

Mariam Jaffar

"Crafting Kuwait's Sweetest Success Story"

In this exclusive CP Magazine feature, we sit down with Mariam Jaffar, the visionary CEO and founder of The Cake Shop Kuwait – a brand that has redefined the art of bespoke cakes in the region. Since opening her first walk-in bakery in 2010, Mariam has transformed a small entrepreneurial dream into a thriving cake empire, celebrated for its creativity, precision, and personal touch. Her journey embodies innovation, resilience, and the pursuit of excellence in every slice.

From humble beginnings in Al-Sha'ab to leading a full-fledged cake factory in Shuwaikh Industrial, Mariam has built more than a business, she has crafted a legacy of sweetness, artistry, and entrepreneurial spirit. In this inspiring conversation, she shares insights into her creative process, the challenges of Kuwait's dynamic F&B scene, and how passion, teamwork, and vision continue to shape The Cake Shop's success story.



You launched The Cake Shop in 2010. What was the original vision, and how has it evolved since then?

When we established The Cake Shop in 2010, there was something new happening in Kuwait and around the world. Social media was taking over nearly every aspect of our lives; it was the age of entrepreneurship, and the food industry was booming like never before. I wanted to be part of what was going on and originally started The Cake Shop as a walk-in bakery in the Al-Sha'ab area, where customers could buy whatever we had on display.

What we noticed was that most customers were requesting to customize their cakes, adding their own touches and creating something more personal rather than purchasing what we had on display. This made us change our entire business structure, focusing on delivering customized cakes to our customers and becoming part of their events.

In order to fulfill more orders, we had to relocate to larger facilities, hire more staff, and become closer to our suppliers, so we moved to the Shuwaikh Industrial area and became a cake factory.

You're described publicly as the CEO/Owner (and also Chairperson) of The Cake Shop. How do you split your time between creative R&D, operations, and leadership?

I realized very early on that in order for my business to thrive, I had to be involved in every tiny detail and every aspect. Titles are meaningless if there is no progress and evolution. For me, this is not a 9 to 5 job where I can switch off and relax when I go home. I have to be available 24/7, ready to deal with any challenges or opportunities, and always researching and looking for new trends.

The brand is rooted in Shuwaikh Industrial. What advantages (and challenges) come with being based there?

The advantage of being based in Shuwaikh Industrial is that we are located very close to our major suppliers. The major challenge is the traffic and infrastructure of the area.



The Cake Shop promotes “customized cake design with same-day delivery.” What operational systems make fast, bespoke fulfillment possible?

The only way for this system to work effectively is through teamwork. You must have a capable sales team that takes detailed orders from customers and hands them over to the production team, who create the orders with precision, and then to dispatch, who eventually deliver the cakes. It’s a non-stop operational system that requires expertise and excellent time management.

Which flavors or techniques best define The Cake Shop’s signature today, and which new ones are you experimenting with next?

We take pride in providing a top-quality product to our customers, so we guarantee that we use the best ingredients available in the market. Sometimes our customers request flavors or items that might not be on our menu, and we do what’s necessary to fulfill such requests. The imagination is limitless.

Kuwait’s festive calendar is unique. How do Hala February, Ramadan, and Gergean influence your seasonal collections and production planning?

Cakes are meant to bring joy and happiness, so what better way is there to celebrate festivities than through colorful decorations and delicious treats? We prepare for such events in advance, and even the preparations are fun and enjoyable.



You've appeared on Kuwait TV and other platforms discussing your journey. What's a lesson from those early interviews that still guides you?

I feel very thankful and grateful to have had the opportunity to appear on important and significant platforms such as Kuwait TV. It's remarkable to have a visual documentation of your achievements. I constantly look back at them and think about our past, present, and future as a business.

You've also engaged students about entrepreneurship, sharing challenges from founding your bakery. What hurdles would you warn first-time founders about in Kuwait's F&B scene?

Running a business requires personal involvement, so you have to be familiar with every detail in every department and be aware of everything around you. Create a team that will help you achieve your vision, and become part of the team yourself.

What were the biggest inflection points for the business, first commercial kitchen, first retail counter, e-commerce launch, or something else?

Relocating to Shuwaikh Industrial and changing our business structure from bakery to factory. We established www.thecakeshop.com.kw from the very beginning because I was aware of the importance of e-commerce. Orders started flowing from the website once we relocated and realized our purpose in the market.



Your Instagram presence is very active. How has social media changed how Kuwait orders celebration cakes and how you design for trends?

Social media is obviously the most effective marketing tool nowadays. As a business, you get to promote your products and also interact with your customers. You become a reminder to your clients of what they should order next, for example, when you post about Mother's Day, you remind your customers to order cakes for their mothers. But if you want results, you must be prepared in advance. We usually plan for all major events early, always trying to add something new and eye-catching, and hope the results are rewarding.

Many customers order via phone or online through multiple service numbers. How do you maintain quality control and a personal touch at scale?

Without getting into too much detail, there is direct supervision over all service numbers to ensure quality control, whether through personal checks or specific programs that enable us to do so.

What's the most technically challenging cake you and your team have executed structurally or artistically and what did it teach you?

Every order we receive is as important as the next, regardless of size, price, or artistic specifications. Every single cake brings its own challenges because it is a major part of the celebration or occasion.



Can you share an example of a client brief that pushed your creativity into a new style or product line?

We were the first to introduce the online selling of cakes and flowers together. When we were joining one of the well-known online food platforms a long time ago, their manager informed us that we could add cakes but not flowers. After many negotiations, not only did they allow us to sell flowers, but they eventually introduced a flower section on their platform.

Weddings and corporate events often require large volumes and flawless timing. What's your playbook for big-ticket, high-pressure days?

Organization, teamwork, and an effective operational system that allows the workflow to run efficiently.



As a woman leading in Kuwait's F&B sector, what mentorship or ecosystem support would you like to see expanded for future founders?

The amount of paperwork we had to go through to establish our business and still sometimes go through is time-consuming and quite strenuous. Digital and online procedures would have been useful; however, it seems that things are now moving in a more digital direction, which is positive.

If you were to export The Cake Shop Kuwait concept abroad, which market would you target first, and how would you localize it?

I believe that children are the most lucrative consumers for any business, so kids will always be our main target, no matter where we decide to expand The Cake Shop in the future.



Finally, your message for us at CP Magazine.

Thank you for this delightful opportunity to share my journey with City Pages Magazine. I have been a fan for quite some time and really enjoy your content. My main message is to find a career in a field that you are passionate about, and always be present in your business hands-on and involved.

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