



*Thanjai*

# Biryani

Don't share with anyone

Biryani is a beloved dish all across the Indian subcontinent, and rightly so. Its rich mixture of rice, meat, marinade, and spices never fails to provide a flavourful taste profile that exceeds expectations of all those who eat the meal. Because of the popularity and tastiness of biryani, different cultures and regions often contest this meal's origin. Who wouldn't want to claim biryani as their own?

## Who Invented Biryani?

A debate in October of 2020 went viral on Twitter under the hashtag: #BoycottBiryani. Online discourse ranged from those who believed biryani came to India from the Moghuls, to those who believed it was first consumed in the Deccan region as far back as the 15th century, and others who believed it was originally part of the Persian empire.

Historians generally believe that biryani originated in Persia as a more general rice and meat dish, before making its way to India where it was shaped more by Muslim foods, particularly in the South Indian city, Hyderabad. Pratibha Karan, author of the book *Biryani* finds that the dish also perhaps has South Indian origins, because armies would prepare a one-pot dish called "pulao" out of convenience and ease, which would turn into biryani eventually through different cooking methods. However, as the dish moved across the subcontinent, it faced influences from other Indian cultures and regions as well, thereby resulting in the countless variations of biryani available today.

All in all, it is safe to say that biryani that, in its own way, biryani has come from all over the subcontinent because of the endless variations available. And it is these different regions that made it into the diverse yet wholesome dish it is today.



## What does biryani taste like?

A classic biryani dish has an impressive flavor profile to say the least. The meal is doused in several spices, including but not limited to saffron, cumin, turmeric, pepper, cloves, coriander, and cardamom. The rich tastes are tempered by Indian cooking staples: ginger, garlic, tomatoes, green chillies, and onions.

So just one bite of biryani will fill your tastebuds with a burst of all of the best spices, mixed well into the soft and supple long grain basmati rice. However, other variations of biryani may use different types of rice such as seeraga samba or jeerakasala.

Despite the abundance of spices, what arguably gives the biryani its unique quality compared to other Indian dishes is the thick marinade. This marinade is made out of a spiced yogurt, because yogurt is a commonly used acid to tenderize meat in South Asian meals. Therefore the aromatic, hot spices are cooled down by a fulfilling yogurt marinade that makes the meal to die for.



The marinade coats the rice, spices, and also the meal's primary protein. Biryani can be made with any type of meat, from lamb to chicken, and even with seafood such as fish or shrimp. As mentioned earlier, the different regions in India have resulted in countless variations of the meal, including in the predominant type of protein and meat. For example, coastal regions enjoy shrimp and fish biryani more while regions inland eat more chicken and lamb biryani. Most restaurants tend to have many different options for protein with biryani, including a vegetarian option as well.

### **Is Biryani Spicy?**

Generally, yes, biryani is spicy. If hot food isn't your cup of tea, you can always request for a lower spice level to accommodate to your taste preferences.

### **Why is Biryani So Famous?**

It is difficult to decide just one reason why biryani has become so popular amongst not only India, but South Asia in general. To name a few:

1. Biryani is incredibly filling: It is full of rice, an essential carb, that makes this meal perfect for individuals looking to bulk up their bodies.
2. It can be made in a one-pot dish: Biryani is a simple dish to make and a classic order at any Indian restaurant. If you're looking for an authentic Indian meal experience, you cannot go wrong with biryani.
3. It has countless different flavors as well: Because the dish has been adapted according to the dietary preferences and ingredient availabilities per region, there are more variations than anyone can count with a ton of different flavors associated with it.
4. Biryani is full of important vegetables: Meaning, you will consume a rich amount of nutrients and antioxidants masked with delicious flavors.



### **Shrimp Biryani:**

This dish is served with juicy, luscious shrimp alongside an assortment of mild spices and an egg to add extra flavor to the rice. Side dishes include a soothing, creamy raita which is a yogurt seasoned with coriander, cumin, cayenne pepper, mint, and other herbs.

### **Vegetable Biryani:**

Of course there cannot be an Indian non-vegetarian meal without its vegetarian counterpart. Vegetable biryani serves its classic basmati rice seasoned with spices like cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves and sauteed vegetables.

### **Chicken Biryani:**

Perhaps the most common type of biryani eaten across India, and the world, is the famous chicken biryani. Also mixed in with scrambled eggs, the delectable chicken stands out all the more against the backdrop of the aromatic basmati rice and array of species.