

Sundays

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NESTLED BETWEEN THE SLEEK POTS, sophisticated pans, and George Foreman grill, the black, round *tawa* resides in the kitchen cabinet of my childhood home. Its humble presence is formed by a thin slab of coarse metal and reliable functionality, striking a resemblance of our ancestors who have used it for generations.

Hard-working, resilient, tactile. Far removed from its native land, the modest *tawa* still wakes on Sunday mornings and musters the energy to sizzle at a browning slab of Guyanese plait bread. My small feet follow each other like thunder and lightning, racing down the stairs to the kitchen where I find my mother flipping the hot toasted dough over the *tawa* with her bare hands. Her gifted fingers fly like fluttering kites; she displays a skill that all women in my family inherit effortlessly. It's as if this is a rite of passage into womanhood.

Like hot butter, morning melts into evening, and the *tawa's* silver neighbor—the *karahi*—presents itself like a respected matriarch. Starting out as methodic and nurturing, the *karahi's* deep curvature kisses a layer of oil and grows heated, thrashing against the whites of onion and garlic. It welcomes curry powder and pepper like friends from the local village and builds a warm nest for silky curries. The *karahi* cradles heritage in its basin, sometimes boiling over with stimulation. A sprinkle of salt completes this exchange, and a reverberating clang is heard throughout the house—the metal pot spoon hits the *karahi* to release excess gravy. Performing in perfect synchrony, they sing to the house that a meal is ready once more. The sound pierces the air, electrocuting my enthusiastic feet again. The aroma dances in front of my face and wraps my senses in the blanket of home. ❖



A **tawa** is a flat or concave disc-shaped frying pan or griddle, usually made of cast iron, aluminum, or carbon steel. It is used in the cuisines of central, west, and south Asia, the Caucasus, the Caribbean, and the Balkans. The large concave styles of *tawa*, sometimes called a *saj* or *sac tawa*, may be turned upside down for cooking a variety of flatbreads on the convex side. The concave side is used like a wok or frying pan. A **karahi** is a type of thick, circular, and deep cooking pot.