

## Interview: Restaurateur Nandita Khanna of UTSAV in the Theater District

We gained insights into the career of Nandita Khanna and learned about UTSAV that offers authentic Bengali cuisine



Nandita Khanna has a deep-rooted passion for Indian cuisine with family ties to renowned restaurants in Calcutta and Tokyo—most notably BAR-B-Q in Calcutta, one of India's oldest Indo-Chinese establishments. Nandita has infused Utsav's menu with both tradition and innovation for the last 25 years. Since opening in 2000, the restaurant has showcased diverse flavors from North Indian curries and smoky tandoori dishes to bold Indo-Chinese favorites and an exclusive Bengali menu. Nandita's chef team are trained in the Calcutta style of Chinese food, the birthplace of Indian Chinese cuisine. As the only Manhattan restaurant offering authentic Bengali cuisine, she takes pride in sharing the vibrant, aromatic tastes of Calcutta with New Yorkers. A fair representation of the dishes offered to patrons are recipes from BAR-B-Q which Nandita has replicated at Utsav.

BroadwayWorld has the pleasure of interviewing Nandita Khanna about her background, career, and Utsav.



**What inspired you to be a restaurateur?**

I come from a long line of restaurateurs. My grandfather owned several restaurants in Tokyo, and my father followed suit in Calcutta. Growing up surrounded by the sights and smells of bustling kitchens, I always knew I wanted to carry that legacy forward and continue our family's culinary tradition.



**Have you had any mentors?**

My father was my greatest mentor and inspiration. He taught me that hospitality is about far more than just food, it's about creating memories and moments of connection. His work ethic, creativity, and dedication to guests continue to guide everything I do.

**What makes Utsav so distinctive?**

Utsav has been a cornerstone of the Theater District for twenty-five years, offering three distinctive cuisines under one roof, Indian, Indo-Chinese, and authentic Bengali. We're proud to be the only restaurant in Manhattan serving true Bengali fare, honoring recipes that have been passed down through generations while also celebrating the rich diversity of Indian cuisine.

**Why do you think Utsav has been so successful in the Theater District?**

We understand that our pre-theatre guests are on a schedule, and we take great care to ensure their dining experience is seamless and enjoyable. Our team is attentive without ever making guests feel rushed. Whether you're dining before a show or lingering over dessert after one, we strive to make every visit feel effortless and memorable.

**Can you tell us a little about your team?**

Our kitchen is led by seven exceptionally talented chefs, each specializing in one of our three cuisines. They bring years of experience and a shared passion for flavor and presentation. In the dining room, our staff is young, energetic, and genuinely guest-focused, they bring warmth and professionalism to every table, making sure each guest feels welcome and cared for.

**What are a few of your most popular specialties?**

Our menu reflects the diversity of India's culinary landscape:

**Indian Cuisine**

- Butter Chicken Kulcha
- Cream Cheese & Truffle Oil Kulcha
- Tandoori Broccoli
- Tandoori Sea Bass

**Indo-Chinese Cuisine**

- Chili Lamb
- Salt & Pepper Prawns

**Bengali Cuisine**

- Kolkata Fish Fry
- Daab Chingri

**Why do you think Utsav is a great spot for theatergoers?**

Our location couldn't be more ideal, we're just steps away from Times Square and Rockefeller Center, right in the heart of New York's cultural energy. It's the perfect stop for a pre-show dinner or a relaxed meal afterward. We like to think of Utsav as part of the city's theater tradition, a place where **Great Performances** begin and end over a shared meal.

**Anything else you want our readers to know?**

Utsav has been proudly woman-owned for twenty-five years, and that sense of pride and perseverance runs through everything we do. We're not just serving food, we're sharing a family story, one that began in Tokyo and Calcutta and found its home here in New York City.



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