

Spicing Up London: My Indian Culinary Adventure at Borough Market

International Brunel student Jigyasa Singh tells of her shock and delight at the food served in London when she landed in the UK for the first time ever this month

As I boarded my flight to London, I braced my taste buds for Brussels sprouts and fish and chips—dishes that are far from the vibrant, spiced flavours of Indian cuisine.

The thought of it actually gave my mother sleepless nights, worrying about my lack of options in the UK. Little did I know that my journey would lead me to a delightful exploration of British cuisine, with some surprising connections to home.

I was in for a delightful surprise when I got to talk to Joshua Thomas, a 33-year-old cosmopolitan traveller and a tutor hailing from Leicester, who possesses a broad palate of knowledge on everything under the sun, and has a knack for seasoning it with classic British sense of humour!

He expressed his fondness for Indian food and spices, confessing that his strict diet has kept him from enjoying rich Indian cuisine. What he missed the most, however, was onion bhaji. I was lost, and Joshua was shocked that I couldn't understand which dish he was talking about. A quick internet search revealed that onion bhajis are essentially the British term for something similar to what we call pakoras in India.

What are Pakoras?

Pakoras are popular Indian street snacks made by coating vegetables, meats, or paneer in a spiced chickpea flour batter and deep-frying them until golden

brown. They are often enjoyed with chutneys and are beloved for their crispy texture and flavourful spices.

My Culinary Exploration

My culinary exploration took me to Borough Market on a crisp October weekend in London. The weather was a mix of sun and wind, making it an enjoyable day to wander through the bustling stalls. Eager to try some Indian dishes, my friends and I queued up at one of the stalls and finally got our hands on samosas, chai, and, of course, the famed British onion bhaji.

To my surprise, I enjoyed the onion bhaji more than I expected. Perhaps it was the chilly October air or the excitement of trying something new, but they had a charm of their own. However, I couldn't help but notice that while they were tasty, they didn't quite hit the mark in terms of crispiness. It seemed the Brits prefer a subtler approach to seasoning, which left me yearning for the generous sprinkle of salt that we Indians love to add to our dishes.

A Culinary Connection

Overall, it's safe to say that London truly lives up to its name as "the international food capital of the world." My culinary adventure helped ease my homesickness, and I found a slice of familiarity in this vibrant city.

These recommendations are so good that Mr. Thomas might want to have a cheat day and try them too! If this little tale of my adventure has put any of

our beloved readers in the mood for some crispy bhaji and chai latte, here are a few spots you must check out in Uxbridge:

1. Karma Lounge - They serve brilliant lamb samosas and fantastic Indo-Chinese!
2. Chaiiwala Uxbridge- Their karak chai will revive you from any post-lunch slump.
3. Shree Krishna Vada Pav Uxbridge - Their USP vada pav is too hard to resist.

As I continue my studies in media and mass communications, I look forward to sharing more of my culinary adventures, bridging the flavours of India and Britain, one bite at a time.

So yes, all I can say is keep up the good work, London, but remember—you can always sprinkle a pinch of salt here and there!