



Twenty-six-year-old Perzen Patel is a marketing executive who runs a food blog about Parsi cuisines titled Bawi Bride. PIC/ EMMANUEL KHARBHARI

Click, share and read secrets of Indian regional cuisine

his month-end, food blogger Perzen Patel is all set to publish *Best Kept Secrets*, a crowd-sourced e-book featuring a collection of regional Indian recipes sourced from foodies across the country

RINKY KUMAR

rinky.kumar@mid-day.com

EVER wondered what is it that makes your aunt's Bhapa ilish (steamed hilsa fish) different from the one found in leading Bengali restaurants in Mumbai? Or, what makes your friend's mother's Kothimbhir vadi (coriander dumplings) stand out from the regular fare available at Maharashtrian eateries across the city? The answers to such queries will soon be just a click away. Earlier this month, marketing executive and food blogger Perzen Patel started the *Best Kept Secrets* project. The initiative is aimed at creating an online repository of food secrets featuring recipes, ingredients, cooking tips and tricks, intricate methods used in cooking a dish that makes it stand out and interesting anecdotes.

As part of this project, from January 13-15, Patel invited people to share their food secrets about regional Indian cuisine. She received 30 entries, which were later shortlisted to 16. The voting phase went live on January 18 wherein her blog readers as well as the shortlisted *Best Kept Secrets* authors had until January 24 to secure as many votes possible on social networking websites. The most popular 10 recipes will then be chosen for the e-book by

the end of this month.

The Dadar resident says, "While cooking, how often have you wished that you could learn more about the story behind the recipe? Not just the practical bits like where to source the best chicken or how to wash the *dal* correctly but the juicy *Best Kept Secrets* on why a certain dish was made the way it was, or how it has been adapted through the years? What makes a meal memorable is the back story of a recipe. When I shortlisted the entries, the story was the most important factor. People had sent multiple entries, so I tried to choose a healthy mix of recipes from different parts of the country."

The Best Kept Secrets project

FOOD blogger Perzen Patel started the *Best Kept Secrets* project on January 13.

► She invited people to share regional Indian cuisine recipes, ingredients and interesting anecdotes.

► Voting started on January 18 where readers as well as the shortlisted authors had to secure as many votes as possible till January 24.

► The most popular recipes will now be formatted into an e-book by the end of this month

Patel, who has a blog called *Bawi Bride*, which was launched last year and is an online repository of traditional Parsi recipes, says she wanted to kick start the project deliberately with regional food. "Parsi food is extremely close to my heart. So I thought it would be interesting to know the secrets of regional cuisines such as Bengali, Maharashtrian, Mangalorean and Punjabi. For instance, one of the entries is about how a man loved his grandmother's pork sorpotel as she would add pig's blood to it."

The 26-year-old reveals that she now plans to launch a book every couple of months. "Each time, the topic will be different. I plan to come out with *Best Kept Secrets* books about specific ingredients such as mangoes etc."

Patel, who was born in Mumbai but shifted to New Zealand, returned to the city once she tied the knot. Though her mother made Parsi food at home, Patel was known as the continental chef. Things changed after she realised the lack of material about Parsi food on the online medium. "Parsi food is closely associated with Mumbai's history. So I thought of setting up *Bawi Bride* to document my journey as a Parsi bride and more so as a *Bawi Bawarchi*." Apart from conducting cookery classes, Patel also has a catering service of dips, desserts and Parsi delicacies.

She reveals that in the near future, she plans to get *Best Kept Secrets* published in a print format wherein she will try to inculcate all the entries that she had received. After all, isn't it true that the more you share with others, the more you learn?