

Nawabi Dastarkhwan- Study on Variations and Acceptance of the Cuisine of Lucknow, in Mumbai

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Abstract: Indian cuisine is a rich tapestry of regional and traditional culinary styles, each cherished for its distinctive flavors. Influenced by religion, culture, and centuries of Islamic rule, notably under the Mughals, Indian food boasts a diverse array of influences. Lucknow, often referred to as the "City of Nawabs" or the "Golden City of India," stands as a testament to this culinary heritage. Lucknowi cuisine offers a regal and opulent dining experience, steeped in historical etiquette and luxury. Perfected by skilled khansamas in the royal kitchens, these dishes mirror the lavish lifestyle of the nawabs.

The Awadhi cuisine, rooted in Lucknow's history, plays a pivotal role in shaping Lucknowi culinary traditions. While today, Lucknowi fare can be found on menus across the nation, many contemporary establishments may not fully capture the traditional richness of authentic Lucknowi food. Retaining the true essence of this cuisine proves challenging due to the complexities involved in recreating historical cooking techniques, acquiring specific ingredients, and employing traditional equipment. While remnants of the authentic flavors persist in the old quarters of Lucknow and select pockets across the country, modern adaptations have become inevitable.

This research endeavors to investigate the variations in Lucknowi cuisine as served in Mumbai's restaurants and discern the preferences of diners regarding these adaptations.

Keywords: Lucknowi cuisine, Awadhi cuisine, Variations, Acceptance, Mumbai.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lucknow, situated in the state of Uttar Pradesh, is renowned as the 'City of Nawabs'. Flourishing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it emerged as the epicenter of art and culture in India under the Nawab of Awadh's patronage. As the second-largest city in North India and the eleventh largest in the country, Lucknow boasts an array of architectural marvels that span centuries. Beyond its storied history, the city is a haven for culinary enthusiasts, offering a plethora of delectable dishes like Galouti Kebab, Boti Kabab, Tunday Kebab, Biryani, and much more.



Fig. 1

Lucknow, often dubbed the 'City of Nawabs,' flourished culturally and artistically in the 18th and 19th centuries. It became North India's social hub, giving rise to the refined Urdu language and nurturing institutions like the Lucknow Gharana of Kathak dance and the Bhatkhande Institute of classical music. The city's architectural legacy, along the Gomti river, stands as a testament to its history. Lucknow's unique Ganga-Jamunitehzeeb, blending Hindu and Muslim

influences, is embodied in its cuisine. It's a blend of diverse culinary traditions from across India and beyond. Influences from Central Asia, the Middle East, and Northern India are evident, with Mughal cooking techniques playing a significant role. The city is renowned for its kebabs, biryanis, and distinct dum-pukht style of cooking.

While predominantly Muslim, Lucknow has been home to a diverse community including Hindus, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Kayasthas, British inhabitants, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Parsis, Bengalis, Sindhis, and Punjabis. Each community has its culinary preferences and techniques.

Noteworthy contributions to the culinary world include the invention of the samosa and the origin of chaat. The city also boasts its own signature biryanis, pulaos, and the delectable tunday kababs. Traditional dining arrangements on dastarkhwan have evolved to incorporate European-style tables.

The city's syncretic culture is evident in the shared celebrations and religious practices of Hindus and Muslims. The exchange of delicacies during festivals is a common practice. Lucknow's refined culture, or 'tehzeeb,' along with its distinct cuisine, makes it a sought-after destination for travelers. Beyond food, Lucknow is renowned for its chikan embroidery, exquisite jewelry, and ittar (perfume). Shopping in the city offers a diverse range of items. Street foods like tokri chaat, makhana malai, and kali gajar halwa add to the city's culinary allure.

Overall, Lucknow's rich history, culture, and culinary traditions make it a vibrant and enticing destination for both residents and visitors alike.

Awadhi cuisine, originating from the Awadh region of Northern India (present-day Uttar Pradesh), is renowned for its elaborate and refined cooking techniques. Here are some key Awadhi culinary techniques and terms:

Culinary Techniques

Dum Pukht: This is a slow-cooking method where marinated meat or vegetables are sealed in a pot with dough, allowing the flavors to infuse while the dish cooks in its own juices. The pot is typically placed over a low flame.

Bhunao: The process of sautéing or frying spices, meats, or vegetables in ghee or oil until they are well-browned, enhancing their flavors.

Korma: A technique involving slow-cooking meat in a mixture of yogurt, cream, and spices until it becomes tender and rich in flavor.

Baghar: A technique where whole or ground spices are tempered in hot ghee or oil, releasing their flavors before being added to the dish.

Yakhni: This involves simmering meat or vegetables in a flavorful broth made from various spices, creating a delicate and aromatic stew.

Tawa Cooking: Using a flat griddle or tawa to cook various dishes, including kebabs, breads like naan, and even certain curries.

Marination: Awadhi cuisine often involves marinating meat or vegetables in a blend of yogurt, spices, and aromatic ingredients to tenderize and infuse flavor.

Culinary Terms:

Bawarchi: A skilled cook or chef, often associated with royal kitchens.

Rakabdar: Another term for a skilled cook, particularly one known for preparing kebabs.

Kebab: A variety of grilled or skewered meat dishes, often marinated in a blend of spices.

Kaliya: A slow-cooked meat stew made with a rich, aromatic blend of spices.

Nihari: A slow-cooked stew made with meat and various spices, often served as a hearty breakfast dish.

Zarda: A fragrant, sweet rice dish cooked with saffron, sugar, and nuts.

Sheermal: A saffron-flavored, slightly sweet flatbread made with refined flour, milk, and ghee.

Roomali Roti: A thin, soft flatbread that's folded like a handkerchief, often served with kebabs.

Warqi Paratha: A layered, flaky flatbread made with ghee, often served with rich curries.

Chandi Ka Warak: Edible silver leaf, used to decorate and enhance the appearance of certain dishes.

These techniques and terms are integral to creating the distinctive flavors and textures that define Awadhi cuisine. Mastering these techniques allows for the preparation of authentic and flavorful dishes from this rich culinary tradition.



Fig.2



Fig. 3



Fig.4



Fig.5

Today's Awadhi Cuisine:

Lucknowi cuisine offers a complete experience of refined dining, elegance, and luxury. Expert chefs from the Nawabs' royal kitchens mastered the array of dishes that defined Lucknow's culinary spread, embodying the refinement and sophistication of the Nawabi lifestyle.

The cuisine of Lucknow has always been celebrated, with both performing and culinary arts flourishing under royal patronage. Awadhi cuisine, characterized by inventive techniques, reflects the Nawabs' commitment to culinary excellence. Unique cooking methods like Dum style, Dhungar style, Galavat, Ghee Durust, Loab, Baghar, Gile Hikmat, were developed and popularized by Awadh's Rakabdars (Chefs) and Bawarchis (Cooks).

One of the most distinctive features of Awadhi cuisine is the careful blend of spices. While it shares some influences with Mughlai cuisine, Awadhi cuisine is known for its subtle, delicate flavors and intricate use of spices. The cuisine boasts unique elements like the use of perfume (Ittar) in dishes, steam cooking (Degh), Ghee Durust, Baghar, and Gile Hikmat, which contribute to its distinct character.

Spices like cinnamon, peppercorn, cloves, cardamom, and more were meticulously used in Awadhi kitchens, with closely guarded recipes handed down through generations of royal cooks. Old Lucknow, a symbol of past opulence, is famous for delicacies like Tunday kebabs, makkhan malai, sheermaal, and paan gilori. Traditional street food, a treasure trove of culinary heritage, holds immense untapped potential.

Dishes that emerged from this period have become legendary, giving rise to 'Awadhi Cuisine.' Though widely available across North Indian cities, modern-day renditions often fall short of capturing the complexity and nuances of authentic Awadhi cuisine. The true essence of this cuisine is best preserved in Lucknow's old city and a few select pockets in the country. Adapting to modern times was inevitable, given the challenges of replicating the labor-intensive techniques of the Nawabs' era. Awadhi cuisine remains distinguished by its unique characteristics, preserving its soulful essence.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

(AWASTHI, 2020)

This city is likewise known as the capital of the Uttar Pradesh state and "City of Nawab". This State and city are interesting a result of its authentic imaginative, characteristic resources landmarks, cooking, culture, and otherworldliness. Its landmarks, profound spots address the "Awadh" esteem. The city saved their claims to fame through a customary, financial action that is the creation of the item on a business level. The city is certified and unique in relation to the realities where improvements are vital from the vacationer side and a few realities painstakingly dealt with like nearby claims to fame and culture, as these are the significant places of the location. With all realities and without aversion gastronomy is a vital piece of the neighborhood culture. Moreover, Awadhi food is the rich and explicit conventional cooking of the Lucknow city. It was created and changed by Nawab Surjaud-daula (1754-1775) and Nawab Asafud-daula (1775-1798). The kitchen of that time span kitchen is designated "Dastarkhwan". Awadhi food was created and adjusted by "Daroga-e-Bawarchikhana" (Head of kitchen), "Bawarchis" (culinary specialist), "Rakabdars" (gourmet cooks), Nanfus (royal gourmet experts), assistant or "masalchis" (who is pounding masala) and "degbos" (Washing utensils) with "Mehris" (Carried out plate, compartment and utensils).

(Anita 2019)

The cooking styles of Lucknow and its environs are a mix of Central Asian, Middle Eastern, and Northern Indian influences. Dastarkhwan, an Awadhi feast, consists of intricate meat-based dishes with flavours of cardamom, saffron, and other rich spices. The Dastarkhwan is also known for its unique combination of specific breads and curries served at specific times of the day.

Main historical themes, tours of churches and cemeteries, and local Eid and Ramadan celebrations are all covered by a variety of walking tours, community orientation, and regional discovery options.

(Kaushik, 2020)

India's culinary history is rich with anecdotes around many regal courts and their kitchens, yet nobody has had the option to coordinate with the greatness of the dastarkhwan of the nawabs of Lucknow, for it is there that Awadhi cooking appeared. The nawabs of Awadh were supporters of human expressions, verse, music and everything fine. This affection for refined things likewise advanced toward their food and lead to the improvement of Awadhi cooking that foodies the nation over adore

Trivia: It is said that the yearly spending plan for kitchens of the third nawab, Shuja-ud-Daula, was around seven lakh. Hitting the food trail in Lucknow isn't anything not exactly a journey for admirers of good food. From kachoris at Vajpayee and chai-samosa at Sharma to chole bhature at Shree Lassi and tokri chaat at Royal Cafe, the city offers a wide exhibit of dishes for food darlings. In any case, you wouldn't go to Lucknow to eat chole bhature and samosas and kachoris. It's Awadhi rarities that are the genuine article. In spite of the fact that Lucknow is similarly prestigious for its compositional legacy, the vast majority travel to the city for their affection for the neighborhood food varieties.

One could be spoilt for decision when eating out in Lucknow and posting each must-attempt dish might be somewhat overpowering. These are the dishes we suggest you not miss on your following visit to Lucknow.

Kebabs

Awadh was truly known for its meat dishes, particularly the delicate kebabs. Lucknow brags of probably the best kebabs in India. The most ideal approach to eat a kebab is with Indian breads, for example, roti, chapati and naan. Be that as it may, in the event that you are in Lucknow, you can attempt it with ultra slight rumali rotis. These do something amazing with the boti or the galawati kebabs.

Galawati Kebabs

Any conversation about the kebabs of Lucknow unavoidably begins with the galawati (or galouti) kebab, considered one of the mark dishes of the city of nawabs. These uncommon soften in-the-mouth kebabs were initially made during the nineteenth century for Nawab Wajid Ali Shah what its identity is, reputed, had lost his teeth yet wanted the flavor of kebabs. A one-furnished cook named Haji Murad Ali idealized the formula of the galawati. His child opened Tunday Kababi (or the one-furnished man's kebab), a 100-year-old foundation that actually serves the galawati made by the first, secret formula. The kebab is a roundabout patty made out of finely minced goat meat. Green papayas are

utilized as a tenderiser and restricting specialist. Various flavors are added to the kebab, some of which have never been unveiled to general society. The patties are then simmered in ghee till earthy colored.

Kakori Kebabs

Another well known Lucknowi creation is the kakori kebab. As per a famous story, at a gathering tossed by an Awadhi blue-blood, a British authority offered a belittling comment about the coarse surface of the seekh kebabs. Incensed by this slight, the blue-blood entrusted his staff to revamp on the surface of seekh kebabs. Also, that is the kakori kebab was conceived. What separates it? Mangoes are utilized to relax the meat.

Shami and Boti Kebabs

Shami kebabs are hot round patties that are softened with crude green mango in the late spring and karonda, a harsh and acidic natural product in different seasons. Boti kebabs are little bits of speared sheep that are marinated in a blend of yogurt and flavors and afterward cooked in an oven. Your smartest choice to attempt these out is Dastarkhwan, a short stroll from the Parivartan Chowk.

Biryani

In the event that there's anything as celebrated as Lucknow's kebabs, it is its biryani. Strangely, biryani comes from the Persian word 'birian' which signifies 'simmered prior to cooking'. The biryani of Lucknow is distinctive as in the rice and meat is cooked independently. They are then layered and heated dum-style in a fixed handi (pot). The biryani is sweet-smelling and has inconspicuous flavors. A short stroll from Chowk, directly inverse the Patanala police chowki, is a bustling little one-room structure with monster degchis hanging out in front. This is Idris Hotel, and it likely has the best biryani in Lucknow. They serve it with a side of salan (sauce) and cut onions. The mystery of Idris' choice lamb biryani, they say, lies in the utilization of milk, spices and saffron and the way that it's cooked in a copper degchhi.

Nihari Kulcha

Non-vegan sweethearts can't leave Lucknow without attempting this totally fabulous and lip-smacking blend. The nihari is a rich yet gently seasoned lamb sauce, and kulchas are a thick raised bread. Together they make a preferred romantic tale over Romeo and Juliet. Directly close to the Chowk part of TundayKababi is Raheem Hotel, which makes the best Nihari Kulcha around. Local people affectionately call it Raheem ki Nihaari and it's a custom of sorts for each meat eater to come here during exceptional events, similar to the sacred month of Ramzan.

Sheermal

Exhausted with the normal rotis? Try Lucknow's sheermal. Customarily worked with milk, it is an improved naan wealthy in saffron. Heated in an iron oven, what loans it an exceptional taste is the sprinkling of saffron and cardamom-seasoned milk on the dividers of the oven. Sheermal tastes extraordinary with kebabs, kormas, and even without help from anyone else. The baqarkhani is an intricate variety of the sheermal that is seared on a frying pan as opposed to being prepared in an oven. Different sorts of sheermal assortments incorporate zafrani, and hazri sheermal. Lucknow has a whole path committed to sheermals. Situated nearby the Akbari Gate, the Sheermal Wali Gali is the best spot to enjoy this one-of-its-sort offering from Lucknow.

Malai Paan

Pretty much every strength of Lucknow has a story behind it thus does Malai Paan or Bilai ki Gilori. As indicated by nearby legend, it is accepted that this sweet dish arose because of a prohibition on paan by the nawabs of Lucknow. The cooks of the regal kitchen thought of Malai Paan, which resembles a paan yet is set up from milk and malai (thickened cream). Making the sweet dish is a significant assignment. The malai should be set into paper slim sheets and folded into the state of a paan in the wake of being loaded up with dry leafy foods (gem sugar). Furthermore, nobody shows improvement over the famous Ram Asrey sweet shop in Hazratganj. They have been doing business since 1805 and are the most praised mithai walas of Lucknow.

Kulfi

While you can get the Malai Paan pressed for home as well, unfortunately frozen yogurts must be devoured on the spot. With regards to our desi kulfis, Lucknow for sure realizes how to give an imperial treat to the sense of taste of its guests. For dessert, you need to attempt the kulfi at Prakash Kulfi in Aminabad. At a sensible cost, you will have a rich, smooth kulfi brimming with get leafy foods dry with falooda. It's effectively outstanding amongst other kulfis you'll at any point taste.

(Sexena, 2010)

The now-famous and celebrated cuisine of the Awadh area in modern-day Uttar Pradesh originated from Mughlai cuisine in the kitchens of the Nawabs of Awadh in Lucknow's capital city in the 18th and 19th centuries. Awadh's Rakabdars (Chefs) and Bawarchis (Cooks) invented and spread new cooking techniques such as Dum style, Dhungar style, Galavat, Ghee Durust, Loab, Baghar, Gile Hikmat, and so on.

The dishes that developed from that period are culinary legends and have brought forth an entire class of cooking known as the 'Awadhi Cuisine'. The Awadhi Cuisine is a normal for the city of Lucknow and the Awadh area like the Chikan and Zardozi needle works of which Chikan is as of now secured as Geographical Signs and endeavors are on to get the GI status to Zardozi. The Lucknowi dishes like Shaami Kebabs, Kakori Kebabs, Nimosh/Namash, Biryani, Pasanda Kebabs, and so forth are grounded incredible dishes which are generally advertised for a gigantic premium cost in the homegrown and unfamiliar business sectors. In the city of Lucknow itself, there are more than 1,000 outlets selling kebabs, aside from others selling the extraordinary assortments of desserts and different dishes.

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Once in a week	12.3%
Once in a month	47.5%
Twice a month	11.1%
Once in six months	29%

How often do you order for Lucknowi cuisine?
162 responses

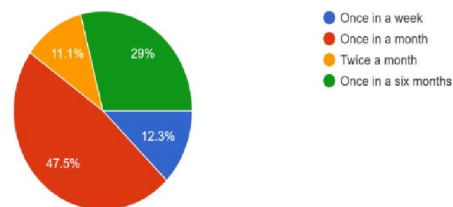


Fig.6

Interpretation: -

- 12.3% of the respondents order for Lucknowi food once in a week.
- 47.5% of the respondents order for Lucknowi food once in a month.
- 11.1% of the respondents order for Lucknowi food twice a month.
- 29% of the respondents order for Lucknowi food once in a six months.

What attracts you the most in the cuisine of Lucknow?
162 responses

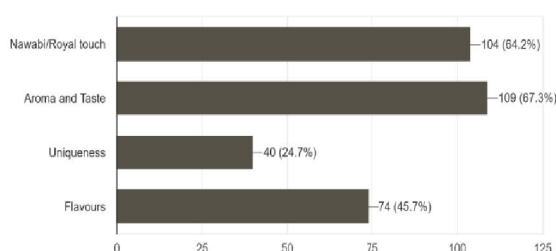


Fig. 7

Nawabi / Royal touch	64.2%
Aroma and Taste	67.3%
Uniqueness	24.7%
Flavours	45.7%

Interpretation

- 64.2% of the respondents gets attracted towards the Lucknowi cuisine by Nawabi/Royal touch.
- 67.3% of the respondents gets attracted towards the Lucknowi cuisine by Aroma and Taste.
- 24.7% of the respondents gets attracted towards the Lucknowi cuisine by Uniqueness
- 45.7% of the respondents gets attracted towards the Lucknowi cuisine by Flavours.

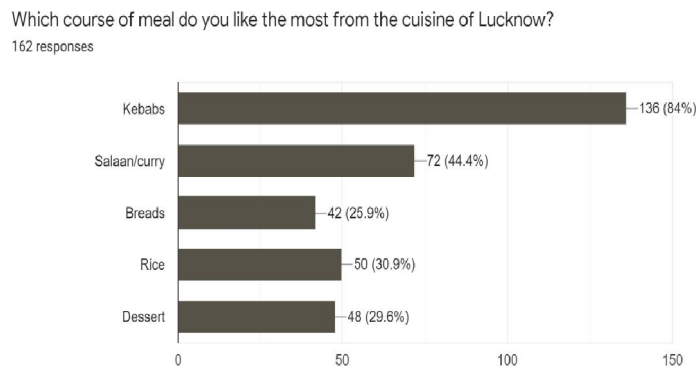


Fig.8

Interpretation

- 84% of the respondents like kebabs from the Lucknowi cuisine.
- 44.4% of the respondents like salaam/curry from the Lucknowi cuisine.
- 25.9% of the respondents like breads from the Lucknowi cuisine.
- 30.9% of the respondents like rice from the Lucknowi cuisine.
- 29.6% of the respondents like dessert from the Lucknowi cuisine.

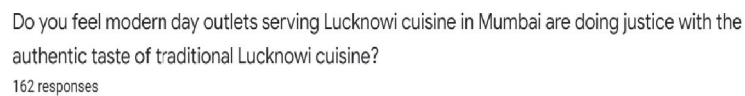


Fig. 8

- 45.7% of the respondents feel that modern day outlets serving Lucknowi cuisine in Mumbai are doing justice with authentic taste of traditional Lucknowi cuisine.
- 54.3% of the respondents do not feel that modern day outlets serving Lucknowi cuisine in Mumbai are doing justice with authentic taste of traditional Lucknowi cuisine.

Traditional Lucknowi dining etiquettes is losing its value of authenticity in the restaurants of Mumbai
162 responses

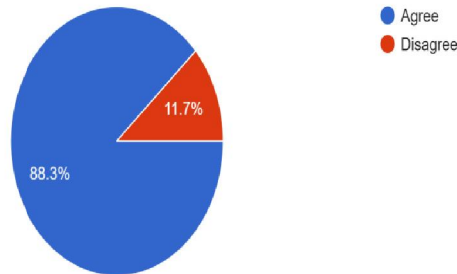


Fig. 9

88.3% of the respondents agree with the statement that traditional Lucknowi dining etiquettes is losing its value of the authenticity in the restaurants of Mumbai.

11.7% of the respondents disagree with the statement that traditional Lucknowi dining etiquettes is losing its value of the authenticity in the restaurants of Mumbai.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings suggest that Mumbai's restaurants offering Lucknowi cuisine struggle to replicate the authentic flavors of Lucknow. This has led to notable disparities between the traditional Lucknowi cuisine and what is served in Mumbai. The inevitable modern-day adaptations stem from the challenges of recreating the labor-intensive, intricate, and refined cooking techniques of the Nawabs' era. Unfortunately, many contemporary restaurants fail to capture the true essence and complexity that define authentic Lucknowi cuisine.

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