

HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Business Review

June-July 2023 • Volume XX Number 5 ₹ 100

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Business

Career in Catering

Feature

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Food

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Cuisine

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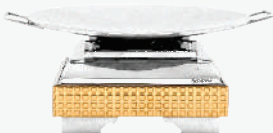
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SCAN for CATALOG

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Indians are becoming more adventurous with their drinks than they were before due to greater global exposure and increasing disposable incomes. This change in drinking habits can be attributed to greater awareness about drinks, the trend which is now percolating down from higher strata of the society to middle strata, resulting in the maturation of the drinking habits in our socio-cultural fabric at large. The cover story examines how bartenders are innovating cocktails to provide sensory satisfaction to the demanding guests.

The demand for caterers is growing due to the increased festivities and celebrations. The annual turnover of this business and the profit margin is tempting not only enterprising entrepreneurs but also several emerging hospitality graduates to venture into this business. Business story suggest caution for these aspiring entrepreneurs to take a look at several other aspects into consideration before making it a career.

With the growing health consciousness and increasing awareness about the harmful effects of pesticides, the popularity of organic food is rising in India. But very few understand organic food and what constitutes organic farming. Feature story discusses the fundamentals of organic farming before one can appreciate the meaning and dimensions of organic food.

Coconut has great relevance in our cultural and religious space, and its role in festivities and culinary dishes cannot be overstated. Food section talks about the edible potential of this magical fruit. The Beverage section of this issue has covered traditional summer drinks mainly made at home, often fresh, for the day's consumption either before a meal or during the day.

Besides these above-mentioned interesting and relevant to the industry topics, we have explored some other interesting topics too through articles and Q&A's, which are supplemented by an exhaustive coverage of information through our News, Report and Event sections.



Food & Beverage

Business Review

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6th Edition of the India International Hospitality Expo 2023

August 2-5, 2023, at IEML, Greater Noida

India Expo Centre & Mart is poised to hold the sixth consecutive India International Hospitality Expo (IHE) 2023 after throwing five blockbuster events in a row. The countdown has begun for the most viable hospitality exposition in India, which has emerged as the country's leading B2B show designed to cater exclusively for the hospitality and food sectors.

The Expo will be held from August 2-5, providing comprehensive B2B business and sourcing solutions under one roof that are relevant to the hospitality and food sectors, like Amenities, F&B and Kitchen Equipment, Furniture and Furnishings, Linen & Uniform, Housekeeping, Laundry, Tableware items, and more. The show has emerged as the most sought-after sourcing hub for the hospitality and F&B industries. The conglomeration of 1000+ brands and 25000+ visitors will give a significant boost to the Hospitality sector. The wide spectrum of hospitality associates and service providers will have their opportunity to connect internationally and network with potential buyers to boost their business globally.

This year, the exhibition will focus on 'plant-based food products and manufacturing'. The conference sessions proposed during the 4-day IHE-2023 will focus on sustainability and environment friendly practices in the hospitality industry. The conference will also be loaded with knowledge-based discussions by industry leaders on emerging market opportunities, technologies, and sourcing alternatives.

The Expo will also feature masterclasses on culinary and mixology by renowned chefs. Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi, Davinder Singh, Nandlal, Nishant Choubey, Michael Swamy and Sommelier Ankur Chawla will interact with gourmets and young culinarians to disseminate knowledge about new culinary trends and innovation in the F&B industry. Adding to the attraction, Wine Certification Course and Sommelier Competition will be conducted for young mixologists and



sommeliers in the industry.

The IHE Excellence Awards, an USP of this show, have more to offer this time with new categories which will be another fascination for the best hospitality service providers and associates in the industry. They will be honoured with the prestigious awards as recognition of their contribution and achievement in these sectors which will boost their morale and make them celebrities.

Big names in the Hospitality and Catering business have also joined hands with IHE2023 this year. Purchasing Professionals Forum India (PPFI), Jharkhand Catering Association (JCA), Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WICCI), and Professional Housekeeping Association (PHA) are onboard as supporting partners for IHE-2023.

Speaking regarding the forthcoming expo, Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML and Director General, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), said, "IHE has emerged as one of the most well-managed hospitality shows across India, and our core focus on B2B engagement and business generation has helped make a mark in Indian hospitality. We welcome decision-makers from star hotels, resorts, and guest houses, as well as fine dining restaurants and cloud kitchens. If you're somehow linked to the hospitality sector, you're cordially invited to know how we can help you grow your business by sourcing from the best."



India Expo Centre & Mart (IEML) has witnessed several grand exhibitions and prestigious events like Auto Expo, Elecrama, COP14, and IHGF. It has been the venue of choice for the 12 biggest trade shows in India and is spread across an area of approximately 2.5 million square meters.

IHE 2023 is expected to break all the records of previous events, as our teams have been working round the clock to make this a fruitful business event and experience for our exhibitors and visitors. It will be much more than an exhibition. It is expected to be a knowledge fest for professionals engaged in the food and hospitality sectors. From students of hotel management and culinary artists to the professionals in the F&B, front office, housekeeping, kitchen management, purchase, and engineering departments of hotels, the IHE-2023 has a lot to offer to everyone in the industry.

If you've been waiting to upgrade your Hospitality and F&B businesses, it's a golden opportunity to source from the best.

For further information, visit the website at www.ihexpo.com



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ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA

6-8 September 2023, AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong



ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA, the leading trade show for Asia's fresh fruit and vegetable industry, returns to AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong on 6-8 September 2023. Thousands of high-quality trade visitors and top buyers from fresh produce industry supply chain will attend ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA to discover an array of products and services, including fresh produce, technology, machinery, and logistics.

Strong Exhibitor Line-up

Exhibitors from 38 different countries and regions have already registered to showcase their products and services at the show. Big brands and key players from across the global fresh produce business all gather in one place – ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA.

Some 22 industry associations and entities will have national or regional pavilions, including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Moldova, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, USA and Vietnam.

ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA brings together leading players from across the global fresh produce business and every step of the value chain. The exhibitor line-up features top names and brands in the business, including Aomori, BayWa Global Produce, T&G Global, Capespan, ClemenGold, Costa, Del Monte, Dole Asia, Goodfarmer, Jingold, Joy Wing Mau, Mission Produce, Pagoda, Pink Lady, Rockit Apple, Rijk Zwaan, Valleyfresh, WayCool Foods and Zespri among others.

Exhibitor registrations are still being accepted. Book your stand now at ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA 2023 to take advantage of the latest advances and untapped market opportunities, and to secure your participation at Asia's largest gathering of the global fresh produce industry.

Top-quality insights

The visitor pass also includes access to a busy event programme bringing a wealth of information and insights.

ASIAFRUIT CONGRESS, Asia's premier event for business information and networking, homes in on the latest trends and opportunities in the fast-moving Asia market. Marketing, trade, and technology are all in focus on the three-day programme. Topics on the agenda include 'New market demographics in Asia', 'Where next in food retail?' and 'Big changes on China's distribution landscape'.

For more info on ASIAFRUIT CONGRESS and to view the full agenda, visit: <https://www.asiafruitlogistica.com/asia-fruit-congress/>

ASIAFRUIT BUSINESS FORUM presents three days of workshops under different tracks. At the 'Launchpad' on Day One, exhibitors showcase new products, technologies, and solutions. Day Two offers 'Partner Content', including special Chinese-language sessions curated by Asiafruit China. On Day Three, the 'Logistics Hub' features expert talks and discussions on cold chain logistics, from sea freight to air cargo. More details are available at <https://www.asiafruitlogistica.com/asiafruit-business-forum/>

[asiafruitlogistica.com/asiafruit-business-forum/](https://www.asiafruitlogistica.com/asiafruit-business-forum/)

Tickets Available Online

One can now buy tickets online to save up to 40% compared with registering onsite and skip the queues in Hong Kong. Tickets include free access to ASIAFRUIT CONGRESS and ASIAFRUIT BUSINESS FORUM, with both events held on the show floor across all three days of ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA.

Tickets are available to purchase at the online Ticket shop: www.asiafruitlogistica.com/buy-your-tickets/

For more information about exhibiting, please visit www.asiafruitlogistica.com/why-exhibit/

EVENT CALENDAR

India International Hospitality Expo

2-5 August 2023

India Expo Centre and Mart
Greater Noida, UP
<https://www.ihexpo.com>

AAKAR 2023

25-28 August, 2023

Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
<https://www.aakarexhibition.in>

Food & Hospitality Thailand

23-26 August, 2023

Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre
Bangkok, Thailand
<https://www.fhthevent.com>



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‘Toya’ Uttarakhand’s First Teppanyaki Restaurant

Toya is all set to offer its diners an attractive selection of a la carte from local and international favourites on the menu. The contemporary restaurant has taken inspiration from Chinese, Thai, Korean and Japanese cuisines. It is located within The Westin Resort & Spa Himalayas, offers a live Teppanyaki showcase to engage guests, whilst they enjoy views of the forested hillside. The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas has become a quintessential property of the brand’s embodiment of wellness.



The restaurant offers a unique dining experience with interactive concepts such as Teppanyaki, and a live sushi counter. The menu features an array of vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, including appetizers, main courses, beverages, and desserts. The delectable menu highlights signature dishes such as Yam Som O, Rock Shrimp Tempura, Tom Yam, Asparagus and Avocado Tempura roll, California Roll, Stir Fried Asian Greens, Stir Fried Chicken, Thai Green Curry, Pad Thai Noodles and Vegan Tres Leches. The bar at Toya is an electrifying space offering delectable cocktails and mocktails such as Toyatini, Thai Melon, Shirley ginger for the teetotalers.

Following the brand’s Eat Well ethos, Toya brings gourmet experiences showcasing the powers of organic, seasonal, and locally sourced ingredients, exemplifying the resort’s commitment to sustainability and nourishment. The menu at Toya has been carefully crafted by Expat Chef Tawee Chaichana, to make it exclusive and sensitive for all flavour palettes and preferences.

“Teppanyaki is a newly sprung concept in India and the goal is to make Toya synonymous to authentic Teppanyaki along with curating immersive experiences and signature epicurean memories for our discerning guests.” said Vivekananda Saha, Executive Chef – The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas

With modern and sophisticated designs, the restaurant comes with a beautiful al-fresco dining area attached for guests who enjoy natural surroundings. The design elements at Toya showcases a beautiful blend of traditional and contemporary south Asian elements. Endowing the restaurant with natural light, the floor-to-ceiling windows creates a relaxing atmosphere for the diners.

Keventers Launches New Milkshake Flavours

Keventers, a name synonymous with unparalleled milkshake perfection and delectable recipes, has launched its brand-new milkshake flavours. With the debut of its season special Ferrero Rocher, Belgian Chocolate, and Original Biscoff Milkshake, the brand continues to redefine indulgence for its consumers.

Prepare to embark on a sensory journey with our very special Original Biscoff milkshake. For those with a fondness for irresistible caramelized biscuit goodness, this milkshake is a must-try! Infused with rich lotus biscoff spread, delectable chocolate cookies and silky caramel syrup, this divine beverage is to die for.



The creamy Ferrero Rocher Milkshake is a blissful blend of rich chocolate and unmistakable hazelnut goodness, that will make every sip count! Every chocolate lover’s dream, now translated into the oh-so-delicious Keventers Belgian Chocolate milkshake is sure to immerse you in a realm of pure cocoa-infused delight.

Agastya Dalmia, Founder & CEO of Keventers, comments on the new taste profiles: "We are excited to introduce these new milkshake flavours as a testament to our dedication to innovation and delivering exceptional taste experiences. Our loyal customers have come to expect nothing short of perfection from us, and we believe these new inclusions will exceed their expectations, elevating their beverage indulgence to new heights!"

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PizzaExpress Opens in Hyderabad

PizzaExpress has opened its brand new outlet in Hyderabad. The brand was brought to India by Gourmet Investments Private Limited (GIPL), venture of Bharti Family office, headed by Ramit Bharti Mittal as the chairman. GIPL holds the master franchise rights for PizzaExpress in India along with franchise rights for Ministry of Crab. The first PizzaExpress opened in India in the year 2012 in Colaba, Mumbai. Currently there are 18 restaurants across 6 cities in India. GIPL plans to open 100+ PizzaExpress stores over the next few years.

PizzaExpress is known for its handcrafted gourmet pizzas, using the finest ingredients. It is available in two bases; one, the 1965 Original Traditional Pizza with the "Classic" Base and the other; the thinner, crispier "Romana" base inspired by pizzas from Rome. In addition to Pizzas there is healthy variety of Pastas and appetizers along with delectable cheesecakes (available in 6 different flavours) and other desserts plus fresh Italian coffee which makes every PizzaExpress meal special.

Other speciality products include signature Dough balls served with a trio of dips & speciality Pizzas like Calabrese - our iconic rectangular Pizza (invented by the Michelin start Chef), Leggera - Pizza under 600 calories & Calzone - The folded Pizza.

Ramit Bharti Mittal, Chairman GIPL on this occasion said, "We're excited to bring PizzaExpress to the people of Hyderabad! PizzaExpress is not your typical casual dining restaurant. We strive to provide not just a wholesome wine & dine experience for true pizza lovers, but also give that perfect casual yet modern café and pizzeria vibe for people to hang out and chill with their friends, family and colleagues."

PizzaExpress has also recently launched Grab & Go Fresh as a part of their offering. PizzaExpress is the first brand in country which serves fresh Grab & Go. The Grab & Go items are made fresh every 4-6 hours to cater to people on-the-go while majority of other brands serve chilled product. Also, the offering is unique to PizzaExpress as it's inspired by Naples Street food and ties back to its Italian heritage.

The menu offers "Pizza by the Slice", "Piadina" - A traditional Italian Flatbread sandwich, "Napoletana Pizza - Classic Naples style Pizza - light, crisp & airy, along with Italian signature salads and an array of delectable cheesecakes and other desserts. The Grab & Go offering coupled their fresh Italian coffee makes a perfect meal for the on-goers.

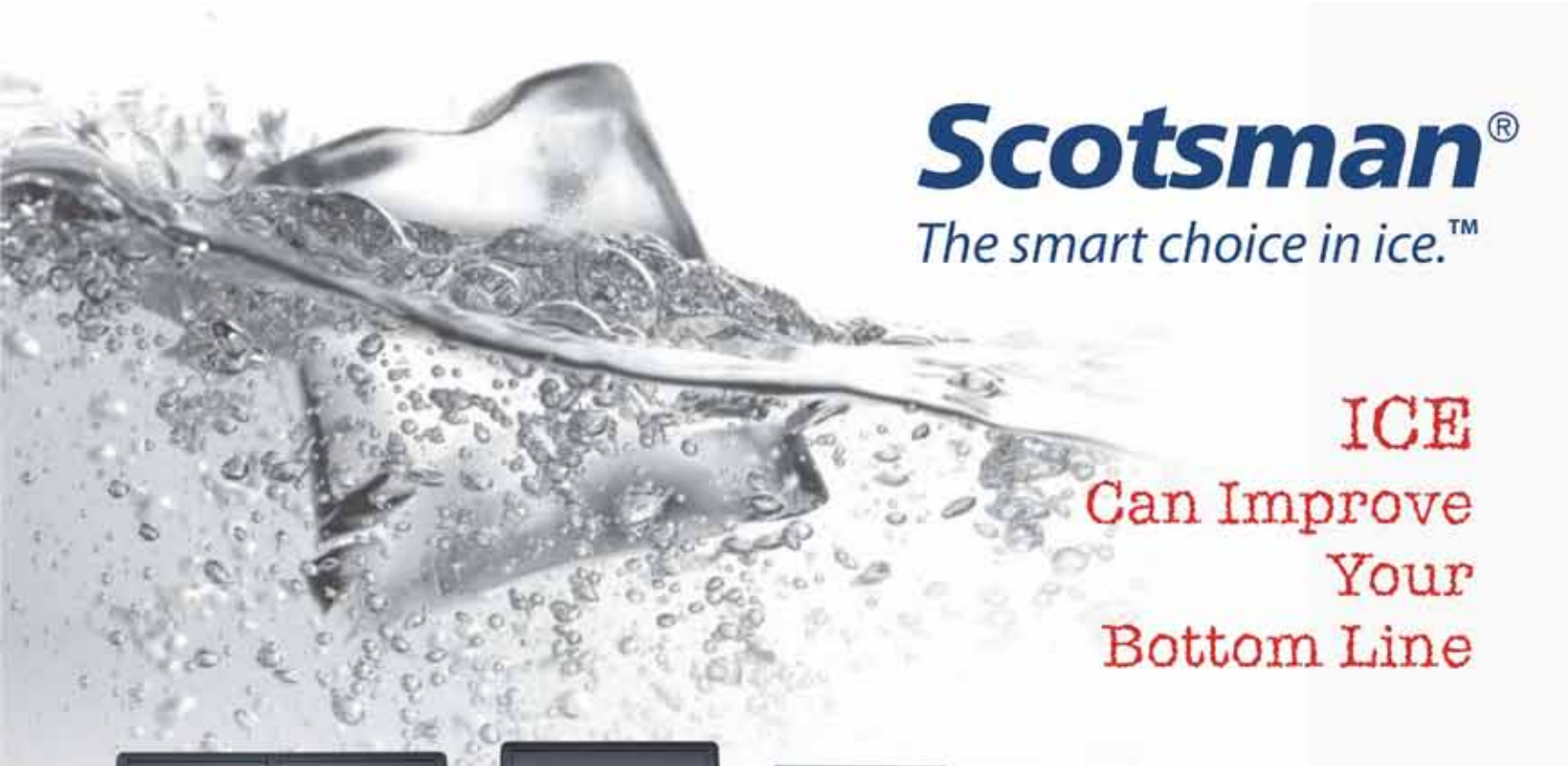


Fat Tiger Opens New Outlet in Agra

Fat Tiger has opened its newest branch in Agra, offering spacious area of 1200 square metres spread over two floors. The restaurant is strategically located in the heart of the city, close to famous tourist attractions such as the famous Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. The menu offers burgers, french fries to boba teas the restaurant prides itself on using only the finest ingredients to create delicious meals.

At Fat Tiger, the focus is not only on creating a visually appealing space but also on delivering an authentic culinary experience. The restaurant's expert chefs have crafted a menu that showcases the diverse and flavorful cuisine of North India. Guests can indulge in a wide array of mouthwatering dishes, ranging from aromatic biryanis and buttery naans to flavorful curries. The extensive menu caters to different tastes and dietary preferences, ensuring that every visitor finds something to satisfy their cravings.





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Spectrum Metro Redefines Food Experiences

Spectrum Metro continues to innovate and evolve, providing visitors with a dynamic and engaging environment. With its exceptional dining options, it has cemented its position as the ultimate food destination in Noida. With an impressive lineup of the best food and beverage brands, including Domino's, Kulhad Biryani, Starbucks, Baskin Robbins, The Waffle Co., Stress-Free Cafe, and many more, Spectrum Metro ensures a multi-cuisine experience like no other.



As the Noida's top commercial hub, Spectrum Metro is renowned for its vibrant atmosphere, excellent location, and diverse range of offerings. It has become synonymous with the best food and dining options, providing visitors with a one-stop solution to satisfy their cravings. Spectrum Metro has everything to suit the mood for mouth-watering desserts, delectable international cuisine, or comfort food.

"Food is an essential part of our lives, and at Spectrum Metro, we understand the importance of offering a wide range of culinary experiences. We are thrilled to be the go-to destination for food lovers, providing them with an unparalleled dining experience. From international chains to local favourites, Spectrum Metro hosts the best food and beverage brands under one roof," said Ajendra Singh, VP- Sales & Marketing, Spectrum Metro.

TCP Launches Tata Coffee Gold- Cold Brew

Tata Consumer Products (TCP), the consumer products company uniting the principal food and beverage interests of the Tata Group under one umbrella, announced its entry into the Ready-to-Drink Cold Coffee category with the launch of Tata Coffee Gold- Cold Brew. This latest offering aims to redefine the coffee experience by delivering a unique blend of cold brew maintaining a rounded taste profile without any bitterness.



Carefully crafted for those who appreciate the finer things in life, this new beverage steeped for more than 12 hours offers a strong, rich, velvety taste that will captivate coffee connoisseurs. This well-crafted recipe ensures that each sip provides a perfect balance between indulgence and mindful consumption, making it an ideal lifestyle choice for coffee lovers. One of the key highlights of Tata Coffee Gold- Cold Brew Ready-to-Drink Coffee is its low sugar content, catering to health-conscious individuals without compromising on taste.

Tata Coffee Gold is brewed with cold water to retain its smoothness, using only the finest ingredients and is available in three variants – Classic, Mocha, and Hazelnut. Free from any artificial flavorings, it offers an authentic and genuine coffee experience that is both refreshing and satisfying.

Speaking about the new launch, Vikram Grover, MD NourishCo Beverages Limited, Tata Consumer Products (the Ready-to-Drink business of Tata Consumer Products) said, "Our aim with Tata Coffee Gold- Cold Brew Ready-to-Drink Coffee is to provide an unparalleled coffee experience to our discerning customers. We have meticulously crafted this beverage to cater to the needs of coffee enthusiasts who appreciate a perfect blend of taste, quality, and convenience. With Tata Coffee Gold- Cold Brew, we are offering a product that delivers a rich, rounded taste without any bitterness, while still providing a cold brewed coffee hit."



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99 Pancakes Ventures into Café Model

99 Pancakes, India's first QSR chain in the pancakes segment, launched its first café in Nasik, Maharashtra. The new café is located in the heart of the city on College Road. The company will operate on a company owned company operated model for this café to provide the best. The pancake specialty QSR has entered the second new segment with its first café in Nasik after venturing into the FMCG segment.



The food menu is tailored to suit college students, kids, and working individuals. A variety of coffee is being offered at the café, along with pancakes, waffles, fries, pizza, and cakes. 99 Pancakes operates more than forty-five outlets across fifteen cities in India. The QSR brand is planning to expand in the Middle East. Moreover, QSR opened the outlet in Prayagraj this year.

Talking about venturing into the café model, Vikesh Shah, Founder of 99 Pancakes, "We are so excited to open our café. We look forward to welcoming more people into our tribe. The journey till now has been filled with learnings and innovations. The major goal is to make the brand the go-to neighborhood cafe for young people who like to eat and enjoy gourmet places without digging a hole in their pockets."

Coffee Meets Alcohol: A Brewista Collaboration

BLR Brewing Co., an eminent micro brewery in Bangalore known for its exceptional brews & Bonomi, a leading cold brew company, has recently collaborated for something unique and flavourful to introduce their latest collaboration craft beer: Hazelnut Stout. Crafted with precision and a commitment to excellence, this bold beer showcases the artistry of both brewing and coffee-making. It is rich and roasty, with a smooth and creamy finish. It has a distinctive coffee aroma and flavour, while the hazelnut and chocolate flavours are very well balanced from the start till the finish. Every sip evokes notes of coffee as well as chocolate and can be easily distinguished by its deep & dark colour.



Prasanna Kumar, co-founder of BLR Brewing Co., expressed his excitement about the collaboration, stating, "Working with Bonomi to create the Hazelnut Stout has been a remarkable experience. The craftsmanship and dedication demonstrated by the Bonomi team have elevated the quality of this brew to new heights. We are confident that stout lovers will appreciate the unique flavor profile we have achieved."

Combining the robust characteristics of an American Stout with the rich flavours of coffee, hazelnut, and chocolate, the Hazelnut Cold Brew Stout promises an indulgent and well-rounded drinking experience bursting with flavour. With an ABV content of 6.3% and an IBU score of 28, this brew offers a delightful balance of bitterness and smoothness.

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Bacardi Launches 'Shake Your Future'

Bacardi in India has announced the commencement of its 2nd edition of 'Shake Your Future' – a free two-week long training program geared toward helping LDA+ unemployed and underrepresented youth in the country to kick start successful careers in the world of bartending.

Following the success of the first edition in 2022, which was the pilot of Shake Your Future in India, the second edition will offer students the opportunity to master the basics of bartending, refine mixology finesse, and master the art of personal branding through immersive workshops. The



sessions will additionally cover a variety of subjects like, Beverage Basics, Mixology, Flair and other complementary subjects such as Social Media, Communication, and Industry Talks.

The previous edition in India had 100% graduates going on to get hired by reputed bars and restaurants at five-star hotels across the country. Keeping with its #GoodSpirited motto, Bacardi in India also started an all-women batch earlier this year to help talent pivot to a career in bartending. The upcoming batch is expected to further offer students sessions with Nitin Tewari, Founder of Bar kala Academy and BarTrender OPC private limited, as well as industry stalwarts and Bacardi trade ambassadors.

Peep Kitchen, A Hidden Gem

The aroma of masalas and spices welcomes you the moment you walk into Peep Kitchen. The ambience and the smiles on fellow customers' faces prepare you for a Goan journey that's full of flavour. Peep Kitchen, a 15-year-old restaurant, in Taleigao, Panjim, is known for its authentic Goan seafood such as Pomfret Recheado Masala Fry, Chicken Cafreal, Prawn Xacuti, Kingfish Rawa Masala Fry and more.



Located in the residential neighbourhood of Taleigao, close to other seaside areas of Caranzalem, Miramar, and Dona Paula, Peep Kitchen serves the best of the local catch in traditional Goan preparations. Their Fish Thali combination of fried fish, curry, rice and more is a cult classic and has been called 'the best thali in Panjim' by local guides.

Peep Kitchen doesn't just celebrate Goan heritage with food, but also with its cocktails, infusing them with increasingly popular local spirits like feni and urrak. Their exquisite cocktails like Goan Romance, Peru Meru, and Goan Fenito are a medley of local fruit flavours. The fresh catch menu has everything from Pomfret Rawa Masala Fry and Prawns Butter Garlic to unconventional, local delights like Teesryo Suke and Recheado Bangdo. Their velvety, perfectly spiced coconut-based curries are an immersive experience for your senses.

Run by brothers, Amey and Gaurish Naik, Peep Kitchen is a tourist and a celebrity favourite. What makes it a go-to place, even for locals, is the traditional, 'heirloom' recipes that their mother, Vidya Naik, learned from her large joint family upbringing. The food isn't just enriched with homemade masalas but with fresh local vegetables sourced nearby as well. And you taste the love with which it's made, in every bite.

Peep Kitchen was originally a small takeaway restaurant in 2006, where Vidya Naik would cook, while one brother assisted and the other delivered. Soon they upgraded to a dine-in restaurant in Caranzelem in 2010. With time, the reviews of their "impeccable", "delicious", and "mouthwatering" food spread and they needed a larger space. Around 5 years ago, they shifted nearby to Taleigao, another suburb of Goa's capital Panjim, with double the capacity and happier customers.

Celebrities like Sachin Tendulkar, Devendra Fadnavis, Nitin Gadkari, and Rocky and Mayur are their fans, for good reason. The flavours are widely regarded to be authentic and wholesome. As one local resident describes it, "Peeps is only second best to home. It has been years since I've been visiting this place and it has never failed to tickle the tastebuds. Undoubtedly it's the finest."

Peep Kitchen has a comfortable ambience for travelers looking for a respite from Goan heat as it is air-conditioned, and has comfortable, modern decor. Its generous parking area also make dining easy and convenient. As a bonus, its large "Peep" sign outside is hard to miss.

Customers constantly rave about their food and the welcoming staff. Their service shines through their smiles and great recommendations. They're "friendly and courteous", "on-point", and even "awesome". The quality of service, their reputation and exquisite Goan delicacies have won Peep Kitchen several accolades and recognition.





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Cherries from U.S. Pacific Northwest Launched in India

The Northwest Cherry Growers (NWCG), a trade association based in the state of Washington in the U.S.A. have launched their promotion campaign in India to introduce this summer’s crop of large deep-mahogany red, ripe, juicy, sweet and the most delicious cherries from the U.S. Pacific Northwest to the discerning health-conscious Indian consumers.

Ron Verdonk, Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, Embassy of the United States of America, officially launched the Northwest Cherries campaign in India. Speaking on the occasion he said, “Food is a very important part of India – U.S. trade, and I am really pleased that freshly-picked cherries from our Pacific Northwest are now added to the basket. I am confident that Indian consumers will love the quality and taste of these cherries that are considered amongst the best in the world.”

The U.S. is one of world’s largest producers and exporters of sweet cherries. Keith Hu,

Director of International Operations of Northwest Cherry Growers (NWCG) was also



present on the occasion. He remarked that the cherries from the U.S. Pacific Northwest are grown in the states of Washington, Oregon Idaho, Utah and Montana, and consumers worldwide relish their sweet flavour, bigger size and superior quality. “I am delighted to see NW cherries here in India.”

Speaking on the India campaign for Cherries from Northwest, Sumit Saran,

In-Country Marketing Representative of NWCG said, “We foresee immense potential for Northwest Cherries in India. These cherries are considered amongst the best in the world for their high quality, flavour, taste and also food safety. Cherries from the Pacific Northwest USA will be in the market in July and August, perfectly complementing the Indian cherry season. We have chalked out an extensive retail and communication strategy to take this delicious fruit to discerning Indian consumers across the country. These cherries will be available both with retail fruit sellers and e-commerce platforms”.

Also present at the launch was Kavita Devgan, a leading Dietitian, holistic health consultant and Chef Vicky Ratnani who showcased a healthy recipe featuring Northwest Cherries. He highlighted their high quality and culinary value, bringing joy and creativity to every plate.

AER Re-opens After a Year

AER the iconic rooftop bar at Four Seasons Mumbai re-opens this weekend after a year of complete renovations. A fresh and exciting beverage menu by renowned mixologist Alexandre Renoue, also known as Alex, who takes on the mantle of Beverage Manager, is designed to delight the discerning drinker while the bar’s new refined interiors, inspired by nautical themes, make the perfect setting for lingering gazes at glorious views of South Mumbai’s skyline and glorious sunsets.



Cumulus, a curated collection of sour cocktails, offers the chance to revel in whimsical frothiness with cloud-kissed concoctions. Carbonated beverages offer a soothing wash of rejuvenation. Thunderheads embodies a bolder spirit with alcohol-forward mixtures

designed to recreate the adrenalin-charged skies outside.

Celestial Sommelier’s Collection reaffirms AER’s legacy with a hand-picked assortment of wines, while Mariner’s Brew Voyage offers a selection of beers as diverse as the seven seas. The menu courses to a crescendo with the Mile High Library, a revered repository of spirits tucked away in the rooftop yacht club.

The beverage offering is supplemented with a richly nuanced culinary experience, ranging from contemporary small plates to crowd-loved sharing plates. An assortment of flat breads tantalises the tastebuds of the modern gourmand, while an innovative approach to desserts offers up the quintessential happy ending.

ViVi Italian Bar & Kitchen, New Italian Eatery

ViVi Italian Bar and Kitchen is the newest addition to Thane's culinary scene offering complete Italian dining experience. "ViVi" translates to "live" or "be alive" in Italian, which encapsulates the core



philosophy of the restaurant. Tucked alongside an Olympic-sized racing pool, ViVi Italian Bar and Kitchen combines the magic of poolside relaxation with the tantalizing flavors of woodfire pizzas, hand-stretched garlic bread, hand-rolled pasta, handmade gelatos, and tiramisu.

The heart of ViVi Italian Bar & Kitchen lies in its authentic wood-fired oven, constructed with precision and craftsmanship, this oven recreates the fiery heat and smoky ambiance of the traditional pizzerias of Naples. In addition to the impeccable pizzas,

ViVi Italian Bar & Kitchen offers a diverse menu that caters to a variety of tastes and dietary preferences. From delicious hand-made pasta like cannelloni and tortellini to cheesy garlic dough balls to serving Tiramisus live on the table, every dish is a celebration of authentic Italian cuisine. Do not forget to order their signature Nutella pizza The place also serves beers, Italian wines, and delectable cocktails

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Westfalia Fruit Strengthens its India Presence

West-In Avo is looking to expand the total nursery capacity to propagate over 100,000 plants a year and also start producing clonal plants, which have better tolerance to phytophthora root rot and is also ideally suited for the high rainfall tropical growing conditions in the Western Ghats region. West-In Avo is looking to work with large and small growers in this region to expand avocado growing areas from the current plantation of 120 hectares to over 1000 hectares in the next 3-4 years.

“We have had a strong start to our partnership in India, establishing ourselves as the market leader in avocados - having the largest growing footprint of avocado orchards and also marketing of avocado fruit in the Indian market. We see a great potential for India developing into a large market for growing Hass avocados for both domestic consumption and exports and Westfalia Fruit will take a leadership role in establishing the avocado industry in India,” mentioned Alk Brand, Group CEO of Westfalia Fruit Group.

GVK Naidu, MD of Sam Agri Group added, “Being the first integrated avocado project in India, we have built a very strong relationship with our grower partners by providing the highest quality planting material, continued technical support, develop package of practices for Indian conditions and also offer buy back of produce for marketing.”



'Ultimate Bartender Championship' Comes to Mumbai

Monkey Shoulder, the free-spirited blended malt owned by William Grant & Sons announced the sixth season of 'Ultimate Bartender Championship' amongst the bartending community in India. The championship culminated its Mumbai city round with over 80 talented bartenders from the city mixing, moving and shaking to claim the mask!

Hosted and judged by Monkey Shoulder India’s Brand Ambassador and Chief Monkey Officer, Gaurav Sareen, the event saw a gush of energy from a zealous group of bartenders paving their way through five exciting mixology challenges. The top finalists from Mumbai,were Vishal Tawde from PCO Mumbai, Rudra Kumar from Blah, Jay Mhamunkar from Eve, They will now compete with other city round finalists at the finale.

This year, the brand is set out to “Unmask the next champion” aka most passionate and skillful bartender across the country. The championship is structured to evaluate “the skills that pay the bills.” The five distinct levels of the competition concentrate on essential skills like industry knowledge, pouring, nosing, table service and nailing the perfect serve.

Commenting on the championship, Kapila Sethi Kad – Marketing Head, said, "Monkey Shoulder is proud to support the bartending community in India. The Ultimate Bartender Championship is a testament to the brand’s ethos of light-heartedness, cheeky creativity, and enthusiasm. The city round in Mumbai witnessed some of the best bartending talent in the country. This has further strengthened our commitment to grow trade in the city and help these bartenders thrive and reinvent themselves."

Marico Integrates Saffola Store

Marico Limited has recently integrated its Saffola Store with the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). This association is a significant milestone for Marico, as it opens new avenues for growth, collaboration, and enhanced digital experiences in the ever-evolving e-commerce landscape.



The ONDC network, initiated by the Government of India, is a revolutionary digital commerce network that aims to empower businesses and consumers across the country. The initiative takes the ambitious ‘Digital India’ vision further by creating an inclusive ecosystem aimed at dramatically increasing e-commerce penetration in India and enabling population-scale inclusion of all types and sizes of sellers. Through this integration, Marico is committed to delivering unparalleled benefits to its stakeholders, including distributors, retailers, suppliers, and consumers.

Sanjay Mishra, COO India Business and CEO New Business, Marico Limited, emphasized, “We are delighted to partner with ONDC and further government’s ‘Digital India’ vision. While the e-commerce market in India has grown at an exponential pace over the past decade, online FMCG retail is yet to make significant inroads into rural and semi-urban markets.”

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Chef Nishesh Seth

Shangri-La Bengaluru has announced the appointment of Nishesh Seth as Executive Chef. With over fifteen years of experience working in luxury hotels, he brings to the table creativity and exemplary culinary skills. Chef Nishesh has extensive knowledge of varied cuisines, culinary operations, innovative culinary techniques, and has a talent for creating new and exciting dining experiences. Nishesh Seth

will oversee all of the hotel's culinary operations across eight restaurants and bars, along with the banqueting operations of Shangri-La Bengaluru.



Chef Raj Kumar Nandy

Hotel Royal Orchid Bangalore has announced their new Executive Chef, Raj Kumar Nandy. Chef Nandy has over 25 years of experience being 9 years as an Executive chef. He started his career as a Senior Sous Chef and worked with properties such as The Chancery Hotel on Lavelle Road Bangalore, Aloft-Ahmedabad Marriott Hotels, Royal Orchid Central, Ahmedabad, Fortune Landmark

Ahmedabad, to name a few. He will be primarily responsible for overseeing the culinary operations and enhancing standards.



Chef Ashley Nunes

Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield has introduced Ashley Nunes as the newly appointed Executive Chef. Chef Ashley brings extensive culinary knowledge through his 17 years of experience working with prestigious luxury hotel brands across India. He has previously worked in several reputable establishments, including Hilton Goa Resort, Radisson Blu Hotel and Spa Nashik, JW Marriott Juhu and Grand Hyatt

Mumbai. Chef Ashley will oversee all culinary aspects of the hotel, including menu planning, overseeing food quality, team management, cost control.



Chef Mahesh Ramasamy

Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort has appointed Mahesh Ramasamy as the new Executive Chef. Chef Ramasamy has over 22 years of experience. He did his BSc degree in Hotel Management from Bharathiyar University, and his expertise spans across renowned organizations such as MGM Resort, ITC Fortune, The Tamara Coorg, Kanva Resort, and Clarion. His extensive knowledge and skill set make him an invaluable addition

to the Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort team. He will be responsible for overseeing all culinary operations at the property.



Chef Ishant Khanna

VRO Hospitality, has appointed Chef Ishant Khanna as the Corporate Chef for one of its flagship brands Badmaash, that set a new benchmark in exhilarating taste of Indian cuisine matched with international standards of service and style. An industry veteran of 16 years, Ishant joins from the Oberoi Centre of Learning & Development where he was a Kitchen Faculty. Prior to this, he was associated with JW Marriott,

Olive & Thyme Hospitality LLP, Four Seasons Hotels and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts.



Chef Prabhjeet Singh Lehal

Conrad Pune is ecstatic to introduce Chef Prabhjeet Singh Lehal as the new Chef De Cuisine at their award winning Indian restaurant, Zeera. With an impressive culinary career of over 12 years, Chef Prabhjeet's has garnered experience with renowned brands such as IHG hotels, The Leela hotels and the Taj palace hotels. He was responsible for opening Falak at The

Leela Bhartiya City in Bengaluru. He will lead the culinary team, overseeing all culinary operations and driving innovation in the kitchen.



Chef Satrujeet Das

Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield welcomes Chef Satrujeet Das, as the new Sous Chef for Alto Vino, a contemporary Italian Restaurant. He holds a postgraduate certificate in Italian Culinary Arts from Gorge Brown College in Toronto, an Advanced Culinary Arts Diploma from Johnson and Wales University in the USA, and food handler certifications from Singapore, Italy, Toronto, and Saudi Arabia.

He has an experience of nearly two decades, working in Michelin-starred restaurants alongside renowned chefs specializing in Italian and Mediterranean cuisines.



Chef Yoshinori Mizutani

Shangri-La Bengaluru has appointed Chef Yoshinori Mizutani as the Master of Japanese Cuisine at Yatai, a authentic and contemporary Japanese restaurant. With a career spanning over four decades, born and raised in Nagoya in Japan, Chef Mizutani's career has seen him traverse culinary destinations worldwide including Egypt, Singapore, China, Mauritius and Indonesia. Chef Mizutani's exceptional

tuna carving technique, which earned him recognition during his tenure at Shangri-La Beijing, celebrated as a monthly affair at the restaurant, now brings his expertise to India.



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Chile to Strengthen Ties with India



The counter-season and the diversification of its exports has allowed the Latin American country to enter the Indian market with a wide variety of products, mainly foods, which seek to position themselves among consumers thanks to their high-quality standards.

During June 18-22, a delegation of senior economic authorities from Chile visited India to explore new opportunities for growth and development between the two countries. During these 5 days, promotional events in New Delhi were organised, along with meetings with government authorities, and a visit to Mumbai, where the official inauguration of the Consulate took place along with the economic office of Chile in this destination.

The delegation was headed by Ignacio Fernandez, the General Director of ProChile -an entity belonging to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of the promotion of goods and services for export- and SOFOFA, a trade association that brings together representatives of different Chilean productive sectors. Among the activities of the mission carried out in New Delhi was, Chile-India Business Council, together with the Confederation of Indian Industry and the promotional event "Captivating Chile", and in Mumbai, the inauguration of the Chilean representations and the masterclass "Know

Chile Through Wines".

At the opening event of this tour, the Director General of ProChile highlighted India's role in the future of trade and how Chile is adapting to current consumer demands. "We are witnesses of the explosive growth that India has had in the last decades, in addition to the incredible potential it has to develop in different areas. That is why we want to strengthen our relationship through new expansion opportunities in the food sector, health and even topics as varied as education. We believe that this visit marks a new milestone in our relations," he added.

Chile was the first Latin American country that individually managed to sign a Trade Agreement with India and currently, both countries maintain a Partial Scope Agreement with India which entered into force in August 2017. There are also multiple commercial ones, as is the case with the Memorandum of Understanding agreement for the acquisition of pharmaceutical products in 2021. To this added the agreement signed to eliminate DoubleTaxation in 2020.

The Chilean Ambassador to India, Juan Angulo, highlighted the importance of this type of meetings, which allow the South American country to position itself as a reliable producer. "India has proven to be a key ally for the realisation of our strategy in

the region. Its cultural richness, its territorial diversity and its millenary history allow us to expand our export portfolio, while promoting openness for the consolidation of new ties," he concluded.

The public-private alliance that makes the trip from Chile possible seeks to be the first of many initiatives aimed at deepening agreements while showing Indian consumers the unique qualities and properties of the goods and services coming from the new continent.

"For us it is extremely important to make visible the work we do every day with Indian importers in order to increase our commercial exchange. We are constantly looking for ways to optimize our shipping times, innovating our offer and meeting the request for more attractive packaging, products with high added value and exceptional flavour. Being on field today makes it easier to recognise opportunities and drives us to go for more," added Ignacio Fernandez.

In 2016, an expansion of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between India and Chile was signed in New Delhi, increasing the scope of the agreement from 474 tariff lines to 2829 tariff glosses. As of 2021, both countries are negotiating a further expansion of the PTA in the hope of deepening it; this could liberalise up to 90% of tariff lines in India, equivalent to some 10,000 products.

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Concocting Cocktails

Drink preference, like fashion, literature and food, reflect the changing trends and likes of the populace. Post pandemic, people have become tuned to quality over quantity. The desire of consuming an excess quantity of spirits has been replaced with what tickles the taste buds and provides sensory satisfaction. Today, cocktails have become increasingly popular over neat spirits. And the usage of spirits has also taken a turn. While previously cocktails were normally concocted using vodka or gin, today they are extensively prepared from rum, tequila, bourbon, whiskey, and mescal. **Ashok Malkani** examines the cocktail scenario and the different aspects of creating and fabricating flavourful and intoxicating drink.

As the sun slips below the horizon and it's time to relax after a tiring day you are ready to try that new place, which you have been reading about, to pep yourself up.

It may be mentioned that respite and remedy for fatigue and mental exhaustion has been associated with form of fermented alcoholic beverage since as far back as 7000 B.C. Alcohol's history in society is long and storied and it's evolution shows no signs of slowing. The format of consumption, though, keeps changing and one of the significant changes of it being consumed as a cocktail can be traced back to May 1806. At that time some kind of spirit, sugar, water and bitters were mixed together to intoxicate you and tickle the taste buds.

Today cocktail has become an art form.



And we have become a society full of art collectors and connoisseurs! So what is fueling our collective cocktail endearment?

Rajib Ganguly, Restaurant Manager at Seven Eleven Club and Hotels, Mira Bhayandar, Maharashtra, discloses, "Cocktails became popular in early 20's and as per survey they are becoming more popular as people today prefer having mix flavours rather than only 1 liquor taste. Many new refreshing innovative recipes have given long lasting palatable effect to consumers making cocktails become popular."

Gaurav Sareen, Brand Ambassador, Monkey Shoulder India, avers, "People love cocktails since they are more exciting than straight spirits. Their tastes are more complex and customisable. You don't like vodka? No problem, swap it out with tequila or rum. And most of the alcohol that's used as a base, pairs extremely well with tropical juices and syrups. Now with the talent that we have in our bars, every cocktail is a unique experience, from storytelling to the presentation, to taste!"

Dushyant Singh, Executive Assistant Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa, is of the opinion that cocktails have soared in popularity due to their extraordinary versatility and the captivating sensory experiences they offer.

He adds, "At JW Marriott Bengaluru

Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa, our cocktails elevate the art of mixology to new heights. What sets our cocktails apart is the dedication of our expert mixologists, who showcase their extraordinary expertise and passion for innovation. They weave together a tapestry of ingredients, sourced from the finest local and international markets, to create imaginative and truly unique concoctions. The result is a symphony of taste that captivates the palate and sparks conversation.

Shree Yadav, F&B Head, Taj Corbett Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand asserts that popularity of cocktails is because they differ from standard alcoholic beverages. They are made by hand using strong alcohol like tequila, gin, rum, vermouth, vodka as the base and then skillfully combining them with supplementary beverages and fruit or herbs for decoration.

He adds, "Some of the reasons for their popularity are explained below:

Variety and creativity: Cocktails offer a vast array of flavours, combinations, and presentations. Mixologists and bartenders continuously experiment with different ingredients, spirits, and techniques to create unique and innovative cocktails. This variety appeals to people who enjoy exploring new tastes and experiences.

Social and celebratory nature: Cocktails are often associated with socialising, celebrations,



and special occasions. They provide a festive and convivial atmosphere, making them popular choices for parties, gatherings, and nights out with friends. The act of sharing and enjoying cocktails together enhances the social experience.

Flavour balance: Cocktails are typically designed to achieve a balanced blend of flavours. The combination of sweet, sour, bitter, and other taste profiles creates a harmonious and complex drink. This balance enhances the drinking experience and can be

tailored to individual preferences.

Customization and personalization: Cocktails can be customized to suit personal tastes and preferences. Whether it's adjusting the sweetness, strength, or adding specific ingredients, individuals can tailor their cocktails to their liking. This level of personalization adds to the appeal of cocktails.

Cultural significance: Cocktails have a rich history and cultural significance. Classic cocktails like the Martini, Mojito, or Margarita have become iconic and carry a sense of tradition and heritage."

Rasikta Kamble, Assistant F&B Manager, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel states, "Well-travelled and younger guests have started coming to bars with the expectation of interesting, unique flavoured beverages and want to experience something exciting. The attraction of a well-stocked bar, exotic bitters, and striking presentations are emphasized by award-winning and knowledgeable bartenders. With exposure to global trends, international beverages and pop culture, many people are developing an interest in such an elevated drinking experience, and specifically cocktails."

Vishwesh Ramesh, Food & Beverage Manager, Mulberry Shades, Nandi Hills, Bengaluru - Tribute Portfolio Resort of Marriott International declares, "Some of the reasons for the allure of fancy cocktails are variety and creativity, aesthetic appeal, customization, craftsmanship and so on. This diversity appeals to the discerning





Dushyant Singh



Rasikta Kamble



Gaurav Sareen



Rajib Ganguly



Shree Yadav

palates of the modern maverick who seeks memorable and distinctive dining and beverage options.”

Rajasekhar S, Assistant Beverage Manager at Aloft Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, attributes their popularity to “mixing of different ingredients together, each with a different flavour and aromas. When we plan for a cocktail as a bartender, we do get a concept story behind the cocktail. So, every cocktail has a story to say.”

Craft Cocktails

Cocktail culture is, nowadays, more than just what’s in the glass. Today cocktail is a fantasy. And bartenders now invest more time in creating an upscale version of classic cocktail. This takes more skill and craft thus we have an intricate and creative delicacy: Craft Cocktail. There has been an explosion of craft cocktails recently. The result is that bartenders are getting more creative with their drinks.

So why are these cocktails becoming so popular and, as a result, how is the industry changing?

Shree Yadav states, “Craft cocktails are carefully crafted showcasing the skill and expertise of the mixologist or bartender. They have gained in popularity due to their unique and high-quality flavours, social and experiential aspect, creativity and innovation, focus on craftsmanship and skill.”

He adds “social media and visual appeal have also given them a boost.”

Rasikta Kamble declares that craft cocktail is an upscale version of a classic cocktail that takes more skill, or craft, to make. She adds, “As guests are traveling widely and exposing their taste buds to different flavours, even their desire to experience different cocktails has increased. The industry has welcomed this change with open arms and is excited to offer guests their own interpretations and unique recipes. A mixologist gets the chance to infuse their signature in cocktails, thereby pulling crowds in to their outlet. Moreover, the visual experience of ‘drinking’ the beverage through cameras pushes bartenders to make their beverages Insta-worthy.”

Vishwesh Ramesh believes that craft cocktails are creations of the artistry of the mixologist. At Mulberry Shades, Nandi Hills, Bengaluru, every individually created drink is a work of art, harmonizing top-tier spirits, locally procured ingredients, and

artisanal techniques. Our passionate team of talented mixologists continually strives to redefine the craft cocktail experience by incorporating regional flavours and drawing inspiration from diverse sources. The industry is getting increasingly competitive and hence staying relevant and keeping up with new age techniques and consistent innovation is the way to go.

Rajasekhar adds, “Craft cocktail has become very popular because it doesn’t comprise any pre-mixes. It can be customized as per choice.”

Rajib states, “Craft cocktails are designed to tantalize the taste buds and ignite the senses.”

Dushyant Singh declares “Each craft cocktail is a masterpiece combining premium spirits, locally sourced ingredients, and artisanal techniques. With the industry undergoing a transformative shift, mixologists are pushing the boundaries of innovation and flavour exploration. Our dedicated team of talented mixologists at JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa, continuously seeks to redefine the art of craft cocktails, infusing them with local flavours and inspirations. One of the cocktails at our Asian restaurant, Melting Pot, is a Japanese version of whiskey sour by addition of yuzu Asian bitters with a garnish of edible rice paper dragon.”

Gaurav believes that these cocktails are becoming popular due to the rise of exposure and knowledge in Indian bartenders. The industry standards have increased significantly with multiple bars recognized at the international level and the culture of craft cocktails being accepted widely by consumers and the trade.

Art of Mixology

The spirits and the ingredients that go into making a cocktail that speaks to our souls and responds to our inner tastes, feelings and desires is due to the skill of a bartender/ mixologist. How does he arrive at the conclusion of what ingredients to mix, and in what quantities? Mixology is considered to be essential. Why?

Vishwesh Ramesh states that mixologists, through a thoughtful process, expertise and professional training, arrive at various elements such as the chosen spirit, complementary flavours, achieving balance, and fulfilling the desired taste profile.



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He continues, "Understanding the proper mixing techniques is crucial to crafting exceptional cocktails. It allows our bartenders to achieve a perfect balance, ensuring that each ingredient shines while contributing to the overall harmony of the drink. Our skilled mixologists, at Mulberry Shades, Nandi Hills, Bengaluru, expertly blend freshly sourced handpicked ingredients in precise proportions. By combining spirits, mixers, and relevant garnishes with meticulous precision, they create cocktails that are a harmonious symphony of flavours that are captivating, well-rounded, and truly unforgettable.

"As far as different techniques of mixing cocktails are concerned, without getting into extreme technical details, I would say, basic cocktail making involves these basic methods: Building, Stirring, Shaking, Blending and Layering. And some of the basic ingredient groups involve: Core Spirit, Balancing agent, Modifiers and Garnish. My idea of cocktails is that there are usually no rules excepting these two – "Taste" and "Balance". First is easier to achieve than the second. The second is a mastery that takes years of consistent practice."

Rajib declares, "As mixologists or professional bartenders, we need to be able to follow recipes and instructions quickly and easily, so we can deliver our guests their thirst-quenching, delicious drink. Proper mixing of cocktails is important as wrong quantity of mixtures can spoil the taste. Mixing, incidentally, is a process wherein bartender uses his recipe of cocktails and mixes proportionate Liquor, sweet and sour, juice and sometime flavoured spirits to get exact palatable taste. One fundamental rule of drink mixing is: we need to include a spirit, something bitter and something sweet to achieve a balanced drink. When we are mixing up a sour cocktail, one useful thumb rule is to aim for 3 parts Spirits, 2 parts Bitter, and 1 part Sweet."

He elaborates on the Different techniques of cocktail mixing which could be used if you are preparing a cocktail at home, thus:

Shaking: When a drink contains eggs, fruit juices or cream it is necessary to shake the ingredients. Shaking is the method by which you use a cocktail shaker to mix ingredients together and chill them simultaneously. The object is to almost freeze the drink whilst breaking down and combining the ingredients. When you've poured in the ingredients, hold the shaker in both hands, with one hand on



Rajasekhar S

top and one supporting the base, and give a short, sharp, snappy shake. It's important not to rock your cocktail to sleep. The cocktail should be sufficiently chilled and ready to be strained.

Straining: Most cocktail shakers are sold with a build-in strainer or hawthorn strainer. When a drink calls for straining, ensure you've used ice cubes, as crushed ice tends to clog the strainer of a standard shaker. If a drink need to be shaken with crushed ice (i.e. Shirley Temple), it is to be served unstrained.

Stirring: You can stir cocktails effectively with a metal or glass rod in a mixing glass. If ice is to be used, use ice cubes to prevent dilution, and strain the contents into a glass when the surface of the mixing glass begins to collect condensation.

Muddling: To extract the most flavour from certain fresh ingredients such as fruit or mint garnishes, you should crush the ingredient with the muddler on the back end of your bar spoon, or with a pestle.

Blending: An electric blender is needed for recipes containing fruit or other ingredients which do not break down by shaking.

Building: When building a cocktail, the ingredients are poured into the glass in which the cocktail will be served. Usually, the

ingredients are floated on top of each other, but occasionally, a swizzle stick is put in the glass, allowing the ingredients to be mixed.

Layering: To layer or float an ingredient (i.e. cream, liqueurs) on top of another, use the rounded or back part of a spoon and rest it against the inside of a glass. Slowly pour down the spoon and into the glass. The ingredient should run down the inside of the glass and remain separated from the ingredient below it. Learning the approximate weight of certain liqueurs and such will allow you to complete this technique more successfully, as lighter ingredients can then be layered on top of heavier ones.

Flaming: Flaming is a method by which a cocktail or liquor is set alight, normally to enhance the flavour of a drink."

Gaurav declares, "The conclusion to create a cocktail requires a lot of trails and understanding of each ingredient from spirit to mixer. There are multiple factors that are to be considered before a cocktail is made starting from the style and concept of the bar, location, food served, clientele, resources and many more. Overall, it completely depends on the bartender and his knowledge and exposure on ingredients and mixology."

Dushyant asserts, "The experienced bartenders at JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa carefully consider factors such as the base spirit, complementary flavours, balance, and desired taste profile to determine the perfect combination of ingredients and proportions. Our bartenders undergo rigorous training and possess a deep understanding of flavour profiles and their interactions."

Rajasekhar iterates, "Regarding the ingredients and quantities it s completely a bartender's expertise that comes into work. Once in a trade, one has to know the tricks well."

Rasikta affirms, "The ingredients depend on their availability and freshness. A skilled bartender always endeavours to incorporate the freshest of all ingredients to impart the right flavour and aroma. The quantity of each ingredient is a delicate balance of flavours, we like to think of it as an imperfect science! We usually experiment multiple times, tasting and tweaking until we arrive at the appropriate flavour profile that would suit maximum palates, whilst trying to infuse our own signatures. "

She further adds, "Understanding different



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methods used to curate a cocktail are very important for a bartender or mixologist to truly be able to hone his or her craft. The fundamental elements of a cocktail are the same no matter which method you apply, namely spirit, balancing agents like simple syrup or citrus, modifiers, and water! You start by following tried & tested classic recipes and then move on to adding your own twists and thereby arrive at crafting your own libations.”

Shree avers, “Bartenders use their knowledge of flavours, techniques, and classic cocktail recipes as a starting point to create new cocktails or modify existing ones. Some key considerations that bartenders consider, when deciding what ingredients to mix and in what quantities, are:

Flavour profiles: Bartenders consider the flavour profiles of each ingredient they want to incorporate.

Spirit selection: Bartenders choose a base spirit that forms the foundation of the cocktail. They consider the flavour profile, strength, and characteristics of different spirits such as whiskey, gin, vodka, rum, tequila, or others.

Balance and harmony: Bartenders strive for balance among the different taste elements of a cocktail.

Technique and texture: Bartenders also consider the texture and mouthfeel of the cocktail. They might incorporate techniques like shaking, stirring, muddling, or layering to achieve a desired consistency and texture.

He continues, “It’s important to note that the process of crafting cocktails involves trial and error, tasting, and adjusting the ingredient proportions until the desired flavour and balance are achieved. Experienced bartenders rely on their knowledge, expertise, and palate to create well-crafted and delicious cocktails.”

Yes, with delicious cocktails being concocted by the present day bartenders/ mixologists one is tempted to raise a toast only with a cocktail. ■

Cocktail Recipes

Monkey Colada

Ingredients

Monkey Shoulder	50ml
Lime Juice	20ml
Fresh Pineapple Juice	90ml
Coconut Cream	20ml
Pinch Of Salt	

Method

Blend all ingredients with 3 cubes of ice. Serve in a tall glass over cubed ice. Garnish it big and as you like.

Monkey Jam Sour

Ingredients

Monkey Shoulder	50ml
Fresh lemon juice	20ml
Sugar syrup	5ml
Jam	2tsp

Dash of orange bitters
Soda water (optional)

Method

Add all ingredients to a shaker. Add fresh ice and shake. Strain into an ice-filled glass

Gaurav Sareen, Brand Ambassador, Monkey Shoulder India.

The Pickled

Ingredients:

Vodka	60ml
Gari Ginge	03 pcs
Pomegranate	10 no.
Ginger Juice	10ml
Simple Syrup	10ml
Lime Juice	15ml

Method:

Pomegranate and garaging are muddled before all the ingredients are added, shaken, and then fine strained. On the coupe glass, serve. Add some bubble gun garnish

Glassware: Coupe
Garnish: Flavoured Bubble

Nankai

Ingredients:

Gin	60ml
Citrus Cordial	15ml
Oleo Saccharum	15ml
Asian Bitters	2ml
Grapefruit Tonic	1 no.
Stamped Orange	1 Slice

Method:

In a highball glass, combine all the components. Then, add grapefruit tonic, a rim of blended Asian spices, a hot stamped east logo for garnish, and moulded tall ice.

Glassware: Highball
Garnish: Rimmed with Asian 5 Spices

Dushyant Singh, Executive Assistant Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa

Ignite Rock

Ingredients:

Vodka	60 ml
Simple Syrup	15 ml
Lemon Juice	10 ml
Muddle Raspberry	20 gm

Method:

Shake
Mix well

Glassware: Rock Glass
Garnish: Berry Skewers

Afternoon Tea

Ingredients

Tequila	45ml
Passion Fruit Syrup	20ml
Lemon Juice	15ml
Sugar Syrup	15ml
Chamomile Tea	1 Bag

Method

Shake
Mix well

Garnish with Chamomile Tea Bag

Glassware: Champagne Saucer

Vishwesh Ramesh, Food & Beverage Manager, Mulberry Shades, Nandi Hills, Bengaluru

Blackberry Gin and Tonic

Ingredients

Blackberries	12
Meyer lemons	2
Mint, fresh leaves	20
Simple syrup	1/2 cup
Gin, high quality	8 oz
Tonic water	1bottle

beer, wine and liquor

Method

Serve over ice with a twist of lime.

Bloody Orange Margarita

Ingredients

Camino Silver	1 oz
Triple Sec	1/2 oz
Orange Juice	
Dash of Grenadine	

Method:

Garnish with Marischino cherry
Serve in margarita glass

Rajib Ganguly, Restaurant Manager at Seven Eleven Club and Hotels

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Career *in* Catering



With the world returning back to normalcy festivities and celebrations have once again come to the fore. The most important prerequisite for any celebration is food. This makes it mandatory for the event organiser to take the services of a caterer. The demand for caterers, with the increasing number of celebrations taking place, is growing. It is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.3% by 2024. The profit margin is believed to be about 35%-40%. The annual turnover of this business and the profit margin is tempting not only enterprising entrepreneurs but also several emerging hospitality graduates to venture into this business instead of serving in Hotels or F&B outlets. But a word of caution for these aspiring entrepreneurs: Catering is not just about food. One has to take several other aspects into consideration. **Ashok Malkani** takes a look at some of them and how one can make a successful career in catering.

The festive season has started. This is the time when events galore take place. Starting from Onam (new year for Malayali people of Kerala), in August, to Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Dusshera, Durga Puja and Diwali, followed by Christmas and New Year, there are festivities galore that are still pending during the year.

And festival time is the time to party! But festivals are not the only time for Indians to have a party and celebrate. They are ready to party for all occasions, be it birthday, engagement, wedding, baby showers, anniversary. They are ready to celebrate all occasions which make them happy.

Besides these, there are also corporate events. Food & beverages are extremely necessary requisites for these occasions. To satisfy these needs one needs a caterer. Yes, in a country like India which embraces diversity there are no limits for catering business. The country is a land of joyous celebrations where every festival has the prerequisite of serving delicious fare to the guests. This has immense potential for growth of catering business.

The profit margin of a catering business depends on a number of factors – not least among them is where your business is based. Catering can be a lucrative business not only for individuals but also for F&B outlets. It helps the restaurateur to reach new customers and supplement dining room sales.

It is estimated that the catering service market is worth Rs. 15000-20000 crores. This is attributed to the increased disposable income of the people as well as the rise in the number of celebratory occasions. According to Motilal Oswal Financial Services, the Indian food service industry is expected to flourish by 9 per cent during the fiscal years 2020-2025.

Catering can be highly profitable. But it can be highly challenging too, since many people are entering this business. One of the reasons for this is that it does not require heavy investment. Thus if you are planning to venture into this business you have to do proper planning. It is estimated that one would need about Rs. 15-20 lakhs for venturing into this business. This would cover the initial costs like kitchen rent, hiring manpower,

transportation, licenses and permits.

Weddings, which according to CNBC, amounted to about 10 million per year, offer great opportunity for caterers. Ten million weddings annually works out to 2000 weddings per day. It may be mentioned that weddings are the highlights of the catering world. But these are only a part of the catering business which comprises of serving food for birthday parties, weddings, corporate & business parties and other celebratory occasions

The growing market for catering makes it an enticing business proposition. Many emerging hospitality graduates dream of entering business and not serving in hotels or F&B outlets. One of the fields they are tempted to enter is catering. But one has to remember that the competition for a bite of this lucrative market is fierce and so it is necessary to be aware of all the intricacies involved, in order to make a success in this career.

The first thing that you have to look for is: competitors in market segment you want to serve and location. Based on this you have



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to evaluate if there is demand for another caterer. You have also to study the price and type of food served by the competitors. The would-be caterer has thus to decide on a proper location. Besides location, storage space has also to be considered. The rent, too, has to be taken into consideration.

Getting Required Licenses

To start this business you have to get licenses which are mandatory. Though it is a tiring process, it is crucial. As there is a lot of paperwork involved, it could take time so you should apply well in time.

To venture into this business you need the following licenses:

Business License: You have to get this from the state from where you are planning to operate. This can be obtained by filling out a form, paying the requisite fees and attaching relevant documents to it.

FSSAI License: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) license is mandatory for running a food business.

For a food business that has an annual turnover of up to Rs. 12 lakhs, only a basic FSSAI registration is needed. For this registration you need:, authorized person address proof, passport size photo, business name and address and FSSAI declaration form, nature of business details.

For a food business that has an annual turnover of up to Rs. 20 crores and operates in only one state, a State FSSAI license is needed and for a food business that has an annual turnover of more than Rs. 20 crores and operates in multiple states, a Central



FSSAI license is needed.

Health Trade License: A health trade license is necessary for any business that has an impact on health. You get this license from the municipal corporation or the health department of the state

GST Registration: Under the GST regime, tax is payable if the turnover is Rs.20 lakhs (Rs. 10 lakhs for North Eastern states & Special Category States) per year. If the catering business is carrying on its business through an e-commerce platform or its turnover is covered under the GST law in India, it must mandatorily obtain GST registration

Fire Department NOC: The Fire safety laws of most of the states in India consider this business to be a hazardous activity requiring a "No Objection Certificate" from the Chief Fire Officer before commencing business.

To obtain a fire license, you will have to submit building plans, model of the building from where you plan to operate and from an architect. You also need to fill out a questionnaire related to compliance with fire

safety rules and regulations. Getting insurance for fire hazards is pivotal in the food biz as any mishap can happen in your kitchen.

MSME Registration: Government provides many benefits to businesses having an MSME registration. A Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) can apply for MSME/ Udyam registration. If your business is less than Rs. 250 crores and investment is below Rs.50 crore you can apply for the MSME registration. Though MSME registration is not mandatory it is advisable to obtain MSME registration as it can enable you to get benefit from many schemes introduced by the government for small and medium industries, such as tax benefits, easy access to capital, low-interest rates on loans, etc.

Shops and Establishment Registration: Every owner of a shop or commercial establishment, having more than 10 employees, must obtain a shop and establishment registration from the respective State Labour Department. This process has moved online in the recent past. This registration is typically valid for 5 years and thereafter it shall be renewed. Currently, some of the States are issuing Shops and Establishment Registrations, with lifetime validity on payment of renewal fees.

In addition to the above-mentioned licenses, you will need to have other licenses which are not specific to the food business but may be applicable depending on the infrastructure you invest in for your business. Food businesses which require to store Diesel, Kerosene, Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG), Boilers, etc may need a license from PESO if the quantum of such flammable materials exceeds the prescribed threshold.

Maintaining Sustainability

When you venture into any business sustainability is extremely important. For this one has to take several facets into consideration. Some of them are:

Budgeting: If you do not have your own capital you have to initially think about the source of capital. You have to pen down the sources of your capital. It could be from investors or taking a loan from the bank. For this you have to convince them of your business plan and revenue generation model.

You have to plan how to use the capital efficiently for on-site equipment, rental costings and other expenses,

Purchasing equipment: It is advisable to

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Apart from cooking equipment, a caterer also requires storage equipment. The cooking equipment would include deep fryers, coffee/ beverage stations, ovens, storage cabinets, pans and pots, refrigerators, utensils, stoves, etc. You would also need storage equipment which comprises of cabinets, multiple-compartment sinks, disposable containers, Serving Equipment, Garbage Bins etc.

Kitchen Area: Since cooking is the prime objective of the business the kitchen has to be sufficiently big. Even in case of a small scale catering business involving 20-25 people, the kitchen area should be about 70-80 sq. feet. For serving more than 25 people the kitchen area would have to be at least 100 square feet.

Kitchen cleanliness: One has also to be extremely careful to see that the food does not cause any dietary problems. Hence maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in the kitchen is extremely important.

Menu: Preparation of menu is another important factor in maintaining sustainability. You have to give as much choice as possible – both from financial and culinary perspective – to the customers. You could have tiered offering – varying the price plans, offering discounts for bigger orders, and so on.

Several caterers start business because of their passion for culinary arts and get stuck on serving only what they are familiar with. Customers want something new or unique, so explore different options and expand your menu.

Transport: You have to ensure that the food remains fresh and tasty from the moment it is prepared to the time it reaches

the event venue. For this you must use a temperature controlled van. Food safety issues can occur when hot and cold meals get packaged directly alongside each other. Keep hot and cold items in separate food dishes or containers to avoid cross-contamination. You should also make sure you're covering each dish with lids, foil, or plastic wrap to ensure they're secure during delivery.

Popularising Your Business

Gone are the days when catering for an event meant setting up a long table with buffet-style foil pans with not very attractive options. Today, food – hot or cold – has not only to taste good but even the presentation has to be attractive. The following steps are essential to attract more clientele:

First Impression: Delicious food will enable you to gain word-of-mouth popularity. Several caterers start business because of their passion for culinary arts. Besides making delicious food, you should also make the food pleasing to the eye. "Visual taste" is often as important as the actual taste. Prioritize making your dishes look irresistible for photos and video. They should be as alluring as the catering event itself.

By presenting a stellar catering offering in front of the large group attending the event you are creating a favourable image for these guests to call you for any catering event they plan in the future.

Some of the great ways of making a visual impact are:

- Using splashes of colour and contrasting shades to highlight your dishes
- Using drizzles of sauces, syrup, and liquified ingredients to bring a flair to your dishes.

Competitive Pricing: Be aware of the prices charged by other caterers in the

area of operation and offer competitive prices. Having a good software programme will enable you to offer economical prices without compromising on the quality of the food.

Digital Marketing: To popularize your brand, open your own website. Digital marketing can be a great ally. Some actions that could help you get noticed are: Facebook and instagram ads, attractive website with complete information about your catering business, SEO on your website, besides attractiveness you should work on the semantics to ensure search, promote your services on your social networks, Share videos of your company, register in Google and optimise your website for mobile use since it will make you more accessible to customers using mobile device.

Managing Negative Opinions: To maintain online reputation you have to tackle the negative reviews by providing them with suitable replies promptly. Be apologetic and clarify what went wrong and why. You could even reach out to them offline.

Offline Marketing: Popularising your business offline has its importance too. You can create advertising brochures and distribute them by letter dropping or keeping them at local business establishments for their customers.

Brand Delivery Van: You could use your delivery van to market the catering service by not only having your business name but also the phone no. and website prominently printed on the van.

Choosing Potential Customers: Be sure about your target audience. Do you want to do only catering for corporates and institutional events or do you want to cater to events like weddings, birthdays, family reunions, etc.? Plan your publicity accordingly.

Lead the Way

Remember you will be able to stand out in the crowd or be a leading caterer – not only in the area but even otherwise – if the quality of your service and cuisine is of superior quality. Your publicity – online and offline – too has to be a notch above the others. You have to pay attention to the minutest detail. Your service has to be customer focused. It has to be creative and flexible to meet the demands of the customer even if they do not come under your purview! ■

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The healthy option

The twin concepts of organic farming and organic food were conceptualized and became popular worldwide during the twentieth century. Presently, there is a significant demand from consumers for organic food, but this is mostly in developed countries. There is sustained increase in consumption of organic food in India in last few years. It is expected that organic food would see a steady growth in near future in India.

But what is organic food? It is possible to understand organic food only after one is clear of what constitutes organic farming. Organic food is an output of organic farming and organic processing methods and hence there is a need to understand fundamentals of organic farming before one can appreciate the meaning and dimensions of organic food.

The Past

Farming as an activity succeeded hunting and gathering as a source of food in the history of human civilization. Farming is known to have been done since more than ten thousand years and during all those years, food crops

have been grown with no reliance of fossil fuels, chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides for protecting crop plants from pests and diseases.

In those years, farmers grew food-crops by use of either locally available or naturally occurring resources. The human population too was at levels that did not necessitate cultivation of large areas. Crop cultivation could be sustained by use of locally available resources such as animal manures for crop nutrition. The fertility of soils being brought under crop cultivation would have sufficed to meet plant nutritional requirements without addition of external sources of nutrients. Pest and disease control might not have



been serious concerns due to prevalence of a natural balance between pests and their natural controls (parasites, predators and pathogens).

Human population grew as human civilization expanded to cover more areas of earth and the growing population required more food. One method for increasing food grown without increasing area under cultivation was by use of chemicals that could replace soil nutrients removed by crops and also by reducing losses from pests and diseases through use of chemical pesticides.

Industrial Revolution

Introduction of chemical fertilizers and pesticides for intensively cultivating crops and producing food occurred within the past 150 years. Such intensive farming that relied on mechanized farm implements and industrially produced chemical inputs can be traced back to the advent of the industrial revolution.

Dramatic results were seen when farming was freed from its dependence on naturally occurring inputs such as animal manures and

minerals for nutrition and products of plant and mineral origin for management of pests and diseases. Farming could be extended to areas where it was earlier thought impractical and yields obtained under the new methods were initially higher than those under traditional farming which had depended mostly on local resources and naturally occurring materials.

The Parallel Movement

Even as farming that relied on synthetic chemicals came to be practiced and was becoming increasingly popular throughout the world, a parallel movement was taking root to implement farming that would use only naturally occurring materials and perhaps mimic farming practices that had been known to and had been used by farmers for hundreds of centuries.

The use of naturally occurring materials (as opposed to synthetic materials) for providing nutrition and protecting plants came to be known in popular perception to be organic farming during the twentieth century. Organic farming as a concept grew both as an attempt to establish that reliance on man-made or synthetic chemicals could be completely avoided in farming and also to prove that farming by utilizing only naturally-occurring materials was both possible and economical. These were thus the two fundamental aspects of organic farming.

In short, organic farming is farming that does not use any synthetic chemical inputs. It is an alternative to present-day or conventional farming for providing healthy and nutritious food to consumers and preventing environmental pollution by the process of farming. Organic farming thus promotes human health as well as health of the planet.

The Economics & Ecology

Organic farming should be considered as an alternative to conventional farming for the benefits that accrue from farming organically. The reliance in most cases on locally available resources for plant nutrition and plant protection in organic farming ensure that it is both economically and ecologically a viable alternative to conventional farming.

Farmers worldwide are looking to grow food at lesser cost and with its general emphasis on local resources, organic farming fits requirements for a less expensive method of cultivation. The deleterious ecological impact of conventional farming is another compelling reason to consider organic farming.

Chemical Fertilizers

Real or total costs of producing chemical fertilizers and moving them over large distances to be used in farming are not estimated or charged on basis of damages to the environment that such activity causes. Further, when chemical fertilizers are used, large quantities can become accumulated in the soil without being accessible to crops and also leach out into water bodies nearby.

Excessive and continued use of chemical fertilizers can render soil unusable due to formation of salts and pollution

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of water from fertilizers can cause much loss of aquatic flora and fauna. Chemical changes that occur in soil after addition of chemical fertilizers can alter the flora and fauna of the soil and reduce the populations of soil biota that are beneficial to plant roots and thus crop plants.

Toxic Pesticides

Conventional farming also uses toxic pesticides against pests and diseases that damage crops. Chemical pesticides are polluting at the manufacturing stage itself and can be extremely toxic and deadly both to the applicator (farmer) and the target pest. Pesticides can also be non-selective in their action and toxic and lethal to both the target pest as well as a range of non-target pests that may or may not be harmful to humans.

Regular use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on crops destined for human consumption also imparts harmful chemical residues on the food obtained from such crops. Continuous consumption of food containing chemical residues can impact the health of consumers and also cause illness as well as mortality in extreme cases.

Basic Principles

Some basic principles underlie adoption and implementation of organic farming and have more or less been accepted by practitioners and proponents of this method of farming worldwide. These include:

Preservation of biodiversity of the crops as well as the ecosystem surrounding a farm, integration of farming operations with the environment as well as integration of all

aspects of a farm to ensure harmony and ensuring sustainable farming. On account of the wide diversity in the climate and geography of regions on earth where farming is done and also vast differences in crops grown, it is not possible to have the same methods of organic cultivation of a crop in different parts of the world.

Further, each organic farm is unique and is more similar to other organic farms in philosophy of farming rather than on the methods and materials used. Also, degree of compliance to principles of organic farming can and will be variable among organic farms and it is not possible to ensure total compliance to all principles of organic farming. Most critical is the compliance to non-use of synthetic chemicals in growing crops.

The principles mentioned are idealistic in nature and hence compliance or non-compliance is not easily established. Maintenance of biodiversity in an organic farm is by use of crop seeds that are genetically diverse and by ensuring that cropping and farm operations help in retaining and perhaps even enhancing diversity of the flora and fauna in and around the farm.

Environmental Impact

Each farm whether organic or not impacts both the local environment in which it exists as well as the global environment to which is connected. Organic farms are required to carry out operations in such a way that the environmental impact of producing organic food is of the least impact to the environment.

Organic farming is synonymous with wholeness or integration and an organic farm seeks to integrate different aspects of farming so as to ensure that organic production principles are complied to. In an organic farm, farm animals might be fed crop residues and the wastes from those animals might be used as manure to grow crops. Crop nutrition might also be ensured by use of crop rotation and green manure crops both of which help to generate nutrients required for crops on the farm itself rather than relying on nutrients and sources from outside the farm.

Sustainability of the organic farm is also another principle that requires cultivation of crops be done with methods that can ensure continuity. The most critical aspect of organic farming is integrity or compliance to organic farming principles in letter and spirit. It is necessary for organic farmers to be absolutely honest in all practices required to grow crops organically so that consumers accept food that is produced in an organic farm wholeheartedly.

The Changeover

Switching over from conventional farming with synthetic inputs to organic farming that relies on natural inputs is not instant and linear. After it has been decided to convert a conventional farm to an organic farm, there is a conversion period during which the farm has to make either a gradual or radical switch from synthetic to natural inputs.

Even when a complete switchover from synthetic inputs has been made, it has to be remembered that previously used chemical fertilizer and pesticide residues can be present in soil and might be absorbed by the roots of plants grown in the farm. Thus, while the application of chemical inputs might be completely avoided in an organic farm, it is not possible to ensure that the produce from such a farm is totally free of chemical residues.

Chemical residues might also drift in from neighbouring farms that grow crops conventionally and also through rain and irrigation water that might contain dissolved residues of chemicals. These issues point to the necessity to remember that while no chemical inputs might have been used in an organic farm for one or more seasons, previously used chemicals and chemicals used elsewhere can come to be present in produce from such a farm.

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It is then desirable to claim that the food crop has been grown organically without chemical inputs but cannot be expected to be completely free of chemical residues. Certified organic farming would rely not just on accepted or approved methods to grow food organically but would also have provision for preventing contamination of such food from prohibited materials (such as chemical pesticides) and food grown conventionally.

Preferred Organic Crops

Organic cultivation of crops can be adapted to cereals, vegetables and fruits though the ease of adopting organic methods for each of the categories varies. The less-intensively cultivated fruit crops are more amenable to organic cultivation whereas the more-intensively cultivated vegetable crops can be cultivated organically with more difficulty. Among cereals, hardy cereals or coarse cereals such as millets are likely to be amenable for being grown organically whereas cereals such as rice are likely to be more difficult to adopt to an organic farming regime.

This points to the possible need for even a change in food habits of consumers who would like to buy and use organic food and particularly those that would prefer only organically grown food in their diets. There may have to be less emphasis on cereals in the diet and greater emphasis on including fresh fruits and vegetables and dried fruits in the diet. Organically produced rice, wheat, edible oil, spices, jaggery and herbs are available in India today and point to the potential of growing a range of food crops organically.

Processed Foods

Processed foods made from ingredients grown organically are also available and indicate that the possibility of including processed organic food in one's diet. Food grown in an organic farm might undergo minimal or extensive processing prior to reaching the final consumer.

Foods can be considered organic only if they are obtained from farming that complies with accepted or codified practices that are organic and the processing also adopts organic methods. It is critical for food processing methods too to be in compliance with organic processing standards, for the food to retain its claim of being organic.

Food such as vegetables and fruits sold

as fresh produce might undergo minimal or no processing and can retain claim of being organic provided methods used for cleaning, preservation, transport and display for sale do not introduce or involve use of synthetic chemicals. In case of products such as cereals, spices, dried fruits, canned fruits and vegetables, dehydrated fruits and vegetables and ready-to-eat foods, all of which undergo extensive processing and storage prior to use by consumer, more care is required to ensure that organic nature of the product is not affected at any stage of processing.

In any food-processing unit that handles both organic and non-organic food, care should be taken to ensure that the organically labelled products have not been mixed with the non-organic products. Ultimately, a food can be considered organic only if it has been grown organically and processed organically with adequate safeguards to prevent contamination of such food at crop stage or processing by chemicals or contaminants that are not permitted under an organic regime.

Ensuring Organic Product

Individual consumers or institutional buyers are not in a position to easily ascertain the genuineness of claims of food being organic and this could lead to non-organic products too being sold off after being labelled organic. There are no easy methods to counter such malpractices in organic food trading.

In small scale and local trading involving organic food it might be possible to accept claims of product labelled organic solely based on the growers' or seller's personal integrity. However, for an organized system of cultivation, processing and trading of organic foods, a well-defined approach is required to ensure that the ultimate consumer really gets organic food when they pay for such a product.

The key aspect of an organic food trading system would be the use of only those practices and materials that are acceptable to organic farming. The use of organic standards established by either voluntary bodies set up by the organic food industry or by the government is one way of ensuring that food is being grown organically in compliance to known standards.

Sourcing of organic food in India is difficult due to the limited availability of

such food and also lack of information and access to sources of organically grown food. The organic food movement has gained momentum in India nearly three to four decades after it gained prominence abroad and developments in this regard have not kept pace with those occurring abroad. Consumers need to be educated about the differences between organic food and food produced by conventional farming.

The Future

While farmers can and will benefit from adopting organic farming and producing food crops for personal use, wider adoption of organic farming methods by the farming community can occur only if there is a demand for organically grown food. In many Indian cities it is possible to buy organic food either in specialized stores selling only such products or in regular grocery stores that also stock organic products. However, the scale of the organic food market in India is still very limited and the availability of organic produce and food is more on account of a network of organic food enthusiasts rather than a steady and significant demand for such products.

The higher prices for organic products and also lack of definite evidence for the claim of a food being organic are two main impediments that have affected growth or one can say even the birth of the Indian organic food industry. While it can be argued by organic food growers that they need to be compensated for adopting organic cultivation methods which can yield less than conventional farming, consumers might say that by going organic, farmers are helping themselves too by not being exposed to harmful chemicals while farming and thus already stand to benefit by adopting organic farming!

Organic certification and labelling are likely to be a way out in establishing that food that is sold as organic was indeed grown organically. This is not going to be easy because certification is expensive and may not be affordable by small farmers. One way out would be farmers in a village or a neighbourhood joining hands and getting all their farms certified jointly so that the total costs of organic certification and maintenance of such certification can be shared among members of the network. ■



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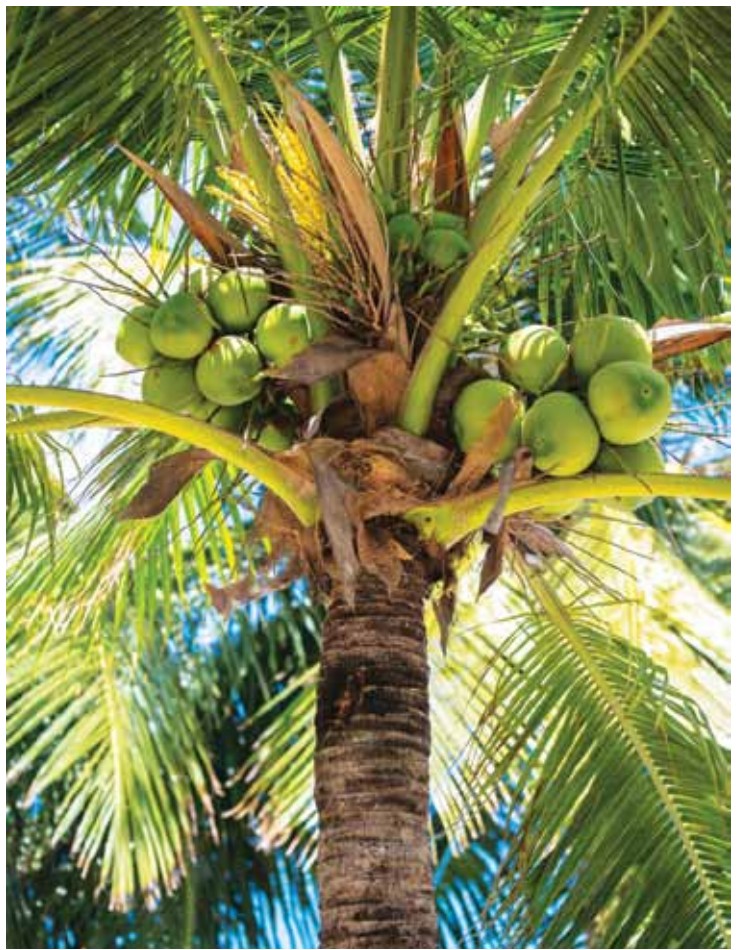


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Cracking the Nut

Coconut is a strange fruit indeed. Like life, and many great human beings, it is characterised by wonderful dichotomies. It is hard yet soft, tough yet sweet. And like life it never reveals its best to people, who are not ready to do the hard work of breaking through its shell.

Recent researches have provided new insights into our age-old coconut, and managed to dispel many of our popular misconceptions. We all know that coconut has great relevance in our cultural and religious space, and its role in festivities and culinary dishes cannot be overstated. Specially, in Kerala, the presence of coconut is all pervasive in food preparations. Moreover, coconut's commercial relevance in the form of coconut hair oil is very much a contemporary reality among the Indian middle classes.

However, there is no denying the fact that Indians are yet to fully use the edible potential of this magical fruit. Coconut biscuits are quite common, but what about coconut edible oil? How many north Indian homes use it

in their daily cooking? Similarly, packaged coconut water, if creatively marketed, can give the cola giants a run for their money.

The Nutritional Value

The nutritional value of coconut products varies according to the different stages of development. The mature coconut is a good source of iron and potassium. Approximately 86% of the calories in coconuts are from fat, most of which is saturated fat. The saturated fat content according to studies is good saturated fat, easily metabolised to give the body quick energy. Contrary to popular myth,

it does not transform into bad cholesterol to clog up arteries.

Besides wonderful taste and a refreshing feel to it, coconut water also has many good medicinal properties. It is rich in minerals, iron, and copper. Several clinical and biochemical studies have made it clear that tender coconut water is beneficial to heart, good for stomach, good for sorting out urinal problems, and also imparts vitality. It has been scientifically proved to be containing protozoa, which is essential for heart.

Coconut water facilitates an infant's growth and development, and is widely recognised as the best drink after mother's milk. Moreover, coconut water has electrolytic property, and thus patients suffering from dehydration, gastroenteritis and intestinal disturbances could easily use coconut water to overcome these ailments. It has sufficient quantity of saline and albumen, and thus cholera patients should use this water. Coconut water helps to reduce cholesterol and is a useful drink to check heart strokes.

But sadly, despite these beneficial aspects,



packaged coconut water as a drink is yet to become vogue, and develop popularity across the length and breadth of the country.

Coconut milk also has beneficial effects on human constitution. The kernel of the tender coconut water is a rich source of carbohydrates, fibre and other nutrients. Then there are coconut chips, coconut milk, coconut cheese, coconut cream, coconut jam, coconut lemonade...in fact, the edible applications of coconut can be many splendoured from the culinary point of view, which our markets and homes have failed to fully tap.

Misgivings and Research

Many in India believe that coconut oil results in high cholesterol, which could have a damaging effect on the heart and artery. In fact, many medical professionals have promoted this erroneous idea, stating that it is bad for artery and heart. Particularly,



certain competitors lobby in India has given a bad name to coconut oil. Yes coconut oil does contain saturated fats, but it is also true that all saturated fats are not bad for health. Every human body has got cholesterol, but some cholesterol are good and some cholesterol are harmful. In fact, very low quantity cholesterol in human body is considered bad for health.

Coconut oil does not adversely effect cholesterol levels in the human body because the medium chain triglycerides that are contained in saturated fat of coconut oil are burned off immediately, and are not converted into body fat or cholesterol, thereby not adversely affecting the blood cholesterol levels.

Moreover, many researchers have reported that coconut oil lowers cholesterol

(Blackburn et al 1988, Ahrens and colleagues, 1957) levels in the body. Besides, the saturated fat in coconut oil is completely different from the saturated fat found in meats and other vegetable oils. Coconut oil is a unique fat comprised primarily of medium chain triglycerides or fatty acids, which are endowed with an array of health benefits. Medium-chain fatty acids are not only effortlessly digested but these molecules of fat are sent directly to your liver, where they are immediately converted into energy.

Coconut oil is a good source of energy and facilitates the metabolism process. Coconut oil is also found to be beneficial for prevention of some heart diseases. In those regions where there is a high consumption of coconut oil and coconut oil products, the incidence of heart disease has been relatively rare. This oil provides a source of antimicrobial lipid for individuals with respect to chemical carcinogenesis. In chemically induced cancers of the colon and breast, coconut oil was found to be far more protective than unsaturated oils. Research has also revealed that coconut is a neutral fat in terms of atherogenicity.

Scientific trials conducted by two doctors in USA have revealed the healthy signs of coconut oil. Furthermore, coconut oil contains lauric acid, which is very much essential to the human body. Lauric acid is a medium chain fatty acid which is found in abundance in coconut oil and is known for many health benefits. Coconut oil constitutes about 50 percent lauric acid. The only other abundant source of lauric acid found in nature is in human breast milk.

Moreover, coconut oil has potent anti-viral, anti-fungal and anti-microbial effects. In a study conducted in the Philippines, doctors found that coconut oil reduces the viral load among the AIDS patients.

But thankfully, the Indian mindset about coconut is changing, though gradually but perceptibly. We as a society are realising that coconut oil can be extensively used in internal consumption and as well as external application purposes. Coconut oil is now being used in hair care, skin protection, Ayurvedic medicinal preparations, for cure of leprosy, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, soriosis and venereal diseases. At the same time, it is used in confectionaries, ice cream and paint industries.

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Harvesting Success

Presently, coconut is produced in 17 states and 2 union territories of India, and is being cultivated in around 1.892 million hectares of land. India has been positioned number one in production of coconuts and third in terms of its area of cultivation.

Fresh coconut kernel is grated and dried to produce coconut powder. The fat present in desiccated coconut powder is being widely used in confectioneries, as ingredients in filling chocolates and candies. Coconut milk is becoming more popular in certain markets, which is used in meat, fish, poultry and vegetable dishes. Besides that, canned and packed coconut products are already available in the market.

Coconut Development Board (CDB) is proactively involved in popularising the coconut market base in India, by inducing the health conscious customers through disseminating the right information on coconut oil. Here it deserves a mention that Coconut Development Board is a statutory body, established under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, for the integrated development of coconut cultivation and industry in the country with a focus on productivity increase and product diversification. Chairman of CDB opined that coconut products will have good market in India as well as in abroad.

Though its price is less competitive than palm oil and other edible oils, but still the health conscious people are expected to be attracted by its beneficial impacts. Despite the fact that coconut products are not that cheap, their demand in the global market is on the rise.

Since the last few years, some coconut products have been marketed through cooperative societies and CDB is working hard to devise a mechanism to ensure a larger share of coconut market. CDB is recently involved in various event management initiatives in various cities of India to raise awareness about the healthier aspects of coconut products.

Besides India, coconut is also fast gaining popularity in the Gulf countries, especially among its ethnic Indian population. Around 50 thousand people in India are engaged in manufacturing coir, coir pith, coconut shell, shell charcoal, shell tar, shell powder and some other valuable items.

Pinacolada to Payasam

The tall coconut tree is associated in our minds with visions of sea shores –places of great leisure & beautiful beaches. Along with these are visions of scrumptuous food from a variety of coastal cuisines. From Malaysian and Thai to Tamil and Goan-the coconut in its various forms & extractions finds pride of place in a variety of dishes in these cuisines. In fact, a google search on the Internet for 'coconut milk' yields recipes from exotic cuisines like Brazilian to the East African ranging from plantains in coconut milk to aromatic salmon.

The ripe coconut fruit has a hard shell covered by a fibrous outer coat and contains an edible kernel. The shell is lined with rich thick 'meat' and the hollow at the centre is filled with a thin, slightly sweet liquid-also called coconut 'water'.

Coconut milk is the diluted cream pressed out from the thick, white flesh of a well-

matured coconut. The process of extraction of coconut milk at home involves the typical following steps:

- Dehusking
- Scooping
- Grating
- Blending
- Pressing

Simply put, the process involves extracting and then grating the meat of the coconut into fine pieces. The gratings are then put in a muslin cloth & warm water is added. The muslin cloth is then formed into a ball & squeezed tightly for getting milk. The milk thus obtained is thick & creamy and is called first pressing milk. The gratings can then be diluted with water and squeezed again to get more milk, which would be thinner. Commercially, coconut cream is obtained by pressing grated coconut flesh by itself without water, using a specialized, heavy piece of machinery.

Obviously, first pressing milk is always the richest and creamiest with the best flavour. Good coconut milk has a clean, white colour and tastes rich, creamy and mildly sweet with the essence of coconut. It should have the depth of flavour and should not leave an unpleasant aftertaste.

Coconut milk is not the liquid inside a coconut, although this liquid does make a satisfying drink. Rather, coconut milk is made by squeezing the grated flesh of a coconut with some hot water resulting in a rich white liquid that looks very much like cow's milk.

Coconut milk should be distinguished from coconut cream. Fresh coconut milk, when refrigerated, and canned coconut milk, if not shaken, separates into two layers, with the thick (upper) layer being the coconut cream and the thinner (bottom) layer constituting the milk.

The top layer can be skimmed off with a spoon and used for recipes requiring coconut cream (usually desserts) with the bottom layer being reserved for recipes specifying coconut milk. Canned, frozen and powdered coconut milk are widely available, convenient to use and generally of acceptable quality.

A good indicator of a high quality coconut milk is one with a higher fat content, in which the fat separates from the watery portion. Although a high fat content is taboo in today's American diet, studies show that the kind of fat in coconut milk, even though it is saturated fat, is good for you. ■

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Avocado Oil

Oil – that wonderful food ingredient which makes many dishes taste absolutely delicious. Used for frying, stir-frying, drizzling, sautéing, etc and in any other way, edible oils are constantly being experimented with. They are known to modify the texture and flavour of any food.

Health advantages are claimed for specific oils such as Omega 3 oils which are essentially fish or flaxseed oil and olive oil. Trans-fats are often produced by hydrogenating vegetable oils which are acclaimed as harmful to human health.

Historically, oils have been used as a fragrant or religious medium. It is seen as a spiritually purifying agent – remember the clarified butter, ghee, we use in our havens. Christians use it in baptism and historically oil has been used to anoint Kings and Queens.

In many ways, only Virgin Olive and Extra Virgin Oil came in this category but of late another category of oil is giving it a good competition. It is Avocado Oil.

Understanding Avocado

Avocados are a commercial crop and the trees and fruits are cultivated in tropical

climates throughout the world. However it also thrives in temperate climate of California. Trees are partially self pollinating and often propagated through grafting. This procedure helps maintain a predictable quality and quantity of the fruit. The seed takes two to six weeks to sprout.

Shaped spherical or egg shaped, avocado is a large berry and contains a pit inside the green flesh. Once cut the green



flesh gets oxidized very quickly and needs to be coated either with a lime juice or covered with film. It is also known as palta or aguacate in Spain and called butter pear or alligator pear.

Culinary use of Fruit

Technically Avocado is a fruit but is treated as a vegetable by chefs and consumers alike. The skin of the fruit on the outside might be green to green brown or sometimes almost black; in fact it changes to a shade darker as it ripens. The flesh is typically greenish yellow to almost golden yellow when it is fully ripe. It has a remarkably higher fat content than most other fruits though it is mostly monounsaturated fat. A ready to cut and eat avocado will yield when gently squeezed in your palm.

Avocados are particularly favourite as an ingredient for the vegetarians and make a good substitute for meats in sandwiches and salads. In taste the flesh is not sweet but distinctly subtle flavoured. It has a smooth and creamy texture.

The most common preparation seen around the world is a salad with shrimps and prawns mixed with cubed avocado and

a sauce, often served in the scooped out Avocado shell. It is also used as a base for the Mexican dip called guacamole. In the Japanese cuisine it would be included in the California rolls.

Avocados, in Brazil and Vietnam, are used for milk shakes and sometimes even added to ice cream and other desserts. While in Brazil, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia a dessert drink includes pureed avocado with sometimes chocolate syrup added, in Australia it would be mixed with chicken for a sandwich filling while in Ghana people enjoy it with sliced bread.

Mexicans would serve it with white rice, in soups or in salads while Chileans would like it as a puree in chicken, hamburger and hot dog and their version of Caesar salad contains large slices of ripe avocado.

Avocado Oil

While many a reference may be found for how to enjoy avocado in your food plan, very few people speak of the avocado oil. Probably because it is not widely available or maybe because it's real value has not

been recognized just yet.

Avocado oil has no inherent smell of its own. In fact, even the extra virgin avocado oil, which is cold pressed, has no underlying smell, thus making it perfect for baking or doing some innovative home infusions with herbs. The oil of Avocado is produced in Chile, Mexico, Spain and South Africa.

When making oil, the whole fruit is crushed and used for oil extraction. This includes the skin, the pit, everything! Once the oil is bottled it has a shelf life of about 2 years. As it is packed in dark bottles or in a tin, protection from light is natural and it should be kept closed in medium temperature, more or less in storing conditions similar to what is recommended for olive oil.

Science of Infusion

Infusion for any fragrance in oil may be achieved in one of two ways, by leaving the ingredient in the oil for a prescribed number of days or by adding the essence of the essential oil from the material you desire to infuse the oil with.

Any oil without inherent smell lends itself perfectly to being infused with essential oils. In that sense it has an upper hand even on the Olive oil, which takes time to be infused with other fragrances and yet always has its own underlying character present. The range of oil includes – plain extra virgin, garlic, lemon, chilli, Mediterranean and basil. One could just as easily mix any two infused oils to get a completely different result with your freshly toasted bread or in your salad.

Health Benefits

High avocado intakes have shown a positive impact on blood serum cholesterol levels. After a diet rich in avocado for seven days, hypercholesterolemia patients showed a 17% decrease in total serum cholesterol levels. They also showed a 22% decrease in both LDL (bad cholesterol) and triglyceride levels. They also showed an 11% increase in HDL, the good cholesterol levels.

Avocados have 60% more potassium than bananas. They are rich in B vitamins as well as Vitamin E and K. They have the higher fibre content of any fruit – including



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75% insoluble and 25% soluble fibre.

Women have used avocados in their beauty regime for a long time using it as a base for exfoliation, face and body masks to get the softness from inherent oil of the fruit.

Avocado Oil:

- Contains high percentage MUFA which decreases the LDL (bad cholesterol) and increases the HDL (good cholesterol), thus lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and coronary heart disease (CHD)

- Oleic acid, which is the major MUFA in avocado oil, increases the absorption of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids in the cell membrane and lowers the risk of LDL oxidation, both processes helping to



reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Oleic acid is also effective in controlling breast cancer cells.

- MUFA are protective in early stages of Atherogenesis, which involve inflammatory processes.

- PUFA are more effective in later stages of Atherogenesis. It blocks the availability of aortic cholesterol, which is the preferred substrate for esterification to cause atheromata/lesions.

- Phytosterols, especially b-sito-sterol (highest amount in avocado oil).

- Seems to enhance the conversion of lionoleate to other essential PUFA, which have a beneficial effect on CHD.

- It promotes prostate health, it helps prevent and treat prostate problems like benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

- Boosts the immune system, normalizes blood sugar and insulin levels in type II diabetics and b-sitosterol has anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal actions.

- It also has the ability to relief inflammation, heal ulcers, etc.

- Vitamin E is a natural antioxidant (of which a-tocopherol is highest in avocado oil) which prevents oil oxidation (rancid), reduces the risk of various cancers, prevents Parkinson's disease and reduces the risk of CHD. It is also responsible for proper functioning of the immune system and for maintaining healthy eyes and skin.

- Chlorophyll levels are very high in avocado oil, this is the pigment that gives the oil it's green colour, it has natural antiseptic properties, antioxidant functions and studies have shown that when chlorophyll is ingested and goes through the blood stream it is readily converted into blood. Chlorophyll structure also has a magnesium centre, and magnesium is an essential nutrient for healthy cardiovascular system and bones. Magnesium also prevents migraines and prevents type II diabetes.

- Avocado oil not only increases the

absorption of the carotenoids it contains but it also increases the absorption of carotenoids of other rich sources. Avocado oil also increases the absorption of lutein, b- and a-carotene, lycopene, etc. Carotenoids prevent diseases like cancer, heart disease and muscular degeneration. Carotenoids are antioxidants that increase the shelf life of oil, preventing oils from going rancid and the formation of free radicals (negatively influence health), peroxides, etc.

- Lutein protects the eyes from UV radiation and free radicals, in also improves visual function.

- Avocado oil also contains high levels of ligands (a polyphenol) which have shown to inhibit cell growth in cancers of skin, breath, colon and lung.

In Conclusion

This wonder fruit, with a known written account as early as a book written in 1519; the first written record in English was by Hans Sloane in a 1696 index of Jamaican plants, is once again makes its presence felt in a new dimension of culinary world. The word 'avocado' is a reference to the shape of the fruit.

How far it gets adapted and adopted by renowned chefs and if it gains itself a place at the top remains to be seen and might be dependent on astute marketing gimmicks and availability. However, its uses are definitely diverse and its aromas quite good when infused. With a high boiling point it is surely a better option for deep frying and tempering – so common in Indian cuisine styles. ■

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Millets - Superheroes of Nutrients

By Sharmila Chand



Powerhouse of nutrients, millets are delightful in taste with a high nutritional value. Rich in protein, vitamins, minerals, and fibers; they are also endowed with a host of micronutrients such as iron, calcium, and phosphorus.

Available in several variants, millets are being recreated in lost recipes now-a-days. With 2023 as the International Year of Millets, there is so much activity happening around these humble grains. The so called 'poor man's food' is being recognized for their enormous potential.

'Millets are a delight for any culinary professional,' say food enthusiasts. Ragi dosas, pancakes, jowar upma, multi-grain khichdi, buckwheat waffles, nachni porridge, are being lapped up by diners as they see them highlighted in menus now. No doubt forgotten millets like jowar, bajra, ragi, kuttu which are high in fibre and gluten-free, are back in chefs' priority list.

Healthy Food

Chefs are catering to the healthy-food requests of gourmands offering food which is not bland and insipid. As they whip up culinary delights using millets, let's have a look at some healthy properties of millets.

Millets can be broadly categorized as:

Naked Grains

Naked grains are the millets without the husk such as Ragi, Jowar, and Bajra. These millets can be consumed without processing.

Husked Grains

Foxtail millets, Little millets, and Kodo millets belong to this second type, they have seed coat that has to be removed before consumption.

Health Benefits of Millets

Millets are rich in nutrients like phosphorus, magnesium, copper, and manganese hence incorporating them into one's diet can have various health benefits such as improved immunity and digestive health. It also protects against heart conditions and asthma. Millet consumption is known to aid weight loss and detoxify the body. It also regulates blood sugar level which helps in the prevention of diabetes or better management of the condition.

Foxtail Millet

Foxtail millet, indigenously called Kakum/ Kangni possesses blood sugar balancing healthy carbohydrates. It is said to help regulate your blood cholesterol and increase HDL cholesterol levels.

Finger Millet/ Ragi

Gluten free, Ragi is used as a healthier cereal substitute for rice and wheat.

Pearl Millet/ Bajra

Bajra is again very nutritious and it contains minerals such as calcium and magnesium, protein, fiber and iron.

Buckwheat

It makes for a healthy food option for diabetes, helps lower blood pressure, and improves cardiovascular health.

Little Millet

Little millet is an excellent option for those looking to lose weight. You can eat it as a rice replacement. It is high in fiber and filled with numerous minerals such as potassium, zinc, iron, and calcium.

Versatile Millets - Savour The Flavours!

Dishes are being tossed up with humble millets as the versatile grains are chef's muse these days. While they are upping their game with reviving grandmothers' recipes, their creative twist is also visible in their presentations. It's like stepping back in time with a fresh take on classic dishes. Nostalgic and experimental at the same time!



Mix Millet Chilla Wrap

By Chef Mani Mohan Pathak, Executive Chef, Pilibhit House, Haridwar- IHCL

SeleQtions



The uniqueness of the dish is its fusion with mango salsa and presentation as its eye visually delightful. The dish will be loved by kids too as they can roll and eat

and feast on the mango part. The stuffing of paneer or seasonal veggies makes the wrap even more nutritious.

Ingredients:

For Chilla Wrap

Raggi flour, 200 grams
Jowar flour, 200 grams
Gram flour, 50 Grams
Whole wheat flour, 50 Grams
Salt to taste
Chopped chilly, 10 Grams
Ginger chopped, 10 Grams
Chopped onion, 20 Grams

For Stuffing

Paneer (Diced), 100 Grams
Tri pepper (Diced), 60 Grams
Onion (Chopped), 40 grams
Garlic (Chopped), 10 Grams
Chili (Chopped), 10 Grams
Tomato (Chopped), 40 Grams
Salt to taste
Pepper, 5 grams
Cumin powder, 5 Grams
Coriander powder, 5 Grams
Refined oil, 10 ml

For Fresh Ripe Mango Salsa

Mango (diced), 80 Grams
Coriander (chopped), 10 Grams
Green chili (chopped), 05 Grams

Jalapeño (chopped), 5 Grams
Lemon juice, 5 ml
Salt/ pepper to taste
Olive oil, 20 ml

Method

For Making Paneer Stuffing:

Heat oil in a pan, and add chopped onion, garlic & chili in it and sauté they turn light brown. Add chopped tomato and sauté well, then add diced paneer and sauté it. Season it with salt and turmeric powder. Spice it by using all Indian spiced powder. Finish with a spoon of cream. Now the juicy paneer stuffing is ready.

For Making Fresh Ripe Mango Salsa:

Nicely peel & dice the ripe Mango. Add chopped Chili, Jalapeño, and Coriander, then season with salt and pepper and mix well. Finish it by adding olive oil and lemon juice. Salsa is ready to use.

For Making Chilla Wrap

Mix all the flour, make a pouring consistency batter using the water. Season the batter with salt and pepper. Add a teaspoon of finely chopped onion, chili and ginger. Make a soft Chilla using the batter (4 to 5 Chilla will be ready using this batter). Now cut the Chilla to half-moon and fold it to make cone shape for stuffing. Fill the paneer stuffing to it and then arrange it on serving platter. Spoon out a little Mango salsa on top of the cone.

Chef's Tip

Serve hot with mango salsa or any spicy chutney.

Finger Millet Puttu

By Chef Supriya Bhattacharyya, Sous Chef, Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa



Ingredients

Ragi Flour, 500gm
Jaggery grated, 100 gm
Cardamom Powder, 10 gm
Ghee, 100 ml
Water, 80 ml
Grated Fresh Coconut, 100 gm
Cashew Nuts, 50 gm

Method

Mix the grated jaggery with flour and room temperature water. Mix the same with light hands so that it remains fluffy. Spread out the mixture well and evenly in a food pan and steam it for 10 minutes at 100 deg Celcius. Take another pan. Add ghee, cardamom powder and grated coconut. Mix the steamed mixture of millets in it. Garnish with shallow fried golden brown cashew nuts.

Chef's Tip

Serve it warm for breakfast or as evening tea snack.



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Indian summers are often long, dreary, sweaty and scorching. They make one feel jaded every now and then. Cool, refreshing drinks help us to get temporary reprieve from the unabated summer heat of a long, long day.

It doesn't deserve a mention that as your body perspires more in summers, you need more fluid to keep you hydrated, and thus summer coolers are not only refreshing and rejuvenating but also play a necessary role during summers to keep you healthy.

Summers in North India are long, hot and dehydrating, it is but natural to have a rich culture where food and beverage is tweaked to suit the requirement of the season. Much before commercialization of these began to reach the shelves of retail market; they were mainly made at home, often fresh, for the day's consumption either before a meal or during the day.

Aam Panna

No other beverage defines North Indian summer as the mango panna. Made with green mangoes it has a tasty mix of sweet, sour, salt and masalas that induce thirst quenching coolness and has health benefits as well. Its natural colour is light green and often it has floating bits of fresh roasted and crushed cumin seeds.

Green Mango is a rich source of pectin, which gradually diminishes after the formation of the stone. Unripe mango is sour in taste because of the presence of oxalic, citric and other acids. Aam panna which is prepared using raw mangoes, sugar and an assortment of spices is an effective remedy for heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It also quenches thirst and prevents the excessive loss of sodium chloride and iron during summer due to excessive sweating.

This drink is mainly consumed in the Northern part of the India and is considered beneficial in the treatment of gastro-intestinal disorders, something very common during summer. This drink is also a good source of vitamin B1 and B2 and contains sufficient quantity of niacin, and since it is prepared from raw mangoes it is an excellent source of vitamin C also.

Aam Panna is also considered as a curative for blood disorders because of its high vitamin C content. It increases the elasticity of the blood vessels and helps in the formation of new blood cells. This drink is also considered as a tonic which increases body resistance against tuberculosis, anaemia, cholera and dysentery.

At home it is made by boiling the raw mangoes, taking out the pulp and mixing salt,

jaggery, other masalas (mainly crushed cumin powder). Commercially, it is now available made by big houses as also smaller outlets. It can be found either in tetra packs or even in glass bottles. Sugar content is indeed higher in commercial forms than it is when made at home. At home one can make it even sugar free, though taste would then seem a bit compromised.

Nimbu Paani

While India cannot lay claim to this drink as internationally this is popular through America and even Europe. However in other countries it is made with larger lemons while we in India use smaller lemons. As winter ended, a longer lasting version was often made at home with a proportion of 1 part lemon juice mixed with 1.5 times sugar which was kept in glass bottles in the sun to be shaken periodically. Once all the sugar had dissolved it could be kept for use through the summer months and used for instant drinks.

However, fresh version of it was always welcome. Some people do float a few leaves of mint or basil to it for tweaking it while others add a bit of ginger juice as well. Personal taste can make saltier version healthier than the sweeter one.

Internationally it is known in three clear

forms of Clear, Cloudy and Fizzy. Initially the clear lemonade was plain unsweetened water with lemon juice now most options on the shelves are with sugar. Cloudy lemonade often had artificial flavours instead of actual lemon juice. Fizzy lemonade as known in modern times in UK, Australia, New Zealand is little more than carbonated soda which has tart taste to it due to commercial flavours.

Pink lemonade is simply lemonade that has been dyed with pink colouring and is sometimes made sweeter. Often artificial colourings are used; natural colourings can include grenadine, cherry juice, red grapefruit juice, grape juice, cranberry juice, strawberry juice, pink-fleshed Eureka lemon juice, or other juices.

The New York Times credited Henry E. "Sanchez" Allott as the inventor of pink lemonade in his obituary mentioning that at 15 he ran away with a circus and obtained the lemonade concession. One day while mixing a tub of the orthodox yellow kind he dropped some red cinnamon candies in by mistake. The resulting rose-tinted mixture sold so surprisingly well that he continued to dispense his chance discovery.

However, this is disputed by historian Joe Nickell, who claims that it was Pete Conklin who first invented the drink in 1857 when he used water dyed pink from a horse rider's red tights to make his lemonade. Most prefer the option of cinnamon candies to horse rider's red tights!

Today, there is commercial variation available in ready to consume plastic and glass bottles and it is indeed considered a healthier version than the colas with extra sugar calories. How much health benefits it carries might be questioned but it is definitely a thirst quencher when plain water seems too plain to swallow.

Lassi & Chaas

Lassi – the famous sweet or salty version is a regular diet item in Punjab. It is often thick and has a top layer of 'malai'. Chaas or buttermilk is the more diluted version of the same with the additional advantage of the butter having been churned out of it and removed. For a long, long time these items were only either homemade or sold out of special outlets like halwais of India.

Originally, buttermilk was the liquid left behind after churning butter out of cream. It also refers to a range of fermented milk drinks, common in warm climates (e.g., India, or the Southern USA) where fresh milk would otherwise sour quickly. Whether traditional or cultured, the tartness of buttermilk is due to the presence of acid in the milk. The increased acidity is primarily due to lactic acid, a by-product naturally produced by lactic acid bacteria while fermenting lactose, the primary sugar found in milk. As lactic acid is produced by the bacteria, the pH of the milk decreases and casein, the primary protein in milk, precipitates causing the curdling or clabbering of milk. This process makes buttermilk thicker than plain milk. While both traditional and cultured buttermilk contain lactic acid, traditional buttermilk tends to be thinner whereas cultured buttermilk is much thicker.

Commercially available cultured buttermilk is pasteurized and homogenized (if 1% or 2% fat) milk which has been inoculated with a culture of lactic acid bacteria to simulate the naturally occurring bacteria found in the old-fashioned product. Some

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dairies add coloured flecks of butter to cultured buttermilk to simulate the residual pieces of butter that can be left over from the churning process of traditional buttermilk.

Commercialisation changed availability of buttermilk outside of home production. A few years ago packs were sold at Rajasthan Roadways bus stop at Bikaner House and these turned out to be so popular that often they were sold out the moment a batch arrived on one of the buses from Rajasthan. Today commercial options are available in market shelves from the ordinary shop selling all grocery items to fancier super markets.

While sweet and salted versions are definitely more popular in the lassi, one can also make a fruit version where mango or banana might be mashed and mixed with the yoghurt. Invariably half the charm of a glass of lassi is in the coolest possible temperature of the liquid when it is served. Bhang lassi is a special lassi that contains bhang, a liquid derivative of cannabis, which has effects similar to other eaten forms of marijuana. It is legal in many parts of India and mainly used for religious purposes, particularly during Holi.

Sherbets

Origin of sherbet may be disputed because many countries serve versions of this sugary syrup, often served with loads of ice in different forms, with the flavour and colour of choice may have natural ingredients or totally commercial flavours. The red of Rooh-Afza and the green of Khus are synonymous with North Indian summers. More exotic versions might have any other fruit like berries, lychees, or other herbs.

Even tomatoes that have been cooked with onions and garlic can form the base of a sherbet. Of course the tomato version would be salty with just a hint of sweetness provided by jaggery or sugar. Another sherbet meant for combating the summer heat is the Kokum sherbet.

Most of these sherbets are available in commercial forms, including powder form that can be mixed with water to make the desirable quantities. They would of course have little food benefit except replacement of dehydrated moisture. Yes, healthier and more expensive versions are also available under the category of 'organic' where unprocessed sugar or 'bura' has been used. These are invariably available in glass bottles in up-market stores.

Jal Jeera

An extremely popular summer drink, traditionally jal jeera was made by hawkers who had this big terracotta urn covered in red cloth that was kept damp. There would be fresh leaves of mint around the neck and the charm of it was often killed by the health hazard it posed. However home versions of it was drunk without fear.

Both Jeera (cumin) and mint have digestive properties and this is often considered a before meal or with meal drink. As it has no added sugar the taste is different to other sugary concoctions and is definitely one of the healthier choices for summer to beat the heat. One of the main ingredients is black salt or rock salt which is recognized for its digestive properties.

Jal Jeera is the most popular drink to accompany Indian food in the UK and the USA, often served as the welcome drink to a diner upon arrival. It is also commercially available as powder which made it easy for even householders to make it. Suddenly it was not any more about mixing and diluting fresh herbs and masalas. You could take a pinch and just add water and ice to get this cooling and refreshing drink without any time management.

Falooda

This is a popular beverage in the Indian subcontinent made primarily by mixing rose syrup with vermicelli and tapioca seeds along with either milk or water. Falooda is an adaptation of the Persian dessert Faloodah and was brought to the Indian subcontinent by the Mughal Kingdom. Basil seeds (sabja/takmaria), sugar, and ice cream may be added to make it almost like a meal rather than a drink. The vermicelli used is often made from arrowroot rather than wheat.

The rose syrup may be substituted with another flavoured base to produce kesar (saffron), mango, chocolate, and fig Falooda which are essentially adaptations of the original Falooda. A variant is falooda kulfi, where falooda and kulfi are served together with syrup. It is very similar to the Thai drink nam manglak, which is made from basil seeds mixed with sugar, water, and rose water. The Iraqi Kurds also have their own version; but made with thicker vermicelli.

Kala Khatta

Technically, this too might not qualify for a

'drink' though the base is shaven ice and hence can be made into a semi liquid form. The vendor places a big lump of ice on a machine, churns it into crushed ice and gathers it into an oval ball with his hand. A proficient poke with the wooden gola stick, a dash of the purplish-black syrup (known as the Kala khatta syrup) from one of the colourful bottles, a squeeze of some lime and a pinch of masala (a mixture of black salt, pepper and common salt) and there you are all ready to slurp the Kala Khatta.

The Kala Khatta syrup is made from a fruit, called Jamun or Jambul. Its scientific name is syzygium cumini and is also called the Indian blackberry or the Java plum. Commercially, this has become a bit suspect due to the quality of water with which the ice is made, but smart hawkers have begun to assure that they use purer mineral water and charge more for the product.

It is also known that Kala Khatta might end up using a different colour and sweeter version of the pouring syrup while keeping the ice ball and the stick as the essential ingredient. Many people know this item as Chuski and one is supposed to either lick the liquid off the ice or suck it gently so your mouth fills with liquid drawn through the ice leaving a chunk of almost clear ice by the end.

Thandaai

A milk based drink with flavours of dry fruit and additives like cardamom this is the drink that often declares arrival of summer when it is enjoyed on Holi morning. Gone are the days when this was made at home, though some households would still make it but commercial versions are now available, though some of them are extremely over flavoured.

Thandaai is often very sweet but enjoyed as a beverage of choice by those who have no problem with sugar.

In Conclusion

While Indian cuisine does not promote drinks with food, there is no paucity of traditional summer, or indeed winter, beverages in India. While most of them were laborious to make, commercially most are now available for the time conscious; and of course restaurants and hotels that serve Indian cuisine have quite a range available. ■



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Interior Intricacies



Designers believe that interior design is as much about functionality as it is about beauty, specially in establishments like hotels and restaurants. When it comes to designing theme restaurants, a designer and consultant can dovetail the layout with décor in order to bring the underlying theme centre stage. A vision is needed which should be shared by the owner, the designer and architect for the final acceptability by the guest. Some tips on how to go about it and what to remember while doing so.

Planning

After providing space for basic essential back-up facilities for kitchen & engineering services. A ratio has to be planned between the area required for kitchen and restaurant.

This is determined according to the concept and cuisine of the restaurant. Area required for Indian, Chinese, Multi-cuisine Fine Dining, Multi-cuisine Fast Food Restaurant or any other speciality restaurant would all be different.

Having firmed up the area required of the kitchen, the location should be ideally on the opposite side of the entrance with a rear approach/access for services and staff entrance/exit.

Restaurant Plan & Design

First requirement is to consider a concept that has to be fitted into an existing site. One needs to consider all existing elements

that would reciprocate to the design requirement.

Visual Form: The concept once realised, should be transformed into reality, by taking the existing situation and all elements to the advantage. Few Hindrances which disturbs the overall arrangement may be modified or eliminated, if necessary. (in consultation with an appropriate engineering expert).

Having got the site to design/ plan, it may be worth noticing the surroundings that could in any way directly or indirectly, functionally or visually give any enhancement to the quality of design.

Spaces: Whatever the existing plan has to offer at a horizontal level i.e. the floor area, location of existing wall, columns, doors, window, floor levels, staircases, entrance/exit points etc., it is extremely necessary to check out the space in vertical dimension. Also many times the height of the space has a lot to contribute to the overall ambience. (All guest and operating areas should have minimum 8'0 height)

Economy of Space: Whether, restaurant, kitchen, back-up areas, toilets etc. in all areas, one has to plan all items that are required to be incorporated in a minimum possible space, keeping adequate space for movement circulation. The arrangement of spaces and their respective items need to be laid out as per the convenience of the end user/ operator of the restaurant.

The Plan: Based on the brief given by the operator on the requirements, which is basically derived from the marketing strategy and viability study for the project, the interior design primarily have to support the complete programme in developing such concepts and ideas that compliment the requirement.

While having conceptualised a visual for that could be incorporated into making of a particular restaurant, one basic factor at all times needs to be kept in priority is the "Cost", which should always be kept in control considering the overall budget planned for the restaurant.

The design form once detailed and analysed through drawings and estimated costs. The bottom line, doing due justice to the design concept should not exceed the overall budget. Since the entire financial viability of the project would to a large extent depend on the same.

The thumb rule is that the profit on overall sale, after discounting all expenses and operating costs should be at least higher than the prevailing rate of interest in the market. Accordingly the nature and style of the restaurant business should be logistically planned and for the same the critical issue is the combination of the product and location. Of course needless to mention that the décor, quality of food, service and reasonable cost goes a long way to establish long term and sound business returns.



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Technical Design Features

Ceiling, walls, flooring, furniture & accessories - all these need to be melted in a pot which gives an ultimate form to the proposed concept.

Ceiling: The most important area which in large spaces, houses bulk of engineering facilities and services such as electrical & communication system, air-conditioning & ventilation system, lighting/ sound & acoustics, fire protection/ fighting system, mood lighting and special lighting system.

There could be multiple ways of designing the ceiling but to house in all the essential engineering facilities and at the same time plan the visuals for adequate height could be an interesting exercise. Creating various levels to incorporate the requirement and in the process arrange and align the same with the floor plan and furniture layout. Simultaneously keeping in mind the concept of design that one has to deliver through a form which would ultimately dovetail with the remaining surfaces that is the walls & flooring.

Arrangement of lights in the ceiling is another most important factor which has a large amount of role to play saliently in the end results of the décor.

Walls: The existing walls, some new if required of different heights sizes, shapes to create suitable spaces as per design requirements with surface finishes to suites the end result is the most important area.

Surface materials, textures, colours, space for display of artwork & artefacts, lighting, which are maintenance friendly, all are some of the important factors for consideration.

Flooring: Most important aspect for choosing flooring is maintenance friendliness of the material. However, many times the operating and design requirement is debated to conclude on the decision of this specification. Marble, stone, wood, vinyl, carpet, tiles are few options readily available in large variety and varying cost.

Furniture: Chairs, tables, banquette seats, high/low sitting, ledges, counter seating etc. are few products which can give various permutations & combinations in the seating order. It is important to plan seating for single, double, four, six, eight and group sitting of twelve and above if possible.

The furniture layout plan must ensure that after leaving adequate movement

circulation for guest and service one is able to create maximum number of covers/seats in the restaurant. At the same time the arrangement of covers should be such that at any given time the wastage of covers should be minimised. For instance a single person occupying a table for four makes three covers go waste for that moment. The design of furniture in coordination with the design concept should be ergonomic, sound in construction, durable, easy to manoeuvre and easy to maintain.

Accessories: Artwork, artefacts, accessories that compliment the design concept is the final icing on cake. Sourcing them at times may be quite a time consuming affair. The most interesting and involving factor is that the appropriate dressing of the entire décor looks friendly warm and lived in & also conveying the ultimate message of the design concept.

Graphics Designs: For stationery menu, crockery, cutlery, staff uniform, external signages, internal direction signages etc. appropriate designs & colour schemes

are developed by Interior Designer in consultation with graphic designers and commercial artists. It gives a definite identity to the creative name or the designs & colour schemes, which looks aesthetical beautiful and conveying the message of the restaurant concept.

Execution: Designs and ideas are crucial, but would be still an illusion if not implemented perfectly. By getting an expert and experienced craftsmen to execute the designs on the ground with perfect detailing and finish is what makes the project successful. To source, select such experts or experienced agencies who would dedicatedly participate to implement the design to reality is yet another exercise.

In absence of access to the appropriate contractors, craftsmen the ideal way therefore is to tender out the job by inviting agencies and experts to execute the project. Such agencies are shortlisted and selected on the merits of their past performance. They need to quote their prices along with the detailed description of item and their required quantities, prepared by the quantity surveyors on behalf of the Interior Designers.

Having received the quotations from more than three such agencies for various items needed, the one with competitive prices, offering work performance guarantee, the contract should be awarded, which has to be executed within a time bound schedule.

Supervision: During the course of execution of multiple works on various items, every stage is needed to be monitored and inspected on regular intervals, to ensure that all items planned are executed and implemented accurately. More than often at the site there are problems related to co-ordination of different agencies executing works of different specifications and finishes. To help solving the problems is important, ensuring eventually no one suffers on account of other and ultimately all decisions are in align with the ultimate interest of the accurate & timely execution of the project.

Launching: Launching a new or a renovated restaurant project is the ultimate exercise for which experts and experienced agencies are commissioned to do promotion AD's and campaigns to access attention of the masses and the target market. ■

Factors to be considered:

Building a Restaurant

- Geographical Location of the Site
- Whether local Market/Culture is conducive to Cuisine and affordability.
- Cost of Site
- Business viability (to Buy or Rent the premises)

Existing Site Conditions

- Orientation Size, proportion of length and width available, height, openings.
- Entrances, Accessibility and approach from ground level.
- Availability of adequate Parking.
- Existing structure - Soundness, Hindrances if any.

- Type of neighbourhood - expected advantageous or disadvantageous.

Guest & Service Entrance.

- Availability of Service Lane.
- Availability of Civil Amenities i.e. water and electrical supply, garbage disposal.
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- Shop outlet or a Standalone property.
- Site clear of all Legal encumbrances.
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Goa is not only a state but also a state of mind, where the ethereal natural beauty is amalgamated with hedonism reflected through fun, frolic and great food, to create a great experience for tourists and travellers. However, visiting Goa without having a taste of the authentic Goan cuisine can make your travels to this state an incomplete one.

Like many other communities across the globe, Goans too like to prepare different food for different occasions and seasons. Since Goa is located on the west coast of India, along the shore of the Arabian Sea, Goan cuisine is dominated by spices and flavours. The staple food of Goa is Rice and Fish Curry. Most of the dishes incorporate coconuts, rice, fish, pork, meat and local spices like kokum. The cuisine of Goa is mostly dominated by seafood which includes Shark, Tuna, Pomfret, and Mackerel Fish.

Varied Influences

Goa was a Portuguese colony prior to 1961, and hence, the Portuguese influenced most of their food. And like many great cuisines, Goan

food also got influenced from tastes from many quarters, which include influences from Arabian, Konkani, Malaysian, Malabar, French, Brazilian, African and Chinese cuisines. Goa, Daman, Kerala, Mangalore, Macau, Portugal, Brazil and Sri Lanka have many dishes common to them.

The Portuguese influence on Goan food is very much well-known. Goan curries are very famous, but it has Malaysian influence for even they make curries from coconut juice. There is also an influence of Arab gastronomy, behind which there are three theories. It could be because of the Portuguese as Portugal was once ruled by Arabs called Moors. Also, Arab traders used to stay in Goan cities. The last theory is that Muslim rulers, who controlled different parts of the country, spread their influence into the Goan kitchen. The influence is seen by way of use of almonds, marzipan and even the sweet dishes like kheer & payasam.

Goan cuisine is also found to be appreciated in other states of India. For example, the Hindu households in Goa usually have Konkani vegetarian fare. Some

of their dishes – dali-thoy, varieties of ghashi, ambaat, sukke, saaru-upkari, kolombo, pathrado, patholi, paayasu, ubbatti, to name a few – have found place in the vegetarian cuisines of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala too.

Rice, Coconut and Curry

The majority of Goans are non-vegetarian, and fish play an important role in their diet. The average Goan cuisine comprises of seafood, coconut, milk, rice and local spices as the main items. Here it deserves a mention that due to the tropical climate of Goa, spices and flavours are intense in this region. Use of kokum is another distinctive feature of Goan cuisine.

In Goa, rice is partaken in different forms. Rice for meals is boiled in water and drained. Hindus in Goa cook the rice devoid of salt. In Goa, an array of roasted breads is made from rice flour.

Coconut juice plays a pivotal role in the creation of curry. Grinding coconut shavings to a fine paste and sprucing it with chillies, garlic, turmeric, dry coriander and tamarind

is another way to reach the out-of-the-world taste of a Goan curry. Kotkotem, a dish comprising several vegetables, pulses and coconut, is a favourite dish among the Hindus in Goa.

The Case of Tomato

Goan cuisine, like any great cuisines, has its share of interesting history. It is said that traditionally the Hindus of Goa did not eat tomato. Even in these days most Goan Hindu families do not use tomato, aubergine, radish and papaya in their dishes on festive religious occasions when they prepare 'food for the Gods,' since these vegetables are thought to have originated in lands from beyond the seas.

Circumstances changed the Hindu tradition in Goa to induce them to eat tomatoes in the early decades of the 20th century. Apparently, during an epidemic of typhoid, patients were prescribed cod liver oil. Because of its unpleasant taste, physicians advised them to mix it with tomato juice. That set the ball rolling. Subsequently, Hindus in Goa started using tomato in their food.

In certain parts of the New Conquest territories of Goa (territories that came under Portuguese rule only in the 18th century) tomato was not used until the second half of the 20th century. In these areas tomato was neither easily available nor did many know its use. Today, tomato though an integral part of the Hindu diet in Goa, is not had when the food is prepared as part of the ritual offering to the Gods.

Adoption of Global Tastes

Though Goan cuisine has foreign influences in liberal dosage, but recipes from overseas were not always introduced in their original form in the Goan cuisine. They were usually presented in a modified version, by taking into account of the availability of ingredients, climatic conditions and local tastes of Goan people.

For instance, almonds or walnuts in Portuguese recipes were often replaced by cashew nuts or coconut in Goan cuisine as almonds were not easily available in Goa and were expensive.

Then Galinha (Frango) Piri-piri, a grilled bush dish from Mozambique, underwent modifications when introduced to Goa. Its adoption came to be known as Galinha Cafreal (Chicken Cafreal) and in Goa it changed from a grilled dish to a fried one.

Sometimes recipes were modified to suit the palate of the Goan people. Sarabulho in its original form consisted of pork meat, liver, ears, tail and limbs. Only a few spices were added to the cooking. Goan Christians added tempero paste and called it Sorpotel (Sarapatel). It is a popular dish in the Goan Christian cuisine on festive occasions.

The famous Goan sausages are a modified version of Portuguese Chouriço. Bebinca, the queen of Goan Christian dessert on festive occasions, is a modified version of Bebingka, which is made in Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia. Let us have a look at some of the significant gastronomic specialties of Goa.

Specialties of Goa

Ambot Tik

In Konkani, ambot means sour and tik means spicy. As the name suggests, the dish is slightly sour and pungent. It is a delicious gravy dish that is usually prepared from dried red chillies, peppercorns and



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tamarind. Red chillies are used to add spice to the dish and also kokum is used to make the dish taste sour. The fish used is normally shark or catfish, which is diced and tossed with onions, tomatoes and masala. It tastes great with plain steamed or boiled rice.

Fish Curry Rice

This is the staple food for Goans and is known as Xitt Coddin in Konkani. The Goan fish curry is loaded with various spices along with coconut. Raw mango is also used to give the dish a tangy flavour. The curry is usually yellowish-red in colour due to the presence of chillies and turmeric. The main ingredients of the dish are a decent-sized pomfret and raw mango. Instead of pomfret, kingfish may also be used, although mackerel is one of the favourites. The dish is served with steamed white rice and is a part of the traditional Goan meal.

Chicken Cafreal

This spicy chicken dish is made with coriander, lime, green chillies, peppercorns, and mint. It can be cooked in oven or is pan



roasted. It is a spicy green coloured dish. Grinding green chillies, herbs and various spices together make the masala for the chicken. Then, the chicken is mixed with this masala and fried. The dish originated from Africa and is usually accompanied by green salad.

Pork Vindaloo

Goan food was previously called Vindahlo but because of the use of potatoes, folks started calling it Vindaloo. 'Vin' comes from

the word vinegar and 'ahlo' means garlic in Portuguese. The dish consists of pork, onions, chillies, garlic along with vinegar and other spices. Masala is prepared using the chillies and other ingredients and is then mixed with meat and vinegar. This mixture is stored overnight. The dish is then fried using onions and other herbs.

Chicken / Mushroom / Crab Xacuti

It is a Goan speciality that is extremely hot and spicy. It is usually prepared with chicken but tastes good with mushrooms as well. The dish is prepared with dry roasted coconut and various spices.

Chicken Xacuti consists of poppy seeds and Kashmiri red chillies. This is yet another Portuguese influenced famous Goan food. The curry consists of chicken, potatoes, onions, coconuts, chillies, and other spices. Kashmiri chillies are specifically used as they give intense hot flavour and also give colour to the dish. It goes perfectly with bread and can be enjoyed with plain boiled rice too.

Crab Xacuti preparation is similar to that of Chicken Xacuti. But the claws of the crab need to be carefully removed and the crabs are then to be boiled for 15 minutes before proceeding. Eggs may be added to the curry to make it thicker and fluffy in consistency.

Feijoada

This dish is a stew of red beans and pork. Goan feijoada is a Portuguese influenced recipe. Salted pork, masala and red beans are combined and fried to prepare this dish. Coconut milk may be added instead of water for the gravy as coconut milk will add a unique flavour and give a thicker consistency. Goan feijoada is served with rice or pois.

Samarachi Kodi

The dish is primarily prepared during the monsoons. It is a dry prawn curry. Dry prawns, onion, coconut, tamarind and tomatoes are the main ingredients which are fried with a spicy, tangy masala. Coconut milk is added to give it the typical flavour and texture. Some also use Bombay ducks instead of prawns. Samarachi Kodi is served best with hot rice and pickle.

Sorpotel

It is a rich stew made from pork. Sometimes liver, heart and kidney are also added. Preparing sorpotel is an elaborate procedure: first the meat is parboiled, finely diced, fried and then cooked in spices and vinegar. Sorpotel usually tastes better on the second and third day after it is prepared; once it has had time to mature. Sorpotel can

be consumed any time of the day however some people prefer to have it for breakfast. 'Soro' is a Konkani word that translates to alcohol or liquor.

The Desserts

Bebinca

Goa's most famous sweet is prepared in the form of a multi-layered cake, comprising egg, coconut milk, sugar and ghee. Cooking a perfect bebinca is considered an art form as it requires a lot of patience to prepare. Each



layer is cooked in the oven until it has a light fudge consistency. The dish uses caramelised sugar and not just normal sugar giving the dessert a rich flavour. This mammoth and delightful cake can be eaten hot or cold and is traditionally being served at Christmas.

Patolea

Patolea is a sweet dish that may also be consumed along with tea. For the dish, Goan red rice is used with tamarind leaves. A filling of coconut, Goan jaggery, and cardamom is made and stuffed inside the leaves and then folded or wrapped and steamed. It is pronounced as 'pathayo'.

The Beverage - Feni

Feni is Goa's local alcoholic drink, which emanates a strong aroma. The word feni derives from the word 'fenn', which means froth. A good feni, when poured in a glass, produces a little froth, which is an indication of the superior quality of the product. There are two types of feni, one is made from coconut and the other is made from cashew.

Coconut feni is less popular and is made from the sap of coconut palms. Cashew feni is made from cashew apples, which are manually crushed and allowed to ferment. Traditionally, there are three grades of this world famous Goan brew. Urrac is the product of first distillation, Cazulo is the product of second and Feni is the product of third distillation.



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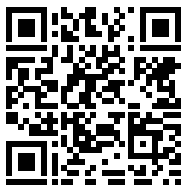
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Dibyendu Roy, Executive Chef, Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, Goa



“With more than two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, Chef Dibyendu Roy joined the iconic Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa as the Executive Chef in October 2022 and since then there has been no looking back. Working with well known brands like Hyatt, Marriott and The Taj within the country and overseas has taught him to be more adaptable leader, respecting ethnicities, diversities and cultures. In his 23 years of professional journey, he has served diplomats and has curated meals and experiences for several dignitaries.

Chef Roy attributes his philosophy behind the food he cooks to the experience that he creates for his guests. To quote him “the emotion that comes out on the very first bite tells my success story”.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about his work philosophy and more...

What is your philosophy of cooking?

My philosophy is the experience that I create for my diners – Their first expression with the first bite tells my success story. I always prefer to use local grown products. “Go Local” is my motto.

What is your area of expertise?

Roast is my area of expertise: I have curated plenty of exclusive dishes and I am learning every day to make it better. Personally I think roasting or pork crackling with burnt onion and apple chutney is one of my signature dishes which always stand out from my others recipes.

Had you not been a chef then what?

I always wanted to be a musician though I don’t know how to play a single instrument. Perhaps it is about creativity and harmony that come out through my culinary skills.

What is your source of inspiration?

I always wanted to try something different which is interesting and fun as career. I come from a Bengali foodie

family where everyone is fond of good food. During my school days I used to watch roadside vendors chopping vegetables with such expertise, they had no degree but their talent was such an inspiration.

During summer my mother used to make home grown vegetable pickles which lasted for six months that was another high point in my life as inspiration. During this process I started developing interest for different spices and finally I joined culinary school.

How has the journey been so far?

Challenging but rewarding. Every day is a learning experience. Idea is to keep our minds open for new possibilities.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

Being in love and passionate about food. There is nothing call right recipe, every recipe taste differently. What one needs to know are the right flavours and how to blend them with other ingredients. Rest comes with experience.

Favourite Ingredient?

Vegetables, fresh herbs and dry spices complement each other. I always give priority to local elements like coconut, kokum, cashew nuts and jaggery in every day recipe. It is difficult to point out a particular favourite ingredient still I think Star Anise is one of them for me.

Fav Cuisine?

Asian cuisine, my all-time favourite.

Fav Restaurant/ Food Joint?

My favourite restaurants are Din Tai Fung (Taiwanese) and Bellagio in Shanghai till now.

You favourite diner so far?

Many but one incident truly touched my heart. There was an instance when a mother of 6 yrs. old boy was struggling to feed him. I made a crunchy simple ham and cheese sandwich which he loved so much that he took more portions as takeaway.

You favourite culinary destination?

Hong Kong & Singapore will always be

my favorite destinations. I love the chemistry they create between fresh herbs and gravy. Even after getting cooked on high heat the flavours of fresh herbs stays the same.

Any guilty pleasures?

Have warm chocolate fudge with a scoop of ice cream at 2 am in the morning.

The best compliment you have received?

I have been blessed to get several compliments from my diners. There was an incident where a 90 yrs. old lady proposed me marry her so that she could enjoy the rest of her life with food cooked by me.

What is your philosophy of work?

Remain passionate and creative. I love to learn new cooking technique from any food artist. I still learn from down the line, never let position come in the way.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

Discipline, consistency, adaptability, keep curating and practice patience above all.

Any cuisines that you want to learn?

Yes, Japanese and French cuisines.

Any earliest memory in the kitchen?

Peeling 200 kg of potato by hand and later realised there was Potato peeler kept on the side.

Last meal on Earth: What would you choose?

My mother's home cooked food, whatever it may be.

10 years from now?

Being a chef I always wanted to be a part of this food industry. Would love to be more involved with multiple properties and lead a bigger successful team. I wish to be known for my food, the concept and the experience.

What are your dreams?

I strive to be recognized as a hotelier who has innovative ideas towards guest experience. Someday I would like to start my own restaurant where the guest would be able to have their own curated meals recipes as perceived by them and not as per the menu. Each meal would be curated along with the quest's choice.

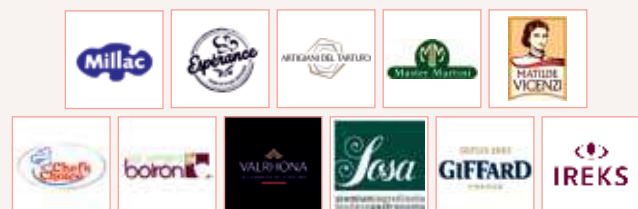
What career advice you would like to give to youngsters aspiring to be chefs?

Enjoy and be passionate. Appreciate your efforts in your daily learnings. Focus on the basics not only on the garnish. There is no shortcut to success. Strive to be a strong and confident person.



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Vacuum Packaging

A vacuum-packing machine used optimally can save large amounts of time, effort and money. These machines allow fresh food to be bought in bulk, prepared and then stored for longer periods without deterioration in quality, allowing restaurants and banquet kitchens to increase working efficiency, and cut costs and wastage.

Considered essential in France, vacuum packers were first used in the United Kingdom (UK) by butchers about 40 years ago, becoming widespread among UK's top chefs over the past years.

The Machine

Vacuum Packaging Machine is a crucial piece of any kitchen which helps spread the workload more efficiently.

The machine has two distinct uses:

First, fresh food can be prepared and then stored in a refrigerator in vacuum-sealed plastic bags with an increased shelf life. The second is the "sous-vide" process, in which food is prepared, sealed inside a pouch or bag, cooked at a low temperature, chilled rapidly, and then kept refrigerated. Sous-vide preparation is less widespread than straightforward preservation, but both methods are safe and hygienic, provided the

correct procedures are followed.

The vacuum-packing procedure involves putting prepared fresh food in plastic bags. The machine then expels 99.95 per cent of the air from the bag taking 99.95 per cent of the bacteria away with it, and seals it. It must be noted that using a vacuum packaging machine in isolation is not enough.

The Storage

The vacuum packing procedure must be backed up by a good Deep Freezer, which can store the product well below 2°C. If a Blast Chiller is used to quickly bring down the temperature of the product then the food can be stored for a longer period of time thereby increasing the shelf life.

Provided the vacuum packs are kept refrigerated, below 2°C, use-by times can be extended considerably. However, stocks

stored this way should be used in the correct order. So all packs should be labeled with a description of contents, weight, the date when packed and the use-by date.

Foodservice Industry

The food service industry in India is familiar with the advantages in vacuum packing and has been practising this method of preservation to enhance the shelf life of perishables for many years. Vacuum packaging machines are quite widely used by the larger hotels, central preparation kitchens of Restaurant chains/Fast Food chains, Flight Catering Kitchens etc. They allow chefs to buy perishables in bulk, process them and store them for longer periods without any deterioration in quality.

The practice of vacuum packaging in India is fast catching on, as chefs are able to plan out their requirements well in advance and also take advantage of the low seasonal prices for procurement of fruits and vegetables for consumption during the off-season. They are also becoming aware of the increased efficiency that can be achieved by using a vacuum packaging machine.

In the hotel industry, generally the practice of vacuum packaging is being adopted by large hotels, whereas it can be very



successfully used by smaller hotels, the chef can use this technique to carry-out pre-preparation of fresh vegetables and meat at slack periods and even cook at night for the next day and maximize the available space, equipment and manpower.

With labour and ingredients being two of the biggest expenses for any restaurant, the potential for saving money and increasing productivity with vacuum packing is huge. This is particularly relevant to banquet caterers, as one can get the mise en place sorted and process vegetables etc. in advance. This flexibility is possibly of greater value to the small caterer. Vacuum packing allows chefs to prepare a number of products during non-service periods which can then be used later, cutting down on the workload and service time during high pressure operating hours.

A vacuum packing machine in the butchery is also highly advantageous, meat can be sourced from a supplier in advance and the chef can trim it down to his specifications and store it for later use. Once vacuum packed, the food contracts and takes up less storage space, and the watertight plastic pouches reduce the risk

of cross-contamination, smells and leakage.

Additionally, when used for preserving fish, there is no risk of damage to the skin through freezer burning, thereby retaining the aesthetic appearance of the food. Marinating becomes a quick process, with the pressure created by the vacuum forcing the marinade into the meat or fish and rendering it tender more quickly.

The Know How

Till recently, vacuum machines were being imported to India. However of late few suppliers are manufacturing these machines in India, after obtaining the technical foreign know-how. Indian versions are rather more bulky, and are available in three different versions, viz: tabletop models, freestanding single chamber and freestanding double chamber models. Various sizes of chambers are available in each version, with either single sealing bar or double sealing bars, and with inert sterile nitrogen gas filling.

The trained technicians assist in installation, training and after sales service. Over the last few years, the locally manufactured versions are being displayed in the various hotel &

restaurant and the response has been quite favourable

The Precautions

As in any food handling operation or process certain precautions must be taken into consideration when using a vacuum packing machine too. A small sharp bone protruding from a cut of meat can puncture a plastic pouch and allow air in, destroying the vacuum created.

As mentioned earlier, the products must be stored at correct temperatures after vacuum packing or the entire exercise is futile. Some points to be considered are:

Is the machine serviced at regular intervals?

Are the management and staff aware of the risks?

Are staff trained to use the machines?

Are procedures in place to ensure safe usage of the machines when key staff is absent?

If used properly a vacuum packing machine can prove to be a vital asset to any kitchen and save considerable amounts of time, money and man-hours.

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Customer Service

Catering institutes in India vie with each other to offer the latest in education to students, even if courses are dated in the late vestiges of the last century. The mushrooming of institutes has led a piquant situation in which there are a number of catering personnel coming out of the institutes and marching straight into the arms of recruitment agencies who promise the skies to the bright-eyed aspirants.

Most training and education programs miss out on some important factors of the business. The trainee could have the right info about the right way to serve wine and lay the table but it is important to develop his attitude to the job that will determine whether the training is put to practice if at all.

This lack of awareness is confined not only to the innocent students and trainees but also to the owners and managers of food outlets. Burdened with the practical aspects of building sales and marketing inputs, the nitty-gritty of running the restaurant business is often taken for granted.

Ask the average restaurateur how important customer service is to business, and one usually gets a strong positive response. However on probing further the response to the question- "Do you objectively measure customer your service in any way?" normally elicits a negative response. For example on asking if they have put into place any special recruitment or training systems to ensure

customer service delivery the puzzled and quizzical response explains it all.

The Key

Customer service can be understood as a positive perception of human interaction. Research and experience reveals that it is worth at least 40 percent of your customers' perception of the business with the rest made up of product and environment. Customers vote for a hospitality business with their wallets and purses, and form the decision to return according to their own, unique perception of what they experience while they're there.

Creation of really good customer service requires the management of quite a complex set of variables, and is very unlikely to happen by accident. If you go into any restaurant or hotel and receive consistent good service right across their staff, it means the organisation is a very special one indeed.

It all starts with a clear vision of what the establishment is trying to create, together with the evolution of what constitutes service performance targets.

How long should a customer stand in a restaurant entrance before he is greeted?

How long should a guest have to wait for a drink in a dining area or a bar?

All eating joints' owners and managers probably want cheerful, helpful service, but how many specify these as targets within their business?

How often it is seen that there is really

good service from one or two staff and pretty average service from the rest?

This usually happens where the recruitment process applied within the business is not thorough enough to identify and reject the applicants who are not naturally service oriented. The end result is a mixture of staff whose service delivery is okay when a manager or supervisor is watching and inconsistent when there is no supervision. Most non-service oriented staff drops the pretence that got them the job when there is nobody in authority watching.

Skill & Attitude

Wherein it is easy for the manager or supervisor to get an inaccurate picture of the service standard they are delivering because the service is good whenever they are watching. Another downside is that only constant supervision ensures customer service standards.

The real foundation of good service is good recruitment. If you get the right people they will run your business for you, and they will preserve a consistent standard of service whether you are there or not – because they want to, not because you want them to.

Good recruiting should concentrate on finding people with the right attitudes rather than the right skills. Skills can be taught quite easily, while it is very difficult to change peoples' attitudes. A lot of managers try to find experienced staff, only to find that they have inherited the recruiting mistakes of other businesses.

Of course, good recruitment must be followed up with good training or it can't capitalise on those good attitudes. The right people are quite easy to train – they want to learn; they want to get it right. A structured training program over a week or two, applied to the right people, can produce wonders. The important thing is to train all staff into the same system – and not let supervisors or senior staff train them the way they want lest you get wildly inconsistent performance across the team.

Catering institutes need to incorporate this into their education systems so that their students emerge as better employee material for the fast growing food business.



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The Junior Pastry Cup 2023 will feature this year 6-8 teams of up-and-coming young pastry chefs, having exemplary skills, competing against each other in a series of challenges to decide which team will become the Champion.

These junior masters will be judged by a panel of pastry professionals. Although this might seem simple but its popularity reinvigorated the interest in pastry & baking throughout the country among aspiring young chefs.

It will be a fun to watch young contestants' running to win a place at Junior Pastry World Cup to be held in January 2024 at **SIGEP** Show in Rimini, Italy.

One just can't resist to be part of this thoroughly competitive and entertaining Event.

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Homemade Pasta Machine

Designed in Italy and now manufactured in Argentina since 1950, the biggest, sturdiest and everlasting pasta maker has now been introduced in India. The "Pastalinda" machine for homemade pasta is manufactured for those who love homemade and fresh pasta.

Pastalinda offers two models of pasta



machine, Classic 200 with 200 mm width and Classic 260 with 260 mm width. With an appealing design and high durability, it permits to easily prepare 200 mm or 260 mm wide sheets of laminated dough of the desired length, noodles, tagliatelle, ribbons, dough sheets, ravioli, ravioloni, cookies, sorrentini, pastry discs for turnovers, phyllo dough, farfalle, pappardelle, lasagne, fettucine and many more.

Due to its sturdiness and resistant structure it is an everlasting product. The use of stainless steel and maximum quality components make it appropriate for a demanding, high-performance operation. It permits a perfect and effortless kneading and stretching of the dough.

It has an appealing design, a crossover between retro and vintage. It can be perfectly combined with any kitchen, countertop, or cupboard, and easy to store.

The product is available in several colours. It has high level of versatility because of its solid rollers. One can be able to select different alternatives of doughs and thicknesses. The rollers included 2 cutting options: 2.5 mm wide tagliatelle or 7.5 mm wide ribbons.

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IT Solution Provider

Founded in 2008, Romio Technologies Pvt. Ltd. is one of the leading IT solution providers for the Hotel and F&B industry. The wide range of products include variation of Hardware and Software solutions.



Under Hardware the solutions include POS(Point of sale machine), Bill Printer, Kitchen Printer, Cash Drawer, Scanner, Card Reader. The touch based POS comes with the latest configuration with a smooth Touch experience and an option of dual screen display. The POS is compatible with majorly all software. With more than 36 support centres PAN India, Romio Technologies is providing POS with 3 years onsite warranty.

As a part of software there solution includes ERP, Front Desk, Room Booking, Restaurant POS, Card based solution, CRM, Inventory Management, Feedback Application, Club Management System. Managing Theft control and a complete set of Analytical Reports are some of the key features of the product. The entire application is simple to use with an extremely low learning curve.

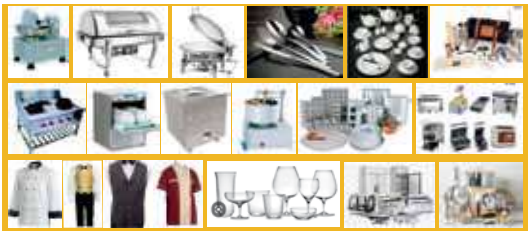
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Facilitating Quality

Kalka Metal Udyog is a niche brand in the field of kitchen crockery, cutlery, chafing dish, bar equipments and uniforms. It has earned considerable recognition as a manufacturer, supplier and importer in this segment. The clientele of the company in the hospitality industry includes renowned hotels, resorts, restaurants, and caterers, etc. Precision and quality are the company's hallmarks.



The company's range of crockery is a product of fine quality of materials sourced from certified vendors, and the application of hi-tech machines and advanced technology. Their packaging also involves utmost care.

The company's range of crockery is a product of fine quality of materials sourced from certified vendors, and the application of hi-tech machines and advanced technology. Their packaging also involves utmost care.

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Restaurant Pasta Machine



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Classic 260



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Striking Balance between Profit and Guest Satisfaction

Sanjeev Ranjan, Food & Beverage Director, JW Marriott Chandigarh



Sanjeev Ranjan began his culinary journey in 2004, accumulating two decades of valuable experience. He has worked with Marriott International, The Leela, The Oberoi, and The Lalit, both in India and overseas. Starting as a Chef de Partie at The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata, he has steadily progressed to his current position as the Director of Food & Beverage at JW Marriott Chandigarh since March 2023.

Sanjeev Ranjan has spent the past eight years serving as an Executive Chef at various luxury properties. His expertise in Food & Beverage operations has played a crucial role in his professional growth. In his current role, he oversees five food and beverage outlets, along with banquet, lounge, and meeting spaces.

In an exclusive interview with [Sharmila Chand](#), he talks about his work philosophy and more...

What do you enjoy most about being the F&B Director?

As the Food & Beverage Director of JW Marriott Chandigarh, I enjoy the opportunity to lead and inspire my team. I take great pleasure in sharing my learnings and skills with them, fostering their growth and development. Together, we aim to curate unforgettable experiences for our guests and build strong relationships with them.

What are your plans in current role?

In my present role, I am whole heartedly devoted to crafting extraordinary concepts and elevating our Food & Beverage menus to unparalleled levels of artistry. Through the introduction of meticulously handcrafted artisanal cocktails and exclusive partnership pop-ups with world-renowned Celebrity Chefs, my aim is to establish JW Marriott Chandigarh as the epitome of culinary innovation and the preferred haven for discerning locals seeking extraordinary gastronomic delights.

How challenging is your position?

Being the Food and Beverage Director at JW Marriott Chandigarh is indeed a challenging role. Each day brings new beginnings with unique challenges and diverse business agendas. I constantly strive to strike a balance between revenue, maintaining our reputation, and ensuring guest satisfaction. It requires staying on my toes and being adaptable in a dynamic industry.

What is the USP of your F&B outlets?

The JW Marriott Chandigarh has a distinct advantage with our in-house brewery, which serves exquisite fresh beers. We boast five

restaurants that cater to various taste palettes of our guests, offering a wide range of culinary experiences. From Asian to Awadhi or to continental to entertaining your sweet tooth - we provide our guests with an array of dining options that set us apart from other establishments.

What is your working philosophy?

My working philosophy revolves around passion, dedication, and attention to detail. I firmly believe that even the smallest things can make the biggest difference. As a resilient individual, I ensure that every task is executed with finesse and that setbacks do not deter me. I maintain a positive attitude and face challenges head-on.

How do you define yourself?

A consummate professional driven by an unwavering commitment to excellence. Dedication is the lifeblood that fuels my passion. I approach my responsibilities with an unwavering focus and an unyielding determination to exceed expectations. I devote countless hours to honing my craft, staying abreast of industry trends, and seeking inspiration from diverse sources. These qualities define me as a detail-oriented and dedicated professional who adds a touch of finesse to everything I do. It is through these traits that I am able to consistently deliver exceptional results and create memorable experiences for those I serve.

How do you like to de-stress?

To unwind and de-stress, I find solace in connecting with nature. One of my favourite

ways to relax is to hop on my bike and explore undiscovered destinations, immersing myself in the serenity of nature. It helps me recharge and rejuvenate, enabling me to bring fresh perspectives to my work.

How has your journey been in culinary field?

My journey in the culinary field has been nothing short of a thrilling roller-coaster ride. Over the past two decades, I have faced and overcome complex challenges, constantly learning and growing. Most importantly, I have enjoyed every step of the way, embracing the excitement and joy that comes with being a part of the culinary world.

What has been your most rewarding moment at work?

Two moments in my career stand out as truly rewarding. Firstly, receiving the prestigious "World on the Plate" award from the Australian Master Chef was a great honour. It validated my dedication and commitment to culinary excellence. Secondly, being promoted to the position of Director of Food and Beverages was a significant milestone, affirming the trust and confidence placed in my abilities.

Anything else you would like to say?

I believe that success as a hotelier comes from embracing challenges and constantly reflecting on oneself. With a positive mindset, determination, and an unwavering focus on growth, anyone can achieve great heights in the hospitality industry. I encourage aspiring hoteliers to remain resilient and never stop learning.

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