

GULF TIMES
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04 December, 2025



**FAHAD ALBISHRI'S
CULINARY JOURNEY
FROM QATAR TO THE WORLD**

**THE ART OF TRADITIONAL
QATARI CUISINE**

THE STORY OF SPICES

Nando's®

Boo'd

NEW

Espetada Dukkah Lima A-Torre

PERi-PERi chicken thighs stuffed with a spiced PERi-dukkah and cream cheese filling, layered between yellow pepper, red onion and lime slices. Served with a PERi and herb tahini pour-over sauce.



Nando's Qatar Elevates Espetada season with a bold new Espetada Dukkah Lima flavour

Nando's Qatar is welcoming Espetada season with a brand-new flavour set to take the spotlight: the Espetada Dukkah Lima. Vibrant, creamy, zesty and perfectly flame-grilled, this new creation is poised to become the flavour everyone will be talking about.

A flavour crafted for bold palates

At the centre of the Espetada Dukkah Lima are Nando's well-loved PERI-PERI chicken thighs, this time enhanced with a new twist. Each thigh is stuffed with a spiced PERI-dukkah and cream cheese filling, bringing an indulgent richness to every bite.



The chicken is layered between yellow pepper, red onion and lime slices, forming a colourful skewer with freshness built into every layer. As it flame-grills, the lime softens, adding gentle citrus notes, while the peppers and onions take on a natural sweetness from the grill.

The dish is finished with a PERI and herb tahini pour-over sauce, adding creaminess, nuttiness and subtle herbiness that complete the flavour profile in a balanced and satisfying way.

A modern flavour with regional soul

The Espetada Dukkah Lima is shaped by flavours that resonate strongly within Qatar's diverse food culture. It brings together:

- ▶ **The aromatic warmth of dukkah**
- ▶ **The smooth, earthy depth of tahini**
- ▶ **The clean freshness of citrus,**
- ▶ **The signature heat of peri-peri**
- ▶ **And the familiar comfort of flame-grilling.**

The result is a flavour that feels new and exciting, yet firmly rooted in ingredients and tastes the region already appreciates. It's bold without being overwhelming, creamy without being heavy, and bright without losing balance.

Thoughtfully crafted from the first look to the last bite

The Espetada Dukkah Lima is designed with visual appeal and flavour integrity in mind. The charred yellow peppers, red onion layers and flame-grilled chicken create a naturally vibrant presentation. The addition of the PERI & herb tahini sauce enhances the dish with complementary creaminess and depth.

Rather than relying on theatrics, the dish stands out through its balance of colours, textures and flavours. It is straightforward, flavour-forward and crafted with the quality guests expect from Nando's.

Whether enjoyed with family, shared among friends or ordered as a personal favourite, the Espetada Dukkah Lima offers a flavour experience suitable for any occasion.

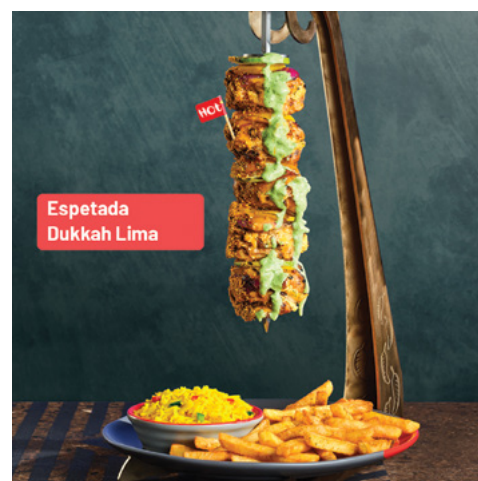
It reflects Nando's commitment to bold ideas, honest ingredients and consistent flame-grilled quality.

This isn't just a seasonal feature - it's the defining flavour of the season.

Now Flame-grilling across Qatar

Experience the new Espetada Dukkah Lima flavour at Nando's locations across Qatar:

Salwa Road | City Centre Doha | Financial Square | Bin Omran | The Pearl-Qatar | Doha Festival City | Ezdan Mall Al Wakra | Lusail Boulevard | Villaggio Mall | Avenue Mall at Steigenberger Hotel | Tawar Mall | Place Vendôme Mall.



DIEGO JUN

A BOLD FUSION OF KOREAN SPICE AND MEXICAN SOUL AT QETAIFAN ISLAND NORTH

Tucked within the vibrant heart of Qetaifan Island North, Diego Jun is redefining what it means to dine at a steakhouse. This distinctive culinary destination takes the finest elements of Korean and Mexican cuisines and unites them in a bold, flavour-forward experience that is anything but ordinary. With an inventive approach to traditional grilling and spice layering, Diego Jun is more than a restaurant, it is a journey through taste, culture and craft.



Diego Jun's philosophy is rooted in elevating the classic steakhouse concept. Guests are welcomed into a modern, elegant space where warm woods, patterned textures and rich cultural motifs come together in harmony. The decor reflects both Korean and Mexican artistry, creating an inviting yet sophisticated atmosphere perfect for any occasion.

Adding even more excitement to its offering, Diego Jun has recently introduced its "All Wagyu Can Eat" experience. This invites guests to indulge in unlimited servings of Wagyu steak, including ribeye, tenderloin and brisket,



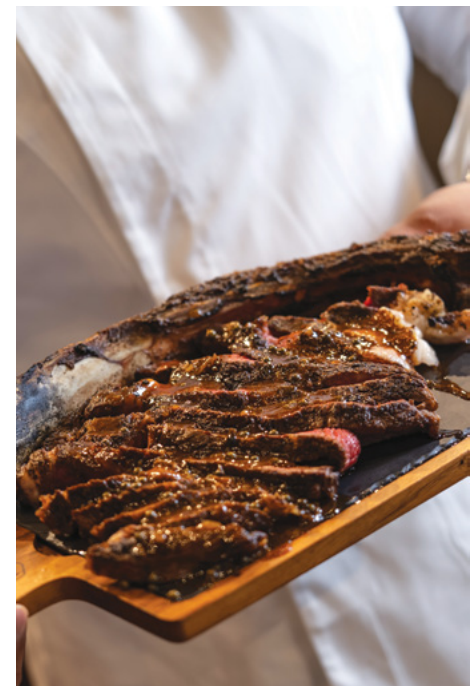
alongside delicious sides and unlimited soft drinks. It is an unmissable opportunity for steak lovers to savour world-class beef in a refined, relaxed setting.

DIEGO JUN IS A PREMIUM FUSION STEAKHOUSE LOCATED IN RIXOS PREMIUM QETAIFAN ISLAND NORTH, DOHA. IT DRAWS UPON THE UNIQUE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF COMBINING MEXICAN AND KOREAN CULINARY INFLUENCES TO OFFER A ONE-OF-A-KIND DINING EXPERIENCE. WITH A FOCUS ON QUALITY INGREDIENTS, EXPERT TECHNIQUE AND IMMERSIVE ATMOSPHERE, DIEGO JUN HAS QUICKLY BECOME A STANDOUT DESTINATION FOR STEAK LOVERS SEEKING BOTH EXCELLENCE AND ORIGINALITY.

The venue comfortably accommodates a range of dining preferences. With 104 indoor dining seats, 11 at the bar, a private room for 14, and an outdoor terrace that can host up to 90 guests, Diego Jun is well suited for both intimate dinners and celebratory gatherings.

Service begins with dinner at 6:00 PM and continues until 10:30 PM. Beverage service extends until midnight, and the venue remains open until 2:00 AM, offering guests a welcoming, stylish retreat well into the evening.

For reservations and inquiries, guests can call or message: +974 7080 7411.



THE LIMIT IS YOURS



Welcome to Diego Jun. Enjoy full access to our **“All Wag-You Can Eat”**, as much as you like, paired with a curated grape selection.

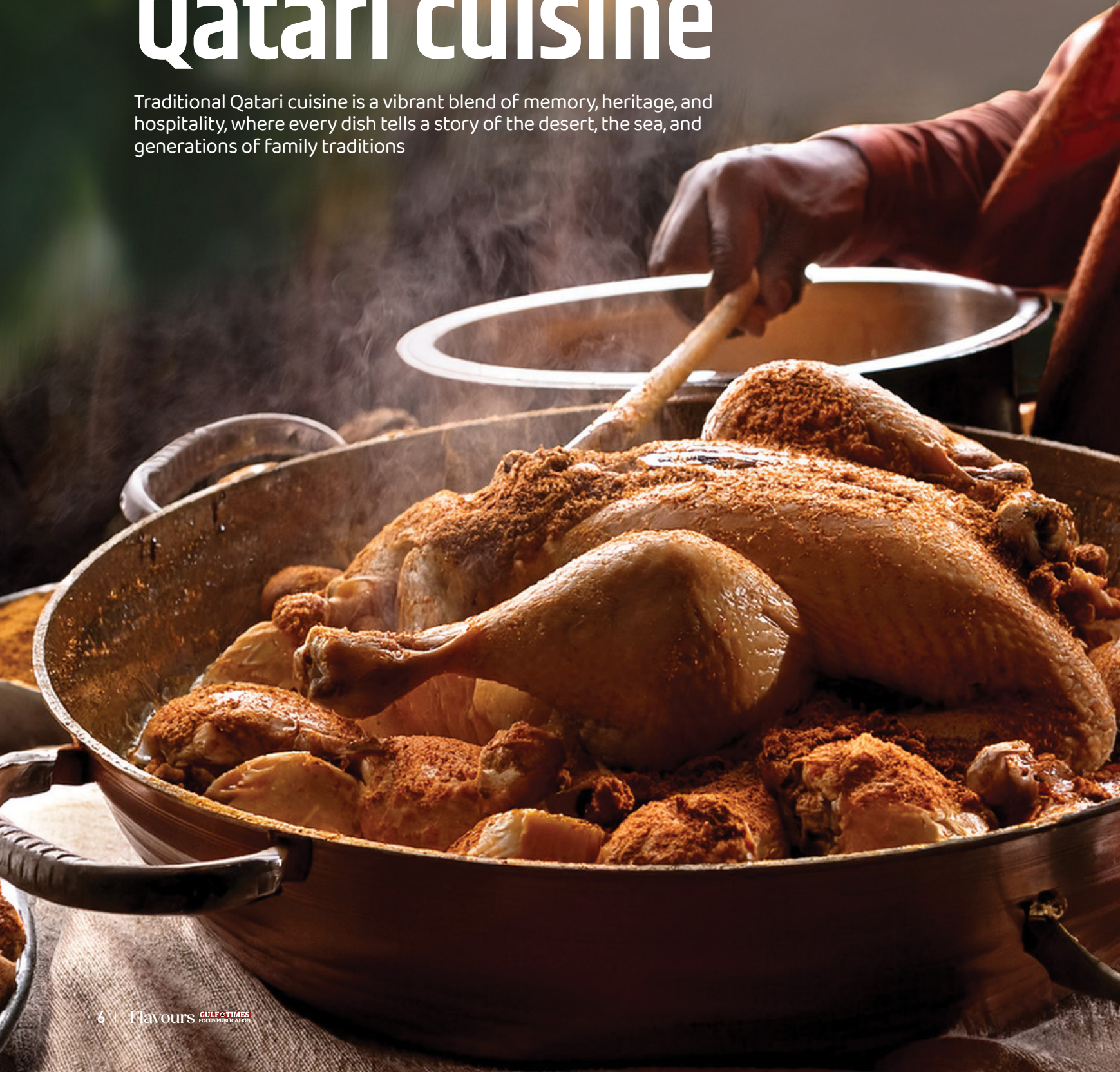
Come for the Flavour, Stay for the Night:
Because it's too good to leave after one course.

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**DIEGO
JUN**
STEAK HOUSE

The art of traditional Qatari cuisine

Traditional Qatari cuisine is a vibrant blend of memory, heritage, and hospitality, where every dish tells a story of the desert, the sea, and generations of family traditions



Qatari cuisine is a reflection of the country's soul—warm, generous, rooted in memory, and enriched by centuries of cultural exchange. In a region shaped by desert landscapes, pearling communities, nomadic traditions, and vibrant trade routes, food has long served as a bridge between heritage and hospitality.

While Qatar today stands at the crossroads of world cuisines, the dishes that remain closest to the national heart are the traditional ones passed down from one generation to the next.

Among these, four classics—machboos, harees, madrouba and luqaimat—form the pillars of Qatari culinary identity, each carrying stories that reveal the rhythm of daily life, celebrations, and family bonds.



MACHBOOS

Machboos is more than a dish; it is a symbol of family, festivity, and generosity. Whenever Qataris gather, whether for Eid, a wedding, a weekend majlis, or a simple family lunch, there is a high chance that a tray of machboos, warm and fragrant, sits at the centre of the table. Made with basmati rice seasoned with an aromatic medley of spices and combined with chicken, lamb, or fish, machboos is instantly recognisable by its comforting aroma of cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, and the iconic loomi, the dried black lime that gives the dish its distinctive depth.

Its origins lie in the centuries-old maritime connections between the Gulf and the Indian subcontinent. Traders brought back spices that transformed Gulf kitchens, and Qatari households adapted these influences to local tastes.

Over time, each family developed its own version—some using more turmeric for colour, others adding additional ghee for richness, and many elevating the fragrance by carefully toasting the spices before mixing them with rice.

In today's culinary scene, machboos has taken on new life. Young chefs present it in contemporary styles: deboned chicken wrapped delicately into parcels atop spiced rice, seafood machboos made with local hamour or shrimp, or even vegan machboos using roasted vegetables and mushrooms. Some fine-dining restaurants deconstruct the dish, separating the rice, protein, and spices into artistic arrangements. Yet even with these modern touches, machboos maintains its essence—the warmth of a home-cooked meal and the feeling of belonging that comes with every bite.



HAREES

Harees is one of the oldest dishes in Qatar's culinary repertoire, cherished especially during Ramadan. At first glance, it appears simple: wheat grains cooked with meat until the mixture becomes silky and smooth, almost like a savoury porridge. But behind its simplicity lies a deep sense of tradition. Preparing harees requires patience, technique, and constant stirring, reflecting a communal spirit that defined life in older Qatari villages.

Historically, harees was prepared in large copper pots during the holy month, often by several women who gathered to share the labour and companionship. The rhythmic sound of stirring—soft, steady, unhurried—became associated with Ramadan nights. The dish provided nourishment after long hours of fasting and was gentle on the stomach, making it ideal for suhoor as well as iftar. Many Qataris recall childhood memories of their mothers or grandmothers waking before dawn to stir the pot, letting the aroma fill the home.

Its origin can be traced to early Bedouin and Gulf communities, where wheat was treasured and meat was reserved for special occasions. Combining the two created a dish that was both economical and celebratory. In modern Qatar, harees is not only a Ramadan tradition but also a comfort food served year-round, especially at large family events.

Today's chefs elevate harees with subtle twists. Some add caramelised onions or clarified butter infused with saffron. Others incorporate truffle oil or slow-cooked lamb shank to create a luxurious version. Despite these innovations, the emotional connection remains unchanged—harees is a reminder of slow living, family gatherings, and the sacredness of sharing food during holy times.



MADROUBA

Madrouba is the dish that many Qataris associate most closely with home cooking. Its name, derived from the Arabic word “darb,” meaning “to beat,” refers to the way the ingredients are blended together during the cooking process. Rice, chicken, milk, and spices are slowly simmered until they merge into a creamy, comforting mixture. Madrouba is a dish without sharp edges—soft, warm, and deeply satisfying.

In earlier times, madrouba was the ideal dish for long desert nights. Its slow-cooked consistency made it easy to digest, while the ingredients were nourishing and readily available. Mothers and grandmothers often prepared madrouba during the cooler months, when families gathered indoors to share stories over steaming bowls of food. The dish became associated with tenderness and care, especially for children, the sick, or anyone in need of comfort.

The storytelling aspect of madrouba often lives through family variations—some add green cardamom for sweetness, others use dried limes for a subtle tang, and many insist on the importance of stirring constantly to achieve the perfect texture. In recent years, creative chefs have experimented with new flavours, using coconut milk for richness or adding roasted vegetables to create a vegetarian interpretation. Some restaurants present madrouba in clay pots that recall traditional cooking vessels, preserving the dish's heritage while elevating its presentation.

Regardless of its evolving forms, madrouba remains a reminder of childhood, warmth, and the unique comfort that only traditional home cooking can provide.

LUQAIMAT

If machboos represents the heart of Qatari food and harees its soul, then luqaimat is its joyful spirit. These golden, deep-fried dumplings—crispy on the outside and soft on the inside—are synonymous with hospitality and celebration. Although enjoyed throughout the year, their presence during Ramadan is almost ceremonial. The sight of a platter of glistening luqaimat, drizzled with date syrup or honey, instantly signals festivity.

Luqaimat is believed to have roots in Levantine and Ottoman cuisine, with variations found across the Arab world. In Qatar, however, the dish took on a character of its own through the use of saffron and cardamom in the batter, adding an unmistakable aroma. Older generations recall how making luqaimat was a communal activity—women gathered in kitchens, shaping the dough, dipping spoons into hot oil, and competing playfully to see whose luqaimat were the most perfectly round. Children would linger nearby, waiting impatiently for the first batch to come out of the pot.

The charm of luqaimat lies in its simplicity, yet modern creativity has taken it to new levels. Today one can find pistachio-drizzled luqaimat, chocolate-filled versions, variations dusted with cinnamon, and even savoury versions infused with cheese. Cafés across Doha have embraced these innovations, introducing luqaimat as part of fusion-style dessert menus. Despite this, the classic version remains the most beloved, tied

to Ramadan nights, family gatherings, and the timeless pleasure of sharing sweets.

As Qatar continues to embrace global cuisine and contemporary dining trends, traditional dishes remain an anchor to heritage. What makes Qatari food exceptional is not only its flavours but its stories—stories of pearl divers gathering for communal meals after a long day at sea, of Bedouin families cooking over open fires, of mothers passing down spice blends to their daughters, and of communities uniting during religious and cultural celebrations.

Modern chefs, both Qatari and international, are finding innovative ways to honour this heritage. Some reinterpret traditional dishes through artistic plating, while others recreate ancient recipes using modern techniques. A new generation of Qataris is rediscovering their culinary roots, learning the recipes that once defined household kitchens and giving them contemporary flair.

Yet at its heart, Qatari cuisine remains a testament to warmth, generosity, and the timeless belief that food is a way of connecting people. Whether it is the aromatic rice of machboos, the patience embodied in harees, the creamy comfort of madrouba, or the sweet delight of luqaimat, each dish tells a story that transcends time.

Traditional Qatari cuisine is not simply eaten—it is remembered, celebrated, and passed on, one generation at a time.



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At the edge of Qatar's Inland Sea, Sealine Beach Resort brings together golden dunes and endless blue. A rare harmony between serenity and adventure.



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Baked from the heart, Since 1962

Oriental Bakery & Restaurant

Six Decades of Flavour, Tradition, and Memories in Doha



For more than six unforgettable decades, a delicious fragrance has been drifting through Doha—drawing hearts, stirring nostalgia, and welcoming thousands into the warm embrace of “Oriental Bakery & Restaurant”. Hidden in the heart of Doha, Matar Al Qadeem, Oriental stands as a timeless culinary landmark, where the past and present melt seamlessly into irresistible flavors.

THE LEGEND OF ORIENTAL PLUM CAKE:

A Taste Handed Down Through the Ages

How many truly know that the “best plum cake in the diaspora” bears the signature of Oriental Bakery? Oriental plumcake isn't merely baked—it is crafted, layer by heavenly layer, in a tradition preserved with devotion.

Fruits are chopped lovingly, dried grapes soaked to perfection, cashew nuts mixed with care, and pure spices folded in like secrets whispered through generations. Each ingredient is chosen with uncompromising attention—only the purest, only the finest.

This is why Oriental plumcakes—whether cream-filled, mango-touched, butterscotch-swirled, nut-laden, strawberry-kissed, pistachio-crust, or chocolate-infused—have become legendary.

And when Christmas arrives, their special cream-butter cakes turn every celebration into a festival of sweetness.

A HAVEN OF SWEETS THAT DEFINE A CULTURE

Indian sweets at Oriental are crafted the traditional way, capturing the essence of home for every expatriate soul. From colorful halwas to jalebis as golden as honeymoon memories, from soft rasgulas to fragrant gulab jamuns—

every sweet is a reminder of festivals, family, and familiar laughter.

THE ONLY PLACE OF ITS KIND IN QATAR:

Authenticity in Every Bite, Freshness in Every Moment

Oriental is Qatar's sole establishment offering a full spectrum of fresh Indian snacks—made on-site, every day. Unniappam and Achappam—those nostalgic treasures—are found nowhere else in this vast world of exile. Here, tradition is served fresh, not remembered faintly.

Alongside its sweets, a world of mixers, curries, and ready-to-eat delicacies are prepared with the same Oriental promise of purity and excellence.

A BREAD EMPIRE SIX DECADES STRONG: Where Every Loaf Tells a Story of Mastery

For 63 years, Oriental has been Qatar's largest and oldest producer of Arabic Bread (Kuboos)—a symbol of trust on countless tables. More than 100 varieties of breads, burgers, rolls, and buns come alive in their ovens each day: potato burgers, tomato burgers, mini burgers, long rolls, colour hamburgers, and more.

If bread is the language of comfort, Oriental speaks it fluently.

ORIENTAL RESTAURANT — A TREASURE TROVE OF FLAVOURS:

From Kerala's Heart to North India's Streets

Step inside, and the aroma alone tells a tale.

Here, Kerala's beloved palappam with beef curry, steaming pots of fish curry, aromatic dum biryani with the soul of Malabar, and more than twenty varieties of chicken and beef dishes await.

Then comes Chandni Chowk by Oriental—The Tribute to North India.

Pani puri, bhel puri, chaats bursting with tang and spice—flavours that dance, laugh, and sparkle on the tongue.

Whether you crave dosas that remind you of home or dishes that introduce you to new joys, Oriental is an endless journey through flavour.

This is a place where fragrance touches memories, where sights shine brighter, and where sweetness fills the heart. Many walk in hungry—and leave fulfilled, body and soul.

Reliability is its hallmark.

THE STORY: Crafting Unforgettable Moments Since 1962

Founded in 1962, Oriental Bakery began as a humble, traditional bakery and has grown into an icon of Qatar's culinary landscape. It preserves the warmth of conventional baking while embracing modern concepts, creating a beautiful blend of heritage and innovation.

SERVICES

- 1. Restaurant:** Where culinary artistry meets warmth, and every meal becomes a memory.
- 2. Bakery Services:** Freshly baked goods—from croissants to specialty cakes—crafted as edible art.
- 3. Food Production:** High-quality, safe, and trusted products prepared in state-of-the-art facilities.
- 4. Catering Services:** From intimate gatherings to grand celebrations, it delivers experiences that linger beautifully on the palate.



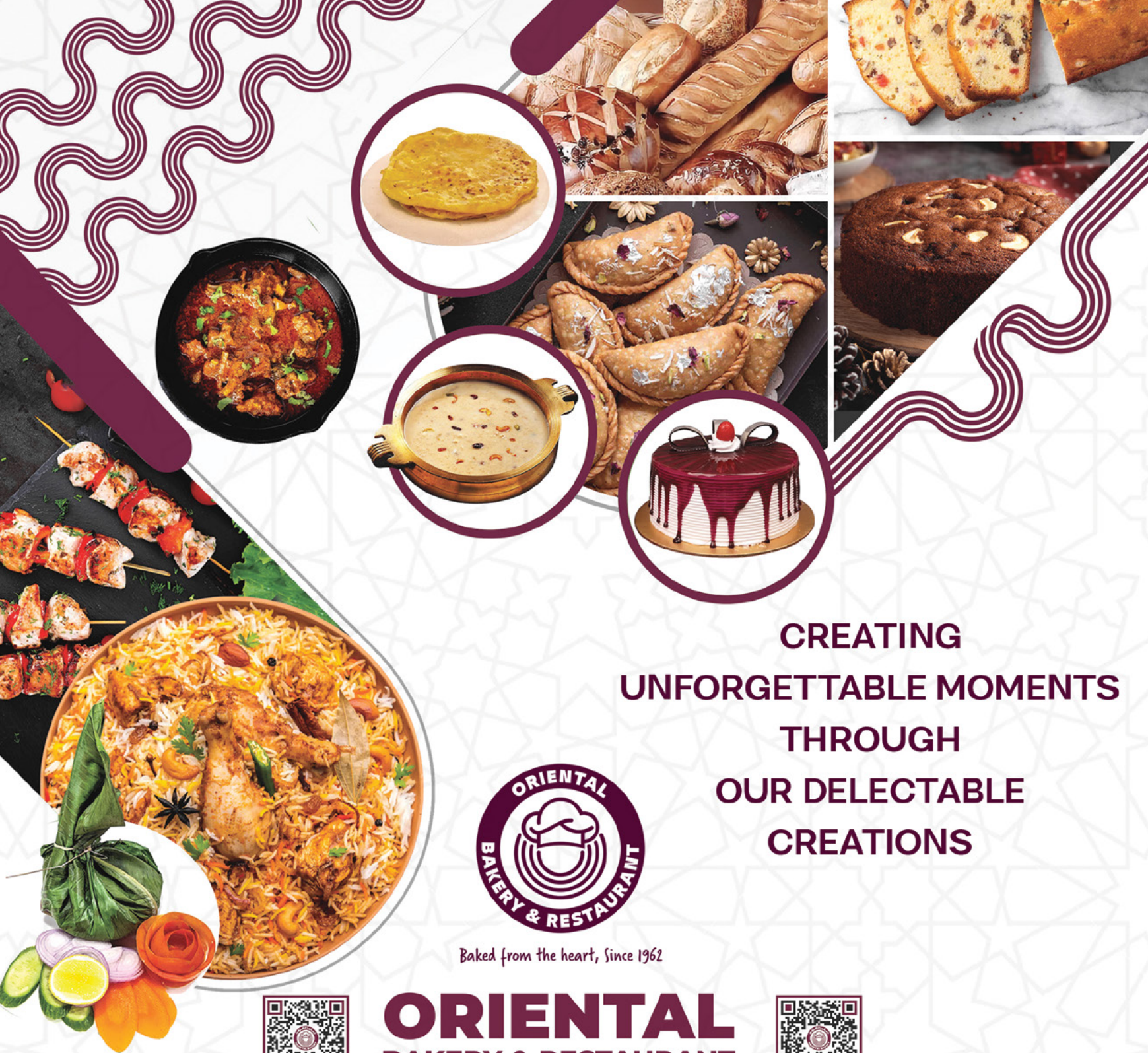
THE JOURNEY OF EXCELLENCE: Baking is an art shaped by centuries of dedication. At Oriental, their team of skilled experts, the cutting-edge facilities, and the unwavering commitment to quality help them pioneer total bakery solutions.

They select only the finest ingredients, uphold strict quality control, and ensure every product that leaves their kitchen carries their signature of purity and perfection.

CRAFTING MORE THAN FOOD — CREATING MEMORIES

Oriental Bakery is not just a brand. It is nostalgia wrapped in aroma. It is a tradition served warm. It is the taste of home in a land far away.

For generations, Oriental has crafted unforgettable moments through their exquisite creations—and they continue this legacy with unwavering love, purity, and passion.



CREATING
UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS
THROUGH
OUR DELECTABLE
CREATIONS



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Yassalam TO **FLAVOURS**

Fahad Fahad Albishri's Culinary Journey from Qatar to the World

Fahad's dream of documenting original Qatari dishes shows how he sees food not only as personal passion but also as cultural heritage worth safeguarding

By Amjad Vanimal

In a digital landscape crowded with food enthusiasts and travel influencers, Fahad Albishri has carved out a space that feels refreshingly genuine. His content is not about chasing trends or staging glamorous meals—it is about storytelling through food.

Whether he is sharing a steaming plate of street food in a bustling souk, cooking with mountain tribes in remote villages, or uncovering small, family-run eateries hidden from the tourist map, Fahad has built a reputation for authenticity, humility, and curiosity.

What makes him stand out is his ability to blend culinary exploration with cultural appreciation. His journeys go beyond tasting dishes; he dives into traditions, cooking methods, and the lives of the people who prepare the food.

Followers are drawn to his honest reactions, his signature "Yassalam!" moments, and the sense of discovery he brings to every episode—whether filmed in Qatar or across the globe.

In just under two years, Fahad has transformed his personal passion into a storytelling platform with an international audience. He has travelled to 14 countries specifically to create food content, collaborated with well-known chefs, and even inspired viewers from Europe and South America to fly to Qatar just to try the dishes he recommends. His love for food is deeply connected to his love for people, culture, and simplicity.

IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS, FAHAD HAS TURNED HIS PASSION INTO A GLOBAL STORYTELLING PLATFORM. HE HAS ALREADY TRAVELLED TO 14 COUNTRIES FOR FOOD CONTENT, COLLABORATED WITH TOP CHEFS, AND EVEN INSPIRED VIEWERS FROM EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA TO VISIT QATAR JUST TO TRY THE DISHES HE RECOMMENDS

Simultaneously, Fahad remains rooted in his identity as a proud Qatari. He is passionate about preserving traditional recipes and is vocal about protecting the authenticity of Qatari cuisine amid modern reinterpretations. His dream of documenting original Qatari dishes shows how he sees food not only as personal passion but also as cultural heritage worth safeguarding.

In this exclusive interview, Fahad reflects on the journey that brought him here, the cuisines that changed his perspective, the lessons he learned from world-renowned chefs, and the mission that drives him forward. What emerges is the portrait of a creator who is not just tasting food, but building bridges across cultures—one dish at a time.

Q: When did your passion for food and travel begin?

A: My passion started when I was about 18. I always loved exploring different cultures, trying new foods, and discovering unique cuisines. For many years I travelled purely for pleasure—to taste food, meet chefs, and enjoy the culture without filming anything.

During the pandemic, while sitting at home, I asked myself why I shouldn't start sharing my experiences online. That's when my journey began. Now it has been almost one year and eleven months, and I have travelled to 14 countries just for food content.



Q: Did you have any inspiration from family or friends? Or was this passion self-driven?

A: I didn't have a specific inspiration from family or friends. But since I was a teenager, I loved watching people cook—whether it was my own family members or famous chefs like Gordon Ramsay. I also admired food travellers like Mark Wiens. I

remember thinking, "One day I will be like him." Later, I even became friends with him.

Q: You also share fishing content. Where did your love for fishing come from?

A: Fishing has been in my life since I was around ten years old. I used to go on fishing trips with my



father and cousins. It's in my blood. I've travelled to places like the Maldives and Oman specifically for fishing, and I've learned many techniques such as jigging, trolling, casting, and net fishing. I'm planning to film fishing episodes abroad soon, hopefully in the Maldives, to catch bigger fish.

Q: You've travelled extensively to explore cuisines around the world. Can you share a particular country or city that left a lasting impression on your palate?

A: Morocco—without any doubt. The cuisine is diverse, delicious, and varies from region to region. The culture around food is very rich. And the lamb in Morocco is the best meat I've ever tasted in my life, even after travelling to many countries.

Q: When visiting a new place, do you prioritize local street food experiences, fine dining, or a mix of both?

A: I always prioritise local food and street food. People don't want to see me in fancy restaurants—they want the real, authentic taste of a country. Local food is almost always better. You can find a tiny restaurant in a small Italian village that tastes better than a three-star Michelin restaurant. I usually connect with local experts or friends to find the best places.

Q: You've worked with many chefs around the world. What have those experiences taught you?

A: Every chef has something different to teach. Cooking is like engineering; it's a craft. When I travel and cook with chefs in places like Istanbul, Azerbaijan, and Morocco, I learn new techniques and ways of thinking. Being in their kitchens has given me a lot of experience.

Q: What's the most surprising dish you've ever tried, and how did it challenge your taste expectations?

A: Definitely Malaysia. Before visiting, I didn't know much about Malaysian food. But it blew me away. Malaysian cuisine mixes Malay, Indian, and Chinese influences—three cultures in one. And the flavours are very close to Gulf tastes. I really enjoyed dishes like Nasi Kandar.

Q: What are your thoughts on the modern reinterpretation of traditional Qatari dishes?

A: I believe traditional recipes should remain traditional. You can present them in a fancy way for high-end restaurants, but if you change the original recipe too much, you destroy the culture. Machboos is machboos. It shouldn't be altered. I actually plan to create a book documenting all traditional Qatari dishes so that future generations can learn the original recipes.

Q: Have you faced any unexpected or dangerous moments during your filming?

A: Many! One time in Azerbaijan, we were cooking a whole ox in a huge bowl, and the fire suddenly

rose dangerously high because of the gas and wood combination. It was a risky situation. Another time, I travelled to remote mountain areas in southern Saudi Arabia, about 3,400 metres above sea level. The roads were very dangerous, but I wanted to show the people there, their traditions, and their cooking styles.

Q: Can you share one of your most memorable interactions with your followers?

A: Once I was eating at Baba Kebab in Doha after a long time, and a man next to me said, "We just arrived from London because of you." He and his family traveled all the way to Doha just to try a restaurant I recommended. I've met followers from Norway, Sweden, Scotland, Argentina—people who come because they trust my recommendations. That trust is very powerful.

Q: As a Qatari food blogger, how do you see your role in promoting Qatari and Arab cuisine?

A: I'm proud to promote our food culture. My content is clean and family-friendly, and it reaches all ages. Parents often send me videos of their children imitating my catchphrases—especially "Yassalam!" It's nice to see that connection.



Q: What advice would you give to young Qatari food bloggers or those who want to enter this field?

A: Learn food deeply before you start. Understand ingredients, cuisines, and flavours. Don't just copy what others are doing. In Qatar, many restaurants repeat the same concepts because one idea becomes trendy. We need originality. Travel, discover new cuisines, and bring something new to Qatar. We still lack many Latin American concepts like Argentinian asado, Peruvian dishes, or authentic Mexican food.

Q: What travel plans or collaborations can your followers expect next?

A: I have several collaborations coming up in Doha and abroad, but I prefer to keep them a surprise. As for travel, I'm hoping to visit Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, Uzbekistan, and India. Each place has its own culture and food traditions, and I want to bring those experiences to my audience.



At Al Hubara, every day brings a new flavour to the table.

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Wednesdays | 7 pm – 11:30 pm

A bountiful catch of the ocean's finest.

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All-about-lobster indulgence, every Thursday.

Family Fun Brunch

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Great food, good vibes, and fun for the little ones.

Persian Feast

Fridays | 7pm – 11:30 pm

An aromatic journey through Persia's iconic flavours.

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Tuesdays | 7 pm – 11:30 pm

A Journey Through Asia, Served to Perfection.

Souq Al Hubara

Saturdays | 12:30 pm – 4 pm

A vibrant market-style taste of Middle Eastern favourites.

THE SPICE ROUTE

The story of the spice route is a story of human ambition, where flavour, wealth, and discovery intertwined to shape the world we know today

For thousands of years, spices have inspired voyages across oceans, shaped empires, transformed cuisines, and connected distant cultures long before modern borders were drawn.

The story of the spice route is not simply about flavour—it is about power, imagination, wealth, and the human desire to explore the unknown. From the earthy scent of cinnamon drifting through ancient temples to the prized saffron threads carried along Silk Road caravans, spices were the precious treasures that built civilisations and intertwined the destinies of continents.

From sacred rituals to global desire

The earliest recorded use of spices dates

back over 4,000 years. Ancient Egyptians used cinnamon and cassia in embalming rituals, believing their aromatic properties helped preserve the body for the afterlife. In India, turmeric, cardamom, and cloves played a central role in Ayurvedic medicine, spiritual ceremonies, and early culinary traditions. China's imperial courts valued ginger and star anise not only for flavour but for healing.

At a time when refrigeration did not exist, spices served practical purposes—preserving meat, masking bitterness, and preventing spoilage. But beyond practicality, spices carried a sense of mystique. Many in the ancient world believed spices came from sacred lands guarded by mythical creatures. This sense of mystery enhanced their value, driving demand and fuelling centuries of exploration.

The great trade networks

By the first millennium BCE, spice trade networks had formed an intricate web stretching from the Malabar Coast of India to the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, Persia, and Europe. Arab traders, skilled in navigation and secrecy, became the intermediaries who protected the true source of spices. For centuries, they dominated the spice trade by controlling sea routes and crafting elaborate tales to prevent competitors from reaching the origin of precious goods.

Greek and Roman merchants eagerly sought pepper, cinnamon, and ginger—items so costly they were worth more than gold. In medieval Europe, peppercorns were used as currency and accepted as payment for taxes and dowries. A single bag of cloves could purchase livestock or land.





As demand escalated, the spice trade grew into one of the earliest global economic systems. It shaped the rise and fall of powers, from the Nabateans who controlled caravan routes in the Arabian deserts to the maritime kingdoms along the Indian coast.

But it was the Age of Exploration that truly transformed the world. European monarchies—

driven by greed, curiosity, and the quest for control—financed perilous sea voyages in search of direct access to spice-producing lands. The Portuguese reached India in the late 15th century, followed by the Dutch and British East India Companies. Their battles for monopolies led to colonisation, naval warfare, and the redrawing of world maps.



Spices, once scattered across distant islands and jungles, had pulled the world into an era of dramatic geopolitical transformation.

More than just flavour

The influence of spices extended beyond trade and economics; they helped shape cultural identities, medical traditions, and religious rituals.

In India, spices became deeply embedded in everyday life—used to treat ailments, season food, and purify spaces. In the Middle East, spice-laden dishes represented generosity and status, with saffron, sumac, and cardamom becoming essential components of Arab hospitality. In East Asia, spices influenced traditional medicine systems focused on balance and harmony.

Across Europe, the introduction of new spices reshaped cuisine. Medieval dishes became intensely seasoned, partly to preserve food and partly to display wealth. During the Renaissance, the use of spices broadened with improved



access, transforming bread, pastries, meats, and beverages. Even today's Christmas traditions—gingerbread, mulled wine, and spiced cakes—owe their origins to medieval spice routes.

Spices also carried stories. Each one travelled through ports, marketplaces, and deserts, collecting layers of culture and meaning, blending the histories of civilisations.

The aromatic identity of each region

Every civilisation on the spice route developed its own signature flavour palette. The Arab world is characterised by warm, citrusy, and floral profiles—cardamom in qahwa, saffron in rice, and sumac in grilled meats. India developed an intricate spice philosophy, pairing heat (chilli), depth (cumin), and fragrance (coriander, fennel) to create thousands of regional combinations.



galangal, nutmeg, and cloves, giving rise to layered, aromatic curries and broths.

Africa, too, has distinct spice identities—the fiery berbere of Ethiopia, the smoky paprika of Morocco, and the ginger-heavy blends of West Africa, each tied to local soils and ancient trade connections.



In China, star anise, cinnamon, cloves, Sichuan pepper, and fennel formed the iconic five-spice blend, reflecting the philosophy of balancing sweet, bitter, sour, pungent, and salty. Southeast Asia's tropical climate produced lemongrass,

These profiles are not random. They reflect centuries of adaptation to climate, agriculture, and cultural exchange, each one adding a unique chapter to the global story of taste.

Modern spice blends

Today, the legacy of the spice route lives on in modern kitchens, where ancient traditions and contemporary innovation meet. Chefs experiment with spices the way artists use colour—blending Middle Eastern cardamom with Latin American chillies, pairing Sri Lankan cinnamon with Japanese miso, or creating global seasonings inspired by travel, migration, and multiculturalism.

Contemporary blends like harissa, za'atar, ras el hanout, garam masala, baharat, Cajun seasoning, and Japanese shichimi togarashi represent centuries of cross-cultural influence. Even fusion cuisines—such as Peruvian-Japanese Nikkei or Indo-Arab Gulf dishes—rely heavily on spice connections that trace back to the ancient route.

The modern spice industry continues to bridge continents, but with newfound emphasis on sustainability, fair trade, and ethical farming. What once fuelled imperial conquest today supports livelihoods, preserves biodiversity, and inspires global culinary creativity.

A legacy that lives in every kitchen

The story of the spice route is ultimately a story of humanity—our curiosity, our appetite for beauty and flavour, and our desire to connect with one another. From the earliest caravans that crossed the Arabian deserts to the bustling markets of Zanzibar, Istanbul, Goa, Muscat, and Shanghai, spices have shaped our world in ways few other commodities have.



Even today, when a pinch of saffron colours a broth golden, when cardamom scents a morning cup of coffee, or when pepper sparks heat across the tongue, we are participating in a tradition older than many civilisations. The journeys of these tiny seeds, roots, and barks have left an immense legacy—one that still flavours our kitchens, inspires our cuisines, and connects us to a shared global story.



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FROM TRADITION TO TABLE

**SIMPLE, SOULFUL
RECIPES TO
TRY TODAY**

FROM CHERISHED GULF TRADITIONS TO GLOBAL KITCHEN FAVOURITES, THESE FOUR RECIPES CELEBRATE THE FLAVOURS, STORIES, AND SIMPLE JOYS THAT CONNECT US TO THE FOOD WE LOVE—ONE COMFORTING DISH AT A TIME



The Comfort Bowl: Classic Chicken Machboos

In many Gulf homes, machboos is more than a recipe—it's the aroma of family gatherings, the taste of celebration, and a dish that ties generations together. This hearty rice-and-chicken favourite showcases the region's spice mastery, blending warmth, depth, and a touch of fragrant smoke.

INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 1 whole chicken, cut into pieces
- ▶ 2 cups basmati rice, rinsed
- ▶ 2 onions, finely chopped
- ▶ 2 tomatoes, chopped
- ▶ 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ▶ 1 tbsp baharat (Arabic spice mix)
- ▶ 1 tsp turmeric
- ▶ 1 tsp cinnamon
- ▶ 1 tsp dried lime powder or 2 whole loomi
- ▶ 3 cardamom pods, cracked
- ▶ 2 bay leaves
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste
- ▶ 3 tbsp oil
- ▶ Fresh coriander for garnish

METHOD

Heat oil in a large pot and sauté onions until golden. Add garlic and tomatoes, cooking until soft. Stir in baharat, turmeric, cinnamon, cardamom, and dried lime. Add chicken pieces and sear until lightly browned. Pour in enough water to cover, add bay leaves, and simmer until the chicken is nearly tender.

Remove chicken, set aside, and strain the broth. Return the broth to the pot, add rinsed rice, stir gently, and place the chicken on top. Cover tightly and cook on low heat for 20–25 minutes until the rice is fluffy. Garnish with coriander and serve with a squeeze of lemon.

This dish delivers the soul of Gulf cuisine—aromatic, comforting, and beautifully layered.

The World's Favourite Snack: Crispy Vegetable Spring Rolls

Crispy, golden, and irresistibly crunchy, spring rolls are a beloved street-side snack across Asia. Filled with vibrant vegetables and served with a sweet-chilli dip, this recipe brings together texture, colour, and flavour in every bite.

INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 1 cup shredded cabbage
- ▶ 1 cup grated carrots
- ▶ ½ cup sliced bell peppers
- ▶ ½ cup bean sprouts
- ▶ 2 spring onions, chopped
- ▶ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ▶ 1 tbsp soy sauce
- ▶ 1 tsp sesame oil
- ▶ Spring roll wrappers
- ▶ Oil for frying
- ▶ Salt and pepper

METHOD

In a hot pan, sauté garlic and spring onions until fragrant. Add vegetables and stir-fry lightly; they should stay crisp. Season with soy sauce, sesame oil, salt, and pepper. Cool completely.

Place a wrapper on a flat surface, add a spoonful of filling, and roll tightly, sealing with water. Deep-fry until golden and crispy.

Serve hot with chilli-garlic dipping sauce—perfect for gatherings or as a quick comfort snack.





Italian Simplicity at Its Finest: Creamy Mushroom Risotto

Risotto is the art of slow cooking—a dish that rewards patience with rich creaminess and depth. This mushroom version evokes the warmth of a northern Italian kitchen, where every stir brings out a new layer of flavour.

INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 1½ cups Arborio rice
- ▶ 200 g mushrooms, sliced
- ▶ 1 small onion, finely chopped
- ▶ 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ▶ 4–5 cups vegetable or chicken stock (warm)
- ▶ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ▶ ½ cup grated Parmesan
- ▶ 3 tbsp butter
- ▶ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ▶ Salt and pepper
- ▶ Fresh parsley

METHOD

Heat olive oil and 1 tbsp butter in a pan. Sauté onions and garlic until soft, then add mushrooms and cook until lightly browned. Add Arborio rice and stir until coated and slightly toasted.

Gradually add warm stock, one ladle at a time, stirring often. Allow the liquid to absorb before adding more. Continue until the rice is creamy and tender. Stir in remaining butter, Parmesan, salt, and pepper.

Serve with parsley—a dish that's indulgent yet wonderfully simple.

Sweet & Golden: Classic Luqaimat with Date Syrup

A favourite during Ramadan and festive occasions, luqaimat are crisp on the outside, soft within, and soaked in sweetness. These tiny golden dumplings capture the joy of traditional Gulf hospitality.

INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 2 cups flour
- ▶ 1 tbsp sugar
- ▶ 1 tbsp cornflour
- ▶ 1 tbsp yeast
- ▶ 1 cup warm water
- ▶ 1 tbsp yoghurt (optional, for softness)
- ▶ A pinch of salt
- ▶ Oil for frying
- ▶ Date syrup or honey for drizzling
- ▶ Sesame seeds (optional)

METHOD

Mix flour, sugar, cornflour, yeast, salt, water, and yoghurt into a smooth, thick batter. Cover and let rise for 1 hour.

Heat oil in a deep pot. Drop small spoonfuls of batter into the oil, turning until golden and crisp. Remove onto paper towels and immediately drizzle with date syrup or honey.

Sprinkle sesame seeds for a traditional finish—they're addictive, nostalgic, and perfect with Arabic coffee.







HOW STREET FOOD DEFINES A CITY

There is something magical about street food. It is not just a way to eat on the go; it is an experience that immerses you in the heartbeat of a city.

The aroma of sizzling spices, the rhythmic sounds of knives chopping vegetables, the hissing of hot oil, and the animated conversations between vendors and patrons create a sensory tapestry that is unique to every place.

Street food tells stories of history, migration, culture, and survival, all wrapped up in flavours that are both humble and extraordinary. From the bustling alleys of Bangkok to the narrow lanes of Istanbul, the food that spills onto the streets reflects the soul of a city like nothing else can.

Food born from necessity

Street food has historically emerged from necessity. It was a solution for working people, travellers, and urban communities that needed quick, affordable, and filling meals.

In ancient China, vendors wheeled carts through busy marketplaces, offering dumplings and buns to labourers. In 18th-century London, pie-men served hot pastries to factory workers during long shifts. Across continents, street food allowed everyday people to enjoy nutritious meals without the luxury of a full kitchen.

Yet necessity alone does not explain its enduring appeal. Street food has always been a reflection of local tastes, seasonal ingredients, and cultural identity. The recipes that survive generations—whether a spiced chickpea chaat in Mumbai or a folded crepe in Paris—tell stories of migration, trade, and adaptation. In many ways, the humble street cart is a miniature historical archive, preserving flavours and traditions that might otherwise be lost.



Street food as cultural expression

Every city has a distinct street food identity, shaped by geography, climate, and cultural influences. Bangkok's street food scene is dominated by bold, vibrant flavours—sweet, sour, salty, and spicy meld together in dishes like pad thai, som tam (papaya salad), and fragrant coconut curries. Street vendors are celebrated for their mastery of spice and speed, turning bustling sidewalks into open-air kitchens that operate from dawn until midnight.

Istanbul's street food, in contrast, reflects centuries of imperial history and cultural blending. Simit, a sesame-crusted bread ring, is sold by street-side carts, while roasted chestnuts, kebabs, and börek capture the Ottoman legacy of trade and cosmopolitan tastes. The food is communal; locals and tourists alike share spaces, chatting with vendors who have passed recipes through generations.

In Mexico City, street food is bold and festive. Tacos al pastor, sold from vertical spit grills, burst



with smoky, marinated flavours, while tamales wrapped in corn husks carry the ancient culinary heritage of the Aztecs. The streets here are living museums where indigenous, colonial, and modern influences coexist, and every bite tells a story of cultural resilience.

Even in modern Doha, the rise of street food markets and food trucks demonstrates how local and global influences mingle. From shawarma and falafel to South Asian chaat and East Asian bao, the city's streets reflect its growing multicultural population and the way food acts as a bridge across communities.





The vendors: Custodians of tradition

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of street food is the people behind it. Street vendors are not merely cooks; they are storytellers, cultural custodians, and entrepreneurs. Many inherit recipes from parents or grandparents, tweaking them over decades to satisfy changing tastes while preserving authenticity. Their expertise lies not only in flavour but in technique, speed, and showmanship—skills honed over countless hours of cooking in often challenging conditions.



The relationship between vendor and customer is intimate. In a city like Mumbai, a regular customer might wait patiently for their favourite chaat vendor each evening, exchanging greetings and sharing news. In Naples, Italy, a family-owned pizza cart has served the same square slices of pizza for generations, becoming part of the neighbourhood's daily rhythm. These interactions make street food deeply personal, embedding it within the social fabric of the city.

As a reflection of globalisation

While street food is inherently local, it also reflects globalisation and cultural exchange. Dishes like sushi rolls, tacos, dumplings, and falafel have travelled across continents, adapted to local ingredients, and evolved with new culinary techniques. The fusion of flavours—Korean tacos, sushi burritos, or shawarma wraps—is a testament to the adaptability and creativity inherent in street food culture.

Street food festivals in cities like Singapore, New York, and Dubai celebrate this diversity. They bring together street chefs from across the world, offering patrons a chance to experience multiple cultures in one place. Even as these events formalise street food, the essence remains: food for the people, made accessible, communal, and memorable.



Why street food matters

Street food is more than sustenance—it is cultural storytelling on a plate. Each dish carries historical context, social meaning, and regional identity. It bridges gaps between tradition and modernity, connecting generations, locals, and visitors alike. Through street food, we can taste a city's history, understand its people, and experience the vibrancy of its streets. It reminds us that the soul of every city is not found solely in grand restaurants or luxury dining, but in the clatter of pans, the sizzling of woks, and the smiles of those who serve food with love and dedication. It is in these moments, standing on a crowded street, clutching a paper-wrapped meal, that a city's heartbeat is most palpable.

To walk through the streets of any city is to embark on a culinary journey. From the smoky aroma of grilled meats to the sweet scent of fried pastries, street food invites exploration, curiosity, and connection. It is democratic, unpretentious, and immediate—anyone, regardless of social standing, can partake. And while street food evolves with time and taste, its essence remains unchanged: it tells stories, preserves heritage, and celebrates the simple, profound joy of eating together.

In every alley, marketplace, and food cart, the soul of a city lives on. Street food is not merely eaten; it is experienced, remembered, and cherished—one bite at a time.

Nando's Qatar unveils its 12th Casa at Place Vendôme Mall, bringing flame-grilled flair to the opulent destination



Nando's, the beloved Afro-Portuguese restaurant brand, is celebrating another milestone with the grand opening of its 12th Casa in Qatar, located on Level C, Ground Floor at Place Vendôme. This opening marks Nando's next chapter in its more than 20-year legacy of serving its signature flame-grilled PERi-PERi chicken to the Qatar community.

Strategically positioned with a prime view of Place Vendôme's world-famous dancing fountains, the new Casa offers both indoor and outdoor seating, giving guests an immersive, vibrant dining experience. The outdoor terrace promises front-row views of the nightly fountain shows, creating one of the most atmospheric Nando's settings in the region.

The opening ceremony was attended by senior representatives from Nando's, Oryx Group for Food Services, the Nando's Brand team, the Place Vendôme Mall Management team, and distinguished guests from the community -

celebrating the brand's continued growth and commitment to delivering memorable dining experiences across Qatar.

Speaking at the opening, **Sajed Jassim Mohammed Sulaiman, Managing Director at Oryx Group for Food Services – Nando's**, said: *"The opening of our newest Casa at Place Vendôme marks an exciting milestone for Nando's in Qatar. For over two decades, we have been committed to bringing people together over great food, warm hospitality, and a truly unique Afro-Portuguese experience. This Casa reflects not only our continued investment in the market but also our passion for creating memorable dining spaces that celebrate our rich heritage. We are proud to welcome guests to this stunning location and look forward to serving the community for many years to come."*

Adding to this, **C.V Rappai, CEO of Oryx Group for Food Services – Nando's**, stated:

"Nando's has always been about more than just food - it's about connection, culture, and community. With our new Casa at Place Vendôme, we are elevating the Nando's experience by offering guests a vibrant setting overlooking one of Qatar's most iconic destinations. This opening is a testament to our growth, our partnership with Place Vendôme, and our unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional quality and service. We're excited to continue expanding our footprint and strengthening our bond with the Qatar community."



Bringing to life Nando's rich Afro-Portuguese heritage, the restaurant features a distinct interior design showcasing hand-selected artworks and warm, earthy tones that reflect the brand's roots in the sun, soil, and Fire of Southern Africa. As with every Nando's worldwide, no two Casas are alike.

To mark the opening, Nando's is also launching a new signature item: **Espetada Dukkah Lima** and **Espetada Dukkah Lima A-Torre**. This show-stopping dish features PERi-PERi chicken thighs stuffed with spiced PERi-dukkah and cream cheese, stacked with yellow pepper, red onion, and lime slices, and served with a PERi & herb tahini pour-over sauce - bringing tableside theatre to every visit.

Nando's continues to be celebrated for its commitment to quality, with chicken marinated for 24 hours and flame-grilled to perfection in the brand's signature PERi-PERi—the unmistakable flavour born from Southern Africa's vibrant culinary traditions. This latest opening reinforces Nando's continued growth in Qatar, where it has been proudly serving the community since 2001.



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