

## Tips from auto drivers

"If you're heading into town on Bannerghatta Road, instead of making your way down Hosur Road, turn left at Sagar Apollo and head towards Jayanagar and drive through Siddapura. Given that the road in front of Spar on Bannerghatta Road has been dug up, it's a far more convenient one."

– **Chaand Pasha**, Jayadeva Hospital

"If you're a woman and are looking for an auto late at night in the Brigade Road area, avoid the St Patrick's Complex junction and the Church Street-Museum Road junction; the male crowds here get rowdy and bawdy. Instead, head for the Sadhwani's Corner at the top of Brigade Road."

– **Srinivasa**, MG Road

## Man on the street *XXXX*



## OPINION by Shyam Bhat

### *Take back the mango*

There's the messy way to eat a mango, and there is the wrong way. Unfortunately, I see an increasing number of people eating it the wrong way: any method that requires the use of a knife, a fork, or a spoon – cutting it and scooping it out, slicing and dicing it into cubes and using a fork and so on.

No, the right way to eat a mango is to eat it with your hands, your mouth, your eyes, your spirit. Look at it first, feel its heft in your hands. Smell it. Then peel the skin with your teeth, and with the juice running down your hands, sink your teeth into the mango. You see it, smell it, taste it, and even hear it, as you savour its sweetness. That is the full mango experience.

To those of you who have invited me over for dinner, please, do not cancel your invitations yet. I don't eat with complete abandon in polite company. I realise that most people would not enjoy seeing someone devouring a fruit, making a slurping

sound, drinking the fruit as much eating it.

But how did we ever get to this point in human civilisation? Why is eating with cutlery seen as more socially appropriate in a fine-dining restaurant than eating with your hands? Why do many people in the west, and in urban India, believe that eating with knives and forks is more civilised than eating with the hands? And why were knives and forks invented in the first place?

Spare me the more popular explanations: that water was scarce, that hands had to be kept clean, that the nature of the food demanded it, and so on.

No knife or fork compares with the hand – our hands are the most versatile, portable, sophisticated, and discerning eating implements in the world, accurately assessing temperature, texture, quality, and safety. No, knives and forks were not invented out of necessity. They were invented as a result of a deep-seated repression. Our collective

psyches demanded it. Society, especially western society, demanded it. After all, the act of eating with one's hands is a primal act, a sensual experience. A Freudian would even suggest that there was something sexual about it. Therefore, to repressive societies, the act of eating naturally, without cutlery, conveys a "rawness" of experience, a certain "savage" quality. When we consider that several cultures – Victorian England is a prime example – repressed even the slightest expression of sexuality to sometimes absurd levels, even covering the legs of sofas so as to not offend, it's easy to see why they would also modify the act of eating. Repressive cultures attempted to reduce the sensuality of the act of eating, and they did this by increasing the distance between eater and food by introducing an intermediary – the eating implement. The contact between food and person decreased. The entire experience, one that is so basic

to our very existence, the act of eating, became more and more stylised, and ultimately depleted and diminished.

Thankfully, some types of food still require the use of our hands.

So reclaim your food. Eat fruit the messy way. Take back the mango.



**Inflation watch** **Papaya** Jul-end Rs 16.90; Jun-end Rs 11.05; **chikoo** June-end Rs 28.05, Jul-end Rs 33.09; **carrot** Jun-end Rs 18.05, Jul-end Rs 31.05.