



Qcity Biz

## Black Biz Spotlight: Woodbrook Kitchen

After graduating from UNC Greensboro, Toby Rajkumar launched a catering business in Charlotte that offers meal prepping, event services and private dining.



*Photo: Courtesy of Toby Rajkumar*

By Amanda Harry  
December 16, 2022

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Toby Rajkumar wants to bring the flavors of Trinidad to the Queen City.

Two years ago, he launched [Woodbrook Kitchen](#), a catering business that offers meal prepping, event services and private dinners.

A native of Trinidad, Rajkumar named the business after place where he was born. At age 10, he moved to the United States with his family.

After graduating from UNC Greensboro, where he majored in business administration and entrepreneurship, Rajkumar began cooking in various kitchens, from family-owned eateries to upscale restaurants. He launched Woodbrook Kitchen in January 2021, a year after the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in America.

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His timing was fortuitous.

“People were staying at home eating, and they didn’t want to go out to eat,” Rajkumar recalled.

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Photo: Courtesy of Toby Rajkumar

Rajkumar said his mother was skeptical but came around as he found success. He said he got his “hustle” from his father, who’s also an entrepreneur. Rajkumar said it was good to have both perspectives.

During a recent appearance at the [Sarah Stevenson Tuesday Forum](#), Rajkumar said he wants his cooking to show a different culture, one he thinks Charlotte is lacking.

Rajkumar grew up in east Charlotte, where, he said, healthy food options were scarce.

“Back home in Trinidad, we get our food from farmers,” he said. “I want to keep the same aspect with my business.”

As a solo entrepreneur, Rajkumar does it all – quotes prices, picks up ingredients and prepares dishes.

“I’m like a one-man show,” he said, adding that he never gets tired and loves seeing clients react to his food, something that an office job would not offered him.



Photo: Courtesy of Toby Rajkumar

“I wouldn’t get to see the smiles and the enjoyment and the satisfaction of what I bring to people and to have them experience myself and my food and the experience that I bring to them,” Rajkumar said.

Some of Rajkumar’s food products — sandwiches, cakes, and banana pudding — recently went on sale at [Archive CLT](#), a Black-owned cafe on Beatties Ford Road. The sandwiches come in two choices, turkey or vegan.



## Losing pieces of Black history stops with Archive CLT



Charlotte native, Cheryse Terry, has opened a store in the Beatties Ford Corridor that looks to preserve Black history and will serve as a community safe haven.



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Cheryse Terry, who owns Archive CLT, said she especially enjoyed the vegan option.

Rajkumar advises aspiring entrepreneurs in the food industry to have patience, be willing to sacrifice, and stay inspired.

“It sounds so cliché,” he said. “The steps are easy. It’s just your mindset toward getting to where you want to go is the hard part.”

## What prompted your family to leave Trinidad?

Better opportunities for their kids, for my two sisters and me. To get a better education and better opportunities versus being stuck in one place. They wanted us to grow, evolve and experience new things. That was the biggest thing.

## What defines Trinidadian food?

Really intense flavors and spiciness. It’s a nice blend of Indian and African ancestry.

## What's your favorite dish?

I don't have a favorite. But there is one dish I've made in the past that I've been thinking about lately: an oxtail lasagna.

## What major events have you catered?

Back in 2019, All-Star Weekend in Charlotte. Yeah, I did a couple of events during that weekend that really helped me a lot.

## Who are your typical clients?

My clients range from all walks of life. I have clients who are personal trainers and into fitness that get meal prep services. Some people have more extravagant tastes, while others have health issues and can only eat certain things.

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