

# Food should be made with 'fursat and 'mohabbat'

Says Maharaja His Highness Vikram Singhji, who is in Bhopal to prepare and promote royal cuisines of India

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Celebrated playwright George Bernard Shaw has said, "There is no sincerer love than the love of food." The Maharajas have always promoted their liking for food. Some encouraged music, a few upheld fine arts. However, the most passionate has been love for food.

In royal circles, the Sailana estate has always had a remarkable reputation for its royal cuisine. Bringing some of the culinary delights from the Sailana to the City of Lakes is nothing less than a matter of pride and joy for Maharaja His Highness Vikram Singhji. In Hotel Jehan Numa Palace, for a food festival based on royal food that starts on June 10, Maharaja spill beans on his love for food, his upcoming book, his idea about cooking and much more...

"My grandfather, Raja Dilip Singh Ji excelled in culinary art and was so passionate about food; he used to cook himself and had four

independent kitchens for vegetarian, non-vegetarian, continental foods and one especially for biryanis. He made several utensils and designed sigdis to suit the delicacies. He had a team of expert 'khaansamas' who were specialised in particular foods. He used to travel a lot to relish different kinds of cuisines across the country and realised soon that if they are not shared, these unique recipes will be vanished. He went to states like Hyderabad, Kashmir, relished delicacies and got them with him. He travelled all over the country and even abroad and got gems of recipes with him. This culinary journey extended to even Pakistan (then part of India), Afganistan and even Iran. He brought recipes of Murg Irani and Mutton Shirazi from Iran. He maintained different registers for different foods like one just for fish, another dedicated to various kinds of dal and so on. There are more than 5000 recipes kept in lockers", shares

the Maharaja about how



**Cooking Delights of the Maharajas, written by my father was found at Saddam Hussain's library**  
Maharaja Vikram Singhji

the 'love for food' was instilled.

"After my grandfather's death in 1960, his friends and my father's acquaintances put forward that his recipes should be shared and that's how the book 'Cooking Delights of the



PHOTOS: MUJEEB FARUQUI

Maharajas' written by my father Digvijaya Singh, came into existence. It has more than 150 unique delicacies from around the country. It was also found at Saddam Hussain's library when the Americans raided his place. I have written the second edition and it might get published next year," adds the Maharaja.

For the Maharaja cooking is akin to meditation. "There is a famous dialogue from the film Julie and Julia - the best way to cook is cooking fearlessly. Cooking is a stress-buster for me. I strongly feel any food should be made out of enough 'fursat' and

'mohabbat'. Then it can never go wrong," the Maharaja says.

On being asked what does he feel about the fusion cooking creeping in the culture, he says, "I am against it. Food should never lose its originality. Why to have gol-gappas with chocolate syrup? Have them as they are."

Maharaja will be cooking some of the unique delicacies in the food festival. People of Bhopal can savour Murg Irani, Mutton ke dahi bade, Reshmi biryani, Aalu khaas, Dal Sailana among several mouth-watering delights.

