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THE SCENES OF THIS
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AND HOW TO
MAKE IT REAL**

**Fun Italian food
for Fridays**

**WHY MR INTROVERT
COULD BE MR RIGHT**



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Aliens may exist, unicorns certainly do, but work-life balance?

Nope, not a chance of that mythical legend ever becoming a reality.

Raise your hand if you've worried your head off wondering if your kid has reached home safely, slam-dunk in the middle of a board presentation; or if you're perennially being rebuked by your family for that phone, which is now an accepted-yet-hated extension of your hand. You can't have it all.

Yet, you love your me-time, fam jam, travel, and all that your career means to you. So what do you do?

We try to find solutions with the next best thing—aiming at a slightly low target of work-life balance.

MAKING MINOR CHANGES, ALLOWING THINGS TO PASS, LETTING GO ARE THE BASIC MANTRAS. WORK-LIFE BALANCE WILL FIND YOU WHEN IT DOES. YOU NEED TO STAY CALM AND ADD SMALL TARGETS TO THE AGENDA.

Allow tweaks. Fine, you have to send an official email when your cousin's sangeet expects you to break out into Bollywood dance moves; step out and send it as you would upload Insta images of the wedding.

It's just five minutes, so try not to stress about it beyond that short time. Making minor changes, allowing things to pass, letting go are the basic mantras. Work-life balance will find you when it does, you need to stay calm and add small targets to the agenda.

So if you can't meet your family for a full-fledged, sit-down seven-course dinner, try and incorporate a coffee plan. If your assignment expects you to fly to a remote city, plan an early-morning, late-night flight out so that your child isn't left unattended beyond a day. Of course, your family members will complain and your supervisor may not be too happy, but hey, you can't have it all. So do the best you can.

This issue also has the girl with Bollywood's happiest visage on our cover—Jacqueline Fernandes—whose career is shining owing to some smart moves, great networking and that gorgeous smile.

Our Fashion Feature on minimal yet impactful workwear is a personal favourite.

Beauty goes bold with on-trend eyes in focus.

This issue, aptly enough, is working extra hard. Hope you enjoy reading it!



Tanya Chaitanya

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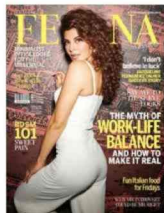
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(For editorial queries, email femina@wrm.com.in)

ON THE COVER

MODEL: JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ;
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HAIR AND MAKEUP: SHAAN MUTTATHIL;
STYLIST: PRACHITI PARAKH;
ASSISTED BY: PALLAK SHAH, FORAM
PATEL, SHIRSHA GHOSH; LOCATION
COURTESY: SOFITELE MUMBAI;
MICRO CREPE JUMPSUIT, GAURI NAINIKA;
ACETATE EARRINGS, VARNIKA ARORA



Jacqueline Fernandez is a vision in white on the latest cover of Femina. Catch all the action in the behind-the-scenes video of the making of the cover.

How to make sense of Femina's augmented reality (AR) special

VIEW THE AR FEATURE EMBEDDED IN THIS ISSUE WITH THREE EASY-AS-PIE STEPS

- 1 Get the ALIVE app: Give a missed call to 18001023324 or visit aliveapp.in
- 2 Open the ALIVE app on your phone and scan the page with the ALIVE logo by focusing your phone's camera on it.
Android/iPhone: Hold still and it will scan automatically.
BB/Symbian: Go to Options, then capture image.
Windows: Tap on screen to capture and hold still over image.
- 3 Voila! Watch your favourite magazine come alive on your mobile device. You will get various options that'll enable you to view, save and share these features.

Available on Android version 2.2 and above, iOS version 4.3 and above, BB version 5.0 and above, Symbian version S60 and above, Windows version 7.5 and above

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HOME FASHION BEAUTY BRIDES
WELLNESS RELATIONSHIPS
CELEBS LIFE SPIRITUALITY
PAGEANTS BLOGS AND MORE

JEAN JACKETS

Your guide to styling your favourite denim jacket three ways

SHINE BRIGHT

Go glam or go home with this easy silver smoky eye tutorial

OH CRÊPE

Recipes for a yummy and healthy breakfast

OLD WORLD CHARM

Explore these four must-visit Indian caves



We asked our followers on Twitter what their dream career is. Here's what they had to say:



Kopal Seth @SethKopal
An economics professor. I absolutely love economics and teaching, so my ideal career would combine both.



Jeanne Rozario @JeanneRozario Ever since I was five, I always wanted to be a traveller. My dream job is still that.



Prerna Goyal @PrernaGoyal17 I would love to be an entrepreneur, and take my father's business ahead!



Mayuri Kataria @KatariaMayuri I love experimenting with clothes and accessories. It's no surprise that my dream career is to be a fashion stylist.



Anisha Dias @xlianne97 I'd love to be a music curator. I want to curate tailor-made playlists for people and events. Algorithms and AI just doesn't cut it.



Asteria @Asteria18187979 My dream career is to become a musician and a philanthropist.

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twitter.com/FeminaIndia

WE HEAR YOU!

Write to us at femina@wmm.co.in

Who better than Ranveer Singh to rock the Men's special issue? The story where you profiled noteworthy Indian men (The Big Story) was inspiring, and it was nice to see Femina celebrating the men of the moment. I also enjoyed the feature about the '80s making a strong comeback in fashion (Fashion, Front Row). The feature on timeless hair trends (Beauty, Feature) and the story on the dos and don'ts of a facial (Beauty, Blast) also helped a lot.

Aarzoo Italia, Mumbai

The Men's special issue turned out to be different from what I was expecting. I enjoyed the story on orgasms and how they enhance sexual experience (All About You, Passion). The story on going digital (She-economics) came at the right time since I was struggling with keeping track of my finances. I loved the article on Zabi Khan (Reality) and his mission of protecting animals. The feature on Gulzar (Reality, The Life and Times of) was also a pleasure to read.

Veena S Saran, Chennai

I'm so used to seeing gorgeous women on the cover of Femina that the June 24, 2018 issue with Ranveer Singh took me by surprise. After going through the issue, however, I was happy that Femina had attempted something



different for a women's magazine. The fashion and beauty features were par excellence and my husband felt confident enough to experiment with some timeless hair trends (Beauty, Feature). As usual, Femina proves that it is unstoppable!

Anisha Thakur, Mumbai

I always thought Femina was a great women's magazine. My husband picked up the June 24, 2018 issue and loved it. We read the entire issue but there were two stories that stood out. The first was the story on orgasms (All About You, Passion). It was a wonderful and educative read for a newly-wed bride. The other story we loved was on being tech-savvy with your money (She-economics). We got married around three months back and the story helped us set some goals. It contained useful and much-needed advice!

Sujala Gupta, Noida

The June 24, 2018 issue of Femina was stunning and informative. The feature and photoshoot with Ranveer Singh was a real treat. It was also nice to read the story featuring noteworthy men (The Big Story) who dared to dream big and stood out in their respective fields. I'm looking forward to next year's Men's special issue already.

Dilip Karkera, Mangalore

WIN

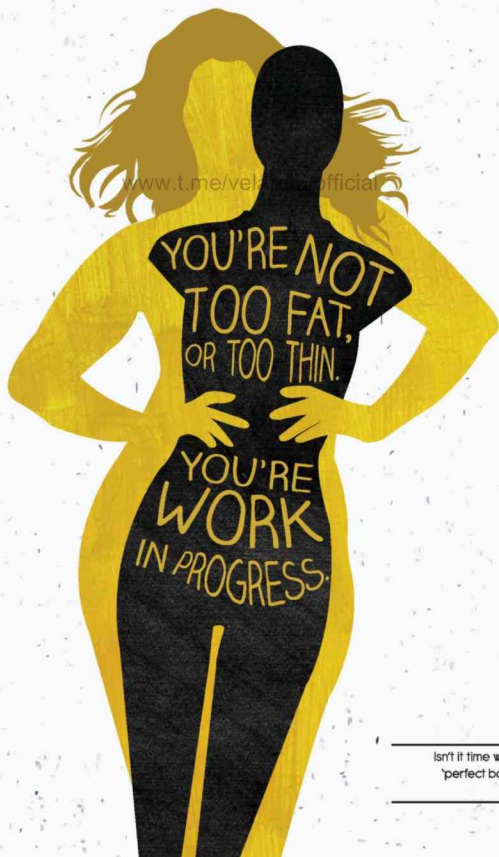
AN EXCITING GIFT FROM LAVIE

These five letters will win this handbag from Lavie. Stylish and versatile, it has just enough room for all your essentials.



FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we did away with the
'perfect body' myth? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/fitness](https://www.femina.in/fitness)

Are you DOING THE www.t.me/veerach_official work-life BALANCING ACT?

Is your work-life balance in sync with your idea of it? As the lines blur between work and other aspects of your life, **Neeti Jaychander** helps you step back and reconsider

We've all heard the term 'work-life balance'. Especially in urban India, the phrase is bandied about quite frequently. To the majority of people working in corporate and entrepreneurial India, a balance between the hours we spend at work versus the ones we spend on the rest of our life seems unrealistic, and frequently undoable. The implications of work-life imbalance, however, can be drastic. Explains Gajalakshmi Chandran, MD, Right Goal Pvt Ltd, "Over the years, the approach to work-life balance has been constantly evolving. Its definition varies significantly from baby boomers to generation X and millennials. Baby boomers craved stability in the workplace and valued the opportunity for employment

above everything else. Because of this, work-life balance wasn't a priority. As a result, 80 per cent of baby boomers report moderate to high levels of stress. As children of baby boomers, gen Xers were exposed to the effect that long work hours had on personal life and therefore, gen Xers started to view work-life balance as a necessary prerequisite to a happy personal life. Work was not the sole objective of a happy life but a means through which they could enrich the lives of their family. With millennials, work ethic is thought to be secondary, or just a part of life. The 2017 Workplace Benefits Report by Bank of America Merrill Lynch found that 59 per cent of millennials report feeling worried about finding a career path that will support the lifestyle they've envisioned for themselves, a paradigm shift from the previous two generations." ▶

"59 PER CENT OF
MILLENNIALS REPORT
FEELING WORRIED
**ABOUT FINDING
A CAREER PATH THAT**
WILL SUPPORT THE
LIFESTYLE THEY'VE
ENVISIONED FOR
THEMSELVES."

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"WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS SKEWED BECAUSE PEOPLE VIEW THEIR CAREERS AS THEIR PRIMARY IDENTITIES."



WHY IS WORK-LIFE BALANCE SKEWED IN INDIA TODAY?

From balancing work to having a life, we've come full circle. Former first lady of the United States Hillary Clinton rightly said, "Don't confuse having a career with having a life." Amsterdam-based consultancy Arcadis recently performed a study, which showed that Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, and New Delhi ranked extremely low on work-life balance. The proof is in the numbers—with Indians clocking

in a whopping 2,195 hours annually, in stark comparison to Hamburg, Germany, where workers clock in just around 1,473 hours.

The most common reason for the lack of work-life balance is our inability to decide what we want as our end state. It is important to know your objective before seeking this balance. Says life coach and counsellor Husna Khan, "Work-life balance is skewed because people view their careers as their primary identities, and therefore prioritise that over everything else. What's more, overworked people enter the comfort zone of being needed, wanted and

BOOKS THAT HELP WITH WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Books

LIFE MATTERS

By A Roger Merrill
& Rebecca Merrill

Efficiency experts show you how to explore your priorities and expand your capacity for happiness. It includes a self-assessment quiz to evaluate the vital elements of work, family, time, money, exploring the gap between what you value and your daily life.

ENOUGH.

By John C Bogle

Inspired by the hundreds of lectures Bogle has delivered to professional groups and college students, *Enough*. To paraphrase writer Kurt Vonnegut: "to poison our minds with a little humanity." There are insights on money and what we should consider true treasures in our lives, values we should emulate in our professional callings, and life lessons regarding our roles in society.

THE 4-HOUR WORKWEEK

By Tim Ferriss

This step-by-step guide to luxury lifestyle design teaches how Ferriss went from \$40,000 per year and 80 hours per week to \$40,000 per month and 4 hours per week; how blue-chip escape artists travel the world without quitting their jobs; how to trade a long-haul career for short work bursts—with case studies, real-world templates, tools and tricks.

indispensable at their job, and so believe that they cannot disconnect, since their organisation won't function without them. The other problem is financial security. Everyone needs to pay the bills, and India is now an aspirational market. Sometimes, the need to build a nest egg for a rainy day, and to lead a good life is so great that we are willing to spend most of our day working, without questioning the demands of the job. There is also the fact that technology has made us accessible at the touch of a button, and it is difficult to switch off completely, unless we are willing to make that effort to detach."



WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF WORK-LIFE IMBALANCE?

Obviously, the single major area that work-life imbalance impacts is health—both physical and mental. Stress is the most important byproduct of a life that demands more of you in the workplace, making you pile up or put off all your other commitments for a later time. Also, India's infrastructure cannot really support its exploding population—just commuting to and from work is a major cause of stress. "Stress can lead to a variety of issues like high blood pressure, cholesterol, >

spikes in blood sugar, anaemia, depression, anger issues, and in extreme situations even cancer and heart problems," says Khan. Adds Chandran, "Too much stress over a long period of time leads to workplace burnout. Burnout can cause fatigue, mood swings, irritability and a decrease in productivity." If you stretch yourself too thin, you will soon start looking at your job with dread and forget all the reasons you chose it as a career in the first place. Also, do you want to be guilty of absenteeism in life? Don't be that parent who misses their son's gold medal win or isn't there for their sister's wedding because something important came up at work.



HOW DOES ONE ARRIVE AT THE PERFECT WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

By accepting that 'perfect' means 'perfect for the individual'. And by realising that you have to create this for yourself, by yourself. Chandran adds, "This isn't something that has a black and white answer. It depends on various things, starting from an individual's financial needs, to their age and stage in their career, to what actually makes them happy." However, she gives us tips to start with.

Integrate work and personal life: The days of separate timings for work and personal lives are over and we should

APPS THAT HELP WITH WORK-LIFE BALANCE

APPS

ATRACKER FOR IOS OR TIMETUNE FOR ANDROID

These time-tracking apps with customised user interfaces can create beautiful reports in pie and bar formats for different tasks and time periods, to assist your time spending analysis. Convert calendar entries to ATracker entries and track work, studying, activities and more.

PACIFICA

Pacifica gives you psychologist-designed tools to address stress, anxiety and depression, based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, mindfulness meditation, relaxation and mood/health tracking. Calm down using one of the 25 plus audio exercises, including deep breathing, muscle relaxation and more. Rate your moods and feelings throughout the day, and add specific notes so you can notice patterns and see improvement over time.

COZI

Cozi is an app for families and includes a colour-coded calendar, shopping lists, to-do lists, recipe box and more. The Cozi Family Organizer is shared, so you only need one account for the whole family. Free features include an easy-to-use calendar, where you can add/edit appointments and set reminders, shared grocery and to-do lists, ease of searching and accessing recipes from anywhere.



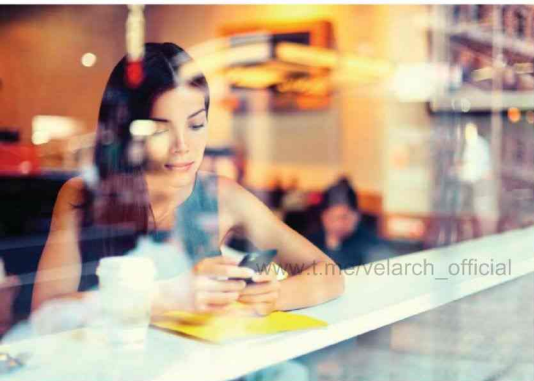
"THE DAYS OF SEPARATE TIMINGS FOR WORK AND PERSONAL LIVES ARE OVER AND WE SHOULD EMBRACE THIS CHANGE."

embrace this change. If we don't, it impacts our productivity negatively. We need to organise our lives such that we're able to do personal work while on the job, because whether we like it or not, while we are out of office, we will end up thinking or working anyway. This way, personal errands or important things get done as well—and your to-do list collates everything important for you.

Rest out stress: Stress is inevitable in today's work environment; many

experts believe the right amount even improves performance. But after tearing your hair out, do you rest enough to recharge your physical and mental faculties? A movie, sports, exercise, reading or a hobby—do something that compensates for the manic days and lets you get revved up to die another day.

Prioritise health: Health is something that we need to work on every day of our lives. We cannot ignore it for years and then suddenly go into an overdrive ▶



UNFORTUNATELY, WE LIVE IN A CONNECTED WORLD—SO YOU MIGHT BE MAKING YOURSELF AVAILABLE WHEN YOU DON'T NEED TO.

to get it back on track. Exercise is also an effective stressbuster, pumping feel-good endorphins through our body. According to Mayo Clinic, exercise helps lift our mood and can help in putting us in a meditative state.

Decide what stage you're at: This is perhaps the most critical component that we need to factor in while trying to achieve work-life balance. The time distribution between our professional and personal spheres is determined by our career stage: early, mid, final or transitory; and the resultant time it requires. The complexities of personal milestones like marriage,

children and commitments also factor into these stages. Triangulate these with your end objective and you'll be able to better fine-tune how to distribute your time and integrate your lives.

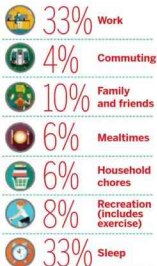
Disconnect: Fortunately, we live in a connected world—so you can work out of a camping trip. Unfortunately, we live in a connected world—so you might be unnecessarily making yourself available when you don't need to. Ensure that quality time is truly that and disconnect from your mobile devices as much as possible.

Invest in building a support system: Create an eco-system that provides

support across all the areas that you need help in. Whether housekeeping, child care or productive commuting (so that you can get work done while on the road) etc, invest in the right technology and human resources that let you multitask, delegate and outsource.

Eat wisely: Everything we eat is converted into glucose, which provides the energy our brains need to stay alert. Fruits and vegetables contain vital nutrients that foster the production of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that plays a key role in the experience of curiosity, motivation, and engagement. They ▶

IDEAL WEEKDAY WORK-LIFE BALANCE



COUNTRIES WITH THE BEST WORK-LIFE BALANCE



COUNTRIES WITH THE WORST WORK-LIFE BALANCE



Source: OCED (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)



DO YOU HAVE A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Take this quiz to find out

Q Do you spend less than half an hour a day while at home, responding to work-related phone calls and emails?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q Do you get home at a reasonable hour, and are you able to get eight hours of sleep or more each night?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q There is a family emergency that requires you to take some time off. Are you able to do it without your boss acting disgruntled?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q Do you spend quality time with family and friends, without them complaining that you are never around?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q Do you find time to exercise at least 3-4 times a week, for an hour?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q Do you have time to eat three nutritious meals a day, and do you feel rested and relaxed?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q Do you have adequate time in your life to pursue hobbies, and go on vacation every now and then?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Q Do you feel like you have an identity outside of your job?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

Mostly As: Congratulations! You've mastered the art of work-life balance. You seem to be devoting enough time to work, personal life, chores and recreation. Don't worry if it goes off-kilter once in a while, just make sure you're back on track.

Mostly Bs: You manage to catch some time away from work, but often find yourself compromising on something on the other—either your health, time with family, or recreation time for yourself. There is definite room for improvement.

Mostly Cs: You're kidding yourself if you think you have some semblance of life outside of work. Fact is, your career is the single most important feature in your life, and you need to start taking a step back to see whether this is the direction you want your life to go in.

also provide antioxidants that minimise bodily inflammation, improve memory, and enhance mood. Treat yourself but don't binge. Make healthy snacking a habit by placing a container of almonds, protein bars and water by your computer, in your line of vision. Have smaller, more frequent meals through the day to maintain your glucose rather than one big midday meal.

Know your peak time

and place: Some focus best in the morning and some late at night; figure out when you're at your best. Also, experiment with the environments in which you perform the best. Research has revealed that 90 per cent of people do their best thinking outside the office. If mornings in the park are when you're brightest, then allocate your toughest tasks for those moments. This will ensure that when you're not at your best, you can do tasks that don't require as much brainpower, and you're optimising your time through the day.

Focus on what really

matters: Time is the most valuable commodity in life. Too many people spend too much time working on things that don't really matter. Focus. What really moves the needle for the business? What do you absolutely need to do for the home, for the kids, for yourself? Set weekly or monthly goals and scrutinise your day to max out your time. ▶

WORK-LIFE BALANCE ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS

We spoke to three women—a baby boomer, a gen Xer and a millennial—to see how three different generations handle the work-life balance



A SELVI,
Senior Special
Assistance, PG
Cell, BSNL (Retd)

Baby Boomer

When I started working, joint families were the norm, and I was lucky to have a support system at home. We had grandparents, siblings and aunts who took care of the children, and hence we were able to focus on work. At the same time, we were subjected to high levels of stress, because of financial commitments like loans. We didn't change jobs or career paths unless the designation change or pay hike was phenomenal. Work-life balance was hard to establish as we were stuck at the office to earn extra perks, like overtime allowance. In the little time away from work in the pre-mobile phone era though, we focused on family and children, and never took work home!



Pace yourself: To have a happy life, professionally and personally, it is paramount to understand the value of pace. There are times when we need to rev up and there are times when we need to throttle down. Self-awareness is crucial.



WHAT SHOULD WORKING MOTHERS, AND COUPLES WHO CO-PARENT, KEEP IN MIND?

Working Indian women are expected to be superior wives and stellar employees. In today's nuclear family, it is mandatory that the husband be an equal partner at home. Says Chandran, "It is important to define roles and responsibilities between the couple, so that there are no overlaps or last-minute surprises. This helps the couple pre-plan their day efficiently. It also helps in the child's growth and development, with equal time from both parents. If you don't have family support, choose a good day-care centre or a nanny to take care of your child. Remember, this doesn't make you a bad mother. Don't try to be Superwoman; she's fictional and exists only in the movies." ■

Gen X

Work-life balance puts the woman in the middle and forces her to choose. I am the mom of a nine-year-old boy. With a full-time job running my own marketing firm and no dearth of interests, I have a fulfilling job and a lovely life. I don't subscribe to work-life balance; in fact, I believe in work-life integration. Here are a few things I do to make work and life coexist happily: Quality trumps quantity. Work hard, play hard. When at work, be mindfully at work. Likewise, at home. Plan your downtime—holidays, spa days, lunch dates. But don't stress if you need to log in once in a while. Find patterns. Routines are efficient; set a daily one. Get that help—support systems are everything for a working mom. It could be your partner, family or a paid support. Finally, whatever your choice, be comfortable with it and enjoy it guilt-free.



AARTHI SRINATH,
Partner—Inception
Business Services

Millennial

When I started working, it was quite hectic; following rules, finding my place in the organisation and socialising with a new set of people was not easy. Now, I've figured out my capability and the level of energy that I can put into whatever I do. Everyone should work to fuel their passion and yet make money out of it. That's the kind of attitude I have towards work. Doing what you love and monetising it is not something that my parents thought would be possible. Travelling is my life. I have been working for the past year, and now I've quit my job and it's adventure time. This is possible since my parents don't rely on me financially. For people with no such responsibilities, I would suggest that you work, save up, do what you love. Once you earn a living from it, you're set for life."



TAMIL ILAKKYIA,
Freelance
content writer



BANANA

BLUE

PINEAPPLE

RED

ORANGE

PEACH

WHICH ARE THE
MOST POPULAR
BDSM SAFE WORDS?

YELLOW

APPLE

UNICORN

VANILLA

FIFTY SHADES OF SEX

Curious about BDSM? **Simran Ahuja** helps you spank your love life into shape

What comes to your mind when we say BDSM? We bet you're imagining a room like the red room of pain from *Fifty Shades Of Grey*, complete with all sorts of contraptions and tools you can't name—maybe a pair of handcuffs hanging here, a flogger or whip there. The concept can either make you cringe or give you the tingles. But there's no denying that ever since *Fifty Shades Of Grey* hit the screen in February 2015, Google searches for the term BDSM saw huge spikes. Pornhub says India likes it as well. Insights for 2017 reveal that India viewed the category 'rough sex' 92 per cent

more than any other country. But before you shudder and turn the page, read this.

There's a lot more to the practice than mainstream media will have you believe. Don't take our word for it. J Walker, member of Kinky Collective, an Indian BDSM group says, "BDSM is all about pleasure. If one had to choose an adjective that best epitomised BDSM, it would probably be 'playful', as interactions are often humorous and always enjoyable." But it's hardly child's play. Don't worry. We're here to hold your hand and help you aboard this bangin' bandwagon.





"IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALISE THAT FANTASIES AND KINKS ARE NORMAL, AND SHARING THEM WITH YOUR PARTNER CAN INCREASE TRUST AND INTIMACY."

WHAT IS IT?

You've read about it, you've seen films that portray it and you might have even crooned a song or two about it (Case in point: Barbadian singer Rihanna's popular tune S&M). But what exactly is BDSM? Walker explains: "BDSM stands for bondage, discipline, domination, submission, sadism and masochism. It is also called 'kink'. It refers to a variety of erotic activities that people engage in, in ways that are safe, sane, consensual and mutually gratifying."

Unfortunately, BDSM has become negatively associated with pain or aggression. Walker explains, "Even if some activities involve inflicting some level of pain or involve restraints, it is important to understand

that BDSM is not violent and that, most importantly, it is not coercive. As a matter of fact, BDSM practitioners go to great lengths to ensure safety, to negotiate their interactions and to ensure that consent can be withdrawn at all times."

WHAT DO I TELL MY PARTNER?

Ever heard the phrase, 'slow and steady wins the race'? Besides being a timeless moral, it's also good advice to follow while introducing your partner to your kinks. If you jump the gun and start off the conversation with how you're into worshipping feet or want to be tied up, it might just make your partner sweat a bucket or two. Walker offers some advice on the subject. "The best moment to bring up one's desires is in the beginning of a relationship. People who don't share the same kinks will therefore not be sexually compatible. It is unfair to get into a committed relationship and then disclose it later on." And if you are someone who discovered your kinks later on in your relationship, it is best to tread carefully. Talking about kinks for the first time can bring a rush of excitement and people tend to jump right in, thus scaring their partner. Here's how you can go about the discussion.

Honesty works

Before you broach the topic with your partner, Sakina Palitanawala, clinical psychologist at Juno Clinic, Mumbai, suggests becoming comfortable with them yourself. "It's important to realise that fantasies and kinks are normal, and sharing them with your partner can increase trust and intimacy," she says.

While talking to him about this, remember that the experience isn't just for you. If you make it more about 'we' than 'me', he is more likely to be on board. Tell him about how trying something new together might even make it more special. Besides, it also increases trust since he knows he won't be in this alone. And if your partner doesn't seem too keen at first, don't force him. Give him a breather and wait for some time before you bring up the topic again. Ask him to share his concerns and calmly address them.

Click play

No matter what you are interested in, you can be sure of finding some representation >

“THE BEST ENCOUNTERS ALWAYS MAKE TERRIBLE PORN MOVIES. SO DON'T TRY TO REPLICATE WHAT YOU SEE.”

of it in either books, movies, videos or TV shows. There's a gold mine of fantasies, kinks and fetishes out there—you just have to get your hands on them! Palitanawala suggests bringing up an article or video and asking him his thoughts on it. Or you could also choose a movie that features a fetish you like. “Lightly exposing your partner to positive representations of activities you like will help you both discuss your interests and fantasies openly and honestly,” she says.

While watching porn together can also be a way to bring up the topic, remember to tread carefully. What you see is not always what you get, or how things play out. Walker says, “The best sex/kink encounters always make terrible porn movies. So don't try to replicate what you see in porn, just use it as an exciting background and always err on the side of caution and slowness.”

HOW DO WE BEGIN?

Here comes the hard part, pun intended. With so many things to try, where does one begin? The trick is to tiptoe slowly before you plunge into all that BDSM has to offer. Basically, hold on to the leather, latex bodysuits and activities that make you uncomfortable. We know sticking to rules can be boring but when it comes to BDSM, following these rules just makes things better, safer and hell of a lot more fun for both parties.

Rule 1 Limits do exist

It's not just important to be on the same page about BDSM, your partner and you also need to know what the other is willing and not willing to try. It's best to have an idea of this beforehand. Palitanawala says, “Regardless of how power is used or exchanged, mutual respect and consent is key. It is important to indulge in BDSM in a safe and enjoyable way. Open communication with your partner is of primary importance for this.”

To begin with, your man and you can draw

SWEET NOTHING

If bringing up BDSM outside the bedroom isn't your cup of tea, consider an alternative method of discussion. Sexting can work wonders for those who are hesitant about a face-to-face conversation. Next time things get hot and heavy over text, sneak in something along the lines of, “I like it when you...” or “I want you to...” See how your partner responds to the suggestion before you take things forward.

up a list of three criteria: things you are excited to try, things you are skeptical about and things that are completely off limits. Swap lists so that you both are aware of what the other is looking for from the experience and then go on to choose something that satisfies the both of you.

Rule 2 Better safe than sorry

There's a fine line between pain and pleasure in BDSM and a safe word can help you stay on the right side. Basically, it's a word you use when you feel like you can't handle more or need a break before continuing. Since prior discussions can't possibly cover every scene and situation, one cannot consent to things they don't know. A safe word then allows you to withdraw your consent and once uttered, it is honoured.

Besides a safe word, it is also important to go a step further and have a safe gesture as well. Walker cautions that if distressed, one could get confused, be unable to talk



or remember the safe word. "Silence is not a blank check. It is the dominant's responsibility to always be attentive towards the submissive and be ready to stop everything if she or he suspects distress," he says.

While choosing your safe word or gesture, remember to pick one with care. Opt for something that is easy to remember and can't be mistaken as part of the script during BDSM. Some good examples: The word 'red', three consecutive taps on the thigh, clicking your fingers twice, holding on to a bell that can be used or dropping a noisy object on the floor.

Rule 3 Start slow

Shikha Pai*, a 25-year-old content strategist has always been intrigued by BDSM but finds extreme situations of it hard to stomach. "I'm okay with spanking or sensory deprivation. But fisting or humiliation are where I draw the line," she says.

Experts also suggest testing the waters



STARTER KIT

Are you new to BDSM? Here's everything you'll need for a great time.

Dressed to the nines

Apprehensive of donning your new role? Looking the part can definitely help you play the part. Latex, leather or roleplaying costumes—whatever helps you feel comfortable, go for it.

Eye, eye captain

Giving up control can be hard but the easiest way to start can be by giving up your sense of sight. Invest in a soft, satin blindfold for some sexy, feel good fun.

Hands up

If being blindfolded seems intimidating, start with a pair of hand restraints. You don't even have to look further than your wardrobe for these. A tie or soft scarf can work just as well.

Silence please

If you're willing to experiment, incorporate a gag ball in your routine. Using non-verbal language can be playful if tried with a trusted partner.

Spank master

If you're a beginner, a whip might make your face go red with fear. Opt for a paddle instead, since the larger surface area can reduce the impact.

CHOOSE YOUR SAFE WORD OR GESTURE WITH CARE. PICK SOMETHING THAT IS EASY TO REMEMBER.

before getting into hard core BDSM. Exploring power dynamics can always be tricky. A good way to begin would be to try some power games for an hour. For example, your partner and you can take turns being in complete control for an hour and determine tasks and activities for the other person to do. Stick to non-sexual things until a vibe is established.

When treading new sexual territories, take baby steps to explore your threshold—start with some light spanking (buttocks and thigh only), pinching or scratching. Walker explains why this works well to test the waters. "The mere fact of experimenting with non-reciprocal situations (where one inflicts pain and the other receives it) is often enough to sense the intensity of a power dynamic, even if the activities remain light," he says.

Roleplaying or sensory deprivation are also good ways to set the ball rolling. However, exercising caution is key. "Rope bondage requires skills as it carries some risks. It is best to explore leather cuffs, instead," says Walker.

Rule 4 Check in

While a discussion before the session is essential, a check-in session after is just as important. "BDSM can have some physical and psychological after-effects so an aftercare session is a must. Treating an injury or providing a comforting touch can go a long way in making the entire experience great," says Ankansha Pandey, consultant clinical psychology, Fortis Hospital, Bangalore.

While it may be good to talk to your partner about things you two liked, didn't like and how you felt about the session, Walker reminds that there is no universal formula to follow when it comes to checking in on your partner. "Some submissives prefer to be left alone with a blanket and a glass of water. Some need to be held for a long time, others for a short time. There are no rules. Dominants can also require aftercare," he says. **F**

It's said that opposites attract. But what do you do when you're in the mood to get decked to the nines and paint the town red, and all your man wants to do is Netflix and chill in bed? Uh-oh, it's a case of the classic mismatch. But far from indicating relationship doom, an extrovert-introvert pairing works well. Think of it like yin and yang, sun and moon, or night and day! Despite being polar opposites, they just go well together. "They can make a good pair since they balance each other out—an introvert gives the all-over-the-place extrovert some grounding, and in return, the extrovert gives the introvert an extra boost in social activities," says Anastasia Dedhia, founder and chief psychologist at Mind Mantra.

This pairing, however, only works if a couple is aware of their personality differences. "While there are other aspects that influence a couple, this plays an important role since it tells us how a person derives his/her energy—whether from

The perks of **DATING A WALLFLOWER**

There's definitely more to introverts than just being silent or shy.

Simran Ahuja helps you navigate your way while dating one

the outside world, through friends and adventure or from the inside world of solitude and creativity," says psychologist and psychotherapist, Sonal Sonawani.

Despite fairytales making everything sound hunky-dory, there's a lot that goes into this kind of relationship. Here's a quick guide on how you can squash all the challenges that come your way and make the best of your relationship with an introvert.

'He isn't making a move'

You've got your eyes on someone, and you two have had a coy exchange of glances and smiles. Then you wait. And wait some more. But he doesn't come forward or initiate anything. Ladies, it's the 21st century so maybe it's time to stop waiting for him to make the first move. It puts a lot of pressure on the guy—more so if he is an introvert! If you feel a spark or get a similar vibe from him, go on and ask him out for a coffee or for a movie. Not screaming



about his love from the rooftops doesn't mean he isn't interested. Notice the subtle signs, trust your gut and go for it.

'He doesn't like my friends'

So, you made the first move and now you're blissfully happy in your new relationship. And since you're happy, you want the world to know. But if you go about introducing your new man to all your best friends, colleagues and cousins, you might just make him a tad uncomfortable. It's not like your partner doesn't want to meet the important people in your life, he just needs you to ease him into your friend circle slowly. Introducing him to your buddies is a great move since it establishes a connection. Sonawani suggests going about it carefully: "The extrovert needs to understand that though there will be initial resistance when the introvert meets their



DO NOT INTRODUCE YOUR PARTNER TO TOO MANY PEOPLE IN A SHORT SPAN OF TIME.

friend circle, they will get comfortable after the first few times." And since big groups and introverts don't go well together, she recommends not introducing your partner

to too many people in a short span of time or giving up if he doesn't seem to be comfortable after just one or two meetings. Allow him to get comfortable with a few people first

and then introduce them to the rest of the circle. Understand that your partner might not be comfortable with everyone and that's alright. Respect their choice and don't force them to interact with anyone.

'He doesn't spend time with me'

The no-judgement rule applies to anyone you date >

ARE YOU MORE OF AN INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT?

Contrary to popular belief, introversion and extroversion aren't singular black and white areas. Yes, extroverts who like some quiet time and introverts who like having a lot of friends do exist! Think of it more like a spectrum, where you can have varying degrees of both. But to get a general idea of which

side you swing more towards, pay attention to these things:

- If you find it easy to open up to people you've just met, you have more extroverted tendencies, since introverts tend to be closed books until they get comfortable with someone.
- Love being the centre of attention? Thank you

extroverted side for that. Introverts tend to shy away from the spotlight.

- Are you the kind who is the first to speak up and let your ideas be known? You might be more inclined towards extroversion. Introverts are just as smart but they tend to speak up only when prompted.
- Do group conversations exhaust you? Introverts tend

to have a flair for one-on-one conversations and prefer it to the former.

- Introverts usually need some downtime after socialising or often crave 'me-time' in order to recharge.
- Do you struggle with focusing on one thing? That's your extroverted side (unless you have ADHD) making its presence felt.

WHY YOU SHOULD DATE AN INTROVERT

If you are dating one, consider yourself lucky!

Here's why:

➤ Introverts always think before they speak. So, say hello to more meaningful and mature conversations!

➤ They understand the meaning of priorities and are okay with you putting yourself first.

➤ Introverts prefer listening to talking. Date an introvert and you'll never have to complain about having no one to listen to what you have to say or having to repeat yourself ten times to get their undivided attention.

➤ Who said introverts aren't spontaneous? In fact, they tend to be super creative and can be just as much fun.

➤ Introverts are selective when it comes to choosing their inner circle. So, if you make your way in, you can be sure that you're special to him and he'll treat you great.

➤ Stuck in a rut or unsure of what to do? No one better than your introspective partner to help you out! Bonus: They'll wait for you to actually finish your rant before they advise you.

but be doubly conscious of it while dating an introvert. Remember, society and the world at large already judges them, so this is the last thing your partner wants from you. Be it their wish to stay indoors, get some me-time or maintain a small, close-knit group of friends—respect their choices. “You shouldn’t be worried if your partner says they need some space or chooses to stay at home all day. Don’t assume you’ve done something to hurt them or said something wrong. An introvert likes solitude or doing their own thing,” says Dedhia.

That said, don’t assume that all introverts can be typecast into people who crave space, since

some might even get a little too clingy for comfort. Baffled? Sonawani explains: Sometimes, introverts have small social circles and when they start dating someone, they may get dependent on that person for their social needs. “They tend to cling on to their partner and expect too much attention, which could be suffocating for the extrovert.”

How do you find the balance then? While there is no universal answer, it might be best for your partner and you to openly talk about your needs and how the two of you can help the other person achieve it. A great relationship always comes with a generous sprinkling

of communication and a dash of awareness.

‘He doesn’t talk’

If you are dating an introvert, chances are, you mostly fuel the conversation. That’s because introverts just take better to listening than talking. “In the initial months of dating my boyfriend, I realised it was mainly me initiating a conversation—from how my day was to the fight I had with the woman on the bus. And the strangest thing was, he never called me much on the phone either. And when I called, it would go unanswered but almost seconds later I’d get a text from him apologising for missing my call,” says Neha D, a 23-year-old law student.

As frustrating as it may seem at first, if you pay closer attention you might notice that your partner isn’t doing that with just

“DON’T ASSUME YOU’VE DONE OR SAID SOMETHING WRONG. AN INTROVERT LIKES SOLITUDE OR DOING THEIR OWN THING.”

Introverts can be good listeners





Include him in your plans

you. Some introverts don't like to talk much, period. Consider yourself lucky—you won't be able to find a more engrossed audience! Don't take advantage of the situation, however, and be a conversational narcissist. Encourage your partner to engage in the conversation and repay the favour by being a good listener as well. And if you are with a group of friends, brownie points for introducing topics of interest you know your man will enjoy so he can pitch in too.

'We can't decide what to do together'

Ah, the eternal struggle of finding an activity or date idea that appeals to both of you! Dedhia suggests that patience and time can be your biggest allies in helping you overcome this hurdle. And remember, a little acceptance can go a long

SWAP A LIST OF THINGS YOU LIKE AND TAKE TURNS DECIDING HOW THE TWO OF YOU WILL SPEND YOUR TIME TOGETHER.

way! Instead of trying to get your man to always see your way of life, agree to the middle ground. Neha shares the solution she found with her boyfriend: "We both had 9-to-5 jobs and when the weekend arrived, we always had different ideas on what to do. I felt that I needed to head out after sitting in one spot for work through the week. But for him, some creative stimulation is all he needed so hand him a book and he would be good for the weekend. Yet, we found our balance. On Saturdays, I get to call the shots and Sundays are his to plan," she says. Dedhia too is of the same opinion and believes that since relationships are equal partnerships, it takes two

to keep the boat from sinking. And the easiest way to do that? Swap a list of things you like and take turns deciding how the two of you will spend your time together.

'He doesn't get out of his comfort zone'

When we love, we love hard. And when we love hard, we tend to push hard too. It's easy to pick out flaws with an introvert—"they aren't spontaneous"; "they aren't going to go places because they're too quiet"—but if you try to push your partner to change himself, you're only going to end up isolating him. "If you think your

INTROVERTS IN LOVE

Calling all introverts out there! Here's a fool-proof guide to finding a partner and making relationships less of a minefield for you.

➤ If it's your first date and you're dreading the small talk, suggest an activity instead. A comedy show, bowling or games at an arcade, maybe?

➤ Try online dating or ask your friends to set you up with someone they think you would like. Text the person a couple of days before meeting them to build a rapport. This will ease your nerves when you do eventually meet them.

➤ If you want to try something more organic, put yourself out there more—join classes or workshops to widen your circle and meet more like-minded people.

➤ Don't let your introversion intimidate you or turn you into someone you are not. Remember that you bring plenty to the table.

partner doesn't have too many friends, try including them in your plans or schedule some group activities. This way, they don't have to be alone in facing such situations and have you for backup," says Dedhia. Instead of forcing your partner, be patient and wait for him to open up at his own pace. **E**

Act of love

These actors play out perfect love stories on screen, and know a thing or two about real-life love too, finds **Anuja Premika**



NO SHOP TALK

When it comes to talking about work, love and life in general, Kareena Kapoor Khan is about as honest as they come. While confessing that possessiveness is natural in any relationship, the actor shared with a leading daily that her marriage to Saif Ali Khan has never suffered the brunt of undue jealousy. "I'm possessive, but I'm not interfering. I don't question him about his schedules or his co-stars and we both like it that way." Her advice? Leave work where it belongs. "Try and not discuss work at home, especially if you're from the same field," she says.

"IT'S ABOUT MENTAL COMPATIBILITY. YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO LAUGH TOGETHER. YOU HAVE TO FIND THE SAME THINGS FUNNY."

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Priyanka Chopra loves to reiterate that she's still a simple person at heart. Her take on relationships is no exception. PC believes that being swept off your feet can be great, but you need to find yourself a man with whom you can appreciate even the little things. "It's about mental compatibility. You have to be able to laugh together. You have to find the same things funny. You have to be able to spend time together doing nothing," she told a leading magazine.



SPEAK YOUR TRUTH

Deepika Padukone's personal life has been in the eye of a media storm. When asked if the constant attention puts pressure on her love life, the actor has maintained that she has nothing to hide from those she holds dear. "I make it easier by being honest about my feelings for all the people in my life, good, bad, past and present. I'm very, very clear and honest that this is how it is," she shared with an entertainment magazine.

LOVE YOURSELF

Alia's advice to young women is simple: Learn self-love before all else. "I'd like every girl to love herself more than anyone else. That's the only way they'll never land up hurting themselves," she shared with a film magazine. She added that relationships take sacrifice but there is a line to be drawn. "When you love someone you forget about yourself. You become a doormat and let everyone walk over you. You stop caring about yourself. That shouldn't happen." Well said!



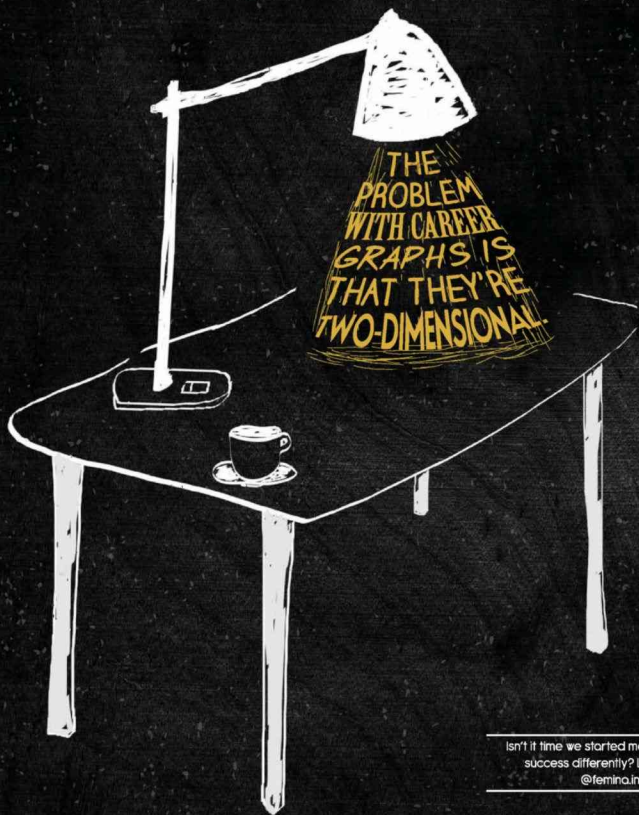
PUT IN THE WORK

Vidya Balan isn't afraid to admit that there have been dull moments in her six-year-long marriage with Siddharth Roy Kapur. When you know your partner is always within reach, it's easy to forget how special the relationship is, she told a leading daily. "When people would say that marriages need constant work, I always wondered what it meant. Now I know that it means not to take each other for granted," she says. **T**



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LITTLE MISS PICKY

Dealing with a fussy eater can be hard. Use these tips and tricks to ensure your little munchkin is munching on the right things



From running a home to acing their careers, there's nothing women can't manage. But if there's one thing that drives a mother to her wit's end, it's dealing with a picky eater. Says Dr Indu Khosla, practicing paediatrician at Cloudnine Hospital, Mumbai, who we caught up with at PediaSure's latest launch, "It's important for parents not to worry. As long as the child is not falling ill and sticking to their growth chart, it's fine." While kids get less picky as they grow up, dealing with a tiny tot who refuses to eat the right things can be hard. But before you give up or give in to their demands, read this handy guide to ensure your child is getting the right nutrients.

Masterchef junior

The best way to get your kids to eat is to take them grocery shopping, and let them pick their favourite vegetables and fruits. Enlist their help in planning the menu or ask them to help you out in the kitchen with easier processes like washing vegetables. Their involvement is likely to make them taste the dishes they helped you prepare.

Two is better than one

Children usually imitate their parents. So, if they see you eating certain foods, they just might follow. "The family is a child's role model. Children associate right and wrong with what they see their parents doing. So, when parents eat the right foods, kids also consider it the right thing to eat," says Dr Eileen Canday, HOD, nutrition and

dietetic department at Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital, Mumbai.

Take it slow

Forcing something down your kids' throat won't help. So, instead of asking them to finish it all, just appreciate their effort to eat even a little, and offer them something else instead.

"It might take some time for kids to develop a taste or liking for a particular food. Instead, look for means and ways to mask the food before offering it to your child. Also, educating them about the benefits of the food they are eating might help them stomach it better," says Dr Canday.

Give in sometimes

Every time your child throws a tantrum and you rush to the kitchen to prepare their favourite dishes, you are enabling their habit of choosing what to eat. Begin healthier eating habits by saying 'no' gently, at least more often than not. "An indulgence once in a while is fine. It's also important to ensure your child is physically active to maintain a balance between calorie intake and outtake," says Dr Khosla. **f**

SHAKE IT

Looking for a milkshake that is both tasty and healthy? Try this:

Ingredients

- 1 cup PediaSure Cookies and Cream
- 2 bananas
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 tbsp honey
- Whipped cream, for serving

Method

- Blend all the ingredients in a food processor.
- Pour into a tall glass, top with whipped cream and serve.

FENDI



Faux leather bag, ₹4,400, Accessorize



ANTONIO BERARDI

STRONG SUIT

www.thesecretsoffashion.com

Break away from the monochrome pantsuit and rev up your work wardrobe with never-seen-before silhouettes and an exciting new palette

ASHLEY N. SONI

Leather belt, ₹2,325, Hidesign



Polyblend blazer, ₹5,499, Mural



Crepe dress, ₹9,206, Eliza J



LOVEBIRDS



TOM FORD



SPORT MAX



Patent leather loafers, ₹27,699, Pa | Green

Plaid blazer,
₹9,359,
Halogen



Acetate
sunglasses,
price on
request,
Longchamp

Cotton shirt,
₹2,499,
United Colors
of Benetton @
Myntra.com



LOOK SHARP

Intense tailoring and strong
cuts will get you the job
you want



Cotton shirt,
₹1,799, ONLY



Brass and
resin earrings,
₹1,290,
Fabindia



Cotton blend
trousers,
₹28,734,
Rag & Bone



Leather
tote, price
on request,
Saint
Laurent



Leather mules, ₹4,439,
Steve Madden @
Nordstrom.com



Leather sling, price on request, **Fendi**



Leather clutch, ₹16,000, **Longchamp**



www.t.melverarchi.official

Leather tote, price on request, **Christian Louboutin**



FLASH PARTY

We all love an attention-grabbing accessory. What's better than a quirky and colourful arm candy for work!

Leather tote, ₹5,490, **Accessorize**



Leather backpack, ₹9,299, **Charles & Keith**



Leather clutch, ₹7,999, **Dune London**



1

2

3

FLOWER POWER

From runway moments to street-style clicks, flower-adorned jewellery is blooming right now

7

5

4

6

1. Blue precious stone and diamond necklace. **Praakshi Fine Jewellery**
2. Fine cut diamond studs, **Shazé**
3. Diamond cuff, **Chanel**
4. Green stone and pearl drop earrings, **Adawna by Sonal's Bijoux**
5. Yellow, black and classic diamond studs, **Aurelle by Leshna Shah**
6. White and pink diamond brooch, **Latique**
7. Diamond ring, **Minawala Jewellers**



SHINING STAR

Designer Farah Khan Ali, who recently completed 25 years in the industry, believes that jewellery is more than just pretty accessories. **Rushmika Banerjee** does a closer inspection

Farah Khan Ali hails from a family of spirited women, whose strong design sensibilities are renowned internationally. Her sisters, Susanne Khan and Simone Arora, dabble in space and interior design, while Farah has made a mark with her nature-inspired jewellery, which she says is designed for 'the real woman'. Khan Ali founded her eponymous label in 2004 and is a favourite with B-town celebs like Dia Mirza, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Deepika Padukone and Malaika Arora. Excerpts from an interview where the designer talks about her 25-year-long career, which she has always been passionate about, and her inspirations.

How did you get into jewellery designing?

My journey as a jewellery designer began 25 years ago when, on a whim, I decided to do a course in gemology at the Gemological Institute of America. The intent was actually to accompany a friend who had signed up for the



(Clockwise)
Jewellery from the brand; designer Farah Khan Ali; Malaika Arora wearing earrings from the label

course. My aim, however, was different. I wanted to party in Los Angeles; but destiny had other plans. From day one I studied so hard that instead of becoming the party animal, I became the nerd who topped the class. I followed it up with a jewellery design course, which I completed in 1993. I returned to India to intern and work with various well-known jewellers for the next few years. Simultaneously, I also worked on my own and took jewellery orders from clients on the basis of intricately sketched creations. Since I came from a Bollywood family, at first, people were curious about me, so they would walk through the door to meet me and see my work. Eventually, they kept coming back because they realised I was serious about my work and slowly, but surely, people started talking about my design aesthetic. ▶



(Clockwise) Sketches and final creation; images of the jewellery-making process; ring and earrings from the collection

What inspires you?

I have four pillars of design inspiration—nature, architecture, love, and, most importantly, ethics, because everything I do, I believe in doing it right, especially the ethical sourcing of gemstones. Among the jewellery designers in India, I look up to Viren Bhagat who I believe is a great artist. His creations are like paintings; every design takes a lot of time and effort. I am inspired by his vision.

Describe the Farah Khan Ali aesthetic.

My designs are flamboyant, ornate and adventurous. I believe that jewellery should be eye-catching and make you feel special, no matter how big or small the piece. I don't just love to design, I live to design.

What are your core values as a designer?

I believe that whatever one sets out to do, one must do it very well, such that they create



“I BELIEVE THAT JEWELLERY SHOULD BE EYE-CATCHING AND MAKE YOU FEEL SPECIAL, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL THE PIECE.”

a signature for their work—passion is a very important aspect of my life as a designer.

What has been your biggest learning in these past 25 years?

If you are not prepared, then not even luck will get you by. There are no shortcuts to success and the only advice I can give anyone who wants to succeed is to work hard, work diligently, and never give up.

Tell us about your latest collection.

It's inspired by my monogram Aayat. Crafted in 18-karat gold, the pieces are statement-making yet epitomise contemporary femininity. They can be worn with sharp sartorial choices or more traditional ensembles. With a splash of champagne and white diamonds encrusted in rose gold, a colour pop of gemstones and hand-painted enamelling, this collection is an ode to the many moods of today's woman. I love it more because it's playfully mismatched and can be worn in many different ways. 

STRIPE RIGHT

Boardroom stripes get a serious makeover with super bright strokes and deconstructed details. These B-town ladies show us how to fall in line



(Clockwise) Swara Bhasker in **Archana & Puneeth**; Sonam Kapoor in **United Colors of Benetton**; Athiya Shetty in **Ikai**; Deepika Padukone in **Sabyasachi**; Nushrat Bharucha in **Rhea Pillai Rastogi**

GET IN LINE

Stripes are friends of your minimal wardrobe. Offset the look with a series of striped shirts and trousers.

Crêpe blouse, ₹6,800.
Hera by AJ



RUFFLED UP

Amp up your look with minimal details. A frilled hem adds just the right amount of oomph.

Poly blend dress,
price on request.

TheLabelLife.com,

cotton palazzos, ₹4,495,

Vero Moda; faux leather

heels, ₹1,999, [Intoto](#)

www.t.me/velarch_official

MAXIMALLY MINIMAL

Minimalism is the new wave and we are totally on board! **Prachiti Parakh** takes you on a fuss-free ride to decluttering



www.t.me/velarchofficial

EASY DOES IT

Team an oversized T-shirt with flared pants for an offbeat look. Add platform sandals for extra style points.

Cotton T-shirt, ₹949,
Forever 21: flared
trousers, ₹7800, **Hera**
by AJ, PU platform
sandals, price on
request, **Melissa**

A HINT
OF DRAMA

Minimal does not
have to be boring.
Add a hint of print or
embellishment to spice
up your look.

Cotton blend dress,
₹1,439; **SR Store**;
patchwork cape, ₹2,399,
Forever 21; leather
heels, ₹4,995,
Carlton London ▶

www.t.melvelareofficial



MONOTONE
MADNESS

Jump on the monotone wagon. Dress in one colour from head to toe to elongate your figure.

Ribbed T-shirt, ₹1,149, suede ankle boots, ₹2,299, both **Forever 21**; linen blazer, ₹3,299, linen trousers, ₹2,499, both **Vero Moda**; metal watch, ₹21,500, **Guess**





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MIX IT UP

Throw in a pair of quirky trousers to elevate your minimal look. Keep the length cropped to amp up the style quotient.

Cotton shirt, price on request, **Ralph Lauren**; cotton cropped trousers, ₹3,900, **Maku Textiles**; leather loafers, ₹3,695, **Woods by Woodland** >



BOSS WOMAN

Pair an oversized blazer with straight-fit pants. Offset the strong lines with the softness of a chiffon shirt.

Chiffon shirt, ₹2,299,
Vero Moda; cotton
blend blazer, ₹6,999.

Arrow; poly blend
trousers, ₹1,599. **Cape
& Cloth**; faux leather
heels, ₹1,999. **Intoto** >

www.official

BORROWED
FROM
THE BOYS

Add an androgynous
edge to your look with
crisp dress shirts and
tweed trousers.

Linen shirt, price on
request, **Sunil Mehra**;
tweed trousers, ₹8,999,
Tommy Hilfiger >

www.timevsarchofficial

GO WITH THE FLOW

A clean shirt dress
with slits paired with
deconstructed mom
jeans spells street
style chic.

Chiffon shirt dress, price
on request, Zara; denim
trousers, Madewell;
patent brogues, ₹5,799,
Charles & Keith >



www.thevelarch_official

DRESSES OVER SKIRTS

When you are feeling experimental, throw on a dress over your favourite skirt.

Cotton dress, ₹1,499.
Cape & Cloth: ribbed skirt, ₹1,149. **SR Store:** patent loafers, ₹4,995.
Woods by Woodland



COLOUR ME RAD

Delhi-based label Yavi's latest collection of khadi outfits is just what you need to elevate your easy-breezy style. Featuring tunics, pants, tops and dresses in bright, fresh hues and myriad prints, the complete range has a bold edge, thanks to the designer's love for impressionist artwork.

PRICE: ₹9,000 onwards
AVAILABLE AT: Studio Yavi.com



GRAB AND GO

We are totally digging the collection of handcrafted totes from Shades of India. Their accessories are super-fun, with details like polka dots, bright tassels and metallic foiling, paired up with indigenous work like katha, crochet and dori. Definitely carry-alls we want by our sides on that beach holiday.

PRICE: ₹4,500 onwards
AVAILABLE AT: Shades of India stores in Gurgaon and Delhi

Trending

Femina's round-up of the latest news, views and buzz in fashion

JEAN POOL

We are always on the lookout for great denim deals, and AND's summer collection has got our vote. Think jumpsuits, A-line dresses and off-shoulder blouses in different denim washes. Get your hands on these before all your friends do!

PRICE: ₹1,999 onwards
AVAILABLE AT: AND stores across India



CRUISE CALLING

Michael Kors' Resort 2019 collection is all sorts of cool. We are totally eyeing those printed dresses, embroidered bottoms, ruffled skirts and tailored blouses, any of which would be a perfect addition to your jet-setting lifestyle. Oh, and this caught our eye—the return of the socks with sandals trend.

PRICE: On request
AVAILABLE AT: Select Michael Kors retail stores



LAUNCHES WE LOVE

We are delighted to announce the launch of fashion brand Perona at The Chanakya, New Delhi. Known for its clean, geometric shapes, Perona lets you experience some of the finest leather accessories and sharp outfits. Fashion-forward label Huemn has launched their e-commerce store Huemn.in with an exciting offering—a clothing section titled Non-binary—for people who don't like labels. **1**

FEMINA

BEAUTY

www.t.me/velarch_official

Eye CANDY

Charmaine Rao Soares, makeup artist,
Clarins Paris, shows **Sanjana Salunkhe** how
to look gorgeous with bright and bold eyes.
Photographs: **Vinay Javkar**

www.timestelarch.com

COUNTRY CALLING

Take a nostalgic trip with these rustic shades. Start by using gold-toned eyeshadow on the eyelids. Follow with a white liquid eyeliner drawn along the crease of the eye. Extend the same liner to the lower lash line. Brush your eyebrows and shape with an eyebrow pencil. Finish with a nude lipstick.

FLORAL BLOOM

Why just relegate flowers to crowns when you can play around with pretty buds? For a flawless finish, keep your base matte.

Dab metallic rose gold eyeshadow on the lids. Groom your brows with a brow kit. Apply lengthening mascara to your eyelashes. Now, using eyelash glue, play with petals and tiny blooming buds, sticking them on your face. ▶



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PEARLEFFECT

Add this classic jewellery staple to your beauty look. Start with a matte pink eyeshadow smudged on the eyes.

Take the same hue to the outer corners. Highlight the inner corners with a rose gold pigment. Smudge the same hue on the lower lash line. Follow by applying pearls under your eyes with eyelash glue for an extravagant look. Pair with an ombre pink lip. >

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NEON-TASTIC

Create a bold look with multiple colours. Start by prepping your eyes with an eye primer. Contour the eyes for a chiselled effect. Use black kohl pencil to line your upper eyelids. Extend into a winged eye. For the lower lash line, use a combination of pink and black kohl to line the eyes. Next, apply falsies with eyelash glue and coat your lashes with generous amounts of brightly coloured mascara. >

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THE ENCHANTRESS

Sultry yet pretty, this timeless smoky eye is easy to achieve.

Prep your eyes with a concealer, a base foundation and use a black kohl pencil to line the eyes.

Next, smudge black eyeshadow on the eyelids. Extend the hue to the crease with a blending brush. Smudge the hue on the lower lash line to create a smoky effect.

Finish with generous amounts of mascara. »

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COOL WAVE

Capture some poolside romance with true blue lids. Start by smudging aqua blue eyeshadow on the eyes. Blend to cover the entire eyelid. Smudge the same hue on the lower lash line. Highlight the inner corners of the eyes with white eyeshadow. Follow by applying clear gloss on the eyelid for an illuminated effect. Pair with mascara and black kohl eyeliner on the waterline. Finish the look with a glossy pink lip. ■



PEACH FLUSH

This is the perfect shade when you're in the mood to go monochrome, finds **Madhura Sansare**



Monochrome makeup had a big moment last year, and was seen extensively both on and off the ramp. The matching trend was a favourite among celebrities as well. Everyone, from Kylie Jenner to Sonam Kapoor, was seen sporting it. And the shade that reigned the palette was peach. Apart from being an all-season shade, it is also a versatile colour that suits just about every skin tone. Pooja Hegde was recently seen wearing a peachy monochrome look that we can't wait to copy. Here's how.



FACE

Start off by applying a luminising primer to keep your makeup in place for longer. Follow with a liquid foundation in the shade closest to your skin tone, and hide any flaws and imperfections with a concealer. This will ensure that you get a flawless base for your makeup.



CHEEKS

Use a peach blush on the apples of your cheeks for a flushed look. Swipe some highlighter on your forehead, the highest points of your cheekbones, the bridge and tip of your nose, the browbone and the chin for a healthy, happy glow.

EYES

Apply an eye primer to keep the makeup in place. Use a silver eyeshadow over your lids. Follow with a shimmery peach-toned eyeshadow on your upper lashline. Concentrate the pigment at the outer edges of your eyes and keep it close to your lashline. Use the same eyeshadow on your lower lashline as well. Highlight the inner corners of your eyes with silver eyeshadow. Stick some falsies on your lashes, curl them, and coat generously with mascara to open up your eyes.



LIPS

Use a lip scrub to exfoliate your lips and provide an even base for your lipstick. Finish off with a peachy lip colour.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

FOR WORK

Amp up the blush, and tone down the highlighter.

FOR A WEDDING

Tightline your eyes with a liner and kohl to make them pop.

FOR A DATE

Swap the peach lipstick with a crimson one to add some oomph to the look.

MAKEUP

Are there any tricks to make your eyelashes look longer?

— Mira Eashawar, Bangalore

Eyelashes can appear extended with the right volumising and lengthening mascaras. The thinner the wand, the more defined the look. You can also apply white base-coat mascara before your regular mascara. There are also fibre mascaras available in the market that give you long lashes. False lashes or lash extensions work well too.

KAPIL BHALLA

Renowned celebrity makeup artiste



SKIN

Is there a way to permanently get rid of dark circles?

— Sasha Sequeira, Goa

Dark circles can occur due to lack of sleep, stress, smoking, low haemoglobin or allergies. Apply an under-eye cream or serum containing vitamin K and C at bedtime and a sunscreen during the day. Glycolic acid peel treatments and lasers help in reducing dark circles. If the problem is sunken eyes, which cast a shadow underneath, hyaluronic acid fillers could be a solution.

Dr JAISHREE SHARAD

Celebrity cosmetic dermatologist and CEO of Skinfiniti Aesthetic Skin & LASER clinic, Mumbai



HAIR

What are the correct blow-drying techniques?

— Amrita Joshi, Mumbai

Firstly, you need to ensure you rinse out your shampoo and conditioner thoroughly. After a wash, if there's residual conditioner, the blow dry will make your hair look flat and greasy. Take note of the pre-styling products you are using. Make sure to use the right hairspray or serum. Blow dry your hair on high heat for a better finish. 

SAVIO JOHN PEREIRA

Celebrity hairstylist and founder and creative director of Savio John Pereira Salon



YOU ASK

The one-stop panel for all your skin, makeup and hair questions

Send in your queries to femina@wmm.co.in

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Minimal INSPIRATION

Summer calls for subtle nails, kept to the bare minimum, says **Tatiana Dias**

Pastels pair perfectly with the season and while you can wear them loud and proud, you could also turn down the volume a notch. Begin by creating a gorgeous ombré with two shades of the same colour together. Finish with a clear top coat for a glossy effect. ➤

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE

Since when did sticking out like a
sore thumb become a bad thing?

Let's talk. [@femina.in/gossip](https://twitter.com/femina_in/gossip)



IT'S BETTER
TO BE HATED
BY EVERYONE,
THAN BE KNOWN
BY NO ONE.

The official party season may have ended, but that shouldn't stop you from flashing a little bling. Start by creating an even base of two to three coats of white nail paint. Then add clear nail paint with glitter to just the tips. Make sure to give it a gradient effect to complete the minimalist look.



There's nothing fiercer than jet black claws, so go on and give them a glam upgrade with a metallic touch. First, apply a thick coat of matte black nail polish. Then take a thin metallic strip and stick it to the nail bed of one or two fingers, leaving a tiny gap between the cuticle and the strip. Add a clear mattifying coat to keep it in place, for an extra matte impact.

**THE OFFICIAL PARTY SEASON MAY HAVE ENDED,
BUT THAT SHOULDN'T STOP YOU FROM
FLASHING A LITTLE BLING.**



Baby blue and white make a sweet pair indeed. Fill the crescent of your nail with a thick coat of white. Then leave a semi-circle-shaped gap and paint the rest of your nail blue. An additional matte top coat will subdue the gloss, giving it a nice and rustic vibe. 

HOT RIGHT NOW

All that's fresh and fun
on the beauty shelf

GET SET, RESET

Recharge your skin by buffing away dead skin cells and unblocking pores with Klara Cosmetics Reset Gel. This ground-breaking gel brings you the technology of microdermabrasion in a bottle. It is formulated with olive extracts that boost the moisture levels of the skin, French honey that fights redness and inflammation, and bamboo that encourages collagen production. This magical product contains the secret to smooth and radiant skin. PRICE: ₹2,310
AVAILABLE AT: Sephora

BLOOM AWAY

Step into a sensory world of endless blue skies and blooming flowers with Marc Jacobs Daisy Twinkle. The fragrance opens with the sweet essence of berries, mixed with a hint of floral violet leaves. The scent gradually transcends into a bright and creamy white wood base. PRICE: ₹4,900
AVAILABLE AT: Parcos



FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

The search for forever youthful and glowing skin ends now: Decléor Aromessence Neroli Oil Serum is a deeply nourishing oil serum focused on combating ageing. It contains completely natural oils of iris and geranium, as well as plant oils like hazelnut, plum kernel and borage. Get ready to plump up your skin and minimise the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. PRICE: ₹2,700
AVAILABLE AT: All leading salons

FRUIT PUNCH

Moisturise your skin this monsoon with crème that has a fruity twist. The Body Shop Body Yoghurt is a refreshing gel-cream that instantly soaks into your skin, moments after application. Its lightweight formula allows for up to 48 hours of moisture without the added stickiness—which means you can smoothly slip into your jeans 15 seconds after application. A hundred per cent vegan, this yoghurt is available in strawberry, mango, moringa, British rose, and special-edition banana. PRICE: ₹845
AVAILABLE AT: The Body Shop stores

LEG DAY

Make your thighs strong as steel with these simple exercises, says **Kriti Saraswat-Satpathy**

Our legs are the pillars that support our body and it's easy to take them for granted. We use them every day and assume the walking or running we get in are sufficient to stay in shape. But to improve the tone of your leg muscles, you need to incorporate more focused exercises in your routine. Before we take you through the basics, let's start by identifying the most important muscle group in the thigh area. The quads are a large muscle group that form the front of your thighs and include four muscles, namely rectus femoris, vastus lateralis, vastus medialis and vastus intermedius. Hamstrings are found at the back, and the abductor muscles found on the inside of the thighs. Make sure you stretch and warm up before you jump into this workout.

SQUATS

Target your hamstrings and quads, and tone your glutes too in the process. To do a squat, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands outstretched in front to help you balance. Now lower yourself, without bending your back, as if you were sitting on an imaginary chair. Your head and chest are likely to extend forward. Remember, your thighs should be parallel to the floor and your knees should bend at a 90-degree angle, without extending over your toes. Come back up to the starting position and do three sets of 10 reps each.



ELLIPTICAL WORKOUTS

If you hit the gym regularly, spend a little more time on the elliptical machine. Even though it is a cardio exercise, it's great for toning the thighs. The motion does not put excess pressure on your joints, and you can go on for good 20-30 minutes at a stretch. It is, however, advisable that you consult your physical trainer once and start slow.

SIDE-LYING LEG LIFTS

All you need is a mat. Target your inner thighs with this exercise. Lie down on one side with your body forming a straight line. Extend your bottom arm for head and neck support, and place the top hand in front of your chest. Joining both legs together, lift the top leg off the floor as high as possible. Your hips should be stationary and toes should point forward. Hold the pose for two seconds and then lower the leg without touching the mat. Repeat the action and do two sets of 15 reps on each side.



LUNGES

This exercise also targets the leg muscles, but the effect is more on the hamstrings due to the greater range of motion. Stand straight with your hands on your waist. Now move one leg forward and lower your hips until both your knees are bent at a 90-degree angle. They should not extend beyond your ankle and the knee of the back leg should not touch the floor. To avoid straining the knees, put your weight on your heels while returning to the starting position. Repeat the motion with the other leg. Do two sets of 10 lunges for each leg. **1**



Driven by success

Mumbai-based Sneha Kamath started a driving school for women with the aim of getting them to take control of their lives. **Nikita Sawant** chats with the entrepreneur

My mother always told me that I would do something exceptional," says Sneha Kamath. As a young girl, she would look at the fleet of parked *kaali-peeli* taxis that were part of her father's business and wonder when she would be able to drive. At 17, seeing how keen she was, her elder brother started training her, and within four days, she was driving like a pro.

A head-on approach to do something extraordinary led her to start her driving initiative, She Can Drive, in 2012—one that caters only to women. She says, "Most of the women I spoke to or met didn't know how to drive. Often, they were made to believe they couldn't, because they're women. The phobia that they wouldn't be able to drive was already formed in their minds." Kamath came across many women who wanted to learn to drive but didn't get the right guidance. Putting her driving skills to good use seemed like the right thing to do.

When Kamath launched She Can Drive online, she found that she had a waitlist of eight to nine months, which meant that the demand was high. Encouraged, she started training women single-handedly, and has so far trained over 750 women. She says, "For some women, it's a dream come true—to know how to drive. The reasons are many: for some, it's a necessity because they need to travel to work, or it's their bread and butter, or it's just to prove that they can drive."



“Women should not suppress their desire to learn to drive. Get out of your comfort zone; don't let your inner fears hold you back.”

"I had a couple of clients, both sisters, who were employed in the clothing industry. They had to carry a lot of clothing and travel long distances. Transport was

a problem for them. I taught them how to drive in 10 days; now they can do so confidently. Another client, a pregnant woman, wanted to drive to the hospital for her sonography tests alone. Within the ninth session, she had learnt how to drive and had fulfilled her dream," recalls Kamath.

Finance was the biggest challenge Kamath faced; the first year was all about investing in her initiative. But the sea change that she's brought about today is worth it all. There's a lot that sets She Can Drive apart from other conventional driving schools in India. Kamath explains, "You're not in control of the vehicle. You feel like you're manoeuvring and driving perfectly, but you're not learning anything because the instructor is always in charge. When I'm teaching someone, I don't have any control over the car." Secondly, there's a certain lack of respect for women drivers. "More often than not, we have male instructors who come with the mindset that women can't drive. This leads to the instructor not being able to impart the necessary skills to the student," she says.

Kamath's motto is simple—she wants to help women make a difference in their lives. She wants them to remember that driving a car is not rocket science. Women are gifted with the ability to multitask, and we should make the most of it. "This helps us excel at driving. Women should not suppress their desire to learn to drive. Get out of your comfort zone; don't let your inner fears hold you back," she says.

The girl next door

She's sugar, spice and everything nice. **Nikita Sawant** chats with Jacqueline Fernandez about her dream role, her increasingly brilliant career graph, plus box office success, and how she keeps up with her craft. Photographs: **Taras Taraporvala**

Jacqueline Fernandez is having the time of her life. After the resounding success of *Judwaa 2* last year and the recent release of *Race 3*, this fresh-faced Bollywood diva is now gearing up for her next big movie, *Drive*, co-starring Sushant Singh Rajput. In the 10 years that she's been in the industry, Fernandez has managed to garner a massive following comprising grownups and children alike. So much so that it wouldn't be surprising to walk in on the kids in your family shaking a leg to the tunes of *Chitiya Kalaiya* or *Chalti Hai Kya 9 Se 12*. And Fernandez is clearly basking in all the love that she's receiving from her little fans. It shows on her face too; she radiates positivity and joy on the day of the *Femina* cover shoot. You can't help but feel happy for the Sri Lankan beauty who was once an outsider, and has now slowly but surely made a mark in the film industry. ➤

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REALITY cover girl

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"What works is one thing and one thing only—it's how focused you are and how willing you are to push yourself."

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*"To be in front of
the camera, to get
into character;
to prep for
it, to create
something out
of thin air—it's all
really exciting."*

**Your career trajectory is on a steady rise.
To what do you owe your success?**

At the end of the day, there are so many people who come together and are immensely helpful and supportive while making a film. But it does ultimately come down to you—how much you want something and how far you're willing to push yourself for it.

Judwaa 2, particularly, put you in the spotlight as an actor with impeccable comic timing. Did you have fun shooting the film?

It was so much fun—Varun (Dhawan) and I have a great equation! In the beginning, I was a little confused and nervous because I was working with Davidji (Dhawan) for the first time. He would give me the scene and when I would try it, he'd tell me if I needed more energy. I couldn't understand what that meant for the longest time. But he is a genius. Finally, when I saw the film on the screen, I got what he meant. After all the films he's directed over the years, I think he knows how to work with his actors.

Which co-star do you feel most comfortable working with?

Varun and I are close friends, so he's very easy to work with. I'd love to say Salman (Khan), but I think he's very intimidating (laughs). I say this because of his star power. I also find Akshay (Kumar) easy to work with.

What do you think is more important to a film's success—hard work or luck?

What works is one thing and one thing only—it's how focused you are and how willing you are to push yourself in that direction. I don't believe in luck. If you just sit back and think your luck will help you, it's not going to happen. I've been in this industry for almost 10 years, and trust me, it's really about putting yourself out there and working on your craft.

What challenges did you face in the professional and personal space while chasing your dreams?

Definitely the language; secondly, I was not from the industry, so that was challenging. I didn't really know who was giving me good advice, who wasn't, or who was trustworthy and who wasn't. I faced those challenges and made my own mistakes as opposed to having the right guidance all along.

Who has been your support system in your personal life and at work?

My family. From day one, they've been so positive about everything that I do here. Also, the people



I've been working with. Sujoy Ghosh right in the beginning, Sajid Nadiadwala who I've done six films with, Salman Khan, Mohit Suri, Sonam (Kapoor) and her folks who have been like second family to me here, Varun and his family... they've made me feel like I'm part of this industry.

Kids seem to love you. Did you expect to garner such a big kiddie following?

I think it's because many of my films are kiddie-friendly like *Judwaa 2* and *A Flying Jatt*. I met Shilpa's (Shetty) son the other day, and okay, he's a big fan of Tiger Shroff, but he was excited to meet me too (laughs). These films have definitely helped me build a fan base with children.

What's the best thing about acting?

It's just that—acting. Actors are very creative people. To be in front of the camera, to get into character, to prep for it, to create something out of thin air—it's all really exciting. Then to put it all on celluloid—it's like an art. ▶

SATIN POLYESTER BALETTE, ₹1,390; ZOOCHIBERG, TWEED BLOUETTE WOOL PENCIL SKIRT, PRICE ON REQUEST; DIOR METAL STUDS, ₹3,950; SHWANI NAREISH X SWAROOSH CONFIDENCE; STAINLESS STEEL WATCH, ₹62,990; JUST CANALI; LEATHER BELT, ₹3,790; CHARLES & KEITH

"I am my best critic and I analyse my own performances."

What sacrifices do you have to make in your personal life?

In a way, you let go of your social life. You can balance it; I'm not saying it's impossible. But since it's such an absorbing industry, you have to be involved in all of it. That takes up a lot of your time and mental space. You can go out for dinner with friends, but you might not be there mentally.

What was it like when you started out ten years ago? Was it easy to land projects?

To be honest, it was actually quite easy. I think it's because our industry is very fast-paced. When you first start out, people may be hesitant because they don't know who you are, but they're also curious about new faces and new talent. When you work on a couple of films, you need to be able to maintain your standing and keep outdoing yourself continuously. If you don't, you'll easily be replaced with someone else.

What's life like now, after all your commercial hits?

It's become a lot more comfortable for me. I used to be anxious and always think about what the next film was going to be. Now I want to work with nice people and do good stories.

How much does criticism about your films or your performances affect you?

A lot of the time it doesn't get to me as much. I am my best critic and I analyse my own performances. I recognise if I could have done something better, or changed something about a character a bit.

Is there a message you'd like to give to the scores of young Indian women who look up to you?

One of the hardest challenges I faced was to learn to accept and love myself. Once you accomplish that, life becomes much better.



You have a great sense of style.

What influences it?

Honestly, I'm not into fashion that much. I work with a bunch of stylists who know what looks nice on me. The most important thing is feeling good in what I wear. It's about what flatters your body and what makes you feel comfortable.

What about a beauty routine? Do you follow one?

The number one thing is you've got to be in a really good head space. Stress is one of the worst things. Eat foods that don't add to your stress. Have a good fitness regime. Another thing to make sure of is that your skin is clean before you go to bed—cleanse it, tone it, and apply moisturiser. ➤



"One of the hardest challenges I faced was to learn to accept and love myself."

What do you tell yourself when walking the red carpet?

Be classy! (Laughs) I know all the photographers now and I always end up chatting with them and getting clicked mid-conversation. For the sake of your pictures you have to look composed and proper, but I always mess that up.

You were born and raised in Bahrain, but spent many summer vacations in Sri Lanka, where your father is from. What's your best memory from that time?

My extended family still lives there. We would wait for the summer holidays to begin so we could jump on a plane and leave for Sri Lanka. The best part was after coming from a desert like Bahrain, we got to be amidst so much nature and greenery. We would play cricket in the garden, run in paddy fields, play with buffaloes, have leeches stuck to us, go on huge treks and shower in waterfalls and lagoons. It was such a beautiful and fun time.

A hashtag that describes you.

#Positive.

What's the one risk you took recently that paid off?

Probably pole dancing. It was looked down upon by so many people when I took it up, but quite well received later.

What makes you unstoppable?

Self-talk (laughs). You need to keep telling yourself that you can do it and that you're worthy.

What's next for you?

There are things in the pipeline, but I'm going to wait for Drive to release before I figure out what the line-up for my next films will be. **1**



FUNNY SIDE UP

With over a million subscribers on YouTube, Prajakta Koli, aka MostlySane, is one of India's most popular digital influencers. **Nikita Sawant** finds out what makes her click with the audience

Her content is fresh, funny and relatable. It's something that will make you stop and think, 'Hey didn't this just happen with me last week?' It's also relevant and genuine, much like the creator herself. Mumbai-based Prajakta Koli makes no bones about creating content that takes inspiration from real life. In fact, she thrives on it. Take for instance, her video on the types of tuition teachers we have all come across—the lazy ones, the clueless ones, and the *jugaadus* among others. Or the one about how we all deal with studying for exams and how we end up doing everything else besides studying. She chooses everyday topics and spins sketches around them that you can't help but laugh at. Her charming 'love love love!' at the end of each video is just another reason to think of her as a friend more than an internet personality who has garnered a cult following today. We catch up with the bubbly YouTube creator who tells us all about how the madness began.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I grew up with a singular dream—to become a radio jockey. I did fulfil this dream, but I failed at it. YouTube was there to catch me when I fell. I'm just a regular girl trying to make good, fun content on the internet.

Were you as mischievous as a child as you are in your videos?

No, I was quite a dream, actually. I was an obedient, well-behaved and above-average child. I never threw tantrums. My mother wonders what went wrong with me later though (*laughs*).

You said you wanted to be a radio jockey? Tell us more about that.

That was the only plan. I remember I was in Class VI when I decided that I wanted to become an RJ. You know how in school sometimes teachers would ask the class about future plans? My classmates would say things like they wanted to be astronauts and engineers, and I would be the only one saying I wanted to be a radio jockey. I grew up listening to a lot of radio because my parents love music. My grandparents also had a quaint radio at home. I just love the medium; I love the fact that you can go on air and just talk about things, and people listen to you.

Growing up, I also realised that I had limited skills when it came to academics (*laughs*). But I loved languages and was always in the college theatre committee and participated in debates. So I knew I could speak well.

What went wrong with radio jockeying?

After interning at a radio station for nine months, they gave me a late night show to host. In my head I was a good radio jockey, but when my show went on air, I knew that it was quite pathetic. I would mentally tune out of it. It was a talk show where I would take calls from people who wanted to share their feelings, secrets or just talk to someone. It's a difficult medium to crack because there are so many barriers. For starters, there are no visuals—you and your audience can't see each other. It can get quite challenging, and I couldn't do it. My superiors called me one day and told me that the show wasn't working, so they were calling it off air. When I was failing miserably at the one dream I had, I didn't quite know what to do.

What prompted you to start your YouTube channel, MostlySane?

I'm a huge Hrithik Roshan fan. When I was doing radio, his film *Bang Bang!* (2014) had just released and he had come to our station for promotions. Everyone knew I was a fan and, given my craziness, my friends and co-workers told me specifically that I couldn't go and speak to him. But when I saw him, I didn't care about any of it and went ahead to meet him. I have travelled in Mumbai locals all my life, so I could elbow my way into any crowd. I reached him and asked him for a selfie and he agreed. I took a sort of pointless velfie for my Instagram where we're both saying 'oh my god', but Sudeep Lahiri from One Digital Entertainment was present at the studio and he thought that the velfie I had taken was funny. He asked me if I had ever thought about making YouTube videos. Before that, I was pretty clueless about YouTube, let alone the fact that one could make a career out of it. So when I went to meet Sudeep, I thought it was for an interview and, if I cracked it, I would be a YouTuber (*laughs*). I used to write a humorous blog back then, which was read by four people, including my parents. I showed it to him and he told me that he would help me create something out of this. At the end of



**"I WAS
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the meeting, I asked him if I got the job. All I would say is that he was pretty astonished at my cluelessness. He told me that he and his team will be working for me, and not the other way round. I would like to clarify here that I was a confident child, but in that one year at radio I became Dobby from *Harry Potter*. It felt like master had given me a sock!

Why the name MostlySane?

Many people think there's a profound explanation for this, but honestly it was the only thing I could come up with. But now I kind of like it; it makes more sense now than it did back then.

Do you remember the first video you made for YouTube?

A YouTuber will never forget his/her first video because it's the most embarrassing thing on the planet. My first video was called *Types Of Singles On Valentine's Day*. It's a cringe-worthy video and I would advise you not to watch it.

You have over a million subscribers on your channel now. How does that feel?

It's one of those things that you're waiting to happen with bated breath, but when it does happen, you're like, now what? You feel on ▶



"THERE'S THIS ONE VIDEO I UPLOADED WITHOUT ANY MAKEUP ON AND EVERYONE LIKED IT. I REALISED HOW HONEST AND REAL IT MADE MY VIDEOS LOOK."

top of the world and then suddenly reality hits and you can't believe there are a million people who have expectations from you every week. It's a lot of pressure. As much as I'm grateful for it, it can get stressful.

So how do you deal with the pressure?

Six or seven months ago, I came out of a massive content block. The channel wasn't going anywhere and I was happy with just 20,000 views on my videos. It was getting stagnant and I just couldn't churn out content or see where it all was going. The only good thing I did was I didn't stop making videos. So I think the way to deal with pressure is not stopping, no matter how good or bad a job you're doing.

You put out fresh videos thrice a week. How do you manage to stay consistent?

Actually all three videos are quite different from each other. My Tuesday videos are more candid—it's more real talk and vlogs if I'm travelling. My Thursday videos bring something extra to the table, and the Saturday videos are QnA, where I take questions from people and answer them. Most of the content I do is observational humour. I'm not a stand-

up comic; I've tried it and I'm not good at it. So all the videos I do are based on something I've experienced. My favourite pastime is sitting in a café and staring at people. I'm that creep who stares at people (*laughs*).

Given that you have such a strong online presence, how do you deal with trolls?

I would be sad if I didn't have trolls. In the beginning, it bothered me because I was new to the digital scene and would wonder why a person was saying such hateful things to me. But I love them now for various reasons. For one, they're a source of great content. Have you seen some of those comments? They're hilarious! I can't tell you how many of those I've used in my content. Secondly, when there's one person being mean to you, you see a hundred others bashing him up online. You don't even have to be a part of that conversation.

You started a social initiative #IPledgeToBeMe aimed at addressing body shaming. What led to that?

If you watch my earlier YouTube videos, you'll see that I was this skinny kid who put on a lot of makeup, spoke with an accent and generally tried to be somebody else because I wanted to be cooler on the internet. I was quite insecure about my body. But as I continued uploading videos, I started getting more and more comfortable in my own skin. There's this one video I uploaded without any makeup on and everyone liked it. I realised >



"AFTER I STARTED DOING MY VIDEOS, I STOPPED MAKING PLANS. I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE YOUTUBE WOULD TAKE ME, AND IT HAS ONLY TAKEN ME TO THE BEST OF PLACES."

how honest and real it made my videos look. It was liberating to be myself on a public platform. In another video I spoke about being comfortable in my skin and asked people to email me their experiences of body shaming, or even if they simply wanted to talk about it. We were expecting a few emails, but the same week, we got over 8,000 mails. I had nine-year-old girls telling me that they were suicidal because they were dark-skinned or because they had pimples. It was disturbing. I wanted to help them, but I knew I couldn't respond to them all. So I wrote a rap song instead called *Shameless*.

You're quite popular with the public now. Has it become difficult to step out and do regular things?

It's not difficult; it's fun. There are so many

times when I'm just going about doing my thing and someone who knows me will stop me and I'll get startled. But it's a great validation for the work I'm doing.

Do you think the digital revolution has changed things for the better?

Massively. I think the digital boom that has happened recently is a huge shift for not only the creators, but also for the audience from the TV and movies to digital media, and it's here to stay. A few years ago, no one would have believed that being a YouTuber could be a career. My job profile on my US visa reads that I'm a YouTuber. Did you know YouTube India is the second biggest market after the US? It's phenomenal.

You were invited by the Obama Foundation in December last year to attend a Town Hall meeting. What was it about?

Mr Barack Obama actually addressed 200 people from India. The Foundation reached out to YouTube for a list of 20-25 creators from India, from which four were chosen. It was crazy. He (Obama) was right there! Had our seats been any closer, we would be sitting with him. He's really tall! I've been a huge fan of his speeches and watching him speak in the flesh was surreal.

When it comes to online content, what topics do you follow?

I love comedy, DIY and home décor. Come to think of it, I watch too much home décor content online.

Who do you follow when it comes to comedy?

I'm a big fan of Ashish Shukla and Nikunj Lotia from Be YouNick. Internationally, I really like Collins Key; I even collaborated with him recently. I also like Miranda Sings and Lele Pons.

What are you planning next?

All my life I've planned things. That leaves no room for surprises and it gets boring. After I started doing my videos, I stopped making plans. I didn't know where YouTube would take me, and it has only taken me to the best of places. Now I don't want to be the person who chalks her life out. **E**



THE POWER OF INVESTING IN YOU

Entrepreneur Sairee Chahal helps women looking to re-enter the workforce land their dream jobs, and live the best life

As a nation, we're wired to pack in all our learning during the school and college phases. But there's a new culture emerging around the world—the culture of investing in yourself—a journey that has no expiration date. It's an attitude, a way of being, that needs to be consciously inculcated to bring out the most authentic version of you, at work and in life. I've met thousands of women over the years, and I realise that the ones living their dreams are the ones creating the space and time to invest in themselves. There's no perfect formula to craft your dream life, but here are a few hacks to make it work.

Find your passion

Each of us have something we feel passionate about—it could be psychology, entrepreneurship, the environment, and much more. Identifying what you love helps you define the road map early on. I know a 26-year-old artist whose parents were nudging her towards a job and the coveted safety net. While she had doubts about her artistic abilities at first, she chased her dreams and turned her passion into a career in art

and design. If you don't know what you love, make the time to figure it out. Attend workshops and engage in activities that help you dig deeper within yourself.

Learn new skills

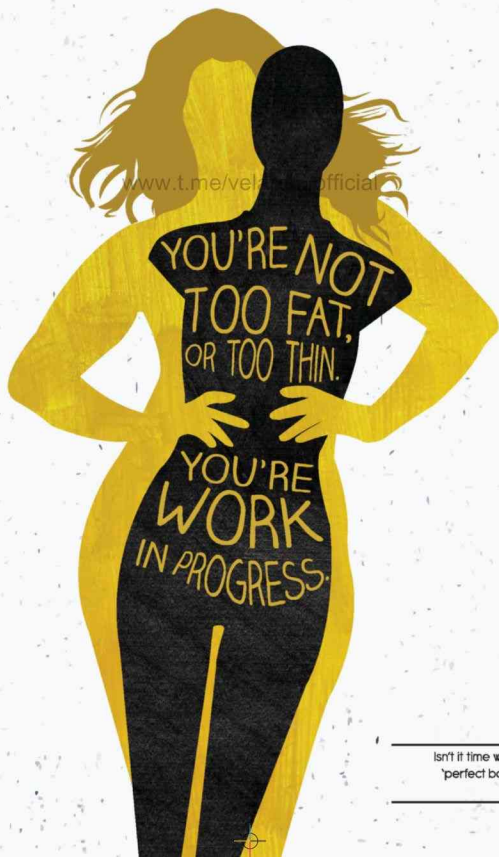
There's no cap on the best time to learn something new, especially if you're looking to get back to the workforce. The digital revolution makes it so much more accessible via a slew of online programmes, webinars and other avenues for learning. I know an editorial professional who >



Sairee Chahal

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we did away with the
'perfect body' myth? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/fitness](https://www.femina.in/fitness)

learnt design at age 41 and a homemaker who started a business at 65 and is now learning digital marketing. Masako Wakamiya, a Japanese woman, learnt to code at the age of 82 and even built her own app—a game called Hinadan. How cool is that? You can learn on the go using your smartphone and find an international peer group to swap notes with. Multiple skills also give you an edge in the job market.

Build your network

Collective wisdom is a blessing, and in my experience, nothing helps you learn faster and more efficiently than from the experiences of others. It could be through mentors, friends, and even people you've never met before. Identifying mentors who can advise you, as well as friends and allies you can reach out to for support can help you respond to a crisis much faster and more efficiently. And it also makes you feel less alone when times get tough. Sharing your own experiences and mentoring others with empathy completes the circle of support.

Make your moolah work for you

We often believe that earning a fat pay check every month translates to financial independence. The reality is far from it. We live in a volatile job market and financial savvy-ness from an early age helps you lay the foundation to take risks in the future. There are several financial literacy programmes that offer you the tools to build your fiscal health. Leverage these and start the journey early on.

Practise self-care

Excellence and hard work are virtues in today's workplace, but between that passion and hectic schedules, make sure you're also taking care of yourself, no matter how much you love your work. Our digital lives can make us clinical and distant in relationships, be it with partners or colleagues. Make time to connect with the kind of people you want in your life. Don't compromise on your sleep, and be sure to invest in your fitness—Pilates, swimming or crush class, whatever you enjoy.

I guarantee you, it's the best investment on returns, as it helps you bring your best to life.

Take risks

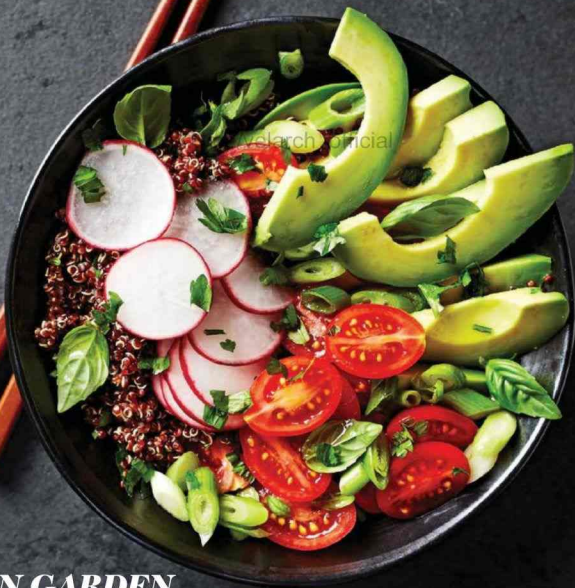
Keeping in touch with your evolving aspirations is part of the journey to craft your dream life. I know a young SHEROES community member who had a flourishing career as a company secretary. But she felt stifled in her monotonous job and turned to writing to vent her frustrations, and finally quit the life she knew to become a travel

blogger. Life felt uncertain, but she took the plunge. A homemaker aged 52 became an entrepreneur and launched a natural product brand. Getting out of your comfort zone is a scary feeling, and these women felt the fear, too. But with the right information, support and intentions, they took charge and won.

—The author is the founder and CEO of SHEROES, the women's growth platform, a safe space offering support, resources, opportunities and interactions



EXCELLENCE AND HARD WORK ARE VIRTUES IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE, BUT BETWEEN THAT PASSION AND HECTIC SCHEDULES, MAKE SURE YOU'RE ALSO TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF.



ZEN GARDEN

Whole grains, plant proteins and fresh veggies all in one bowl—the Buddha bowl is essentially a vegan concept of a meal that's nourishing as well as appealing to the eye. While you don't need to follow recipes as such, you must keep in mind both the health and aesthetic quotients. Try out a variety of ingredients (not necessarily vegan), just enough to offer you little bites of fresh flavours and interesting textures.

You can include anything—rice, millets, quinoa, corn, and a protein of your choice as well as assorted vegetables (raw or cooked). Make your bowl look pretty by arranging the ingredients aesthetically and you're good to go. Remember, the key is balance—both in terms of nutrients as well as colours. How's this for inspo? Red quinoa, avocado, radish, spring onion, cherry tomatoes, chives and fresh basil.

MAMBO ITALIANO

Always wanted to try your hand at putting together a true-blue Italian meal? Romina Lugaresi, collaborative chef at CinCin, Mumbai, helps with these authentic recipes. By **Gia Claudette Fernandes**

PERA PEAR

LYCHEE JUICE, RED WINE **AND VODKA**



1 fresh lychee
100 ml lychee juice
15 ml lime juice

60 ml vodka
15 ml red wine

SERVES: 1 > PREP TIME: 5 minutes

1. Muddle the lychee in a cocktail shaker.
2. Add some ice, fresh lime juice, lychee juice and vodka.
3. Shake ingredients well. Pour out into a glass.
4. Top the drink with red wine.

**Calorie
count:**
250 calories
(per serving)

TIP: SERVE CHILLED IN A TALL BEER GLASS GARNISHED WITH AN ORANGE SLICE.

STROZZAPRETI ALLA NORMA

HAND-TWISTED PASTA **WITH EGGPLANT & TOMATO SAUCE**



120 g strozzapreti
pasta

200 g tomato
sauce

30 ml olive oil

15 g garlic, finely
chopped

60 g eggplant, diced
and fried

Salt and pepper,
to taste

30 g smoked Scarmoza
cheese

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 15 minutes > COOKING TIME: 15 minutes

**Calorie
count:**
350 calories
(per serving)

1. Cook the pasta in boiling water for three to four minutes.
2. To make the sauce, heat olive oil in a pan and add the finely chopped garlic. Fry for a few seconds.
3. Add tomato sauce and fried eggplant. Season and mix well until the sauce forms a rich texture.
4. Now add the boiled pasta and toss well.
5. Add fresh basil leaves and serve hot. >

TIP: GARNISH WITH SMOKED SCARMOZA AND CRISPY FRIED EGGPLANT SKIN.



RISOTTO AL BEETROOT

ITALIAN RICE **WITH BEETROOT & GOAT CHEESE**



180 g risotto rice,
parboiled

30 ml olive oil

20 g onion

30 ml white wine

250 ml vegetable
stock

30 g chopped
beetroot

30 ml beetroot
purée

Salt and pepper,
to taste

40 g butter

30 g goat cheese

30 g Grana Padano
cheese

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 10 minutes > COOKING TIME: 20 minutes

Calorie
count:
450 calories
(per serving)

1. Heat a pan on a low flame, add olive oil and chopped onions and sauté until they turn translucent.
2. Add the parboiled risotto rice and pour in white wine and vegetable stock. Turn up the heat to medium-high and let it cook for eight to nine minutes.
3. Lower the flame and add chopped beetroot and beetroot purée. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Mix well and then add butter, goat cheese and Grana Padano cheese. Serve hot.

TIP: GARNISH WITH FRESH BURRATA CHEESE AND BALSAMIC CAVIAR.



THE BIG DIP

Manish Kusumwal, corporate chef, Keys Hotels, shares interesting ways to get your hummus from basic to delicious. By **Gia Claudette Fernandes**

Basic hummus

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked chickpeas
1/2 cup tahini (sesame paste)
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
2 cloves garlic, peeled
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 tsp paprika
Juice of 1 lemon, plus more as needed
Fresh parsley, chopped

METHOD

- Put all the ingredients, except the parsley in a food processor. Add a little water; just enough to allow the machine to produce a smooth purée.
- Taste and adjust the seasoning if required.
- Drizzle olive oil, sprinkle paprika and chopped parsley leaves.
- Serve chilled.

Beetroot hummus



INGREDIENTS

1 cup basic hummus
1 cup roasted beetroot
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

METHOD

- Blend all the ingredients till smooth. Drizzle extra-virgin olive oil and serve.

Basil pesto hummus



INGREDIENTS

1 cup basic hummus
1/4 cup pine nuts
1/2 cup basil leaves, plus extra for garnish
1/4 cup parmesan
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

METHOD

- Blend all the ingredients until creamy and smooth.
- Drizzle extra-virgin olive oil and garnish with basil leaves.



Avocado hummus

INGREDIENTS

1 cup basic hummus
1 small ripe avocado
Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

METHOD

- Blend the avocado and hummus together until smooth.
- Drizzle olive oil and garnish with chickpeas. **F**

You've gone from actor to author to producer. Are you going to write scripts soon?

I don't really look at it as writing for a particular medium. A story I've written was turned into a play; another made into a movie. So I'm here to tell a story—how it's translated doesn't really matter to me.

You and your mother Dimple have gorgeous hair. What's your secret?



Primarily, genetics. Also, both of us love to experiment with our hair; we colour it often. To protect hair from damage, I make sure that Smartbond is mixed with the colour before application.

Is there a hair trend you regret trying?

For a brief period, I was a 'Sindhi Blonde'. I don't think I'm ever going to do that again!

What was the best beauty advice you received that you'd like to share with your daughter?

The best beauty advice that I would give my daughter is to use sunblock. Secondly, it's all about what you eat. If you eat healthy and if you eat a lot of natural foods, your body creates strong building blocks that last you a long time.



TWINKLE KHANNA

on being the talk of the town

The actor-turned-writer spills the beans on her beauty secrets



What's the strangest response you've received to your tongue-in-cheek comments?

Recently, somebody told me I was bipolar. I really think that's an extreme response.

Is there a hair trend you're really beginning to like?

I recently saw someone who had long hair on one side and a shaved head on the other. I wish I was brave enough to do that. That is something I aspire to do—one day I'll be cool enough.

How does the hair colour you're promoting fit in with the Indian audience?

I think L'Oréal Professionnel Parisian Choclat is the perfect solution, going naturally with the variance of Indian skin tones. Our darker hair requires too much upkeep if you go several shades lighter.

Are there any bizarre beauty mishaps that have happened to you in the past?

I don't think I have ever done anything drastic with my hair—at the most I got chewing gum stuck in it. I have cried at a salon once—I went in for a normal haircut and by the end of it, they shaved the back of my head and all my hair was gone. You have to know what you want before you step into a salon. **E**

—As told to Tatiana Dias