythology we learnt the use of Chenna a long back than them. Innovation have started to flow but still those old sweets holds place into our heart.

The sweets of Bengal are generally made of chhenna, khoa, or flours of different cereals and pulses. Some important sweets of Bengal are:

1. Rasgulla– invented by Nabin Chandra Das
2. Pantuais deep fried and dipped into sugar syrup – invented by Bhim Chandra Nag
3. ChamCham (especially from Porabari, Tangail District in Bangladesh) goes back about 150 years. The modern version of this sweet was inspired by Raja Ramgore of Balia district in Uttar Pradesh in India. It was then further modernised by his grandson, Matilal Gore.
4. Several varieties of yoghurts such as mistidoi which is invented a long back in undivided Bengal.
5. Sandesh, chhanarjilepi, kalo jam, darbesh, raghobshai, payesh, nalengurersandesh, shorbhajaare some few more typical Bengali sweets.

### **Snacks**

Moori (puffed rice) is made by warming sand in a pot, and afterward tossing in grains of rice. The rice can have been washed in brackish water to give flavoring. The rice puffs up and is isolated from the sand by a strainer. Moori is extremely famous in Bengal and utilized in a wide assortment of common and religious events, or even just chomped plain.

A variation of moori is khoi, which is leveled puffed rice. The two assortments are utilized to make a wide range of nibble nourishments.

There are typical festival snacks which are available and offered to gods and goddesses. A typical dumpling is made from puffed rice (muri/khoi) with gur (jaggery made from dates syrup) which is known as moa.

**(Ref. – Chandimangal by MukundaramChakroborty; Bangla SahitterItihaas by Krittibas Ojha and Maladhar Bose;Indian Food: A Historical Companion by K. T. Achaya; Mangalkabya: A group of Bengali Hindu religious text composed more or less between 13th Century and 18th Century; The History of Bengal by Sir Jadunath Sarkar)**

### **OBSERVATON**

The major influence of various culture in Bengali cuisine is the prime instill of this research. It helps to explore the regionalcuisine as a development for the hospitality of the state and hold the flag of marketing of Bengali cuisine in the domestic and international market. By this discussionwe could have made the scope that can help the Bengali cuisine to disseminate towards the world.

Food is valuable elements that help to increase the tourism value of the state however, it is a necessary component of daily life that a serious research and analysis on food can be done for this particular area or state. Food is an essential component of tourism industry. In a study we saw that food had a significant attraction while people travel (Bessiere, 1998; Cohen and Avieli, 2004) mention that traditional food and cuisine could be excellent tourist attraction in rural travel destination (Bessiere1998) and also it can be said that having local food during traveling might be an inseparable part of the travel experience because food reflected the culture and the heritage of the particular are or state. Cohen and Avieli – 2004 agreed that individual cities region or even whole country could be appealing for their unique culinary attractions. More over Long (2003, p.2) stress the importance of food by claiming, “Explore food as both a destination and a vehicle for tourism” by this we are able to analyse the tourist behaviortowards local cuisine.It will provide insight into their behavior in travel destination. Several reasons can be put forward for the growth in attention to food as an area of interest for tourism studies – (Hall, 2003, Hall and Mitchell 2001; Hjalager and Richerds, 2002). Food has also become recognized as being expressive of identity and culture and that’s why it is an important component of cultural and heritage tourism. (Bessiere 1998; Ritchie and Zins 1978)

Looking into the old history book of Bengal (Bangla SahitterItihaas by Krittibas Ojha and Maladhar Bose) wherein it is clearly narrated that the art of cooking is to be handed over to the daughter by their mother so that the daughter can show her best of ability when she goes to her in laws house. Goddess Durga is considered as our Daughter who comes back to her mother once in a year and stay for five days and those five days are celebrated with all joy and fun. All best variety of food is prepared and offered to the daughter. Although use of curdled milk (Chenna) I brought to India by the Portuguese but if we look into the Chandi Mangal written by MukundaramChakroborty during 1100AD wherein he has written about a sweetmeat which is prepared by separating the milk protein and liquid and then mixing it with sugar. Food is always is the weakness of the Bengalis.The culinary tradition depend upon the availability of local ingredients as like Mango, banana, coconuts, verity of fish, meat, and milk product. The versatility of the cuisine is only reflecting district wise variation onto food habit. The great river Ganga along with heat and humidity combine with a fertile soil help in rice farming.The climatic condition plays a major role on Bengals food habit. As Bengal is considered as neither hot nor cold climatic state people sweat a lot and which automatically increases the requirement of absorption of water into the body. Rice helps as it has immense amount of absorption capacity of water.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is quite accepted to move ahead in every aspect. Be it food, culture, garments or anything. But at the same time, we should not give up the best practices of the past. What Bengal thinks today India thinks tomorrow – a statement made by Shri Gopal Krishna Gokhale somewhere around 1907 is still a lesson for all the Bongs. It is absolutely true that till today for every successful organization there is a Bong holding a very responsible position. Still today for India West Bengal is considered as the cultural capital. But it is our bad luck that Bengali cuisine is not so popularized as like other state cuisines of India. Although Bangladeshi migrants in different parts of world have tried to popularize the cuisine but as a part of Indian state we have not yet

flourished. The purpose of this entire research work is that this document becomes a ready reckoner for any youth to popularize Bengali cuisine at a global level.

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