Ramadan Delicacies





Ramadan marks the month of fasting and is observed by 86% of the 160 million people in Bangladesh. The most notable change in the streets can be seen in the changing shopping habits of the people! Even though restaurants are closed during the day , they sell just as much food serving " Iftar" and some even stay open for Sehri. The goodies of iftar in Bangladesh and in Old Dhaka are mostly lentil based batter, grilled or fried. The experience of simply being in Old Dhaka before the breaking of the fast stimulates All your senses!

Soaking in the Atmosphere

The Chawk Bazaar throbs with the bustling sound of human multitudes and street venders screaming out slogans on top of their voices. The air is filled with strong aroma of piled up heaps of iftar delicacies laid out on large trays and bamboo-baskets. The Chawk Bazaar is an age old place for traditional iftar market.

The entire span of road in front of Chawk Bazaar Shahi Mashjid becomes a grand fair of buyers oscillating between open-air stalls that stretch out in every corner of the street.

Ancient Pride

The Chawk Bazaar of Old Dhaka is renowned for its 400 years of traditional iftar bazaar and is heaven for meat-lovers! A streaming hot plate of Haleem or a lofty amount of Mutton Biriyani are the most enticing delicacies anyone could ask for. Almost all the sellers sell Haleem, Chicken and Mutton Kebabs and Kheema and Dum Biriyani.

Sweetness for the Sweetheart!

Jilapi! The sweet originates in Iran where they call it zoolbia. There is a rallying cry among street hawkers, ‘sweetness for sweetheart’, as though the jilapi is some sort of love portion. But a bite of this sugar-syrup coated delicacy can certainly fill one’s heart with sweetness.

Kindling kebabs!

Shami Kebab! Shutli Kebab! Reshmi Kebab! Shikh Kebab! Chicken Tikka! Needless to say, the names are sufficient to bring water in the mouth. The street becomes a carnival, the sizzling sound of the red hot charcoal fire is like a symphony to the ears and pleasure to the eyes.

Malai Tea- Old Dhaka Style

The malai-tea brings the soul back into the body. The Chawkbazaar tea capture the flamboyant mood of the old part of the town. It’s not just any tea but tea with thick cream floated on top: it looks like an iceberg on the murky water or the Buriganga, a definite treat to the eyes.

Carnival of Chaos

Chawk Bazaar hosts the most eventful outdoor Iftar feast experience in the city. The fiesta goes on till 5 a.m in the morning. The taste may last a few moments on the lips but the experience will last forever in the hearts.

Glossary with meaning

- Stimulate- encourage, motivate, inspire
- Bustling- busy, full of life, lively
- Aroma- smell, fragrance, scent
- Throbs- Palpitating, beating fast
- Oscillating- dangling, wavering
- Enticing- tempting
- Murky- obscure, dim, fuzzy, vague
- Ravenous- very hungry, famished, starving
- Carnival-festival, street party, fair
- Encapsulating- enclose in or as if in a capsule
- Flamboyant- colourful, loud, flashy
- Fiesta- feast

Comprehension Check

1. Questions for scanning:

A) Which time of the year is mentioned in the text?
B) Which part of Dhaka city is mentioned
C) Which iftar items are mentioned in the text?
D) Where does 'Jilapi' originate from?
E) How long does the iftar fiesta go on?

2. Questions for skimming:

A) What is the text is about?
B) Why is Chawk Bazaar famous for?
C) Why are iftar items different from the everyday food?
D) What is the speciality of ' Malai-tea'?

3. Questions for inferring:

A) What is the writer's intention here?
B) Who was it written for?
C) Why does the writer think it is a carnival of chaos?
D) Why does he say that the experience will last forever in the heart?
E) What does the writer mean by this expressions-
"As though the jilapi is some sort of love portion"
F) Do you like the passage? Why or why not?