

Small Pakistani Restaurant Serves Tasty, Costly Foods

今回は、パキスタンのある下町にひっそりとたたずむ、小さくて少し不思議なレストランをご紹介します。見た目は素朴でも、ここには強いこだわりと長い物語が詰まっています。料理の出し方や注文方法にも独特のルールがあり、訪れる人は食事そのものだけでなく、その体験を楽しみにやって来るそうです。こうしたお店が生まれる背景には、地域の歴史が深く関わっているのかもしれません。あなたは、土地の歩みが食文化にどのような影響を与えていると思いますか？



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Baking Virsa, an eatery in Lahore, Pakistan, is sometimes described as the country's costliest place for what it serves: flatbreads and meats.

The eatery is a small space without windows. Dinners come on plastic plates and diners sit on plastic stools. But Baking Virsa gets visitors from across Pakistan and beyond. Visitors want to learn about the limited offerings, the owner, and the dining [experience](#) that sets it apart from other restaurants in the area.

Background

The eatery opens out onto Railway Road in Gawalmandi, an area filled with people, vehicles, animals, and food shops.

Many of Gawalmandi's original [communities](#) came from Kashmir and the eastern Punjab area before 1947. That was the year India and Pakistan became [independent](#) from the former British Empire. The mix of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims gave [diversity](#) to Gawalmandi's businesses, culture and food.

Some in Lahore used to see Gawalmandi as "virtually a no-go area," said Kamran Lashari, the director-general of the Lahore Walled City Authority. But a makeover more than 20 years ago helped bring in more visitors.

"We had street performers. President Pervez Musharraf sat in the street with people all around him. The prince of Jordan also visited. Indian newspapers reported on Gawalmandi," Lashari said.

Costly food

Eateries in Gawalmandi are generally not [costly](#).

But then there is Baking Virsa, where dinner for two can quickly come to \$60 without drinks because drinks, even water, are not served.

By comparison, a basket of naan at the five-star Serena Hotel in the capital, Islamabad, sells for a dollar and a serving of kebabs is \$8. In Gawalmandi, one naan usually costs as little as 10 cents.

Baking Virsa makes five items: chicken, chops, two kinds of naan, and kebabs. Owner Bilal Sufi also sells bakarkhani – a pastry best enjoyed with a cup of pink Kashmiri chai. But diners must order everything days before arrival.

The 34-year-old Sufi tells people that his eatery has been in the same place for 75 years. And he has been serving the same items for many years.

Sufi has run Baking Virsa for more than three years, taking over from his father Sufi Masood Saeed, who ran it before him and his grandfather Sufi Ahmed Saeed before that.

He says he is only doing what his father and grandfather have done. He describes his ingredients, cooking methods, and where and how his meat is raised. His sheep are fed special food such as saffron milk, dates and green bananas.

He also tells people how to eat their food. "Pick it up with your hands! Take a big bite! Eat like a beast!" he tells them. A beast is a wild animal that is large or dangerous.

There is no salad, no yogurt, and no chutney, he tells a possible diner on the phone. "And if you ask for these you won't get them," he said.

The meal arrives in a special order. First, Sufi presents a whole chicken, for \$30, followed by mutton chops at \$12.50, then a kebab, which costs \$8. Sufi says one kebab is enough for two people.

Sufi insists on his diners knowing what they eat, where it comes from, how it is made — and “why it tastes so different.” And he has no plan to change anything.

“Baking Virsa is a legacy,” he says. “I’m doing this out of love ... for my father.”

Riazat Butt reported on this story for the Associated Press. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Source: Small Pakistani Restaurant Serves Tasty, Costly Foods

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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. experience (n.) the process of doing and seeing things

Her summer work experience at the college radio station taught her many new skills.

2. community (n.) a group of people living in the same place and having social connections

Our community organized a clean-up event last Sunday.

3. independent (adj.) living or existing without the control or help of others

The island nation became independent last year.

4. diversity (n.) variety; having many different types

The school celebrates cultural diversity every spring with different culture festivals.

5. costly (adj.) very expensive

The jacket in that shop was too costly for me to buy.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What dishes can you get at Baking Virsa? What things are not served there?
2. Why is Gawalmandi culturally diverse?
3. What special food items do the sheep used by Sufi eat?
4. How is the history of Gawalmandi connected to the popularity of its food culture?
5. Would you want to visit a restaurant like Baking Virsa? Explain your answer.