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WINTER STREET TREATS

The cool weather is finally here and Delhi's foodies are thronging streetside stalls that serve seasonal delicacies. From paaya to parantha and chikki, it's feasting time!

Zofeen Maqsood
 It's hard not to be enraptured by the sheer theatricality of street food in Delhi. And as the first whiff of winter sets in, the aroma of surprisingly simple yet delicious cold weather treats begins to magically waft around every corner of the city. From the ubiquitous *theles* selling mounds of roasted peanuts to slow-roasted *shakarkandi* (sweet potatoes) served with occasional slices of *kamrakh* (starfruit), the variety of food and the nutritious science behind all of it (nuts keep the body warm in winters and *shakarkandi* with its low glycemic index is a winter superfruit) begins to preoccupy the average Dilliwalla. Chef Ashwani Kumar Singh, from Kempinski Ambience Hotel says, "Indian cuisine is the only one in the world that has been adopted by Ayurveda. Every ingredient has health benefits associated with it." So perhaps it's best not to spend foggy winter mornings lingering over frothy Starbucks cappuccinos and instead opt for the poor man's power breakfast of paaya and nihari. And if that's not enough, unleash yourself on the amazing variety of parathas, chikkis, kababs, and rich desserts that are best savoured at street food stalls at this time of year.



MOONGFALI CHIKKI & GAJAK

Feasting on chikki that's a combination of melted jaggery and groundnuts is *de rigueur* during Delhi winters. Ram, who piles his pushcart in central Delhi, swaps his business of selling banagas for chikki and rewari during the winter month. "The best chikkis have a dark hue as it suggests good quality *gur* (jaggery) in used. But if it

is yellow toned, the *gur* is substandard," he says.

Where: Kothi Shri Mandir in Khari Baoli is a *gali* dedicated to chikkis. Kanwarji's at Chandni Chowk sells slightly upmarket variations such as rose petal chikki and anjeer chikki. **Price:** ₹40 for 250 gms approx.

GAJAR KA HALWA

A winter specialty, almost every family indulges in the routine of preparing this ghee-khoya laden grated carrot treat. But if you are not in a mood to toil in the kitchen, some of the popular halwas stock authentic preparations. **Where:** Bengali Sweet House, Bengali Market; Gopala, GK 2. **Price:** ₹40 approx for a 100gm serving



GOBHI, MOOLI, ANDA PARANTHAS

Parantha is a staple on the breakfast menu at most north Indian households. While also parantha is an all-season favourite, the winter months bring seasonal stuffings like mashed and stir-fried cauliflower and shredded radish on flatbreads coated with egg. A great start to the day and a good way to end it too, it isn't surprising that the city's roadside stalls do brisk business in stuffed paranthas during the winter. Paranthewali Gali in the old city is rightly famous but excellent paranthas can also be had at: Paranthawala near Moolchand hospital; opposite Link house in Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg; in front of Vikram Hotel, Lajpat Nagar IV. **Price:** ₹20 onwards



PAAYA & NIHARI

An elaborately-prepared soupy dish cooked overnight, the true gourmand appreciates paaya. The recipe involves stewing trotters overnight until the bone softens releasing gelatin and giving the gravy a slippery texture. Paaya is believed to be a healthy tonic for colds. Another popular winter treat, the nihari is made from the thigh meat of goat or buffalo that is simmered overnight and garnished with ginger.

Where: Kallu Nihari behind Delhi Cinema, Darya Ganj; Shabrist Nihari, Chidi Kabar; Jama Masjid; Javed Nihari, Zakir Nagar, Okhla. **Price:** ₹40 onwards for a plate

DAULAT KI CHAAT



Light and frothy, this delicacy tastes like it could have been evolved by the finest modern molecular gastronomists. However, it's a traditional native Delhi dessert that's sold only during the winter months. Daulat ki chaat is prepared by whisking milk for hours until it becomes a light foam. The top layer is collected and drizzled with saffron milk, khoya, nuts and powdered sugar. Daulat ki chaat even made a rare guest appearance in *Ankush Dehli*, Rajat Kapoor's film set in the old city.

Where: Khemchand khomcha, Kinari Bazaar; Pushcarts on the Red Fort stretch. **Price:** ₹50 onwards

TANDOORI TIKKAS & BURRAS

Come winters and the idea of standing at a roadside stall to savour freshly skewered kebabs with the scent of coal (and smog) wafting in the air seems romantic enough. Javed Bhai, who was earlier at Khan Market and now runs Al-Javed at Defence Colony, prepares what are perhaps the most succulent melt-in-mouth kakori kebabs in town. The secret, he says, "lies in the special spice mix we use."

Where: 3, Back lane, Defence Colony market. **Price:** ₹180 onwards. Also check out pushcarts opposite Gate No.1, Jama Masjid



WEEKEND FIX

PHOTOS: SANJEEV VERMA, SAUMYA KHANDELWAL