

Chef Ranveer Brar uses his culinary experience and flair to upgrade the cuisine of all restaurants he works with.



A FLAIR FOR FARE!

A culinary professional, food stylist and host of several reality food shows, Chef Ranveer Brar's relationship with all things culinary goes back to his childhood in Lucknow. Having worked as an executive and corporate chef across India and abroad, his passion for food and cooking has placed him on the map of the food industry.

A restaurateur, passionate traveller and now an author, Chef Ranveer Brar has donned several hats along his long, culinary journey. A chef *extraordinaire* who believes in travelling across nations to understand the culture and food palates of different people, Brar has set up several restaurants in India and abroad. While each of his restaurants is valuable and unique to him, he shares, "Morisco, my restaurant in Fort Aguada, Goa is closest to my heart as it was the first one I opened."

IT ALL STARTS HERE Chef Brar's culinary journey began in 'The City of Nawabs', Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. "My first real connection with food started with cooking for community kitchens at a *gurudwara* (Sikh temple) in Lucknow. Till then, I was just acquainting myself with food via the lanes of the city, my neighbourhood and even the local grocer. The actual decision

to pursue a career in food came when I made *rajma* (kidney beans curry) for my mother at the age of 15. Surprisingly, it even earned praise from my father. It hit me then that food was my true calling."

TRAVEL EQUALS EXPERIENCE Brar believes that travelling is a prerequisite to understanding the food culture of diverse places. "Cuisine is an extension of culture. If you take any regional cuisine, especially in a country as diverse as ours, it is influenced by the local geography, resources and culture. For any chef or food lover, it's important to understand these aspects that will help them appreciate the cuisine more," he adds.

Talking about Goa, a place that holds a "special place" in Brar's heart, he shares, "Goa is a place where I came into my own. I was spearheading the opening of a seafood restaurant and I had to learn about seafood right from

the basics. Earlier, I used to spend days communicating with the locals in my broken Konkani language. They know more about fish than anyone else and I learnt a lot from them. Goa let me re-discover myself at my own pace. Throughout my stay here for my TV shoot of *Raja Rasoi Aur Andaz Anokha*, I relived those days; it was really nostalgic," he reminisces.

Brar is in total awe of Gondal, an erstwhile princely city in Gujarat. He believes that behind every cuisine are countless fables that are instrumental in shaping it. "I had a chance to explore this gem of a destination last year. There's the Shri Ma Bhuvaneshwari Temple which was established way back in 1946, and the Gondal Rasashala Aushadhashram, which serves as an ayurvedic pharmacy and is one of the oldest in the country. The *farsaan* (deep fried savoury snack) here is just amazing. Then there's a humble establishment that churns out *dhoklas* (made with a fermented batter derived from



ABOVE Spicy chicken curry is Brar's specialty.

TOP For Chef Ranveer Brar, cooking is as much a passion as it is a profession.

rice and split chickpeas) by the ton each day. Above all, the royal family and historical treasures preserved by them tell countless stories of Gondal's glorious past. It was an experience that I will remember for a long time."

Brar believes in travelling the world to understand the food scenes of different cultures. "Travelling allows me to absorb the various cultures and cuisines, which I then incorporate into my dishes. Meeting new people and talking about new cuisines is a

bonus. I have inculcated humility while travelling. Everyone I meet has a story and wisdom to share and there is so much to learn from them all."

MORE THAN JUST COOKING Once a host of the famous *MasterChef India* series, Brar is currently shooting for the *Raja Rasoi Aur Andaz Anokha* in Goa. Emphasising Indian cuisine, Brar shares a little about the show, "It is a series that tries to bring out aspects and nuances of our cuisine

QUICK BITES

COMFORT FOOD?

Khichdi

FAVOURITE CUISINE?

Lucknawi

FIVE THINGS IN YOUR KITCHEN THAT YOU ADORE THE MOST? My knife set, my salt brick, my handblender, my sous vide circulator and my leather apron

YOUR INSPIRATION IN COOKING?

Charlie Trotter

A DISH THAT YOU COOK VERY OFTEN? Mushroom risotto

MOST LOVED RECIPE?

Dora kebab, influenced by the silk thread cooking of Lucknow

DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

I have a spouse-like, fun-filled relationship with food.

YOUR WORK MANTRA?

'Food is God'

THE TOUGHEST FOOD COURSE TO PREPARE?

Main course is the toughest as it is the best part of the meal. It has to be perfect in all aspects

and culture through stories and relevant dishes. It's a show based on different aspects of culture (travel, accidents, war etc) that have influenced our food."

Brar has also authored a book, *Come Into My Kitchen*, which talks about his journey through the culinary world. "My first book was an endeavour to take my readers on a trip down memory lane, to relive my journey, understand my relationship with food and its evolution over the years. In short, it talks about everything that shaped me into who I am today," he adds.

On a parting note, Brar shares some words of wisdom for the newbies wanting to make it big in the culinary industry, "Stick to the basics of cooking. Once you have a solid foundation in place when it comes to cooking, the kitchen is your studio to experiment and grow." 