



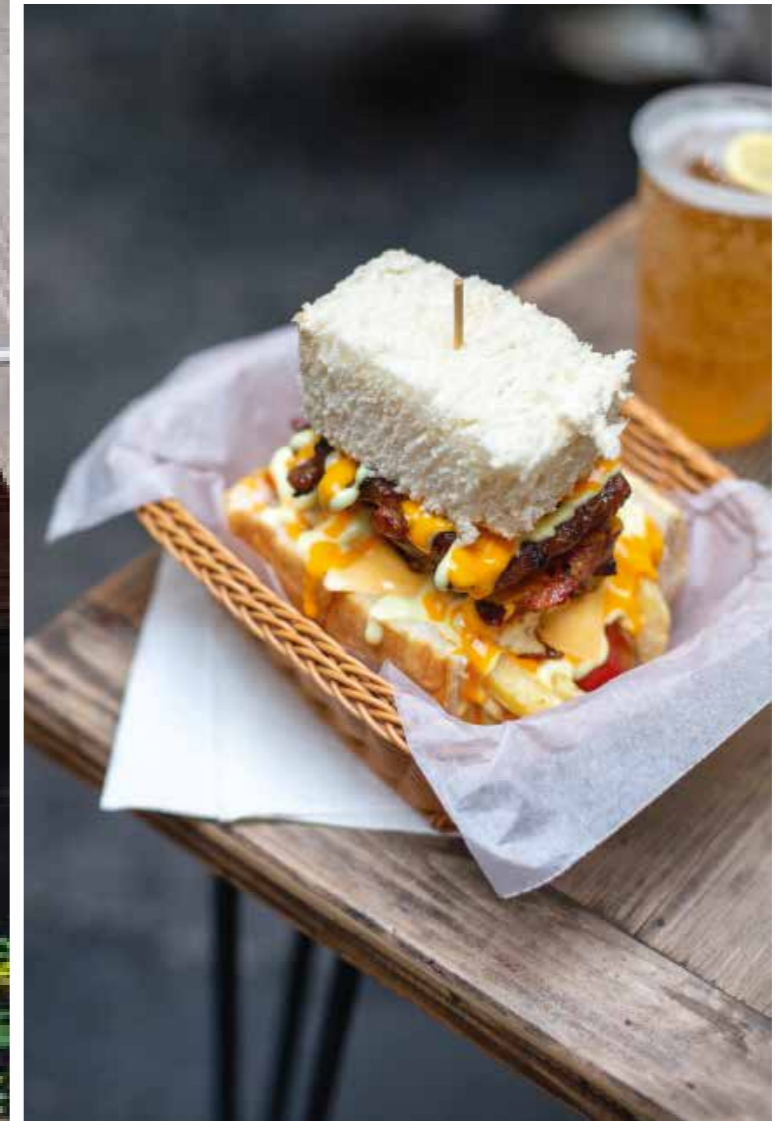
THIS COASTAL CITY HAS A CULINARY IDENTITY ALL ITS OWN. SNACKS, BREADS AND CURRIES ARE PACKED WITH AN ARRAY OF INFLUENCES, PARTICULARLY FROM ITS THRIVING INDIAN POPULATION

DURBAN

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS: TEAGAN CUNNIFFE



A port city seasoned by salty sea air and spices, Durban is home to a multicultural population whose culinary traditions have influenced the cuisine. At the black-owned Durban Kota House, the courtyard is filled with music, chatter and the scent of cooking. The kitchen's assembly line flows from outdoor grill inside to a bread and sauce station, and back out through the window, where the signature dish, the Big Boy Kota, is served to the waiting crowd. While international visitors might be more familiar with bunny chow — hollowed-out bread filled with curry — kota is another South African fast food classic. In this version, a quarter-loaf of bread is stacked with layers of beef patty, bacon, Russian sausage, chicken polony (another variety of sausage), cheese, crisps, atchar pickle and fried egg.



The doyenne of the South African Indian culinary scene, Asha Maharaj has authored multiple cookbooks, and her vegetarian curry and flatbreads [what kind?] are the stuff of legend. Though its origins lie in Asia, Durban Indian cuisine has been influenced over the generations by international trade, ingredient availability, cost-efficiency and African and Western cultures, creating a unique culinary identity. Liberal use of spices, herbs and ghee create the fiery red colouring and complex flavours that are synonymous with Durban curries, with fresh ingredients at their core. At the Bangladesh Market, vendors sell fruit and vegetables, meat, pickles and home-made chutneys along with snacks such as vada, samosas and kebabs.





Known as the Golden Mile, Durban's stretch of beach truly earns its name at sunrise. It's quietest on weekday mornings, when you'll see dog-walkers, joggers, cyclists and football teams working on their fitness. Inland, close to the Umgeni River, diners can take a break from watching the horses at Hollywoodbets Springfield Park racetrack to fill up on bunny chow at the Bunny Bar. Among the most popular fillings are mutton curry and broad beans, and even on non-race days, a team of chefs including Jennifer Pillay prepare vast vats of fresh curry ready for the lunchtime crowd. ●

