

Dhaka streets festive with crowds at iftar outlets despite price hike

- A Monitor Report

Date: 16 March, 2024



Dhaka : The holy month of Ramadan is underway and the streets of the capital are bustling with traditional iftar markets as well as special iftar outlets. Despite the price hike of iftar items witnessed this year, huge crowds are seen frolicking to these iftar hubs across the capital.

Residents from different parts of the city are rushing to several stalls in the alleys of Old Dhaka to buy more than 100 different delicious items for iftar. Like every year, residents from all across town seem to be crowding the stall at Chawkbazar, Kaltabazar, Ray Saheb Bazar, Nazirabazar and Narinda ahead of iftar every day.

Boro Baaper Polaye Khaye, Shutli Kebab, Shahi Doi Bora, mutton and chicken cutlets, Kima Roll, Kima Paratha and Borhani are some of the popular delicacies among Old Dhaka's iftar items. Jilapi, bundia, chops, beguni, vegetable rolls, chicken rolls, chhola, potato cutlets, shakfuluri

and different kinds of kebab are available.

Particularly Chawkbazar of Old Dhaka is considered the epitome of traditional iftar delights during Ramadan. Shopfronts decorated with an array of delectable foods attract residents from all around the city every day.

Chawkbazar's extensive iftar menu features a huge spread of mouth-watering items with varied prices to meet diverse tastes and budgets.

At the hub of iftar delights, Jali Kebab costs BDT 30 apiece, Tana Paratha BDT 50, Kima Paratha BDT 70, Kathi Kebab BDT 40, Egg Chop BDT 50, Dahi Aada BDT 100 (three pieces each), Faluda BDT 220 per kg, Pistachio (Pesta Badam) Juice BDT 250 per litre, Chicken Lollipop BDT 40, Chicken Finger BDT 40, Chicken Sandwich BDT 50, Chicken Spring Roll BDT 40, Vegetable Roll BDT 30, Chicken Roll Pettis BDT 40, Chicken Pettis BDT 50, Chicken Shawarma BDT 70, Chicken Reshmi Kebab BDT 50, Mini Pizza BDT 70 and Chicken Tikka BDT 200.

The iftar bazar features chicken bread, beef and mutton options as well. Chicken bread costs BDT 60 apiece, beef and mutton cost BDT 80 and BDT 100 respectively.

However, the most popular items of Chawkbazar include giant beef, goat, chicken and duck roasts, koel and pigeon roasts, haalim (a mixed curry of pulses and red meat), dozens of kebabs including suti, jali, irani, tika, chicken suslik, kashmiri and so on.



Iftar outlet hub Chawkbazar bustling with crowds as vendors offer popular iftar items in Ramadan

Elsewhere in Dhaka, Karwan Bazar and Eskaton also boasts iftar bazars offering several iftar delights to visitors such as onion fritters, brinjal fritters and small pakoras at BDT 10 each, unchanged from last year, however, are now slightly smaller to adjust with the commodity price hike.

These bazars also feature fried items like egg chop, potato chop and haleem, however, due to rising costs of oil, gas, and other ingredients, the prices of these items are up. Jilapi, for instance, is now BDT 200 per kg compared to BDT 140 last year at Karwan Bazar and Eskaton.

Apart from these areas, most of the restaurants and fast-food outlets across the city-Dhanmondi, Banani, Gulshan, Khilgaon, Mirpur etc-are also super-busy selling iftar items to residents of the new Dhaka and its youth. However, the number of makeshift outlets on the footpaths has declined this year due to the legal drives against restaurants.

On the other hand, the sales of iftar items in the capital's Bailey road area has come down to half a little during the early days of Ramadan, compared to earlier times. Traders and customers blame the recent fire incident at the Green Cozy Cottage building that left 46 people dead and many others injured for the low turnout of customers.

Bailey Road used to be jam-packed with customers during Ramadan in previous years. However, on the early days of this Ramadan, only a handful of people visited the area compared to earlier times following the tragic incident. Not only sales are down, but also the outlets have even lowered the number of items for iftar, due to the recent fire incident and ongoing drives against restaurants.