

## FOOD CULTURE

Clockwise from left: Vardaan Market Moong Dal Pakodi Chat; Lake Market Chicken Kabiraji; Chitpur Road Chicken Rezala; and Tiretti Bazaar Prawn Dumpling



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probably caused by the plethora of British clubs in the city. But almost every ‘evening snack’ or ‘quick bite’ that has been passed through the sieve of Kolkata, has undergone slight changes to find its unique identity,” adds Misra.

Kolkata, historically, was the hub of trade and communities from all over India, as well as some parts of the world, came here to seek their future. They lived in particular localities that soon took on their ethnic identities. Soon some enterprising person cooked their delicacies and put it out on the streets to make it readily available to their neighbours. Popularity spread and these items, though originating in a particular locality, got replicated all over the city.

“To give an example, Chinese traders/refugees first came to Kolkata and settled in the Bow Bazaar/Tiretti Bazaar area. This area then became famous for street-style Chinese food. The early morning Chinese breakfast was a must-experience thing in Kolkata. The legendary Fat Mama was an incredible cook and people came to taste the delicacies fresh off her wok.

The British undoubtedly, left an impression on the street food culture. Aspirational middle-class residents, who had no access to British homes or their clubs, chose to go to the streets for their chops, cutlets and stews,” avers Misra. The Awadhi Muslims who followed Wajid Ali Shah to Kolkata brought their own brand of kababs, parathas and kormas to the street tables and are now hugely popular all over Kolkata.

The street food of Kolkata has definitely changed. It is now far more cosmopolitan and has tremendous variety. Almost everything is now available on streets though it is not strictly street food. There are items like tandoori chicken, naan, Daal Makhni and even Biryani available along the pavements, which were not there before.