

THEWEEK

JULY 2020

SMART *life*

LIVE HEALTHY, STAY FIT

Top picks for
high tea

Gardening with
microgreens

Understanding
protein lows



Neeraj Chopra
on the
comeback trail

Chef
Amit Puri
Modern
meets classic

MUGDHA GODSE

Style and substance



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

What happens inside your body when there is a sudden craving for something sweet? It could be a signal that you protein level is low. As surprising as it sounds, hunger is the response of the body to protein deficiency and the increase in appetite tends to revolve around sugar craving. Head to the Inhale section to read about ways to know whether your body has a low protein level. Besides low protein, do you also feel like you have a low mood? Maybe it is time to dance away the blues. Thanks to cloud clubbing, you can now party to the DJ's beats in the comfort of your home. The best part is that you don't even have to wear a fancy dress or pay the entry fee. Akbar Sami, who is one of the pioneers of Djing in India, talks about how the concept is trending among party-goers. And who couldn't use some cheering up during the lockdown? Tune into a cloud-clubbing session and unwind to the beats of the thumping music.

In this issue, our cover girl Mugdha Godse talks about her journey from modelling to acting. The 36-year-old actor who made her Bollywood debut with the 2008 film *Fashion* might have had a bumpy ride in the industry but she believes that there is more to life than box-office hits. "Nothing went wrong after *Fashion*. My last hit movie was *Jail*. The projects after that did not really work out. But I did not feel low. I was confused, though, and wondered why it was happening. However, I refused to succumb to that darkness," she says. With high hopes on her upcoming film *Fauji Calling*, she is looking forward to new projects with renewed vigour. "People still want to talk to me even after 12 years of my hit film. I am grateful for that and I don't think I deserve to have a low moment. The sun will rise again tomorrow," she says.

In One Shot, chef Amit Puri talks about mixing modern cooking with Indian classics. He also shares six easy recipes from his recently launched cookbook *Redefining Comfort Food With Amit Puri*, which is a collection of global comfort food. And don't worry about getting too comfortable eating the comfort food. We have got you covered. Head to the story on fat cutter drinks which has a list of the top five decoctions that you and your gut will love. Sit back and relax as these detox drinks work their magic on your waistline.

Stay safe, stay healthy and, most of all, stay at home.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MAYUR SHEDGE

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PHOTO SACHIN KUMAR

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Zone refining

Ways to deal with an oily T-zone

BY DR MOHAN THOMAS

The T-zone consists of the central part of the face such as the forehead, nose, chin and the area around the mouth. People who dual skin type tend to have an oilier T-zone. They also have many open pores in this region along with a significantly higher level of acne and pimples compared to the cheeks.

Here are some ways to alleviate the adverse effects of an oily T-zone.

- Clean the area regularly:** Use a mild face wash. Bar soap should not be used as it will make the skin dry and red. Home remedies include application of honey and milk.
- Use a good toner:** It helps to further balance the pH of skin which in turn prevents the skin from becoming extra dry. Toners help in pore closure which prevents the impurities from clogging the pores and prevents skin infection. In addition, they offer hydration to the skin which gives the skin a smooth and flawless appearance.
- Moisturise:** It is very difficult to moisture a combination skin without clogging the pores. Two different types of moisturisers for different areas can be used along with supplements like fish oil, flaxseed oil and walnuts. This makes the skin feel smooth and soft.

- Fragrance means nothing:** Use fragrance-free products as much as possible so that the natural ingredients present in these products are not harmful to your skin. Dry, dull, or flaky skin can react to the fragrance products as they are more prone to irritation.
- Blot away:** Keep blotting sheets handy. Dab it on the area whenever it feels oily.
- Block sun:** Sunscreen is very important for the protection of your skin from UV rays. A broad-spectrum sunscreen with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide and water based with minimum SPF 30 is good to use. Limit your time under the sun as it can lead to premature fine lines, dark spots, and even wrinkles.
- Hold on to your water bottle:** Consume at least four litres of water every day. It helps keep the skin supple and hydrated.
- Work out:** Exercise on a regular basis as it increases the pumping of blood throughout the body. Incorporate a couple of facial exercises in order to tighten the skin on the face.

Thomas is a senior cosmetic surgeon, Cosmetic Surgery Institute.

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Migraine vs headache

When there is pressure or pain in your head, it can be difficult to differentiate between a typical headache and a migraine. However, understanding whether it is a migraine or a headache is crucial. It can mean faster relief through better treatment. When compared with tension or other headache types, migraine pain can be moderate to severe. Some people may experience headaches so severe they seek care at an emergency room. Migraines will typically affect only one side of the head. However, it is possible to have a migraine that affects both sides of the head. Other differences include the pain's quality. A migraine will cause intense pain that may be throbbing and will make performing daily tasks very difficult. Migraine are typically divided into two categories—migraine with aura and migraine without aura. An aura refers to sensations a person experiences before getting a migraine. It can be anything from feeling less mentally alert or having trouble thinking to seeing flashing lights or unusual lines.

Acne vs pimple

Confused if it is an acne or a pimple? The main difference between acne and pimple is that acne is a disease and pimple is one of its symptoms. Acne is a condition affecting the skin's hair follicles and oil glands. Under the skin, the pores are connected to glands that secrete an oily substance called sebum. The glands and pore are connected by a canal known as a follicle that has a thin hair that grows out to the skin's surface. When sebum and dead skin cells clump together, they form a plug in the follicle. Bacteria in the plug causes inflammation, leading to red pimples in acne. Many think greasy food and chocolate cause acne but interestingly that is not the case in majority of people. It is mainly due to hormonal changes, high humidity and even squeezing or picking at existing pimples.



Vegan vs plant-based

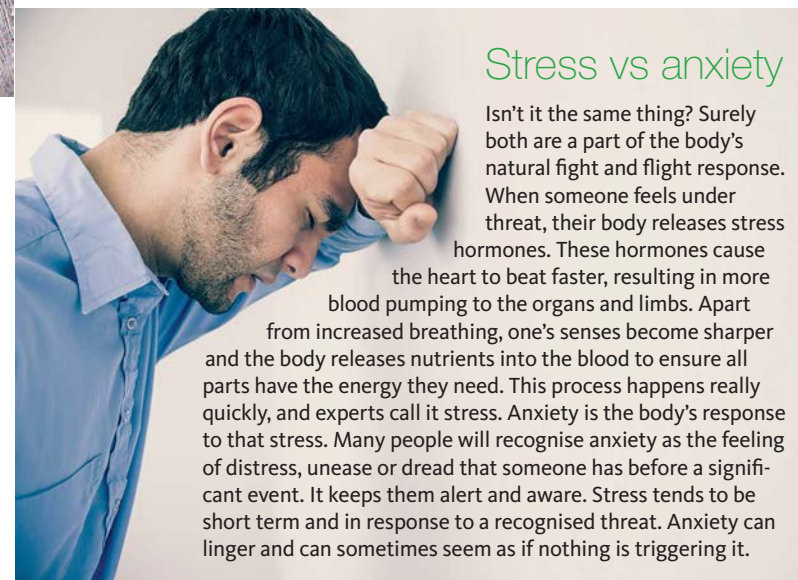
Both vegan and plant-based meal plans have made headlines in the recent past for their health benefits. But most people don't have clarity on what is the difference between the two. Vegan diets eliminate all animal products, while plant-based diets do not necessarily eliminate animal products, but focus on eating mostly plants, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains. In a vegan diet plan, all animal products including dairy, meat, poultry, fish, eggs and honey are eliminated. With a plant-based diet, you can decide whether or not you want to consume animal products, and the focus is on eating mostly food that comes from plant sources. Plant-based diets also emphasise eating whole food, meaning the food has undergone little—if any—processing and is as close to its natural state as possible. The big question is, which is better? Your doctor has the answer to that. So, consult an expert before choosing either.

super FOOD of the month



Pumpkin seeds

- Pumpkin seeds are a rich source of healthy fats, fibres and various antioxidants that are beneficial for the heart. These seeds consist of monounsaturated fatty acids that help to lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol in the blood.
- The seeds also contain serotonin, a neurochemical which aids in getting better sleep. A handful of these seeds before going to bed will help one get a sound sleep.
- They have anti-inflammatory properties and is known to reduce arthritis pain. They are also a good remedy when it comes to treating pain in joints.
- They help improve insulin regulation in diabetics and decrease oxidative stress. These seeds are a rich source of digestible protein that helps stabilise blood sugar levels.
- They are one of the best snacks to lose weight. They are dense and helps keep one satiated for a longer period. They are also high in fibre.



Stress vs anxiety

Isn't it the same thing? Surely both are a part of the body's natural fight and flight response. When someone feels under threat, their body releases stress hormones. These hormones cause the heart to beat faster, resulting in more blood pumping to the organs and limbs. Apart from increased breathing, one's senses become sharper and the body releases nutrients into the blood to ensure all parts have the energy they need. This process happens really quickly, and experts call it stress. Anxiety is the body's response to that stress. Many people will recognise anxiety as the feeling of distress, unease or dread that someone has before a significant event. It keeps them alert and aware. Stress tends to be short term and in response to a recognised threat. Anxiety can linger and can sometimes seem as if nothing is triggering it.



“Your setback is just a setup for a comeback.”
—STEVE HARVEY



Learning everyday

Actor **Digangana Suryavanshi** says it is important to have faith in oneself

Your journey

I faced the camera for the first time when I was seven. It started off as a fascination but it stayed with me. I was so young and I wanted to be on TV. I was 11 when I did my daily soap *Shakuntala*. During this time I realised that acting is something that I want to keep doing. Then I took up *Ruk Jana Nahi* and finally *Veera* which was my first leading show. I had my novel coming out at the same time. My parents don't interfere in my life. They keep me grounded but at the same time let me take decisions. I think this is the reason why I feel more independent. I learned everything on my own. When I decided to go on *Bigg Boss*, my mother was sceptical as I don't even cook in the house. But I wanted to pursue it and I did.

Current projects

I am doing a film in Hindi now. We started shooting for it before lockdown. I am very excited about it. I can't talk much about it, but I hope we will make an announcement very soon. I am also doing another film; it is a squad drama.

Most memorable time

I have memories from my childhood. I distinctly remember the time we went to Jammu and Kashmir; it is very special memory. The initial days of *Veera* are memorable as well.

Greatest challenge

The biggest challenge is when something does not turn out how you want it to. I made some hard decisions. *Veera* and *Bigg Boss* was a journey in itself. People, sometimes, don't have faith in you but you need to have enough faith in yourself. I came from a background where I used to work every single day and suddenly my way of working changed. It was a lot of struggle where I see myself.

Biggest strength

The fact that I am very passionate about my job. I have been working for so many years and it shows how much I love it. I don't do it and leave it. I try something different. I have a lot of struggles but it is not really out there for other people to see. I think those are my strengths.

Weaknesses

Even if I know what are my weaknesses are, I don't speak about it in public. People would just use it against me and I don't want that to happen.

Something you binge-watched

Old Ramayan and Mahabharat I would say. But I don't binge-watch a lot because my eyes hurt.

Lessons learnt

I am learning a lot at the moment. Lessons on being grateful, not taking things for granted



and counting my blessings. I feel that you are lucky if you have support from the ones you love.

Fitness regime

Right now, functional training, yoga, some step up and cycling at home.

Diet mantra

Diet is not about eating less but about eating at the right time. I try to avoid a lot of sweets and control my portions. I also eat five hours before sleep.

Typical day

I wake up early, work out, take a shower, take phone calls and step out for shoots. I speak to my parents regularly. On a holiday, I just relax and do almost nothing.

Ways to unwind

I love to listen to music. I can keep listening for hours.

Dreams for the future

I wish, I continue working and people are willing to watch me on screen.

Going international

Well, I hope I get international projects. As an actor, there are no such barriers. I want to be a part of shows which get global attention and recognition.

A hobby you picked up during the lockdown

I picked up painting and I must say that I thoroughly enjoy it.

One dish you whipped up during this time

Parathas! All kinds of parathas.

Why do you think your life is smart?

My life is smart because I manage to be happy. I try to see good in others.

As told to Oshin Grace Daniell



Not so soon, monsoon

Feeling under the weather?
Here are tips to stay healthy
during the rainy season

BY SHERYL SALIS

The arrival of monsoon brings with it a feeling of nostalgia and respite from the scorching summer.

But the risk of illnesses caused by bacteria and viruses in the air also increase. Moreover, the monsoons cause temperature fluctuations, pollution and water contamination leading to a number of water-borne diseases, infections and digestive ailments. The reason we are susceptible to these problems is a weak immune system. Our immune system is a network of cells and tissues that defends the body against bacteria, viruses, infections or substances that appear foreign and harmful to the body.

This year, in light of the pandemic, the importance of a healthy immune system has been the most highlighted self-care measure by health experts. Similarly, a strong immune system is a natural defence mechanism against many monsoon related ailments as well. It is therefore recommended to consume food which prevent us from falling sick, as keeping our immunity

levels high is essential to stay healthy.

Here are a few precautions and dietary modifications that can easily be adopted by you and your family members.

Monsoon superfood

Since the damp weather is a breeding ground for bacteria, it is advised to have more home-cooked meals that include immunity boosting food and what better than superfood.

Virgin coconut oil: It is hailed as a super food because of its myriad health benefits. The important medium-chain fatty acids present in coconut oil are lauric acid, caprylic acid and capric acid. The function of monolaurin also found in coconut oil is that of an anti-virus that kills it by dissolving the protective lipids surrounding it. This makes virgin coconut oil an excellent superfood that has multiple health benefits and also helps improve the immune system. It can be used in cooking, baking vegan desserts at home or even as a salad dressing or sautéing basic vegetables.



It is also recommended to consume two spoons of virgin coconut oil every day for a healthy and energetic start to the day.

Ginger: Adrak chai in the monsoon is every Indian's love affair. Ginger is regarded as one of the oldest remedies for soothing a cold or flu. A ginger, lemon and turmeric concoction is a power-packed homemade immune boosting drink.

Turmeric: It has anti-viral properties. A glass of turmeric milk does wonders to soothe a cold and fights against common monsoon infections.

Make smart food choices

Wash all your fruits and vegetables thoroughly before storing, especially leafy vegetables, cauliflowers and broccoli. During monsoon, it is better to go for non-leafy vegetables such as bottle gourd, snack gourd (pawal), bitter gourd (karela), cluster beans, french beans and yam. It also advisable to steam the veggies and sprouts before consuming.

Consume seasonal fruits like bananas, apples, lychees, cherries and pomegranate as non-seasonal ones might be infected



with worms or unnaturally ripened.

Since the immune system is generally weaker during the monsoons, it also weakens digestion. Hence, it is recommended to eat in moderation. Even if taste buds persists, do not always eat heavy when hungry.

It is best to avoid uncooked food such as raw salads and sprouts. A hot bowl of soup is a healthy snack during the monsoon months. For people drenched in rain water, soup provides instant relief since its warm base clears up phlegm in the nasal cavities and soothes the general throat area. It also acts as a cleanse through your body as it takes away bacteria and waste products to the body's excretory system.

Sip on herbal teas; add mint, moringa, basil or ginger to your morning cup of tea to get relief from cold and phlegm. They are antibacterial in nature.

For non-vegetarians, opt for lighter preparations like soups, stews, tandoori and grilled rather than heavy curries.

Stay hydrated

As compared to the summer, people feel less thirsty in the monsoon and drink less water throughout the day. It is important to continue drinking six to eight glasses of water daily to stay hydrated as it flushes all the toxins away. Make it a habit to drink boiled and filtered water.

Get adequate sleep and maintain personal hygiene

The body needs rest to function properly throughout the day. Therefore, it is recommended to get about seven hours of sleep to build a strong and healthy immune system.

Infections and bacteria spread rapidly in the monsoon especially when surroundings are polluted and contaminated. Use mosquito repellents and creams or nets if you live in mosquito-prone areas. Keep following the habit of washing your hands regularly with soap and water.

Do not allow your children to play in puddles as leptospirosis in the monsoons is a major threat; wash feet and dry with a soft cloth after coming home.

Physical activity

Being quarantined at home has taught us that we can be physically active even indoors. Physical activity stimulates the immune system, making it stronger and less susceptible to infections. Any kind of workout increases the blood flow and pumps anti-bodies throughout the body which in turn helps improve immunity.

Have a healthy and safe monsoon.

Salis is a registered nutritionist, naturopath, certified diabetes educator and wellness coach based in Mumbai.

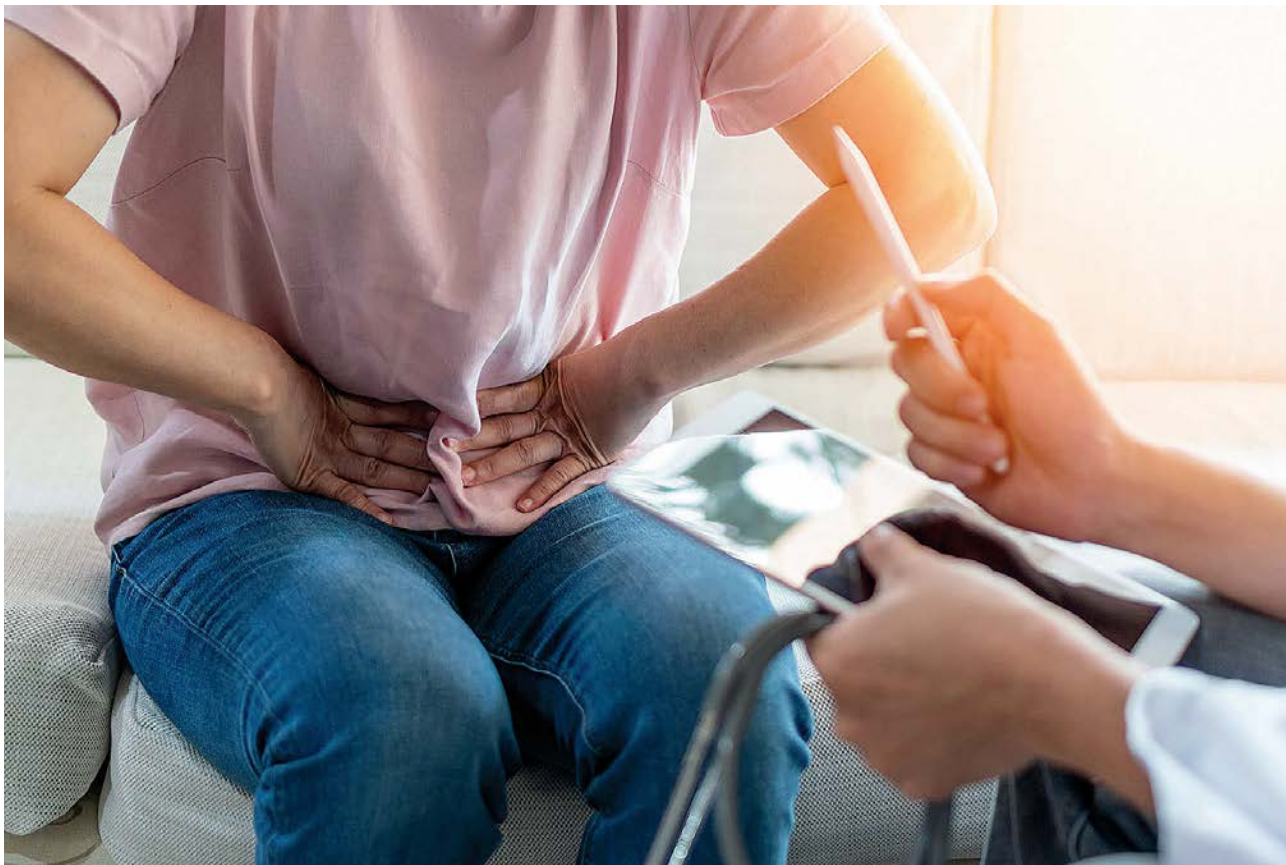
Battle with the bulge

Are you suffering from hernia? Here are ways to identify and combat it

BY DR ERBAZ RIYAZ MOMIN

A hernia occurs when an internal organ or other body part protrudes through the wall of muscle or tissue that usually contains it. When a defect or weakness occurs in the abdominal wall, the contents of the abdomen jut out through the defect. It affects both the genders at any age, but it is more common among men. It can be felt under the skin as a lump. Most often a hernia presents as a gradually increasing swelling, which is usually painless. Often the swelling disappears on lying down and appears or increases on standing. The swelling is usually noted in the groin as it is the most common site of a hernia. A hernia can occur in any part of the abdomen. It can also occur through the scar of previous abdominal surgery or around the umbilicus. A reducible hernia is usually painless and can be pushed back in but comes out on standing or coughing.

Sometimes, the swelling becomes painful when it increases in size or when it does not disappear. In certain patients, this could even be the first presentation. This needs urgent attention and is known as an incarcerated hernia. In certain situations, it may get aggravated and the blood flow to the hernial contents is affected leading to a strangulated hernia. This is a surgical emergency and delay in seek-



ing surgical guidance may have serious implications for the patient.

Diagnosis

Typically, a surgeon would listen to your problem and then examine you and feel your swelling. The patient may be examined in a lying down and in standing position as well and may even be asked to cough. At the end of the examination, the surgeon would be able to diagnose your hernia. In certain situations (obesity, multiple previous surgeries), it may be difficult to diagnose a hernia by clinical method; sometimes a hernia may not present with a swelling. In such situations CT or MRI scans, ultrasound scans or further invasive methods might be necessary to diagnose a hernia.

Each investigation has its own limitation and a hernia surgeon would be able to select and utilise the test to diagnose a hernia. When it comes to surgery, there is no 'one size fits all'

concept. Every surgery is tailor-made based on the condition of the individual undergoing it. Hence in some cases scans may be ordered to plan the surgery.

Immediately after the lockdown was announced, there were frantic visits by patients operated earlier. While they were being sorted, there were a lot of inquiries and visits by patients whose surgeries were scheduled but postponed because of the pandemic. Routine planned surgeries have been suspended as it may not be appropriate for the patients and we may end up stretching the existing resources.

Tips for patients awaiting hernia surgery

- › Relax, majority of hernias are uncomplicated
- › Do not lift heavyweights
- › Avoid constipation by including fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet and stay hydrated

- › If you have constipation or difficulty passing urine (in elderly males with the prostate problem), ask your surgeon for appropriate medications
- › If you have discomfort, then lie down on your back
- › On lying down, the hernia will decrease and you should feel better
- › Contact your surgeon in case of any warning symptoms or discomfort

Warning

- › A hernia causing pain or discomfort
- › Hernial swelling not decreasing on lying down
- › Increase in hernial swelling along with pain or discomfort
- › Increase in the swelling with constipation or inability to pass flatus

If you experience any of the above symptoms then contact your surgeon at the earliest.

Momin is a general and laparoscopic surgeon, Apollo Spectra Hospital, Mumbai.

inhale

ABREAST OF LATEST TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS



Once upon a time, bay leaves used to be given as awards to praise artists. This humble leaf, found in tropical regions, has many amazing benefits. It has been used as a natural medicine for ages and the bay laurel tree is considered to be sacred. It has anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, and are thus cherished in medicinal healing. Even burning bay leaves has therapeutic effects. Bay leaves contain linalool, a compound known to treat anxiety. Smelling bay leaves for just about 10 minutes can instantly help you feel better. This compound is also known to enhance communication. People who burn bay leaves regularly note that the smoke puts you in a "psychedelic state", but it doesn't make you tired; the smoke can calm your body while simultaneously perking you up.

How to burn the leaves: Place a few bay leaves on an ashtray, light it up and let it burn for about 10 minutes.

Time for TEA!

How would you like an elaborate evening with high-backed chairs, crackers with butter and fruitcakes? Here's where to go

BY RUPALI DEAN

Even in these trying times when the food and beverage sector has been walloped by the coronavirus, it seems that the appeal of lazing an afternoon away in virtuous company over tea and beautiful snacks has not gone away. Business for high tea sets is holding steady for restaurants and café and even picking up for some. There is a divergent lifestyle shift. Earlier, people would step out for a quick tea or coffee at work, but now they prefer lingering over high tea. A British tradition, the concept of high tea is very different from a normal tea break. With a lavish spread of salads, crackers with butter, teacakes, fruitcakes, homemade bread, pies and tarts, it started as something for royals and aristocrats to spend their afternoon in a leisurely fashion on their cushy posh chairs. Today, many upscale hotels across the globe offer different versions of the time-honoured tradition. Here are some of the top eateries in India that are a classy blend of contemporary and conventional.



Flurys, Kolkata

The quintessential abode of style and sophistication and with its European legacy, Flurys is considered one of the best tearooms for indulging in top quality European confections and chocolates in the affluent Park Street. Flurys has been serving high tea as part of its menu for the last nine decades. Freshly brewed teas are served along with a choice of butter cream pastries, tarts, tea sandwiches and scones. Apart from this, there is an entire menu available for guests to create their own high tea assortment. In the era of quick-fix 'coffee to go' concept, Flurys prides itself in being a space that is relaxed, contemporary and trendy where one can indulge in elaborate high teas. Flurys also creates high tea buffets that are exclusive and indulgent and are an epitome of a classic tea room experience. The 'afternoon tea' consists of a lemon tart, a butterscotch pastry, cucumber tea sandwich and tea or coffee. The 'cream tea' simply consists of a choice of tea/coffee accompanied with two freshly baked scones, clotted cream, jam and butter. Apart from these, there are various customisable options available and are served as per the choice of guests.



On Kourse, Restaurant Klub Karma, Gurugram

The carefully curated menu is based on use of about 60 per cent of ingredients that are organically grown and locally sourced from their own organic farm situated on the property. This ensures that the delicacies prepared maintain the highest standards of quality and nutrition. The high tea comprises of a variety of teas and coffees available to choose from, a choice of six savoury delicacies and two desserts (teacakes and fruitcakes). The restaurant offers a fixed menu however; a customised menu may be prepared on request. Don't miss the warm wild mushrooms on cheese crackers, baked cigar and asparagus, and sun-dried tomato bruschetta. On Kourse curates specialised high tea experiences on special requests. These include a variety of venues to host the high tea. Fancy a private dining deck—an intimate event by the lake, by the poolside or the garden?



Sea Lounge, Mumbai

Situated on the first floor of The Taj Mahal Palace, Sea Lounge retains and recreates the magic of the past era. The iconic and elegant large windows open to the majestic views of the Mumbai harbour and The Gateway of India. It has been host to Maharajas, freedom fighters, artists, politicians and businessmen. Many love stories have blossomed here. It has seen generations come and experience the creative cuisine that it is famous for, with signature dishes like the Bombay toasty and Bombay chaat. The afternoon tea at Sea Lounge has got more stylish with the introduction of the Asian high tea. The Asian high tea buffet is served from 3.30pm to 7pm with a selection of delicate vegetarian and non-vegetarian cold sandwiches, muffins and scones. The hot section has choices of quiches, satays and mini burgers, with a live counter serving chaat that Sea Lounge is renowned for. Find the perfect accompaniment in unlimited servings of tea and coffee. Whether it be an indulgent high tea or a soothing late evening listening to live jazz, Sea Lounge is ready to welcome you back.



Mister Chai, Shangri-La's Eros Hotel, Delhi

A first-of-its-kind tea restaurant in the heart of the capital, Mister Chai focuses on regional Indian street food in a modern and luxurious setting, enclosed by a beautifully detailed brass balustrade, with each bookend creating a unique design detail with elements of an Indian teashop presented in a sophisticated ambience. A unique concept that is curated to give patrons a local 'tea shop feel'. Placed on the left is the full height, gold-leaf-etched timbre Tibetan prayer wheels and to the right is an intricate screen of planter boxes. These quaint and exquisite elements ensure that guests enjoy privacy from the main lobby. The lounge entails an engaging masala chai action station and a delectable assortment of pastries displayed in intricately designed jewellery boxes, which further enhances the quiet luxury of the place. Recommendations go all out for the butter chicken samosa, chai ki tapri, shakarkandi chaat and the classic vada pao.

Anjum, Fairmont Hotel, Jaipur

The location at the lobby level of the hotel along with an abundance of natural light, an iconic chandelier representing a constellation, hand-crafted frescoes and complementing pastel furnishing makes it the ideal high tea venue. High Teas at Anjum offer a seamless blend of modernity with regal Indian flavours, complementing the palace, Fairmont Jaipur. Along with the choicest selection of Indian and international teas and coffees, guests can indulge in a variety of locally-inspired munchies presented on a traditional three tier stand. These nibbles also include a few selections in paper cones, alluding to the street food that

many of their guests have enjoyed, especially in their childhood. While indulgent, the options include healthy versions of popular snacks such as masala seven-grain uppari bhel and innovations from their culinary team such as gingelly oil gunpowder idli skewers. To add a sweet balance, guests can delight in petit fours with Indian flavours such as naan khatai and filter coffee truffles. Fairmont Jaipur extends the high tea experience to create intimate events for guests, allowing for delightful conversations over delectable nibbles. These sessions can be organised at various venues across the palace grounds, with their chefs curating wonderful menus complementing the pours of the guests' choice.



Darjeeling Lounge, ITC Royal Bengal, Kolkata

The romance of an early morning brew of Darjeeling is almost legendary and stuff that fables are made of, which led to the genesis and conceptualisation of this lounge. Take a step back in time to the tea estates of the 1800's with the postcardperfect Darjeeling Lounge. A visit here is more than a culinary experience, it is an island of unhurried luxury where you can excuse yourself from the rush of the day for a well-deserved moment of respite. An eclectic offering of tastefully crafted one-bite wonders accompanied by an exclusive array of the finest teas, coffee and infused beverages make it a one-of-a-kind experience. The extensive menu pans through Darjeeling's favourite first flush by Margaret's Hope gardens and moves on to the malty black tea by Harmutty from Assam. The international selection includes brews such as Chinese Jasmine Monkey King tea from Hunan region, and Japanese Gyokuro Samurai, Ti Kuan Yin Superior from Fujian Province of China along with a long list of signature blends. The medley of gourmet bites complementing the beverages are a combination of celebrated international favourites replete with finger sandwiches, mini croissants, scones, pastries as well as Indian delights like the quintessential bite-sized Singara to renditions of local love such as kosha mangsho puff, kasundi salmon and asparagus pinwheel, aloo posto crostini, chorchori tarts and gondhoraje cheesecake. □



Protein check

You may not have a deficiency but you may be running low. Here are ways your body responds to it

BY ESHA SINGH

Proteins are vital elements in our body—performing a range of functions that make them irreplaceable. The body constantly needs protein, not only to make new cells, but also repair existing tissues and cells, making their consumption vital to good health.

Proteins provide us with about 10-15 per cent of dietary energy. While water remains the main component of the human body, it is closely followed by protein—present to a large degree in our muscles (about 43 per cent), skin (15 per cent) and blood (16 per cent).

Protein deficiencies, while rare, can occur in someone with a restrictive diet or medical condition. When you are not getting enough protein in your diet, your body has different ways of letting you know. Here are the biggest tells of a protein deficiency.

Loss of muscle mass

It is often one of the first signs of inadequate protein intake. Loss of muscle mass happens when the body is running low on dietary protein; it takes the protein from our muscles. Over time,



this leads to muscle wasting. It is essential to get the protein you need to build healthy muscle.

Thinning hair, brittle nails, skin problems

Since protein is an essential part of your skin, hair and nails, their health can be a good indicator of deficiency. You may see redness on the skin, nails can feel softer and your hair can become more brittle over time. Hair can lose some of its lustre, and may not be quite as thick as it used to be. It may also start to split. Biotin, which is found in protein-rich food, is essential for naturally healthy hair, skin, and nails.

Bigger appetite and increased calorie intake

Craving something sweet? When you are not getting an adequate amount

of protein, your body tends to respond by feeling hungrier. And in general, the increase in hunger tends to revolve around sugar cravings. Sufficient protein intake may keep you satisfied for a longer period, thereby preventing cravings and hunger pangs. However, lesser protein intake does exactly the opposite; it leaves you hungrier, which results in increased calorie-intake.

Easily fractured or broken bones

Your bones are also at risk. Protein helps maintain the strength and density of bones. Not consuming enough protein content might weaken your bones and increase the risk of fractures. Getting enough protein is essential to building up bone density and strength.



Slow healing injuries

Have any wounds that just don't seem to be healing as fast as usual? This could have something to do with your protein levels. It is essential to get the recommended daily minimum of protein to help heal and speed up sport-related injuries.

Compromised immune system

A deficiency in the amino acids found in protein can increase your risk of contracting a disease. It takes a toll on your immunity, and may disable your body's ability to fight infections. Research suggests that consuming protein, whey protein in particular, can help strengthen the immune system and fend off illnesses. There is something extra that sets whey apart from other proteins when it comes to immunity: whey protein appears to boost glutathione production in

some tissues. Glutathione is at the centre of the antioxidant defence system in the body that dictates immune function.

For Indian adults, the recommended intake of daily protein is about 0.6 gram per kilogram of body-weight. The amount of protein varies in different types of food, but the main source includes meat, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, cereals and cereal products, nuts and pulses (beans and lentils). In comparison to other protein sources, whey proteins are unique in their ability to optimise a number of key aspects of immune function. While keeping the focus on protein, it is vital to have a varied and balanced diet of all food groups, including other nutrients such as carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals.

Singh is managing director, India and emerging markets, Myprotein.

Fat's kryptonite

Are you looking at losing weight and increasing your metabolism?
Chug on a glass of some of these fat-cutter drinks

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

The lockdown has not been very nice on the waistline. At least that is what most people who are stuck at home say. Blame it on the mushrooming cooking shows on the internet, the idea of no-sweat comfort food and the speedy food delivery services. But, sadly, the speed at which we gain the weight is not directly proportional to the rate at which we lose it.

When it comes to shedding those extra pounds and love handles most

people look for quick solutions. Maybe a magical pill that would instantly dissolve all the stubborn fat in your body. However, getting rid of fat is not as easy as they say in most nutraceutical advertisements. It is not only about consistency but also self-control and discipline. For the past couple of years, there has been a buzz around the early morning lemon and honey detox drink. The trend is extremely popular among the glitterati crowd. As a matter of fact,

most nutritionists call it the best drink to boost one's metabolism which eventually aids in weight loss. Interestingly, there are many such natural decoctions that serve the same purpose and, maybe, more.

Here are some of the top fat cutter drinks that will help you to shed some pounds and also aid metabolism. But don't just depend on these; make sure you eat clean and follow a balanced diet and fitness regime.

Coriander tonic

It is a fact that bad digestion can lead to weight gain as it hinders proper absorption and assimilation of nutrients. This leads to inefficient elimination of waste from our body. It also slows down metabolic rate. Coriander stimulates digestive enzymes and juices which are known to enhance our digestive system. It is a good source of fibre as well. The leaves possess an important element called quercetin which aids metabolism. It is also a great detox drink as it helps eliminate all excess toxins and helps you feel light. Time to replace all those high-calorie beverages that you consume with coriander leaves-infused water. Here is a coriander tonic which is both a detox and fat cutter drink.

Ingredients:

- › Coriander leaves- a handful
- › Lemon- 1
- › Cinnamon powder- ¼ tsp
- › Warm water- 1 glass

Method:

- › Wash the coriander leaves and make its juice in a blender.
- › Into the juice, squeeze in the lemon and add the cinnamon powder.
- › Stir well before adding the warm water.

Consume this detox drink on an empty stomach.

Turmeric tea

The golden spice found in every Indian kitchen is more than just a flavouring or colouring agent. It has also traditionally been used in Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine to treat inflammatory conditions, skin diseases, wounds, digestive ailments and liver conditions. The antioxidant effect of turmeric appears to be so powerful that it may stop your liver from being damaged by toxins. This is excellent for people who take strong drugs for diabetes or other health conditions that might hurt their liver with long-term use. Curcumin in turmeric has anti-cancerous as well as anti-inflammatory properties. However, the body absorbs very little curcumin as it gets metabolised soon after its ingestion due to the activity of the digestive enzymes in the stomach, intestines and liver. The good news is that there is a natural way to increase its absorption. Piperine, a compound of black pepper, has been shown to increase the absorption of curcumin. It protects the curcumin from the digestive enzymes that actively try to remove it from the bloodstream. Therefore, it is important to combine turmeric with pepper while cooking in order to reap all its benefits. A glass of turmeric tea every day aids in boosting metabolism, improves immunity and acts as a detox for the body.

Ingredients:

- (1 cup of tea)
- › Water- 1 ¼ cup
- › Turmeric powder- ½ tsp
- › Black pepper powder- ¼ tsp
- › Grated ginger- ½ tsp

Method:

- › Heat the water in a saucepan.
- › Add the turmeric powder, pepper and ginger into the water and boil it.



Chocolatey twist

We have grown up hearing, ‘chocolate makes you fat.’ Maybe it is time to ignore it. Studies have shown that dark chocolate is loaded with nutrients and is one of the best sources of antioxidants. It can also improve health and lower the risk of heart diseases, among other benefits like stabilising blood sugar, reducing cravings and controlling appetite. It is even good for mending broken hearts. It has high satiety value and, therefore, keeps one feeling full for a longer time. It is packed with monosaturated fatty acids that are known to boost the body’s metabolism and burn fat. However, it has to be consumed in moderate quantities. How does a combination of chocolate and coffee sound?—absolutely delicious! Coffee consists of caffeine

that effectively increases metabolic activity and boosts energy level in our body. Better metabolic activities and high energy levels may lead to suppression of hunger in the body. Chlorogenic acid, an element of coffee, is known to speed up weight loss. Here is how to make this delicious drink.

Ingredients

- › Black coffee- 1tsp
- › Grated dark chocolate- ¾ tsp
- › Ground flaxseeds- ½ tsp
- › Hot water- 1 cup

Method

- › Take a coffee cup and add hot water and coffee in it.
- › Stir well and add the ground flaxseeds.
- › Mix well and top it off with grated chocolate.

Jaggery decoction

Struggling with fat around your belly area? Jaggery is your go-to. It is said to boost the body’s metabolism which in turn helps to burn the fat around the belly area faster. Jaggery being a healthy replacement of sugar is low in its calorie count but rich in immunity-boosting properties. A combination of lemon juice and jaggery is excellent for flushing out the toxins in the body and thereby, promote weight loss. Together, the goodness of lemon and jaggery can keep your digestive system clean and your respiratory system clear. It gives the body a healthy dose of Vitamin C and water, and also antioxidants and zinc.

Ingredients:

- › Lukewarm water- 1 glass
- › Lemon juice- 1 tsp
- › Dry jaggery- a small dry piece

Method

- › All you have to do is mix the three ingredients well. Stir continuously till the jaggery dissolves in water. Once done, the drink will be ready for consumption. Enjoy this weight loss concoction every day, preferably in the mornings on an empty stomach.



Apple cider vinegar mocktail

The popularity of apple cider vinegar to aid weight loss has risen recently. But for thousands of years, compounds containing vinegar have been used for its healing properties. It was used to improve strength, as an antibiotic and for detoxification. Research shows that the acetic acid in apple cider vinegar promotes weight loss in several ways. It lowers blood sugar levels by improving the ability of the liver and muscles to take up sugar from the blood. Not only does it decrease the insulin levels and increase metabolism but it also favours fat burning. It reduces belly fat and liver fat storage. Consuming apple cider vinegar regularly also suppresses appetite which results in reduced food intake.

Ingredients:

- › Unsweetened orange juice- ¼ cup
- › Apple cider vinegar- 1 tbsp
- › Freshly grated ginger- ¼ tsp
- › Water- half cup

Method:

- › Combine orange juice, apple cider vinegar, and ginger in a small jar. Shake or whisk to combine. Cover and refrigerate. Consume this drink once in a day, an hour before a meal. □



THE GREEN WAY

Packed with nutrients, microgreens are extremely easy to cultivate

BY POOJA BIRAIA JAISWAL



Even as many discovered the joys of cooking and uninterrupted family time during the three-month long lockdown period, Dr Rupali Godbole from Nashik took to the pleasures of gardening, something she had been meaning to do for long. Days after the nation shut itself indoors in March, Godbole signed up for an online class in microgreens. The two-hour session worked its magic straight into her heart. Godbole fell in love with tiny, tender, edible greens that are just a bit older than sprouts but younger than saplings, and she began growing them in old plastic containers and broken mugs. Around the same time, Anandita Patil an eleven-year-old studying in an international school in Mumbai got a fistful of mustard seeds and fenugreek seeds from inside her kitchen to sow them in random plastic boxes and within a week the family consumed their first batch of shiny microgreen harvest—mustard shoots in salads and methi in parathas. As the name suggests, microgreens are essentially referred to the first stage of development when true leaves arise in a plant. It is the next stage after germination when the little plant develops full-fledged roots and leaves. But these aren't a recent discovery. These first stages of plant growth have been incorporated by chefs for decades across the world in a variety of recipes, especially for garnishing salads, soups and sandwiches.

According to the US department of agriculture, microgreens began showing up on menus as early as the 1980s, in San Francisco, California. In 2012, after a team of scientists published studies on the nutritional benefits of microgreens, it gained prominence across the world. "The best part is that these greens can be

added to just about any dish. They take less space and don't need much sunlight. Besides, they have a very short growth cycle of about 7 to 14 days, as against mature or regular vegetables which take 2-3 months to grow. It is so easy that anyone who has never even cared for plants before can also grow these," says Smita Shirodkar, founder and CEO, Earthoholics, a Mumbai-based company that promotes sustainable living and provides training in urban gardening. It also offers online and offline training courses to adults and kids on growing their own microgreens at home.

Most importantly, what truly makes these little green tots very compelling is their high nutritious content. According to experts, microgreens contain 10 to 40 times the vital nutrients of fully grown plants. "Microgreens are literally super foods. When we started in 2013, these were only used in the restaurant space where chefs would get them imported. But now the concept has been alluring families, too. We grow our microgreens with coco peat which is enough. There is no need for actual soil. We have about 20-25 varieties in our space, which includes spinach, coriander, fennel, onion, sunflower, beetroot and alfalfa, among others," says Hamsa, who cofounded Growing Greens, a small-scale farm based out of Bengaluru. The farm grows microgreens and edible flowers through the year for culinary use. While their edible flowers range from petunia and marigold to nasturtium and dianthus, among other varieties, the list under the category of microgreens is extensive with carrot, coriander, fennel, mustard, pea shoots, radish, red amaranth, spinach and onion on offer. The microgreens and flowers are grown hydroponically in an environment free from pesticides and fertilisers. Hamsa's company is among the many new home-grown companies to not only provide microgreen harvests for health-conscious individuals and families but also to deliver large batches of fresh harvests to five-star hotels and gourmet chefs.

But for those looking at reaping the benefits of their own seeds and efforts, microgreens can be cultivated in one's



kitchen space or even the office cubicle by placing a few seeds on a wet tissue paper for a start. It is as simple as that. Take a wet tissue, ensure that it stays moist at all times, spread on a few mustard seeds to begin with and see the magic happen in a week's time. "For a sustained practice, all one needs are untreated good quality seeds, any form of container, with or without drain holes, a well-ventilated space with moderate sunlight and protection from birds," says Shirodkar, speaking from Germany, where she is studying organic agriculture.

The easiest to start with is the mustard seed which germinates and fully harvests within eight days. Radhika Sheshan adds radish seed, peas, moong and spinach to the list. "I have never been into kitchen gardening really. My mother-in-law has been more active. But the effortless and uncomplicated nature of growing microgreens really pulled me in," says Sheshan, a homemaker living in Mumbai. So, there is no exhaustive list of which seeds can be sowed for

How can I grow microgreens at home?

(By Earthoholics)

Step 1: Gather material

A container that is 3-4 inches deep with holes, coco soil and seeds of your choice. For watering, use your hands or a spray can. To poke holes, use a sharp, pointed object. For harvesting, you may use your hands or a pair of scissors

Step 2: Fill your container with coco soil

You get best results when you use coco peat or coco soil, which is coconut husk, readily available in all garden stores around. Fill your container and level the soil

Step 3: Sow seeds

Soak bigger seeds like methi and moong

overnight, so that they germinate easily. Densely scatter them on the soil

Step 4: Cover with thin layer of soil

Keep the container in the sunniest window of your home. Protect from birds

Step 5: Water regularly

Water gently using hand or spray can. Ensure that the water pressure is low or try watering close to the soil once the seedlings germinate to avoid the seedlings from falling flat

Step 6: Ready for harvest

With a daily dose of water, sunshine and love, your microgreens will be ready for harvest in 10-15 days. Use your hands or scissors to harvest. Toss your fresh organic greens in salads, soups or parathas

its microgreen. Experts believe that if a seed is edible, so is its microgreen. But that doesn't mean that moong, which usually sprouts after being soaked overnight, can be called a microgreen, though there is no doubt

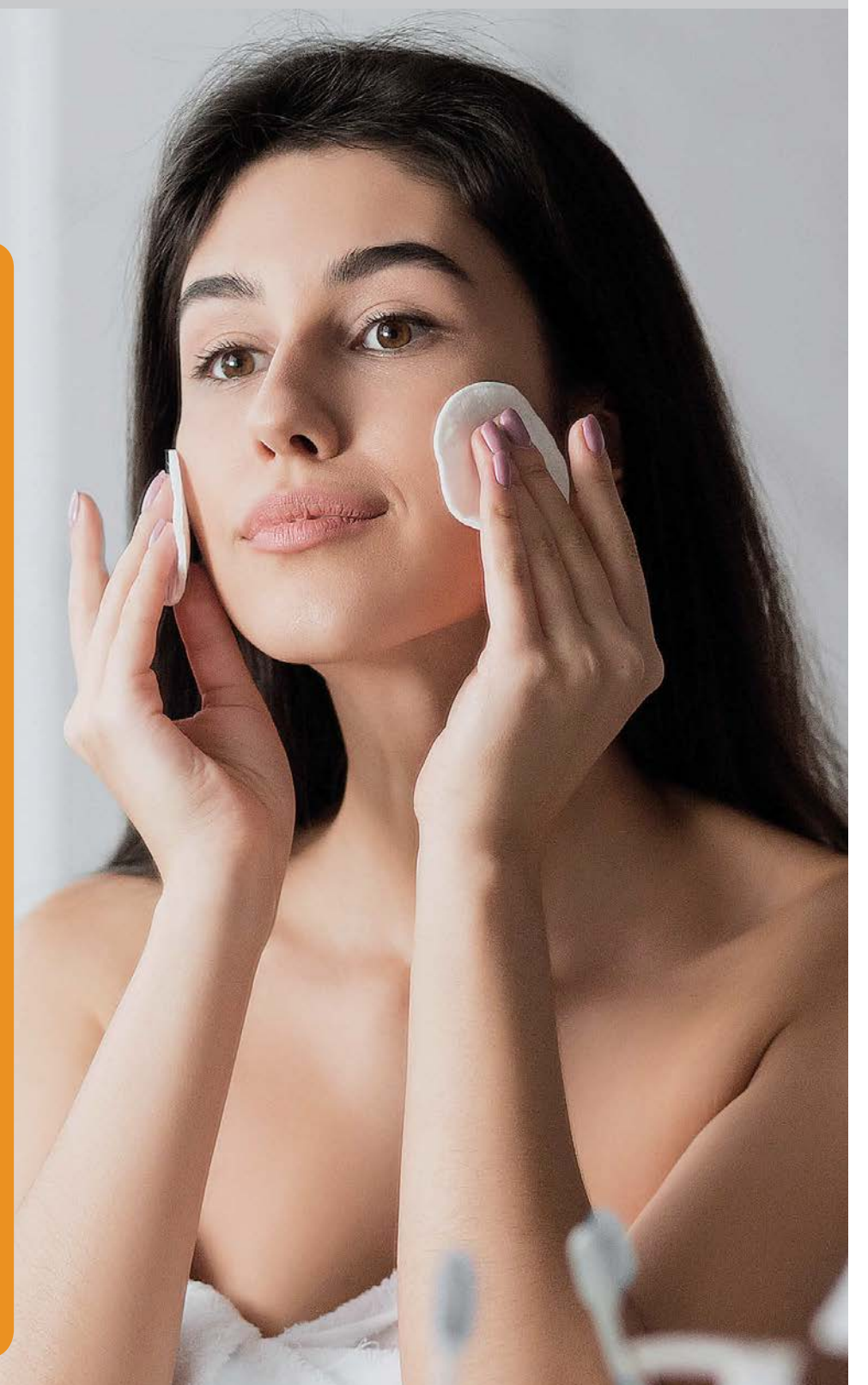
that it packs a punch of nutrition within itself. The most popular varieties include mustard, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, radish, arugula, carrot, fennel, onion, amaranth, beet and spinach. □

|| pause

HOLD THAT THOUGHT, INTROSPECT, QUESTION

Having trouble with acne? Sea salt water is your best friend. The high salt concentration helps kill off bacteria on your face and it replenishes minerals that heal the skin. Sea salt may also be helpful in dissolving skin oils that clog your pores. Too much sea salt can dry out your skin, causing irritation. But with careful use, you may be able to naturally get rid of your acne using the sea salt method. It also pulls oil from the pores. If you are looking for a pack to calm breakouts and irritation, try a blend of salt and honey. Both have anti-inflammatory properties and it soothes the skin. Both help to balance oil production and retain hydration in the layers of skin.

How to make the pack: Mix two teaspoons sea salt (preferably finely ground) with four teaspoons raw honey to create a spreadable paste. Apply evenly to clean, dry skin, avoiding eye area. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes. Before rinsing, soak a washcloth in warm water, and gently wring out. Lay the warm washcloth on your face for 30 seconds. Use your fingers to gently exfoliate in a circular motion while rinsing your skin with lukewarm water.



The mountains echoed

Modelling to acting and finding a balance through clowning, Namit Khanna says life has been an adventure

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

It was a trip to the mountains that gave actor Namit Khanna clarity on what he really wanted to do in life. Call it the effect of the fresh air or tranquillity of the scenery, the visit triggered a whole new passion for showbiz inside of him. Not just that, the experience also helped him discover the joy of photography. “I had a phone with a 3.2-megapixel camera and I started capturing candid moments, inanimate objects and the stunning landscape during my trip. When I came back to Delhi, I showed the pictures to one of my photographer friends and he was super impressed. He encouraged me to pick up a DSLR and start experimenting with it. I have never stopped clicking photos after that,” he says.

Touted as one of the most good-looking television series actors in India, Namit is best known for his role as Dr Siddhant Mathur in the medical drama *Sanjivani 2*. As a matter of fact, the model-turned-actor has quite a lot of titles in his kitty.

He was listed 17th in Times Top 20 Most Desirable Men on Indian Television in 2019. The same year he was placed 28th in the Eastern Eye’s Top 50 Sexiest Asian Men List and 19th in Biz Asia’s Top 30 TV Personality List 2019. But it wasn’t all peachy for Namit when he started off. Like most people, he also had his share of struggles and putdowns.

“I studied business administration and worked in Delhi as an advertising executive. However, that was just to get myself introduced into a working environment and understand the corporate scene. I did not want to be stuck doing the same work, day in and day out, all my life. So, I ventured into modelling,” Namit says. He was 21 at the moment and modelling fetched him way more money than his day job. But it was not just about the money for him. Namit, with his “upmarket” face, wanted to do more than just pose. This is when he, along with his friend, got selected for the American reality game show *The Amazing Race*. “My friend and I applied just for the kicks but we didn’t think we would get called for it. We went to Singapore for the initial selection



process and then we got a call to be a part of that particular season. Unfortunately, we could not go as Indian passports take a longer time to get visa approvals and the organisers of the show asked us to participate in the next season because of the delay. The interesting bit is that I left my job for this but it was all for the good; it marked the start of a fantastical adventure tale,” he says. During this time, Namit shifted to Mumbai to take his modelling career to the next level. Little did he know at the time that luck was at his doorstep. “I vividly remember my first ever professional portfolio. I got to shoot with one of the most versatile Indian photographers Bharat Sikka. Before I knew it, I was shooting for big campaigns wearing designs by Manish Arora,” he says. However, he was not ready to stop there. In an exclusive tête-à-tête, Namit talks about his twisted journey from modelling to clowning and, finally, getting into acting.

When did you realise that you wanted to get into showbiz?

I believe in the power of the mind and thoughts and over the years, this belief has been getting stronger. My modelling career was going on pretty well, however, I felt at some point that I was not really doing any value addition to my work. That was the time when I was randomly contacted by various casting directors for different films. But I was not ready at the time. I wasn’t really skilled as an actor and I just ended up doing whatever I knew during the auditions. And I used to not get disappointed if a project did not work out, I would just continue with my modelling assignments. This went on till the time I decided that I really needed to focus my mind and energy into acting and actually started to put effort into it. This is when I made my television debut with Sony TV’s *Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya Hai*, a Dilip Jha creation, as the protagonist Siddhant Sinha.

You call Sanjivani 2 the highlight of your career. Why?

My acting career really kicked off in 2017 with the web series *Twisted*. Among the projects, *Sanjivani 2* gave me the most

mileage and the maximum love from fans. Not to forget that I was the face of a show that had cult status in the past and was aired on one of the top channels on Indian TV. I am now looking forward to my onward journey.

If given a choice between acting and modelling, what would you choose?

I would choose acting for sure. I have given modelling all the time I could and had a wonderful career. Acting for me has been way more fulfilling so far as I am able to add much more value to myself and my work every day. I am also growing much more as a person while being on set.

What do you think is key when it comes to sustaining in the acting industry?

This is something that I realised pretty early in my modelling career, but it is valid in every industry. Being an all-rounder is important but the key is to be professional. People always prefer to work with those who they can rely on. There is a joke about how the Indian Standard Time is also called the Indian Stretchable Time (basically, perpetual delays). Most projects don’t start on time but as a professional, it is one’s duty to respect time and be at the set no matter what. It just sets everything into a positive momentum. Being yourself and not pretending to be someone you are not is another attribute that takes you a long way.

What made you get into clowning?

When I moved to Mumbai, I happened to watch a solo clown act—*Madbeth*, a spinoff of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*—by Rupesh Tillu. I was spellbound by the performance; I was absolutely stunned as to how he played about 26 characters in that show. This prompted me to meet him and eventually attend workshops. One thing translated to another and soon I started out performing. I travelled across Maharashtra along with the group, staging shows for schoolchildren, patients in the hospital and for the girls in Kamathipura. This phase was one of the most eventful times of my life. It was both emotionally and physically demanding. I used to feel empty when I got back home after a show;



Sagano bamboo forest, Japan

PHOTOS NAMIT KHANNA



A lake in Leh

Nothing down about lockdown

One dish you whipped up during the lockdown.

Butter paneer and *kadi chawal* (Punjabi style)

A new hobby or an activity that you picked up.

Spanish lessons on my phone. I have gotten pretty decent at it now.

A lesson learned during this period.

There is nothing that we can't do. It is only our mind that makes us believe otherwise. I have done everything that needs to be done to have a functioning clean house all by myself.

it used to drain me out emotionally. But, it was fruitful and liberating at the same time. I still enjoy the intricacies of characters in clowning.

What is your big dream?

I think it would be to associate with the best people in the industry and be a part of projects that I can connect to in a deep fashion. I also want to work with people who have similar ideals and goals as mine. Another dream is to travel to the most remote and beautiful places in the world and capture them on my camera.

Your Twitter bio says “Actor, model, photographer, Bodhisattva, trying to change the environment through inner change”—when and why did you venture into Buddhism?

When I moved to Bombay in 2007, I had stumbled upon Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Before I knew it I felt a deep connection with the practise of chanting, and through the studies, I started growing in every aspect of my life. I continued to practise sincerely for nine years along with the organisation and that is where I

understood the concept of Bodhisattva and Buddha-nature that we all possess.

What makes you different from the other actors?

The most important things that set anyone apart from others are one's upbringing and ideals. Having said that, I feel my fans are the ones who will be able to answer this better than me. The bond they have formed within such a short time must definitely make me different from others.

When it comes to fitness, what should be given more stress, diet or exercise?

It is important to have a balance of both. You cannot do without either of them. Physical activity in whatever form is essential throughout your life and what we eat gives us the results we desire. It is just a matter of being conscious about what we eat, and once we see the results, there will be no turning back.

What do you think is the right age to start working out?

It is essential for children to be physically active from a very young age through sports, playground games, dancing and

mostly moving around the entire day in order to exhaust all their energy. Once they reach an age where they start getting conscious about how they look and feel (usually as they become teenagers) they must stick to a sport or dance as a regular activity for fitness. Working out at the gym should only be done in case of something specific, like training for an advanced level of sport. Working out at the gym is not the most natural way to be fit and healthy. It is an option for busy adults who have limited time and want to get the maximum out of it.

Did you have a history of being fat? When did you start building your body?

Fortunately, I don't have a history of being fat and that is because of the sports I played throughout my growing years. But I have had a few occasions when I have gained some weight around my stomach. This usually happens when there is no exercise and a lot of eating, which is mostly when I travel. I started working out when I was in college but I have never taken it beyond a certain level. I just try to



maintain my body structure and size (standard model size) required to fit into designer clothes.

What are some of the challenges you faced while building your body?

The biggest challenge that I have faced in all the years of working out has been injuries. I think it is extremely important for all youngsters to be extremely careful when they start their workouts at the gym. It was more than a decade back when I first injured my lower back and ended up with a herniated disc. Not being careful or overexerting at the gym has caused it to relapse, causing me a lot of pain and complete bed rest. Consulting experts and focusing on the core are important aspects that should not be ignored.

Top 10 exercises that you recommend.

Swimming
Playing sports
All core exercises on the mat
Yoga
Pilates
A foam roller for recovery

Stability ball exercises
Bodyweight exercises
Running
Dancing

Top three smoothies that you consume.

Avocado—my favourite
Chocolate banana almond protein shake/smoothie
Mixed berries smoothie

Top three go-to sweet indulgence.

Ice cream
Chocolate (milk and 70 per cent dark)
Rasmalai

Your idea of a perfect getaway?

As I have done my share of roughing it out a little during my younger years of travel, I like a blend of comfort around nature. I love less-explored places and going away from where the crowd usually goes.

A funny experience while travelling.

I was in Shanghai for a shoot during my modelling years when I was approached by the locals on many occasions to take pictures with them and their families. Apparently, I looked like some celebrity or maybe I was just too tall for them. It was super funny the way they were all excited. □



DJ Akbar Sami

Cloud 9

Miss dancing to the DJ's beat? Here's how cloud clubbing gives a new spin to partying

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

Do you feel like the lockdown blues are weighing you down? Maybe it is time for some cheering up. Turn up the music and unwind with online DJs who are now live-streaming their performances on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. With nightclubs closed and music events cancelled for the foreseeable future, a number of DJs across the globe are turning to cloud-clubbing. Party-goers can now enjoy the thumping music from the comfort of their homes. The best part about this is that these are open parties. Neither

do you need to dress up nor bring a plus one. Be it Bollywood Saturdays or hip-hop Wednesdays, these online DJs are bringing the bash right to your living room. People can watch live DJ sets and send in their feedback. "It is an interesting and different concept," says DJ Akbar Sami who is one of the pioneers of DJing in the country. "With people tuning in from all over the world, we get to interact with a global audience. The reach is endless," he says.

Although the concept of cloud-clubbing has been there for some time, nobody was interested in it until the

lockdown. Like webinars and online classes, the cloud-clubbing trend is an example of how the pandemic is upending the party culture. Surely, the lockdown has hit the best of people but it also has brought out the best in people. For Akbar, it has been a time of giving back to his fans. "All these years, my fans have been paying money to come for a show. In these troubled times, I feel it is important to give back all the love and support. Apart from live streaming my shows, I also record the entire set and post it on social media for the upcoming DJs and producers to learn and enjoy the experience," he says.

Akbar started his career in the 1980s when India had almost no clubbing culture. But he calls it a time when DJ'ing was in its real form and shape. "Today, DJ'ing has become one of those play store games on the internet which anybody can check-in and play. People with absolutely no training or

knowledge about music are becoming or calling themselves a disc jockey," he says. "If you remember the 1980s/90s era, you can find a dramatic difference in the style and texture of music. Fantastic melodies, excellently penned down lyrics and out of the world compositions. Those times had true music directors who created history for us. And somehow that essence got lost in time. It is heart breaking to see how the soul of our music has disappeared."

During the lockdown, Akbar got all his musician friends to put up their compositions online and he compiled it to make a single set. "It was amazing. People across the globe appreciated it. The set was even played by a radio station in Germany," he says. Apart from playing his own sets, Akbar also takes public requests and works around it. "After over three decades of experience, I know what exactly is being heard and liked in India. Being a disc jockey and playing music for all types of people around India is a huge advantage to know the pulse of the crowd," he says.

On World Music Day (June 21), International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) hosted the ultimate virtual party with IIFA Stomp Online. It had a stellar line-up of acts and performances by various artists of which Akbar was a part. This was in continuation of IIFA's initiative #IIFAHumSabSaathHain #IIFASTayAtHomeConcerts which is a digital concert series featuring many multi-talented Indian artists. The event was one of its kind with some of the country's best percussionists, world's fastest dhol players, violinists, saxophonists and performances by several versatile artists. Looks like this is going to be the new norm. "It is a time for everyone to reinvent themselves; a time to think what more they can do. As for the music industry, there are still a lot of areas in this field that are yet to be explored. Maybe it is time for artists to figure it out," Akbar says. For now, let down your hair, and dance away the blues. Time to tune in to a cloud-clubbing session—"DJ drop that funky beat!" □

Ready to roar

Neeraj Chopra was one of India's brightest prospects for an Olympic gold until the mega event was postponed. But maybe it is a blessing in disguise for him

BY REUBEN JOE JOSEPH

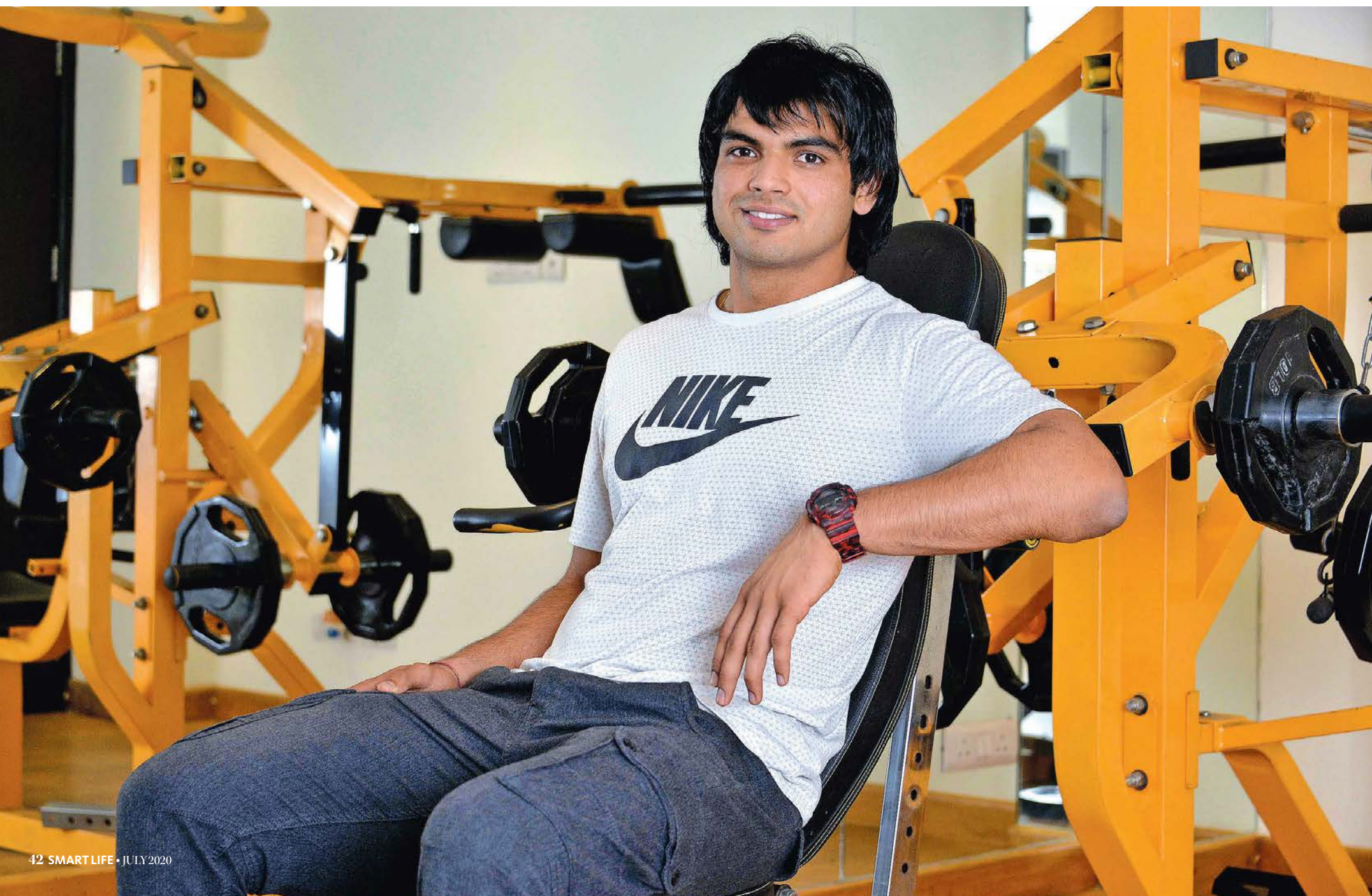


PHOTO ARVIND JAIN

As the new decade dawned, the Indian Olympic contingent had its eyes fixed on Tokyo 2020. The fans in turn set their gaze on a bunch of medal hopefuls. Among them was one of India's finest throwers of the javelin. Neeraj Chopra, who spent most of 2019 nursing an elbow injury before undergoing surgery and rehabilitation, was raring to go. He made a stunning comeback, qualifying for the Olympics with ease. Just as he was about to hit top gear, the blow fell. The Olympics was moved to 2021.

Unlike most athletes, Chopra took it in his stride. "I think I would have been ready for the Olympics had they gone on as scheduled," he said. "However, with the postponement, I feel I would be able to get more time to fine-tune some of my technical skills and am looking at it as a positive in terms of my preparations. For now, I'm hoping and praying that we can all get through this pandemic safely, but the chance to represent India and do well at the Olympics is always in my mind."

Perhaps it is the fact that he has age on his side that keeps him optimistic. He is 22 now. At just 20, Chopra set the national record by throwing a gigantic 88.06m on his way to gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. He followed it up with another gold at the Asian Games the same year. Everybody knew that his best years were ahead of him and that he was destined for great things. But the young gun felt no pressure. "I don't take any sort of pressure from the talks about my prospects. I feel honoured and privileged that people talk this way about me and my performances. It motivates me that people rate me so highly and want me to do well, which is a good feeling," he said.

Chopra hails from Khandra, a village in Panipat, Haryana. He was born into a family of agriculturists and was the eldest among the children in a joint family of 17 members. "Growing up, I was pampered a lot, and since no

one at home was into sports, it didn't come naturally. In fact, I had become overweight when I was 13, and it was my uncle who coaxed me to go to the stadium in Panipat for some exercise. It was at this stadium that I got introduced to the javelin by chance," said Chopra.

He was encouraged to pursue the sport by his seniors. In a country that does not boast of many illustrious javelin throwers, Chopra took inspiration from Jai 'Jaiveer' Choudhary, his first coach. But as he began to master the sport, his attention turned towards arguably the greatest javelin thrower of all time—world record holder Jan Zelezny.

By carefully studying Zelezny's videos, Chopra modelled his throwing style based on the Czech's. And probably with good reason. Besides holding the world record (98.48m in 1996), Zelezny also has the second, third and fourth best throws of all time. For over two decades, sports scientists have examined how Zelezny used his whole body to full effect to release the spear, and have tried their best to help youngsters do the same. It has worked to an extent, but the record remains elusive.

But before Zelezny could establish his insurmountable peaks, there was a lot of churning and adapting involved. The late 1980s brought new regulations in javelin throw that shifted the centre of gravity in the spear. The ruling bodies flip-flopped on this change for several years before finally settling on the specifications that are in use today. While others found it hard to adapt, Zelezny worked on every small detail of his run-up, grip, posture, movement and release to achieve near perfection.

It could be said that in 2019 Chopra had a similar experience. He realised that his current technique was causing much strain on his elbow and had to make radical changes in his run-up and the positioning of his elbow to push the boundaries. After his surgery in May, he sat out the entire 2019 season to recuperate and work on his



technique. “It was a very difficult phase of my career since it was the longest period away from competitions,” he said. By the end of the year, though, he was a different animal.

In his first competition in over a year, at the ACNE League meet in South Africa in January this year, Chopra recorded a throw of 87.86m almost effortlessly. It was the second-best throw of his career, when he only needed to cross 85m to qualify for the Olympics.

The hallowed 90m mark is firmly in his sights. But he is not too worried about it. “I don’t try to keep any targets in terms of the 90m mark, I just focus on doing my best in each competition and am confident that the mark will come at some point,” said Chopra.

Chopra’s training regime varies over the year. During the off-season, the focus is on strength and conditioning and building core strength, speed and flexibility. During the competition season, the focus is on recovery and minor technical tweaks to iron out flaws. He sometimes shares his javelin-

Sneak-peek

Favourite food: Churma and paratha

If not an athlete, then...

I would be a farmer.

One fun fact about you: When I was a child, I was quite mischievous and had once tied up the tails of some of the cattle at home. Got quite a beating for it.

One super power you wish you had:

Like Superman, I would like to travel around the world (without worrying about a visa)

Other talents: Photography

specific exercises on his social media handles. “In terms of diet, there’s nothing specific except for trying to have a nutritious diet and keeping away from sweets,” he said.

He was training in Turkey in March when the Covid-19 pandemic started to force lockdowns around the world. Chopra and his coaches quickly

returned and he quarantined himself at the National Institute of Panipat for two weeks before resuming training at the facility. “I speak to my family regularly and am in touch with them, but it is not very different since as an athlete, I am used to spending a lot of time away from home,” he said.

The change in schedule, location and conditions would have surely affected his rhythm, but Chopra continues to be nonchalant about it. Much of the training he did in South Africa between December 2019 and February 2020 with other top javelin throwers has helped fine tune his game after a lengthy spell off the track.

“They say a lion always takes a step back before attacking,” he said. “I think of a setback in an athlete’s life like that, so I ensured that I gave my 100 per cent during the rehab phase so that I can be at my best possible shape on return.” It is this new-found motivation from a difficult 2019 that has moulded him mentally, more than anything, to scale greater heights in the years to come. □

◀ exhale

CELEBRATE LIFE, CHOICES AND CHALLENGES



Do you have the habit of eating late in the night? Maybe, it is time to put a stop to that especially if you are planning on losing weight. According to a recent study by Johns Hopkins University, the timing of meals can play a role in metabolism and weight loss. The small study, published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, found eating dinner late at night may increase blood sugar levels and make it more difficult to burn fat, leading to weight gain. A late dinner also worsens glucose tolerance and reduces the amount of fat burned. It could result in diabetes or obesity. People who already have these conditions may be even more vulnerable to the effects.

When to eat the last meal of the day: Sleep experts recommend the average person stop eating 2–3 hours before bed. This allows your digestive system ample time to break down your meal before your head hits the pillow.

When style meets SUBSTANCE

Mugdha Godse, who arrived with a bang with *Fashion*, is on a comeback trail. She talks to *Smart Life* about her days as a popular model, Bollywood debut, lockdown days and the upcoming projects

BY POOJA BIRAIA JAISWAL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SACHIN KUMAR

When Mugdha Godse arrived in Bollywood with *Fashion* in 2008, little did she know

the impact the film would have on her career. Even today, reel pundits recall her performance in *Fashion* when they talk about her. Mugdha was an A-lister in the modelling circuit before she broke into Bollywood. She cut her teeth in modelling in the early 2000s, when college kids of the time had posters of home-grown super-models like Sheetal Mallar, Madhu Sapre, Noyonika Chatterjee, Jesse Randhawa and Mehr Jessie adorning their bedroom walls. Mugdha joined the league pretty quickly. “The year 2000 was exciting for fashion in India. It was during that time the first India Fashion Week took place; it was the first time a group of designers came together and gave the business of fashion a professional edge and heft,” says Namrata Zakaria, editor and columnist at *Mumbai Mirror*. “It also marked the rise of super-models who walked beautifully, had the right attitude and brought so much oomph and personality to the floor.”

Though modelling was Mugdha’s ticket to Bollywood, it had the inherent danger of being typecast. “There were people fretting over the fact that acting might not come easy since I was a model,” says Mugdha. “This was true in the case of any newcomer for that matter. If you were too glamorous, you were stereotyped easily. She is glamor-

ous, she has got a model-face, so she is a vamp.” As the story goes, she broke the glass ceiling.

Mugdha is largely her own person who guards her privacy with both hands and fumes when someone dares to trespass. She muses over small pleasures and is enchanted by the indiscriminate use of the red heart emoticon. This, in itself, is not the recipe that makes Mugdha Godse a name with an instant recall value 12 years after she made her acting debut. The 36-year-old, with her unbeatable passion for learning, a killer instinct for survival and an irrepressible urge to stay relevant, charted out success on her own terms. Her role in Madhur Bhandarkar’s *Fashion*—a straight-faced model who gets married to a prolific gay designer (Samir Soni)—not only wowed the industry but also affirmed her acting skills. She was nominated for the Filmfare Awards for Best Female Debut and won the Apsara Award for Best Female Debutante.

In 2009, she took a plunge into the comedy genre with *All the Best: The Fun Begins*—a Rohit Shetty film that came

There were people fretting over the fact that acting might not come easy since I was a model. If you were too glamorous, you were stereotyped easily.

”





WHAT'S ON HER PLATE

Mostly vegetarian, she eats eggs and prefers to stick to two meals a day—breakfast and early dinner. In between, she indulges in a smoothie or a fruit. Eggs are mostly consumed at the time of breakfast. She claims to be off sugar.

“

People still want to talk to me after 12 years of my hit film. I am grateful for that and I don't think I deserve to have a low moment. The sun will rise again tomorrow.

straight out of a college canteen. Her character, Vidya, was notable, but as Jaideep Pandey, who has been reporting on Bollywood, says, getting into the comedy genre may not have been her best decision. Serious roles, he says, suited her better, as her work in *Heroine*

testifies. “The scripts offered to Godse after her debut didn't do justice to her acting talent,” says Pandey.

From a cameo in Kareena Kapoor-led *Heroine*, which was also one of Bhandarkar's hits, to her role in *Jail*, she has done some non-meaty yet memorable roles. But there have been several others, including *Bezubaan Ishq*, *Sharma Ji Ki Lag Gayi*, *Gali Gali Chor Hai*, which failed to make an impact or were simply scripts with poor box-office possibilities.

“Mugdha is a very fine and a balanced individual, who has made a name for herself in an atmosphere of cut-throat competition. The problem is that she never got to play a lead. Only

select films did well. But on her part, she performed to the best of her abilities. The kind of scripts that come to you are beyond your control,” says an industry source who wishes to be anonymous.

However, box office suc-

cesses alone are not always a yardstick for measuring one's prowess and talent. Setbacks did not kill the go-getter spirit in Godse. In 2015, she made her Kollywood debut in the Jayam Ravi starrer, *Thani Oruvan*. The film, reviewed as ‘a deliciously twisted, pulpy action drama,’ eventually went on to become one of the biggest blockbusters of that year. But the credit for the film's success was not properly apportioned. Impervious to the injustice, Mugdha believes there is more to life than box-office success. “Nothing went wrong after *Fashion*. My last hit movie was *Jail*. The projects after that did not really work out. But I did not feel low. I was confused though, and wondered why it was happening. However, I refused to succumb to that darkness. Looking back, I thought to myself, here is this girl from a middle-class family who has come so far,” she says.

She has had a taste of everything from ramp shows, both national and international ones, to big banner films. “People still want to talk to me after 12 years of my hit film. I am grateful for that and I don't think I deserve to have a low moment. The sun will rise again tomorrow,” she says with a spark in her voice. Mugdha will soon be seen in a special appearance in Sharman Joshi-starrer *Fauji Calling*, based on a family who lost a

FIT BIT:

Mugdha practises Ashtanga yoga every morning. During evenings, she prefers to walk, jog and swim. She also does functional training.

soldier. She will also be playing a grey shade in a crime

thriller and her first web series, *A Crime To Remember*, with MX Player.

For now, Mugdha, like the others in the glitterati world, is on a cooking spree. Under lockdown, she learnt how to make *chole bhature*. For a virtuous eater who had barely ever stepped into the kitchen for most of her life, it was a moment of self-revelation. Locked at home with her Punjabi boyfriend Rahul Dev, who is a hopeless foodie at heart, Mugdha has been under a culinary spell for the past couple of months. Their love story began seven years ago when they met at a common friend's wedding. They have been inseparable ever since. Rahul, who is 14 years older to her, also enjoyed unparalleled glamour and popularity. Not only do they have an industry in common between them, they also share a mutual love for meditation and quiet, and look up to the same spiritual master for soul healing. "After Rahul's wife passed away in 2009, he was in a dark space as a single parent. We are our ying and yang," she says. The couple also have complementing opposites between them. "While I'm a morning person, he is a night owl. So, when I am up, all utensils are already done," she says. Apart from the lockdown cooking spree, she has been also catching up on housekeeping and claims to have an incorrigible OCD to keep all things sparkly clean.

With several interesting projects in her kitty, Godse is looking forward to an interesting time in her career. □

ONE ON ONE

What is your view on pedigree and nepotism?

It is one's attitude that matters.

How did you bag the role in *Fashion*?

I was a supermodel at the time. A few others and I were in all the runways and fashion shows.

Why do you think some of your projects did not work?

There were so many that worked. The films were good and I still receive calls of appreciation from fans across the world.

What do you think about hand-holding newcomers in the industry?

I do not advise people, unless asked.

A time when you were surprised by your own role in a movie.

It has to be *Fashion*. I was quite surprised at the maturity with which I emoted for the role in the film.

A particular role you look forward to.

In the new cinema, protagonists are mostly grey with multiple layers to the character. I'll jump on any new

story that comes my way.

How has fashion and modelling changed over the years?

It isn't as easy as it looks. Also, now every model does not want to be an actor.

What do you think is the reason why supermodels are not known by their names like in the bygone days?

Modelling has changed so much. It is crowded with a lot more people entering and everybody has six packs and chiselled looks. Also, the metrosexual look that is peculiar to the present times is a different look/trend altogether.

The three things you would grab and run if your house is on fire.

My master's photo, wallet and passport.

Your prized possession.

My house.

Your biggest strength.

My master's blessings.

Midnight indulgence.

Almond milk with cacao.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate yourself as an actor?

6.5-7.



Add Omega-3 fats in the form of walnuts, chia seeds and flaxseeds which help to keep the skin supple and increase metabolism.

Karishma Chawla, nutritionist and lifestyle educator.

Donal's diet

I am lactose and gluten intolerant. So, I avoid milk products and rotis. But curd is something that suits me, hence I consume it.

Pre-breakfast: The first thing I consume in the morning is coconut water.

Breakfast: I have a bowl of fruits and some eggs. I also like black grams.

Lunch: I prefer rice with lentils, kidney beans or chickpeas.

Evening snack: I enjoy eating dosa and utthappam.

Dinner: I keep it light. Nothing in particular but a meal that can be easily digested.



Nutrition advice

- * Start your day with a power-house drink, like a vegetable smoothie—spinach, kale and apple. Add chia seeds as well. This works like a liver detox and helps with hormone health.
- * Eggs are a perfect option for breakfast. As for mid-morning energy booster, indulge in a fruit and some coconut water.
- * For lunch, consume gluten-free rotis made from jowar, bajra, raj-gira or quinoa with vegetables, lentils and curd. You can also have brown rice with pulses like Bengal gram or kidney beans.
- * Metabolism drops in the evening, so consume low-carb food during this time. Indulge in ragi dosa, moong dal chilla at least four times a week and have dosa for the rest of the days.
- * Keep your dinner light with some soup, steamed vegetables and a plant-based protein.
- * Be sure to consume at least three litres of water a day.

working out extensively since the lockdown began. When the gyms were open, I used to go but I was more occupied with my shoots and meetings. Now I watch workout videos on YouTube and my gym trainer takes online sessions.

My family means everything to me. I always celebrate all major occasions with my family. There were times that I used to carry my luggage with me to the set, complete the shoot and straightway head towards the airport to get home as soon as possible. Even if it is for a day, I would rather spend it with my family than

do anything else. I can't measure up the amount of adulation I have for my family. I even flew down to Delhi for my brother's birthday which was on June 5 despite all the tough circumstances and happily baked a cake for him for the first time in my life. I must say, it was very tasty. Did I mention that I have a sweet-tooth?

As told to Oshin Grace Daniell

Family person

Actor **Donal Bisht** talks about her diet and fitness regime

Before getting into showbiz, I was working in Delhi. Whenever I used to punch in, I would think how life is so much more than my nine-to-six schedule. This thought lingered and I started taking out time from my job just to travel to Mumbai for auditions. In about four to five months, I got a call back from Balaji who told me that I got cast as a parallel lead in the show *Kalash*.

After this, I played the lead role in *Ek Deewana Tha* on Sony and *Roop-Mard Ka Naya Swaroop*. Then, I stepped in as Happy in *Dil Toh Happy Hai Ji* where I had replaced the lead girl; it was my third consecutive show as a lead. I did these four shows back to back for four years.

Apart from acting, I enjoy painting and writing poems. I have a blog where I post all my written work. I have been

smile

INDULGE YOUR SENSES, HAVE FUN



Does your dull-looking teeth stop you from putting out a wide smile? Don't fret, there is a way to sort this out in the comfort of your home. Baking soda is your go to. It has natural whitening properties which is why it is a popular ingredient in commercial toothpaste. It is a mild abrasive that can help scrub away surface stains on teeth. It also creates an alkaline environment in your mouth which prevents bacteria from growing. This is not a remedy that will whiten your teeth overnight, but you should notice a difference over time. One study found that toothpastes containing baking soda were significantly more effective at removing yellow stains from teeth than standard toothpastes without baking soda. The higher the concentration of baking soda, the greater the effect.

How to make the paste: Mix 1tsp of baking soda with 2tsp of water and brush your teeth with the paste. You can do this a few times per week.

NEW MEETS OLD

Chef Amit Puri talks about mixing modern cooking with the classics

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

A Chinese cookery show ‘Yan Can Cook’, back in the early 90s, is what got chef Amit Puri whipping up different dishes in his home kitchen. “I think this was the only cookery show in Doordarshan and I used to watch it religiously with my family. Apart from that, I used to help my parents cook from a very young age. From dicing vegetables to trying out new dishes over the weekends, one thing translated to the other and before I knew it I was in a hotel management college in Chennai,” Amit says. After finishing his course, he trained for eight months in a Chinese restaurant before taking up his first star hotel job in Bombay. “I was always fascinated by the Pan Asian cooking styles and working at a Chinese restaurant really helped me explore a lot of areas which were new to me,” he says. While most of his batchmates chose to work in the ship post their graduation, Amit entered the main kitchen of a fine dine hotel. “During that time, working for a restaurant or a small eatery was not in anybody’s list. The trend bloomed only in the recent past,” he says.

From Chinese to European to modern Indian dishes, Amit’s cooking style has evolved both in method and flavour. But when asked the kind he likes the most, he promptly says European. “I enjoy European cooking a lot; there is a lot of finesse to it. The presentation and art also play a major role in this style. As a matter of fact, the modernisation in various cuisines that we see today are all a transformation of the European style,” he says.

So, is modern Indian cooking similar to fusion food preparation?



According to Amit, fusion cuisine is a very misleading concept. “If you take makhini gravy and mix it with noodles, it becomes a fusion dish. But the minute you say fusion it is an open-ended discussion—there is no end to what you can mix and match. When it comes to modern Indian cooking there are two ways in which we work. One way to go about it is by taking international concepts and present Indian food in that manner. The other way is to take international flavours and mix it with Indian food,” says the 41-year-old chef who has an experience of over two decades in the culinary field.

After working in several fine dine hotels and travelling to various places to explore food and culture, he is now a food and beverages consultant. “Being a consultant includes responsibilities like developing unique concepts, kitchen setup, uniform designing, training staff and food photography. I have learnt a lot while working in different hotels and I pass on those lessons to the staff I train. I distinctly remember how I once put pepper powder instead of pepper corns in a hot and sour soup; it was during my initial days as a chef. Little did I know at the time that the powder would form lumps and float in the soup. As funny as it sounds, it is an important aspect which sometimes chefs tend to overlook,” he says.

Recently, Amit wore the new cap of an author after he released his first cookbook— *Redefining Comfort Food With Amit Puri*. The book is a collection of global comfort food with a lot of twists and flavour layers to suit the palate of the Indian consumer in particular. “These recipes have been accumulated over the years based on my experience of travelling to various foreign countries and also Indian cities where I got to taste some of the local flavours. I combined all of this and created my rendition of these flavours. Recipes in the book are categorised into soups, appetisers, main courses, rice, breads and desserts along with dips, seasonings and sprinklers. The

best part is that you can easily make it at home,” Amit says. He calls the cookbook a tribute to his culinary journey; a testament to what he has practised as a chef. “Some of the recipes that have made it into the book are actually bestsellers at restaurants that I have consulted for. The photography for the book was done at three locations—Raipur, Bhubaneswar and Mumbai—when my team and I were opening restaurants at these locations. It took me a year to conceptualise, compile and publish the book,” he says. Here are six recipes from the cookbook that are easy prepare and delicious to eat.

Three big lessons

- › You need a lot less (than you actually think) to be happy
- › One day at a time
- › Cutting your own hair isn’t as difficult as it seems



Fun fact

No matter how much effort you put in to clean up the house, your wife always manages to find a spot and point it out to you.



First thing to do post lockdown

Go to the salon.

But jokes apart, a lot of work has been kept on hold because of the lockdown. Before the national lockdown was announced, I was to start work at restaurants in Mumbai, Baroda, Chennai, Raipur and Kolkata. The pandemic has affected the hospitality industry to a great extent and every city would have a different approach and response to this pandemic, depending on its situation. I’d need to review the situation of that city closely and accordingly strategise on a bounce-back plan for each of the restaurants.



10 cooking hacks

1. To make tawa non-stick, rub and grease it with onion dipped in oil.
2. To avoid butter from burning, add half the amount of oil to the butter while cooking.
3. Instead of discarding potato skins, make chips out of them.
4. Store homemade paneer in water to keep it soft and fresh.
5. Add a couple of pinches of salt to your masalas in masala dabba to avoid lumps.
6. Saute the fresh methi leaves in very little oil and store for a longer time in freezer.
7. Use strainer to separate egg yolk with egg white.
8. Reserve lentil water and use it as stock.
9. Make crutons/ breadcrumbs with leftover breads
10. Refresh stale bread by covering it with damp cloth and micro-waving for 30 secs. Take it out and allow to come to room temperature.

If you were granted three wishes, what would they be?

- › Travel the world and explore places, culture and food.
- › Have a restaurant of my own.
- › Work and be professionally associated with Jamie Oliver. His rustic style of curating recipes inspires me.

You're given a minute in the supermarket, what are top five things you'll have in your cart?

1. Chocolate
2. Coffee
3. Cheese
4. Foxnuts
5. Flavoured yogurt

10 must-haves for every chef

1. Good quality set of knives and a sharpening stone for maintenance
2. Kitchen shoes
3. Good quality chopping board
4. High quality pots and pans
5. Appropriate small equipment
6. Blender
7. Spoon set, both wooden and silicon
8. Mixing bowls of various sizes
9. Air tight container and zip-lock bags for storage
10. Kitchen cloth

10 must-follow chefs on YouTube

1. Jamie Oliver (Italian cuisine)
2. Gordon Ramsay (French, Italian, British)
3. Gennaro Conlodo (Italian cuisine)
4. John Zhang (Oriental cuisine)
5. Nigella Lawson (comfort food)
6. Peter Kuruvita (Srilankan cuisine)
7. Anthony Bourdain (French cuisine / global street food)
8. Heston Blumenthal (multi sensory cooking)
9. Marco Pierre White (French, Italian, British)
10. Vito Iacopelli (Pizza)

A message to all cooks stuck at home

Be open to learning. Take recipes as inspiration and give your own touch to them. Use your resources well and be in touch with your seniors and colleagues. Try using every part of the ingredient and do not waste food. □



Addictive potato skins

Ingredients

- Potato peels from 3-4 large potatoes
- Yoghurt- ½ cup
- Water- 1 cup
- Cornflour- ½ cup
- Refined flour- ½ cup
- A pinch of salt
- Black pepper, crushed- ½ tsp
- Garlic powder- ½ tsp
- Onion powder- ½ tsp
- Red chilli powder- ½ tsp
- Fresh rosemary, chopped- ½ tsp
- Parsley, chopped- 1tbsp
- Refined oil to fry

Method:

- Wash potatoes under running cold water and peel the potatoes using peeler.
- In a large bowl, add yogurt and dilute it with water.
- Add the potato peels to this buttermilk and allow it to soak for 30 minutes.
- In a separate bowl, mix cornflour, refined flour, salt and dry seasonings.
- In small batches, remove the peels from the buttermilk and toss them in the seasoned cornflour. Coat well and keep aside.
- Repeat till all the potato peels are nice coated with the seasoned cornflour.
- Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the peels till crisp and cooked.
- Transfer in a bowl and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper or any other seasoning of your choice. Toss well till all the chips are coated well with the seasoning.
- Serve hot with mustard, bourbon ketchup or sour cream.



S'mores sandwich

Ingredient:

- Bread slices- 4
- Butter- 3tbsp
- Marshmallows- 12 small cubes
- Hershey's kisses chocolate- handful
- Graham crackers, crushed- 6

Method-

- Make a simple sandwich of marshmallow and Hershey's chocolate and a bit of crushed graham crackers tucked in between two slices of bread.
- Butter the outsides of the bread and place the sandwich in a sandwich griller or on a pan and grill it on a low heat on both the sides, flipping the sandwich in between.
- If you are grilling this in a pan, place a little weight on the sandwich to get an even crust.
- Once the sandwich is grilled and crisp, butter the sides again and cut and serve.

Kolkata jhalmuri

For the chaat-

- Puffed rice- 3cups
- Nyon sev- 4tbsp
- Finely chopped onions- ¼ cup
- Finely chopped tomatoes- ¼ cup
- Finely chopped raw mangoes- 2tbsp
- Peeled and cubed potatoes- 2tbsp
- Finely chopped green chilli- 1tsp
- Finely chopped fresh coriander- 2tbsp
- Chaat masala- ¼ tsp
- Red chilli powder- ½ tsp
- A pinch of black salt
- A pinch of table salt
- Juice of 2 limes
- Mustard oil- 2bsp
- Fresh pomegranate- 2tbsp
- Jhalmuri spice- 2tsp

For jhalmuri spice:

- Cumin seeds- ¼ cup
- Coriander seeds- ¼ cup
- Bay leaves- 5
- Black salt- 1tbsp
- Dry mango powder- 2tbsp
- Garam masala powder- ¼ cup

Method:

- For preparing jhalmuri spice, dry roast cumin seeds and bay leaves on a pan till fragrant. Do not overcook them else they will turn bitter. Grind them to a fine powder once roasted. Mix the ground powder with the other ingredients and combine well.
- Add all the ingredients to a larger bowl and give it a good stir
- Transfer to a serving bowl with fresh coriander leaves, serve immediately.



Missal pav fattoush

For dressing:

- Asian red chilli sauce- 4tbsp
- Tobasco- 1tbsp
- Juice of 2 limes
- Finely chopped green chilli- 1 medium sized chilli
- A pinch of chaat masala
- A pinch of salt and black pepper
- Handful of fresh coriander, chopped

For the salad:

- Pav croutons- ½ cup
- Mixed sprouts- 2 cups
- Chopped onions- 1cup
- Cherry tomatoes, halved- ½ cup
- Cucumber, chopped- ½ cup
- Finely chopped green chillies- 1tbsp
- Handful of fresh mint leaves
- A bunch of fresh coriander leaves

- Iceberg lettuce, torn- 1 large cup
- Romaine lettuce, torn- 1 large cup
- Farsan- ½ cup

Method:

- For dressing, combine all the ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Whisk them until well combined. Store it in an air tight container and refrigerate.
- To make pav croutons, butter the pav and toast it in the oven or on a hot pan until crisp. Remove from oven or pan and allow to cool.
- Wash sprouts under cold running water and par boil.
- To make the salad, combine all the ingredients in a bowl and add the dressing. Toss well. Transfer to serving bowl and garnish with pav croutons.



Quick toss squid pakodas

To marinate the squid

- Squid rings- 500g
- Ginger garlic paste- 2tbsp
- Juice of 1 lime
- A pinch of salt

For frying

- Refined flour- 1 cup
- Corn flour slurry- 1 cup
- Semolina- 1 cup
- Oil for frying

To toss the squid

- Oil- 1 tbsp
- Mustard seeds- 1 tbsp
- Green chilli, slit- 2
- Dry red chilli- 2
- Curry leaves- 3 sprigs
- Black pepper powder- 1 tsp
- A pinch of salt
- Fresh coriander, chopped- 1 tbsp
- Juice of 2 limes

Method:

- Marinate the squid rings in ginger garlic paste, lime juice and salt. Keep aside for 10 to 12 minutes.
- Dip the marinated squids in refined flour, then slurry and then coat them with semolina. Do this for all the squid rings before frying.
- To begin frying, heat the oil in a deep pan.
- On medium heat, fry semolina coated squid rings in batches till done and crisp.
- The fried squid at this stage are perfect to munch on. But let's take them up by a couple of notches and add a second layer of flavour.
- To toss the fried squids, heat a tablespoon of oil in a kadhai and add mustard seeds.
- Cook till they splutter.
- Throw in the green chillies, dry red chillies and curry leaf. Sauté for a few seconds and add the fried squid while they are still hot and crispy. Add seasoning, lime juice and fresh coriander.
- Give the squids a quick toss and serve hot.

Smoothie bowl

Ingredients:

- Greek yoghurt- 300g
- Honey- 50ml
- Ripe bananas, sliced- 2
- Seasonal fresh fruits sliced
- Granola- 6tbsp
- Handful of mixed fresh berries
- Mixed seeds- 6tbsp
- Assorted nuts
- A pinch of cinnamon powder

Method:

- Whisk honey and chilled Greek yogurt together and pour this in a bowl.
- Arrange sliced bananas on the yogurt, followed by granola, seasonal fresh fruits, berries, nuts and seeds.
- Sprinkle some cinnamon powder over sliced bananas.



A grand old dame

Anjuly Mathai reminisces about the golden days of her grandmother's youth

My grandmother is turning 95 in August. She is almost completely bed-ridden, getting up only for meals and for her daily bath. She hardly ever remembers the name of the home nurse who takes care of her, and calls her by whatever name pops into her mind. Sometimes it is our driver's, sometimes our cook's, but most often, a random cross-section of

nomenclature that seemingly has no meaning.

Her sight and hearing have almost completely gone. Holding a conversation with her is like talking to someone in another room. It is forcibly restricted to the two pillars of her existence—her appetite and her sleep. Often, she does not recognise me. Recently, on my 33rd birthday, I asked her whether she knew how old I was turning. “75,” she replied, with

such certainty that one might begin to doubt oneself.

It is sad to see my grandmother deteriorating daily, especially when you consider what an accomplished woman she used to be, with her stately bearing and starched cotton saris. She was the first doctor from her family and a student president at the Christian Medical College in Vellore. “If you go there, you will find my name inscribed on the board listing past presidents,” she used to tell us proudly. There is the story of how, when she had just started practising medicine, my grandfather came to see her for the first time. She mistook him for a medical representative and banished him to the waiting room, until she had finished seeing all the patients.

I remember all the good times we had at my grandparents' home in Calicut, Kerala. My cousin and I used to fight for the privilege of sleeping next to her each night. She used to tell wonderful stories. She introduced me to the world of Ali Baba and Sinbad. For years afterwards, whenever I saw a door, I would imagine saying ‘Open Sesame’ would lead me to a room full of hidden treasure. I recently reminded her of what a great story-teller she used to be, and there was a note of such wistfulness in her voice when she told me: “I don't remember any of them anymore.”

I often wonder what she thinks about most of the time. Is she happy? What must it be like to be imprisoned in your own mind, with all your memories slowly draining away. When you lose your memories, what do you have left? Some people say that old age makes you numb, so that you don't feel the pain of forgetting cherished moments, or the pain of having to depend on someone else for your smallest needs, or the pain of outliving your loved ones. Perhaps having no pain is the worst kind of pain. Or perhaps it is the best kind of mercy. □

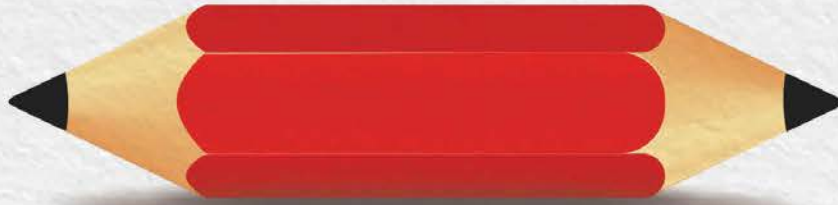
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