



**Success
stories**



Abdus Shahid

Valley Connection

London N9 7EP

Ballington Valley

Suffolk

Abdus Shahid is a multi-award winning cook. He was born and raised in a rural village in Bangladesh. He recollects how his mother would grow all her own vegetables and use them; fresh from the ground to the plate. This is what he wishes to closely emulate in his own restaurant. His earliest memory of cooking is when he used to boil fresh potatoes with his mother on an open fire outside. His mother would finely chop shallots, coriander red dried birds-eye chillies, and smother the potatoes with this mixture. She would also add some salt and mustard oil which was the piece de resistance! His siblings and he would always be hanging around the kitchen. Hence, his inspiration for cooking has originated from his childhood. However, when arrived in the UK, Shahid was amazed by the beautiful creations of the chefs in all the restaurants in London.

His first kitchen post was in a restaurant in Stoke Newington in Hackney. He worked as a kitchen porter but very quickly the chef realised that Shahid had the skills to become a chef. He encouraged him to assist in the food preparation and eventually allowed him to cook when he was on leave. It didn't feel like hard work as Shahid was so impressed by his newly learned skill and creations; making rice and curry look like a piece of art!

This is what inspired him to open his own restaurant. He discovered that he had the skill, work ethic and professionalism to run his own restaurant. He has three restaurants now – Ballingdon Valley, Moza, and Valley Collection – all based in Suffolk with menus created by himself. Valley Connection is one of Bury St Edmund's largest and smartest Indian restaurants, with award winning chefs. Recently renovated this elegant and stylish restaurant can accommodate up to 110 diners in sumptuous and contemporary surroundings, setting the tone for an up market dining experience with menus that focus on Indian continental dishes to Bangladeshi cuisine. Atul Kochhar is Shahid's food hero. Atul, he says, has promoted Indian food to a level that has historically occupied by predominantly European chefs.

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Shahid's restaurant serves a delightful selection of traditional and Bangladeshi meals. He always endeavours to use fresh ingredients to create dishes that are exquisite in taste and visual. “My food is completely different. I make my own spices – this is my secret. I buy all fresh ingredients and make my own recipes and people like my food. When I received my awards, my customers say we are not surprised,” says Shahid.

His favourite dishes from his current menu are Hariyali Chicken Masala (fresh spinach with succulent pieces of boneless chicken in mild spices), Jingra Kal Mirch (king prawns tossed with shallots, ginger, tomato, peppers and garnished with coriander and fresh green chillies – medium hot) and Dum Lamb Achari (a lamb curry bursting with pickle spices, fairly hot) – something for everybody!

When asked which three store-cupboard ingredients he could not cook without, he said 3 staples need to be onions, garam masala and a good mixed curry powder. You can create a curry with just about any type of vegetable or meat using these ingredients.

Shahid has achieved several awards such as the Tiffin Cup 2018, Eat out Eat well West Suffolk Silver Winner, BCA Restaurant of the Year 2017, South Asian Curry Awards 2015 and many more.