

HAMMER

Food & Beverage

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Business Review

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Themed for Success

Business

Increasing Revenue & Profitability

Feature

Small Plates: Conquering The Menu

Food

Turkish Hazelnut

Seafood

One's Oyster

Ingredient

The Priceless Spice

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Theme restaurants have a dominant concept and utilize not only décor and special effects but also other techniques to create exotic environments that are not connected with dining. Cover story looks at the history of these extraordinary, weird places and tries to gauge their popularity, the intricacies involved in selecting a theme.

It is essential for an entrepreneur in foodservice industry to thoroughly study the business and learn how to increase the revenue of the venue. One way of making profits is by increasing the income. Business story looks into the several ways of increasing revenue thus profits.

Variety in flavours and cuisines has made small plates popular with diners who prefer portion control over multi-course meals. In the feature story chefs and food industry professionals share their perspective and benefits of the small plates.

Food section talks about Turkish Hazelnuts, the oldest crops known to humans and is native to the Black Sea coast. Saffron is the costliest spice on the planet, by weight, has varied uses in culinary applications. The ingredient section elaborates on the unique features of saffron, which not only enhance food taste, flavour and colour, but can also add health to the food. Oysters are thought to have regenerative and invigorating properties. It is also considered as an aphrodisiac and is very healthy and enriched in minerals diet. Seafood section values the bivalve as an essential eating which many consider a delicacy.

Supplies section finds the importance of crockery in which food is dished out so that it looks good and at the same time convenient for the customer. Operations section elaborates on how running an F&B operation is not a smooth sailing business and what challenges are faced by the managers.

Besides these topics we have covered recent happenings, through news, events and reports.

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Business Review

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FHA-HoReCa 2024

FHA-HoReCa, Asia's most comprehensive and premier hospitality event, will partner with World Association of Chefs Societies – Worldchefs – a global leading organization that brings together global chef delegates and professionals, to host Singapore's first-ever Global Chefs Challenge Finals.

The Global Chefs Challenge Finals will feature the top 72 chefs from 25 countries, selected based on their outstanding performance at the Worldchefs Regional Semi-Finals that took place in 2023. These culinary talents will compete head-to-head at the Global Chef Challenge Finals, scheduled to take place at the Singapore Expo during 22-25 October, 2024.

FHA-HoReCa trade show is Asia's most comprehensive international trade show covering 5 key segments – Bakery, Pastry & Gelato; Foodservice & Hospitality Equipment; Hospitality Style; Hospitality Technology and Specialty Coffee in a single platform. This event brings over 40,000

hospitality and foodservice professionals from around the world.

Ian Roberts, Vice President of Informa Markets said, "With the dynamic partnership of FHA-HoReCa and the Worldchefs Congress, we're not just setting a place



at the table; we're creating a feast of innovation, excellence, and culinary mastery that will reverberate throughout the industry. In 2024, the Global Chef Challenge will ignite the culinary world, and together, we'll redefine the art of gastronomy on a global scale, inspiring chefs, tantalizing taste buds, and shaping the future of the culinary industry like never before."

"SCA has a strong history of partnering FHA in the organization of culinary competitions over the decades. We also have also strongly supported the Global Chefs Challenges by sending competitors. So we are pleased and excited to support this important culinary competition in our country," says President of Singapore Chefs' Association, Eric Neo.

The 2024 Global Chefs Challenge Finals will see the world's top chefs meet to compete in four competition categories:

Global Vegan Chefs Challenge
Global Pastry Chefs Challenge

Global Young Chefs Challenge
Global Chefs Challenge

The Global Chefs Challenge Finals will see its newest category Global Vegan Chefs Challenge's first finals. This competition features innovative chefs who will showcase vegan culinary skills. Their plates must exclude animal proteins while creatively and tastily combining key vegan ingredients.



THAIFEX - HOREC Asia

Koelnmesse, an international leader in organising food fairs and one of the organisers of THAIFEX – HOREC Asia 2024, has announced key partnerships with a series of world class integrated properties, including Asset World Corporation Public Company Limited (AWC). This landmark collaboration with Thailand's leading integrated lifestyle real estate group underscores THAIFEX – HOREC Asia's pivotal role as a premier HoReCa event platform in the region.

Making its global debut from March 6-8, 2024 at IMPACT Muang Thong Thani, Bangkok, Thailand, THAIFEX – HOREC Asia is set to attract global

brands across the hotel, restaurant, and catering sectors.

THAIFEX - HOREC Asia's AWC partnership announcement is further boosted by the addition of Dusit International, Minor Hotels and Centara, underscoring its strategic commitment to fortifying THAIFEX – HOREC Asia's Hosted Buyer Programme in its inaugural launch in March 2024. This curated program anticipates 500 hosted buyers, facilitating in-person meetings that match top-quality buyers with international exhibitors, fostering valuable connections and partnerships.

Mathias Kuepper, Managing Director and VP Asia-Pacific of Koelnmesse, said,

"AWC's illustrious track record in nurturing the hospitality and catering industry shines through its impressive portfolio, featuring prestigious hotel groups like Marriott Hotels, The Luxury Collection, Le Méridien, Banyan Tree, Hilton, to list just a few. This strategic collaboration comes at a pivotal moment, aligning perfectly with the inaugural THAIFEX – HOREC Asia in March 2024. Together with our other leading hospitality partners such Dusit Thani, we will significantly bolster our Hosted Buyer Programme, opening doors to invaluable opportunities for exhibitors, association partners, and key industry players in the HoReCa sector."

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World Food India 2023: A Resounding Success



The 'World Food India 2023' event, organized by the Ministry of Food Processing Industry, concluded on 5th November at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, graced by the esteemed presence of the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu. The valedictory session encapsulated the event's resounding success, with the President acknowledging its pivotal role in showcasing India's vibrant culinary heritage and fostering robust partnerships among various industries. She emphasized the country's potential as a global culinary hub and underscored the importance of enhancing food distribution to combat global hunger.

The event was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 3rd November disbursing Seed Capital Assistance for over one lakh SHG members. He emphasized the event's role in presenting India as the 'food basket of the world' and commemorating 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Applauding the technology and startup pavilion and food street, the Prime Minister emphasized their role in shaping the future economy. Recognizing the food processing sector as a 'sunrise



sector,' he highlighted its attraction of over Rs 50,000 crore in foreign direct investment over nine years. He underscored the impact of the PLI scheme and ongoing projects under the Agri-Infra Fund, emphasizing investments of thousands of crores in processing infrastructure for fisheries and animal husbandry.

The Mega Food Event, held with the support of ten Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, six commodity boards, and 25 states, attracted significant attention from international and domestic stakeholders. The event featured a remarkable turnout of 1208 exhibitors, 14 country pavilions, and notable participation

from 715 international buyers, 218 domestic buyers, and 97 corporate leaders.

Spanning an expansive area of 50,000 square meters across seven exhibition halls, the event provided a comprehensive platform for showcasing the latest advancements in the food processing industry. 14 country delegations, including seven Ministerial delegations participated in the event. The event's global appeal was further reinforced by the distinguished participation of The Netherlands as the Partner Country and Japan as the Focus Country.

A distinguished CEO Roundtable marked the inaugural day of World Food India 2023, co-chaired by Union Minister Shri Pashupati Kumar Paras of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Union Minister Shri Piyush Goyal of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Textiles.

This significant gathering brought together CEOs representing over 70 leading companies in the food processing and allied sectors. Key deliberations during the Roundtable encompassed facilitation of business operations, investment strategies,



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sourcing interests, and a comprehensive examination of the event. Shri Pashupati Kumar Paras participated in six G2G meetings. He held discussions with Ministers of Fiji, Mauritius, focusing on global partnerships in the food processing sector. He also engaged in talks with dignitaries from Greece and Lebanon, highlighting the event's commitment to international cooperation. Discussions with the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security from Mauritius and a Member of Parliament from Australia emphasized the event's emphasis on knowledge sharing and international ties.

The three-day event comprised 48 sessions, featuring Thematic, State, Allied Ministries, and Country & Organization sessions. Notably, 16 Thematic Sessions delved into crucial subjects such as Financial Empowerment, Quality Assurance, Innovations in Machinery and Technology, e-Commerce, and Logistics in the food processing sector. Moreover, 12 State-focused panel discussions and 11 specialized sessions by Allied ministries, including DPIIT and FSSAI, addressed pertinent industry challenges. The sessions were graced by Ministers from Gujarat, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh.

The event also hosted knowledge sessions by The Netherlands and Japan, promoting knowledge exchange and best practices. Additionally, successful focused meetings with The Netherlands, the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum, Brazil, and the UAE highlighted growth opportunities in India's food processing sector.

The event concluded with a substantial surge of investment interest, resulting in the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 33,129 crore underscoring the event's significant impact on propelling India's food processing sector. Companies such as Amul, ITC, Mondelez, Kellogg's, AB InBev, IB Group, Balaji Wafers, Ananda Dairy, Fertis, and Bikanerwala were among the signatories. More than 15200 B2B and B2G meetings conducted during the event fostered meaningful dialogues and partnerships, creating an environment conducive to knowledge exchange and industry growth.

Reimagining India's Culinary Legacy A Melting Pot Of Tradition And Innovation

The experiential Food Street at the World Food India 2023 proved to be a delightful attraction, offering an immersive experience of India's rich culinary heritage and diverse regional cuisines. 200 chefs, including prominent names like Chef Sarah Todd and Chef Kunal Kapur, participated and conducted cookery demonstrations. The event also featured ICC23, an international culinary competition, celebrating excellence with categories like pre-millet dishes and live pasta cooking, along with master classes and an awards ceremony.

The Food Street at WFI 2023 that stole



paired with Millet Onion Chutney, gluten-free Portobello Burger with Sweet potato Millet Tikki, Millet Chilla, and more.

The Food Street boasted many attractions, but one of the most popular was the Kitchen of the Kings. This luxurious pavilion, presented by Author Anshu Khanna, featured a menu inspired by the culinary traditions of six royal gharanas: Kangra, Sailana, Khajurgaon, Rampur, Dhenkanal, and Jhalamand. The pavilion's ambience, enhanced with royal paraphernalia, brought back memories of an era long forgotten. Visitors enjoyed a regal dining experience as they interacted with their hosts, who served a tasting menu recreated from recipes passed down through generations.

Shree Anna, or millets, India's ancient superfood, was undoubtedly the showstopper. The climate-resilient grains are making a comeback, and how! With the United Nations



the show was curated by Chef Ranveer Brar and co-curated by Chef Ashish Bhasin, Food Street was a delightful convergence of culture and cuisine, becoming a hot spot for food connoisseurs, celebrity chefs, professionals and students from the hospitality industry. Chef Rakhee Vaswani, the hostess and emcee extraordinaire, was instrumental in setting the tone for the lively vibe at Food Street. Legendary Chef Manjit Gill, Parvinder Bali, Gautam Chaudhry, Kunal Kapur, Harpal Singh Sokhi, Manisha Bhasin, Gunjan Goela, Anahita Dhondy, Pankaj Bhadouria, Sanjay Thakur, Vaibhav Bhargava, Nishant Choubey and Saraansh Goela were among many others present.

The chefs conducted master classes where they whipped up wholesome and delicious dishes using the humblest of ingredients, leaving the audience in awe of the sheer simplicity and innovativeness of each preparation. Some dishes prepared included Millet Avocado Khichdi, Millet Mathri

declaring 2023 as the International Year of the Millets, the so-called 'coarse grains' are going from local to global. FMCG giant ITC created India's first Millet Pop-up restaurant as part of their initiative to promote healthy eating by incorporating millets into mainstream diets. Numerous food stalls celebrated the versatility of millets. From dishes with a modern twist like Jowari chaat and Rajgeera beetroot kababs to new-age fusion foods like Barnyard millet lasagna and Foxtail risotto, there was something for every palate. A millet revolution, it seems, is brewing on the horizon, ready to take over kitchens worldwide!

NASVI, the National Association of Street Vendors of India, paid tribute to the 75 glorious years of an independent India by presenting 75 different street foods from the length and breadth of the country. Fafda-jalebi, Awadhi Kachori chaat, Nagori Halwa, Mahadev Jaleba, Dal pakwan, Indori poha-jalebi and old favourites- vada pav, khandvi, fruit chaat exemplified India's vibrant street food culture.



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Indian Culinary Forum's 20th Annual Chef Awards



The 20th Annual Chef Awards, organized by the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), was recently held at Hotel Ashok in New Delhi. A prominent and oldest association of professional chefs in India, celebrated the exceptional culinary talent. This grand event brought together renowned master chefs and seasoned experts from the hospitality industry. The award recipients were honoured by the evening's chief guest, Ms. Priya Paul, Chairperson of Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels.

The ICF's Annual Chef Awards serve as a tribute to culinary artists and their invaluable contributions to the hospitality sector. These awards serve as a driving force for elevating the recognition of Indian cuisine on the global stage and as an inspiration for chefs to aim for greater excellence.

Chef Davinder Kumar, President of the Indian Culinary Forum, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "Today, we are commemorating 20 years of the Chef Awards in India. These awards have provided a platform to recognize and applaud the incredible chefs in our country. We are genuinely delighted to offer these talented chefs an opportunity to shine and enhance their passion for cooking. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone in the food industry, including the judges and our partners, for supporting us throughout these years. Our mission is to continue inspiring chefs for many more years to come. These awards go beyond mere praise for chefs; they are about nurturing their growth and enhancing Indian cuisine's



worldwide appeal."

The ceremony featured 18 culinary artists and four individuals who received special Presidium awards in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the hospitality industry. The top seven Chef Awards were exclusively for senior chefs through nomination and were selected by the grand jury members. Meanwhile, eleven Master Chef Awards were determined through an intense four-day culinary competition involving over 150 chefs from various regions of India. These competitions were conducted at the Academy of Pastry and Culinary Arts in Gurugram and the Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology in Delhi. A distinguished panel of WACS-certified jury members from all over India evaluated the competitions. Renowned Chef Vijaya Baskaran chaired this year's competitions, with Chef Rajeev Chopra serving as the organizing secretary.

Chef Vivek Saggur, General Secretary of the Indian Culinary Forum, remarked, "Over the past two decades, hosting the Annual Chef

Awards has been an incredible journey. Our aim is to showcase Indian culinary art globally, honour our chefs, and inspire young talents to join us. We hope these awards will continue to inspire chefs across the country. The ICF's mission is to nurture new talent with the latest culinary skills and share Indian cuisine worldwide. Our vision is to ignite careers and spread Indian flavours globally."

Chef Vinod Bhati, the Treasurer of the Indian Culinary Forum, extended his profound gratitude, saying, "We extend our heartfelt thanks to Maggi Professional, our title partner, for their pivotal role in ensuring the success of this magnificent ceremony. We also extend special appreciation to our valued associate partners, including Nutaste, Dabur Homemade/Real, Barry Callebout Chocolates, Rich's, Ebro Food, Cream Bell, Kikkoman, Karamat, as well as all our event partners and supporting associations who collectively played an instrumental role in making this event a resounding success."

11th Edition of Knowledge Summit

On the occasion of the 20th Annual Chef Awards, the 11th Knowledge Summit was also organised by the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF). This summit brought together renowned luminaries and experts from the hospitality industry, to delve into the pressing issue of tackling global hunger through innovative culinary solutions.

With the overarching theme of "Culinary Professionals Tackling Global Hunger," the summit aimed to tackle critical concerns



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such as sustainable food practices, food waste reduction, and the evolving role and compensation of chefs in the culinary business. Ajay K. Bakaya, Managing Director of Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest for this day-long event. The 11th Knowledge Summit also brought together established industry leaders, aspiring young chefs, and students from catering and hotel management institutes.

Chef Davinder Kumar expressed his enthusiasm for this year's summit stating, "The 11th Knowledge Summit has once again provided a platform for culinary professionals to come together and discuss vital global issues. We believe that chefs can play a significant role in addressing global hunger and promoting responsible food consumption. By making informed food choices, sourcing food responsibly, and educating consumers, chefs can help to create a sustainable food system for the future consumers."

Adding his views, Chef Vivek Sagar said, "The Summit marks a significant milestone in our relentless pursuit of combating global hunger through culinary ingenuity. Chefs, as culinary visionaries, bear a profound responsibility to champion sustainable food practices, spearhead the reduction of food waste, and drive transformative changes in our industry. This summit serves as a powerful

platform to unite our culinary community and pave the way for a more responsible and nourishing world, one delicious meal at a time."

The summit featured three engaging panels, each addressing a different facet of the culinary world's responsibilities in combating global hunger. The first session, 'Sustainable Food Consumption: A Recipe for Combating Global Hunger,' was moderated by Dr. Nitin Nagrale, CEO of Quality NZ and Founder of the Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum. Distinguished industry veterans, including Diwan Gautam Anand, A D Singh, Naveen Dhingra, and Jai Kumar Bhasin, served as speakers during this engaging discussion, highlighting the importance of sustainable food practices in addressing global hunger.

The second session, titled 'Zero Waste Kitchens: Reinventing Menus, Procurement, and Guest Education,' was moderated by Ms. Mamta Bist, Senior Faculty at IHM Pusa. This panel explored innovative approaches to reducing food waste in kitchens and the significance of educating guests about responsible consumption. Esteemed experts including Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi, Chef Sanjeeb Ghatak, Chef Vinod Bhati and Jinraj Adyanthaya shared their insights into creating eco-friendly culinary experiences.

The final session, 'Evolving Chefs: An Asset

to the Food Business? Decoding Their Role and Compensation' was moderated by Deepak Behl, former Police Officer and Founder & CEO of Astra Protection Group & Astra Training Academy, included influential figures such as V S Datta, Chef Rajeev Janveja, Chef Gaurav Wadhwa, and Aagman Baur. This panel examined the evolving role of chefs in the food business and their compensation structures. It explored how chefs contribute as valuable assets in shaping the industry's future. The Knowledge Summit was curated by Dr Chef Prem Ram, Joint Secretary Indian Culinary Forum.

The Indian Culinary Forum is India's premier association of professional chefs, established for the advancement of culinary art in India. The Forum's objective is to serve as a link, platform, and instrument for the enhancement and development of the community of chefs. It strives to bring international culinary prestige to India, encourage Indians to consider careers in hospitality, promote Indian cuisines globally, and assist young chefs in honing their culinary skills through training, workshops, and competitions.

The World Association of Cooks Societies (WACS) is a fellowship comprising professional chefs' organizations from 110 nations, representing over 9 million professional chefs worldwide.

The Winners

Title	Name
Life Time Achievement Award	Chef Shaju Zacharia
Golden Hat Awards	Chef Rajiv Malhotra
Silver Hat Awards	Chef Vaibhav Bhargava
Pastry Chef Of The Year (Academic)	Chef Balendra
Lady Chef Of The Year (Academic)	Chef Divya Bose
Anil Bhandari Memorial Chef Of The Year	Arshi Naeem
Master Chef International Cuisine	Chef Shubham Bisht
Master Chef Oriental Cuisine	Chef Karan Thapa
Master Chef North Indian Cuisine	Chef Kundan Singh Negi
Master Chef East/West/South Indian Cuisine	Chef Satyaveer Singh
Master Chef Kabab	Chef Govind Malhotra
Master Chef Indian Sweets	Chef Bablu Santra
Master Chef Baker	Chef Anish Khan
Master Chef Butcher	Chef Amir Qureshi
Master Chef International Confectionery	Heman Aswal
Mast Chef Fruit & Vegetable Carving	Carving Karthick
Student Chef Of The Year (Lady)	Disha Saluja
Student Chef Of The Year (Male)	Harsh Budhiraja
Recognition for Outstanding Contribution in:	
Hospitality Journalism	Mr. P. Krishna Kumar
Food Service Entrepreneurship	Mr. Punit Sikand
Hospitality Skill Competitions	Chef Vivek Sagar
Hospitality & Culinary Arts	Chef Rajiv Chopra



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Chrome Asia Hospitality Launch Gigi, Mumbai

Chrome Asia Hospitality marks an entry into the concept restaurant landscape with its latest launch - Gigi, Mumbai. An expansive two-storey space, spread over 6,000 sq ft. in Bandra, Mumbai has been a passion project in the making for co-founders, Pawan Shahri, Dhaval Udeshi and Nikita Shahri. The group aims to further open 12 outlets by 2025 in this segment.

Focussed on using the freshest local produce, seasonal seafood and exquisite cheeses from around the world, as well as local, homegrown brands from across India, Chrome Asia Hospitality's first concept restaurant aims to deliver a truly immersive experience while combining flavours from Europe and Japan.



Talking about the launch, Pawan Shahri, Nikita Harisinghani & Dhaval Udeshi, Co-founders, Chrome Asia Hospitality, said "We have always aimed to expand our footprint beyond the threshold of conventional dining. We want to deliver more and more unique concepts that excite our customers, and Gigi is our latest attempt at doing just that. The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing landscapes in India, and there is a growing appetite for newer, better concepts. Gigi is a dining experience that cannot be paralleled. Its period cocktail bar with Asian influences, and unique fusion cuisine is a celebration of two of the finest cultures out there. With this we have just begun our journey with concept restaurants and we look forward to unveiling more in the next few months."

Taj Mahal, New Delhi Unveils Captain's Cellar

Taj Mahal, New Delhi announced the launch of its new wine lounge restaurant brand, Captain's Cellar. Debuting Captain's Cellar captures the culinary essence traversing the landscape of vineyards across the globe.

A contemporary wine lounge, inspired by traditional wine cellars, Captain's Cellar takes the diner on a journey through the vivid landscape of flavours, wine rituals and beyond.



The menu is an exploration of global and domestic wines, both old and new world, preserved with leading edge technology such as Enomatic equipment and the Corvin selection. The array of tapas celebrates the culinary traditions of the cherished and long-preserved authentic recipes, presented with a modern twist.

The design boasts of engineered timber flooring, vaulted brick ceilings and cast iron details, thoughtfully paired with a variety of furniture, eclectic art, a patio and an informal seating. The spotlight is on 'the perfect pour' integrating the art and science of wine, small-plates, cheese and meat platters, an exquisite experience in the Tasting Rooms – all of this, and more, in an inviting ambience that feels relaxed, homely and elegant.

Satyajeet Krishnan, Area Director – Operations and General Manager – Taj Mahal, New Delhi said, "Taj Mahal, New Delhi with its rich culinary history for over four decades, has been renowned for pioneering global and regional cuisines and concepts. With the addition of Captain's Cellar, the Hotel strengthens its world-class food and beverage portfolio of the much-loved and celebrated brands. As the first Captain's Cellar launches in the gastronomic capital of the country, it promises to offer an adventure of tastes and textures in a neo-classic atmosphere infused with a relaxed energy and warmth."

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Patang Restaurant Reopens with a New Look

Patang, Ahmedabad's iconic landmark has reopened its doors to the public, offering Amdavadis a chance to savour a spectacular view of the city's skyline while dining. Bollywood star Suniel Shetty officially reopened Patang restaurant on the auspicious occasion of Dussehra. Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi also graced the occasion. Dharmadev Group has unveiled the new-look Patang restaurant as part of the grand celebrations of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", marking the country's 75th year of independence.

Speaking on the occasion, Umang Thakkar, Chairman of Dharmadev Group, said, "Patang is the identity of Ahmedabad and the pride of Gujarat. It has been a witness to the unprecedented growth of Ahmedabad in recent decades. The reopening of Patang stands as a gift to Ahmedabad, symbolising the city's growth and development. As it reopens its doors, Patang promises to set new benchmarks in quality standards as a vegetarian restaurant, offering a unique menu, diverse cuisine, exceptional interiors, and traditional hospitality."

Under the guidance of India's first Masterchef Ajay Chopra, all the cuisines and the menu at Patang will be a treat for food-loving Amdavadis. Beyond the delectable cuisine, Patang has also put in place special arrangements for patrons to enjoy the views of old and new Ahmedabad from a lofty perspective. An audiovisual presentation showcasing the city's rich cultural heritage will also be available for guests.

To ensure that everyone can savour the Patang experience, the restaurant is launching an initiative to collaborate with NGOs, providing free meals to children, the elderly, and those in need, delivering a memorable experience to the community.



NRI Chaiwala Expands in North India

NRI Chaiwala announced the expansion of its footprints in North India with the opening of its new outlets in Jaipur, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Jammu. The company is also coming up with a NRI Tea health concept where the company will soon introduce Health Wali Chai and Wellness Tea. These tea blends are prepared with Indian herbs and spices to help in fighting against health problems like Diabetes, Digestion, Stress, Anti-Aging, Blood Purifier for women etc.

The company has come up with 22 unique flavoured tea like, Tulsi Chai, Regular Chai, Kadak Tea, Rose Tea, Turmeric Tea, Vanilla Tea, Tapri Wali Chai, Tandoori Chai, Ayurvedic Chai, Adrak Elaichi Tea, etc., available in a pack of 250 gm at offline stores and online stores at a very reasonable and affordable price.

Jagdish Kumar Founder, NRI Chaiwala said, "The company has only dream of serving multiple varieties of tea to its customers by reaching their doorsteps. The company puts its customers in a sophisticated chai-drinking experience with the remarkable selection of chai at its outlets. The various options and new varieties of chai promise to bring fresh and unusual flavours to the chai experience."





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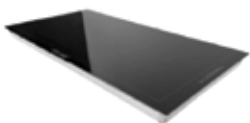


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Enzo Oliveri Kitchen: A Taste of Sicily in Bengaluru

Indismart Hotels has announced the opening of its exclusive Italian Restaurant, Enzo Oliveri Kitchen, in Bengaluru. The restaurant has been curated by the iconic Italian Chef, Chef Enzo Oliveri, renowned over the world as the Sicilian Chef, and served his recipes in his signature style.

Enzo Oliveri Kitchen offers a variety of authentic Italian dishes, such as Fish with Pistachio crust, Lamb Shank and the Chicken Diavola apart from the Italian favourites – mouth-watering, hand-rolled, thin crust Pizzas and perfectly prepared Pastas. The Veg lovers will also find delicious options reflecting the home-made flavours of Italy. The scrumptious Italian desserts like Tiramisu that played a major role in making the cuisine a household name across the world. With chosen ingredients from Italy and herbs handpicked for freshness and flavour, the Enzo Oliveri Kitchen offers a mouthwatering treat to the ever-experimenting foodies of Bengaluru.



Dr. Suborno Bose, the Chairman, Indismart Group, said, "We are very excited to bring Enzo Oliveri Kitchen to Bengaluru, as part of our vision to provide world-class hospitality as we strive to usher a new era of 21st century Hospitality to India. We are honoured to collaborate with Chef Enzo Oliveri, who is a master of Sicilian cuisine and a global ambassador of Italian culture. We hope that our restaurant will be a destination for food lovers who want to experience the true flavours of authentic Italy, right here in Bengaluru."

Chef Enzo Oliveri said, "I am thrilled to partner with Dr Suborno Bose and open my restaurant in Bengaluru, which is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city with a diverse culinary scene. I have always been passionate about sharing my Sicilian heritage and cuisine with the world, and I look forward to introducing it to the people of Bengaluru. I invite everyone to come and join me at Enzo Oliveri Kitchen and enjoy a taste of Italy in India."

Back to Vedic Routes Launched

Back to Vedic Routes, a book focussing on satvik recipes by Chef Sunil Soni & Seema Sethumadhavan was formally released in Delhi. Launching the book, Shyam Jaju, senior BJP leader praised the efforts of the authors and reiterated the importance of satvik recipes for leading a healthy life and having a healthy mind.

The glittering book launch function was attended by senior bureaucrats, politicians, academics, hospitality professionals, nutritionists and doctors.



Speaking on the occasion, Chef Sunil Soni elaborated on some of the recipes listed in the book.

"The book is a collection of Vedic recipes designed to help prepare authentic Indian meals easily at home and help people acquaint with the traditions behind India's vegetarian cuisine," stated Chef Soni.

Coinciding with International Year of Millets, due importance has been given to millets which historically is linked to food in the Indian context which even until 50 years ago was a major grain grown in our country.



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Noida International Airport Partner with Tajsats

TajSATS and Noida International Airport (NIA) have signed a concession agreement for the development of an in-flight kitchen facility. NIA a Greenfield airport at Jewar, will enhance connectivity to and from Delhi NCR, Noida and Western UP.

TajSATS, will develop the In-Flight Kitchen facility on a design, finance, build, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model for a period of 37 years. The mandate will include passenger and crew meal



services, in-flight catering equipment handling, loading and unloading of meals.

Strategically located within the airport, the state-of-the-art kitchen will be spread over 40,000 sq. ft; equipped to serve over 15,000 meals a day in the initial phase. The kitchen will also be equipped to serve the lounge facilities and the food and beverage outlets inside the airport as well in its proximity.

Speaking on the occasion, Manish Gupta, Chief Executive Officer, TajSATS said, "The pace of addition of airports in India, which include marquee developments such as NIA present a tremendous growth opportunity for airline catering. We are delighted that TajSATS has partnered for this prestigious project with NIA. TajSATS with its strong network and market leadership will deliver premium in-flight and lounge catering, leveraging its four decades of experience. This signing strengthens our presence in Delhi NCR as this will be the second facility in the region."

With the addition of this facility TajSATS will have nine production facilities in India.

'The Coconut Boy' Now in Mumbai

The classic Goan restaurant 'The Coconut Boy' is now coming to Bandra in Mumbai. It offers a unique experience with its authentic Goan food, classic tropical cocktails, and live music. At the heart of Coconut Boy is the trio, Hitesh Keswani, one behind dining establishments like Silver Beach Cafe, Opa, Akina and Estella in Mumbai; culinary virtuoso Chef Rohan D'Souza, known for igniting Goa's flavours with his inventive concept, Pisco by the beach and others like Lazy Goose, Toro Toro and Blue Turtle in Goa and Praveena D'souza fueled by an unwavering commitment to preserving and sharing Goa's rich culinary and cultural traditions.

Chef Rohan D'Souza, drawing from his deep Goan heritage and culinary expertise, has curated an exquisite menu at 'The Coconut Boy'. This menu showcases the very essence of traditional Goan cuisine, from grilled squid stuffed with crab to Chicken Cutlets with Kokum Relish and fresh coconut-infused Clams. Vegetarian delights like Local Vegetable Vindaloo and Mushroom & Vegetables Slow Cooked Xacuti Masala are also part of this rich tapestry.



Signature cocktails, such as Coconut Caipirinha and Pina Coladas, transport diners to sunny Goan beaches. With locally sourced ingredients like kokum and tender coconut, Chef Rohan's menu not only brings the best of Goan flavors but also captures the carefree spirit of Goan holidays, right in the heart of Mumbai.

But 'The Coconut Boy' is not just about the food; it's about the whole Goan experience. The vibrant ambiance reflects the lively spirit of Goa, with colorful murals, rustic decor, and tropical vibes that transport you to a coastal paradise. Live music performances on the weekends add a lively touch to the dining experience, creating a perfect blend of soulful melodies and delicious flavours.

"We're thrilled to bring the true flavours of Goa to Bandra West," says the team behind 'The Coconut Boy'. "Our aim is to transport our guests to the lively streets and beautiful beaches of Goa through the food we serve, the cocktails we create, and the atmosphere we curate. We want 'The Coconut Boy' to be the go-to destination for those seeking an authentic Goan experience right here in Mumbai."

Cheesiano Group Launches Third Saucy Subs



Cheesiano Group, having QSR brands - Cheesiano Pizza and Burgerino, all over Pune and Hyderabad, announces the launch of the 3rd brand - Saucy Subs, a brand serving delicious, fresh homegrown

subs with Indianized sauces in Pune and soon launching in Hyderabad. This exciting addition to Cheesiano promises to take the taste buds on a new, fresh tantalizing journey through a world of flavors; all nestled between freshly baked sub rolls in the Indian flavors.

Saucy Subs, the brainchild of Cheesiano's team of expert chefs hopes to revolutionize the way you think about sandwiches- Quick bites, Indian flavours and sauces. They identified the need for delicious, Indian and saucy subs in the current market. Crafted with the utmost care and precision, each Saucy Sub is a mouthwatering fusion of premium ingredients and secret sauces that will leave you craving for more.

"At Cheesiano, we have always been committed to delivering exceptional taste experiences to our customers," said Co-Founder, Niraj Bora, of Cheesiano. "Saucy Subs is a testament to our dedication to innovation and culinary excellence. We've poured our hearts and souls into creating these delectable subs, and we can't wait for our customers to savor the extraordinary flavors they offer. Our speciality lies in the sauces that would change the experience of the said subs".

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FSSAI Accredits GITAM Campuses

The Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam campuses of GITAM (Deemed to be University) have been awarded by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for its highest dining standards for students and faculty. The apex food safety body has bestowed the coveted '5 Star Hygiene Rating'



upon GIMSR CAFE located in Visakhapatnam, while the both campuses have received the esteemed 'Eat Right Certificate,' as a testament to their commitment to providing safe, healthy, and sustainable food options.

GIMSR CAFE at GITAM Visakhapatnam campus recognition underscores the café's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of food safety and hygiene standards. Both the Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam campuses have received the prestigious 'Eat Right Certificate' from the FSSAI. This certification is a testimony to GITAM's commitment to providing safe, pleasant and sustainable meals to students and teachers. It underscores the University's commitment to fostering a culture of balanced nutrition and sustainable meals practices in the education sector.

The 'Eat Right Campus' initiative, spearheaded by the FSSAI, is a nationwide campaign aimed at promoting safe, nutritious, and sustainable food practices in diverse campus environments. This initiative aligns perfectly with the broader vision of improving public health, promoting environmental sustainability, and driving social and economic growth nationwide.

According to Hemant Bagga, Director of Hospitality at GITAM (Deemed to be University), "These accolades reflect our unflinching commitment to provide an exceptional dining experience that prioritizes food safety, health, and sustainability. We are dedicated to enhancing the well-being of our students and faculty members through our dining facilities."

Farzi Café is Back as Farzi

Farzi at Oberoi Mall Mumbai announced its reopening after an extensive facelift. Farzi Mumbai which offers an incredible range of beverages at incredible value is an ultimate destination of great food and great drinks at very low and very good prices.



Taking patrons on a nostalgic journey through the colonial era of Bombay, the newly revamped Farzi Mumbai boasts an ambiance that seamlessly blends the retro charm of yesteryears with modern elements. From captivating vintage portraits to contemporary features like a dedicated selfie booth for enthusiasts,

Farzi offers a unique and immersive environment. The venue has been meticulously designed to capture attention with ornate pillars, vintage windows, antique light fixtures, and captivating props and backdrops that pay homage to classic times reminiscent of old movies. While Farzi may exude vintage Bollywood charm, its ambiance is far from old-school.

Beauty, Best Ingredients & Japan

Reigning Miss World Japan Kana Yamaguchi is visiting India 3-8 November to collaborate with Japanese Cuisine Goodwill Ambassador Harry Hakuei Kosato to promote Japanese cuisine and Japanese ingredients for the first time. Kana Yamaguchi was crowned Miss World Japan in September 2022, and will represent Japan at the Miss World global pageant scheduled in India in 2024.

Harry Hakuei Kosato has been working in India for the last 16 years, and was appointed India's first Japanese Cuisine Goodwill Ambassador in December at a ceremony at the Consulate General of Japan, Mumbai. Harry Hakuei Kosato has been long associated with the Miss World Japan pageant, serving as judge, and collaborating with Miss World Japan 2015 Chika Nakagawa for her appearance at India's first and largest Japan event "Cool Japan Festival" in Mumbai, India.

On this occasion, Kana Yamaguchi san will participate in specially curated invite-only events in Chennai, New Delhi, Bangalore, and Mumbai. This event will be held at official residence of Consul General TAGA Masayuki, Chennai, inviting Influential intellectuals, Business leaders and representatives of selected hotels and restaurants.

The theme "Beauty x Best Ingredients x Japan>India" for the series of events across India will showcase Japanese beauty and authentic Japanese cuisine and ingredients such as Kikkoman Soy Sauce, Kikkoman Oyster Flavoured Sauce, Ishimaru Sanuki Udon and Ishimaru Sanuki Ramen.

Other events will be run at select 5-star hotels and Japanese restaurants, as well as the official residences of senior diplomatic corps in India in other cities, in collaboration with Sushi and More, India's first affordable multi-city Japanese sushi business.

Commented Consul General TAGA Masayuki of the Consulate General of Japan, Chennai "I hope through the event, Japanese cuisine and ingredients will be further promoted among the people here and by that, the people's understanding about Japanese food and culture will be further deepened."

Commented Kana Yamaguchi "I am truly honored to be able to be part of such wonderful adventure of various events in my first visit to India. I would like to take this opportunity to let all of you know in India about the various charms of Japanese food and quality Japanese ingredients. And I look forward to enjoy my time with you all!"

Commented Harry Hakuei Kosato "I am honoured to be working with Consul General of Japan Taga san again, who used to be the Consul General of Japan in Kolkata. We are confident that we will bring further more delicious experiences with authentic pure and natural ingredients from Japan, and excited about this collaboration with my dear friend Miss World Japan Kana Yamaguchi."

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Putting its noble principles into actions for its customers and the planet on whole, T&S also keeps partnering with local centers for specially abled and underprivileged children and conducts several community service events across the globe.

Here in India, in lieu of making lives better, T&S Brass celebrated festivity with Blind Persons Association and Rashtriya Blind School and Training Centre and sincerely endeavoured to lit smiles on the faces of specially challenged children. Children relished the feast and rejoiced the moments of fun and happiness with T&S officials. It was very heart warming to witness and experience the excitement and enthusiasm of the students at both the associations for Blind Children and persons for all the attendees.



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Today, more than 300 employees manufacture products and serve customers from the company's main headquarters in South Carolina – with many more working behind the scenes at distribution facilities in California and China. In the last two decades, T&S has significantly increased its overseas presence, with representatives now selling products in Europe, Australia, the Middle East, Canada, Japan, southeast Asia and South America.

Dr. Mudit Sharma Awarded

Dr. Mudit Sharma, a seasoned hotelier for over 3 decades is a qualified professional from Institute of Hotel Management; Pusa has been awarded Honorary Doctorate



in "Supply Chain Management & Procurement" from Iconic Peace Award Council. His record reflects strong work ethics and a dedicated leader with comprehensive Management experience, which demonstrates his ability to train & manage and motivate team members to achieve organizational objectives.



He has been associated with Taj SATS (IHCL), pre-opened flagship properties of Lemon Tree Premier, Dusit D2 (now Roseate House), Projects OSNE at SHMS Cluster (Shanti Hospitality Management Services), Haveli Group Cluster and The Lalit New Delhi. His qualification includes MBA (Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration) from Symbiosis Distance Learning, 8 weeks online certification on Total Quality Management-I, By NPTEL through IIT Kanpur, 12 weeks online certification on Principles of Management by NPTEL through IIT Roorkee. He has completed "Food Safety Supervisor certificate in Advanced Catering & Covid" from RIR Certification on 15th March 2023 and 2 days "Internal Auditor training program" in ISO 22000:2018.

His achievements include Long Service Awards of 10 years and 15 years by then Chairman, Raymond Bickson and Managing Director and M.S. Kapadia of Taj Group of Hotels (IHCL); was selected and sent to Singapore for a week's exposure training by TajSATS "In-flight catering services at SICC-2", to study International Standards & Work Practices and introduce "Better work practices" in Delhi Unit.

His endeavour is to go an extra mile in aspects like accountability, responsiveness, attention to detailing, and meeting bottom line results, yet remain flexible. Creative attitude goes behind all the sweat. A strong believer of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for everyone and believes in his "Network" is his "Net-worth".



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Sector 144, the Vibrant Pub

Sector 144 reinvents the pub concept, offering a warm haven where individuals can come together, relax, and forge enduring memories. Situated in Electronic City, Sector 144 is tailored to the needs of both working professionals and the youthful demographic in the vicinity, making it a perfect retreat after a long day at the office. Here, patrons can indulge in an alluring assortment of Bangalore's premium draft beers, global culinary delights, and live musical entertainment.



The menu showcases a premium array of tap beers. Additionally, the global culinary selection offers dishes such as Sector Special Chicken, Peanut Chicken Kebab, Veg Golcane, Prawn Cheese Cake, and Chicken Ghee Roast. The cocktail menu is equally impressive, featuring a variety of options including Gin, Whiskey, Vodka, and imaginative concoctions like Duronto, Two Dollar Bill, Habibi and his Dirham's, Dong-Light, and Junglee Rummy.

Taking inspiration from the enchanting forest, Sector 144 infuses its design with a palette of rich reds and greens. Upon arrival, visitors step into a central double-height space accentuated by warm wooden elements, seamlessly melding a sense of comfort with sophistication. At the heart of it all, a striking double-height bar commands attention, adorned with mirrors that craft an enthralling centerpiece.

The pub proudly showcases bespoke artwork honoring music legends, presented with grace alongside bold fluted paneling. The addition of stained glass windows contributes to its allure and refinement, while intricately designed tiles form captivating floor patterns that enrich the artistic atmosphere. Outdoors, the seating area boasts a retractable roof, rustic brick walls, and custom furnishings and lighting, fashioning a comfortable and stylish retreat for patrons.

Premium European Canned Tomatoes

"Red Gold Tomatoes from Europe" are back in India. Whether peeled whole, chopped, or cherry tomatoes, Europe's excellent canned tomatoes are a culinary treasure, delicious for classic Italian dishes such as pizza, pasta, and sauces, as well as vibrant Indian dishes.

The campaign - managed by OI Pomodoro da Industria Centro Sud - Italia - an Association that unites tomato growers and the tomato canning industry - and co-funded by the European Commission - promotes the export of Europe's excellent canned tomatoes, raising awareness of their high-quality and versatility. Visit them at booth no. D10 in Hall 1B at SIAL, The International Trade show, from December 7-9, 2023 at IICC (Yashobhoomi) Dwarka, New Delhi to find out more about these premium canned tomatoes. and visit the dedicated demo area of the show to taste

some of the special dishes using Red Gold tomatoes from Europe prepared by our chefs. The Red Gold Tomatoes from Europe campaign will be back in Delhi in March 2024



From left to right: Eliana Zappala, Alessandro Liberatori, Devna Khanna, Francesco Varriale, Annalisa Zezza, Leonilde Callocchi

at AAHAR, the International Food and Hospitality Fair.

"We see a great opportunity to increase the export of canned tomatoes from Italy into India, specifically whole peeled tomatoes, chopped tomatoes and cherry tomatoes. More than ever before, home cooks



From left to right: Atul Khanna, Chef Manjit Gill, Chef Parvinder Singh Bali, Devna Khanna, Gurpreet Singh, Tikku Singh

and chefs are demanding premium ingredients that are healthy, nutritious and safe," says the President of OI Pomodoro da Industria Centro Sud - Italia, Guglielmo Vaccaro.

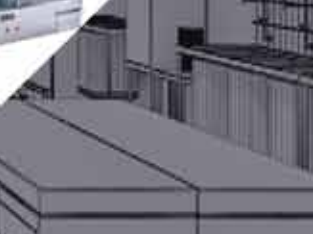
"The figures for the import into India of whole and chopped canned tomatoes at the end of 2022 are extremely encouraging as they amounted to €3.4 million compared with €1.3 million at the end of 2021. Italy has been by far the major contributor to this positive trend, seeing growth from 1.3 to 3.2 million euros, and is the largest exporter of tinned whole and chopped tomatoes overall. A total of 2,978 tonnes of canned whole and chopped tomatoes were exported from Italy to India. Imports from Italy for the first 5 months of 2023 amounted to approximately €1.4 million, up from €1.3 million in the first 5 months of 2022."

The campaign, called "Red Gold Tomatoes from Europe", aims to raise awareness of European canned tomatoes, preserved using a mix of traditional wisdom and up-to-date technology to the highest quality and safety standards. The superior quality and flavour of canned tomatoes from Europe, and especially from Italy, is perfect for food professionals and chefs, home cooks, and influencers alike.

The tomatoes are picked at their peak of ripeness, full of Mediterranean sunshine, and utterly delicious. But their goodness is not just in their flavour: they also offer an abundance of vitamins A and C, and minerals, including potassium, calcium, phosphorus, and fibre, as well as being low in calories. Interestingly, while many foods are at their best eaten raw and fresh, tomatoes - rich in lycopene, a protective antioxidant - provide a higher level of lycopene when canned than when raw.



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Indian Cold Chain Growth



India's cold chain market is segmented into cold chain storage and cold chain logistics. As of 2022, the cold chain logistics segment accounted for 55.42% of the total market share. By the end of 2027, the cold chain logistics segment is expected to hold a share of around 55.51% of the overall market. The wastage levels in perishables in India are significantly high- 4.6- 15.9% in fruits, 5.2% in inland fish, 10.5% in marine fish, 2.7% in meat and 6.7% in poultry. Adequate and efficient cold chain infrastructure from farm gate to consumers is required to arrest the high losses in supply chain of perishables.

Many global cooling and logistics companies are stepping up their operations in the cold chain sector in India eyeing the huge potential in a large-sized agriculture driven country, which also happens to be the world's second-largest producer of grains, vegetables, and fruits. The country's vast production base, which includes meat, seafood, exotic fruit, and vegetable varieties has a sizable agro-export market as well, with India exporting fruits and vegetables worth INR 160 Bn.

REFCOLD India, 2023, South Asia's leading exhibition and conference dedicated to refrigeration and cold-chain technologies, commenced at the Chennai Trade Centre. The three-day expo will host over 200 exhibitors, along with more than 10,000 visitors and innovators from retail, pharma, seafood, milk and dairy products, fruits & vegetables, frozen foods, food service, processing, production, distribution, logistics, and transportation Industries.

Organised in collaboration between the Indian Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ISHRAE) and

Informa Markets, REFCOLD India 2023 is set to redefine the industry landscape. This well-reputed event represents a significant step forward in the refrigeration and cold-chain sector, unveiling a vast potential cold-chain market of around INR 4.3 trillion by 2027.

The event's grand inauguration was spearheaded by a rich array of dignitaries including Guest of Honour - Dr. R Velraj, Vice Chancellor, Anna University; Raja M Sriraam, Chairman, REFCOLD Chennai, ISHRAE; Mr. Yogesh Thakkar, National President, ISHRAE, Anoop Ballaney, National President Elect, ISHRAE and Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India.

Sharing his ideas on the way to sustainable refrigeration and cold chain solutions, Dr. R Velraj, Vice Chancellor, Anna University, said "Technology empowers us and represents the contribution of the engineer. 15% of agricultural production is wasted, while over 10% of marine products lose value owing to inadequate preservation. Sustainability in economic progress depends on inclusivity. The potential for yearly growth in the refrigeration and cold chain sector is 19%. Integration of cool energy storage with solar energy can reduce expenses.

Multidisciplinary methods should be embraced by entrepreneurs. Agriculture, medicine, marine preservation, logistics, energy efficiency, and tiny refrigerated trucks are all integrated into sustainability. We can outperform the anticipated 18.4% increase if we take the appropriate approach. Events like REFCOLD India serve as a platform to showcase these cutting-edge facilities, playing a pivotal role in moulding the future of the refrigeration and cold chain industry."

The cold supply chain has been one of the most emerging HVAC sectors in India. Lot of opportunities are being observed in the cold chain industry in India as large production and distribution of perishable food products are happening across the country. Increasing urbanization and growth of organized retail, food servicing and food processing sector are responsible to enhance the growth of the cold storage chain industry in India. Also, the Government of India has taken several policy level and schematic steps to increase investment in this sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Yogesh Thakkar, National President of ISHRAE said, "The adoption of integrated cold chain solutions has the potential to significantly revolutionize the traditional perishables sector, bringing about substantial changes in the market landscape and overall growth. This is especially important in a country where agriculture employs 60% of the population. To harness the potential of integrated cold chain solutions, there is a need to optimise logistics, enhance value addition facilities, adopt green refrigeration practices, and adopt energy-efficient cooling systems and natural refrigerants ultimately improving efficiency across the supply chain.

Similarly, the Indian organized food industry is a vast arena with significant potential. This underscores the substantial room for growth in the food delivery sector, which, when integrated with advanced refrigeration and cold chain solutions, can further enhance food quality, safety, and delivery efficiency. Indian cold chain market is expected to reach INR 4.3 trillion by 2027 with a CAGR of 14.27% from 2023 to 2028."

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Kakapo's Gastronomy Voyage



Kakapo, the renowned culinary gem nestled in the heart of New Delhi's iconic Ambawatta complex, on its spree to delight food enthusiasts and globe-trotting gourmands with an exciting announcement, is set to transcend boundaries with a delectable journey across nations with the launch of its skillfully crafted global cuisine menu with natural and widespread palette of ingredients and techniques.

Drawing inspiration from the diverse and tantalising flavours of dishes from around the world, the new menu promises to be a celebration of flavourful excellence, a testament to the rich tapestry of global gastronomy and a symphony of tastes. The menu transports the food enthusiasts to the far-flung corners of the world and awakens a sense of wanderlust with dishes such as the Peruvian Chicken Skewers- an amalgamation of flavour notes inherited from the fresh herbs of Peru & local spices such as cumin and chillies, Burrata Chaat- a one of its kind haute experimental offering from Chandni Chowk to Rome, melding the regional old delhi chaat with the Italian dairy farms, Pecking Duck- a traditional Chinese curation originating from Beijing and many more umami choices with vegan and gluten-free options available too.

The menu boasts innovative elements in all its courses, leaving the gobblers on a high note, spoilt for choices in the dessert

course too. The restaurant offers startling options such as their signature Kakapo's Nest, with complete resemblance to the rare nocturnal bird Kakapo, the egg shaped dessert is a delight for sensory and spatial exploration with diverse flavours of banana, passion fruit, yoghurt mousse, soft boiled egg paired with kataifi pastry and chiffon sponge, Traditional Basque Cheesecake, Brownie, rose scented Ghevar with rabri and more.

"With an aim and passion to offer the patrons an exclusive and holistic experience, "Kakapo's new menu is nothing short of a gastronome and a traveller's dream combined. With travelling at heart, we make sure to bring back comestible wonders from our journey across the globe with the traditional elements and techniques passed on by local chefs of different regions." said Udit Bagga, Managing Director, Kakapo.

Further elevating the dining experience, the cocktails sway the guests with a dramatic affair with spirited flaming and juggling techniques alongside the smokey presentations by the table. The most singular characteristic to stand out is the technique of infusion. Beyond infusing flavours into dishes and concoctions, the adept team at Kakapo proffers infused spirits and liquor with notes of chamomile, lemongrass, hibiscus, berries and many more natural ingredients and flowers.

All of this magic is created in Kakapo's pristine kitchen with thoughtfully put together equipment and machinery imported from around the world such as the Jospier Grill, a charcoal oven, an ideal equipment for the perfect grilled taste while maintaining the juiciness and texture of different exotic meats, a Wood Fire Station for authentic pizzas and a Blast Freezer with temperature up to a whopping minus 80 degrees. Utilising such precise and comprehensive methods, the team warmly welcomes you to partake in a well-rounded dining experience amidst the enchanting decor and tranquil atmosphere.

Guests are welcomed by the 20 feet high glowing symbolic bird Kakapo, starting the visual journey right at the entrance onto the leaf-less metallic tree indoors spanning widely across 40 feet. The beautiful interiors at Kakapo are meticulously designed by architect and interior designer Aatika Manzar. The ambiance attracts visitors for a romantic date night with candles lit all around the restaurant, making it the optimal setting for romantic rendezvous. Featuring an alluring al fresco dining area, Kakapo offers breathtaking views of the enchanting Ghitorni forest on the west, creating an ideal setting to savour exquisite bites and sip on meticulously crafted beverages and host an unforgettable sundown gathering.

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Theme eateries, type of restaurants which use a theme to attract diners by creating a memorable experience, are becoming popular not only with the youngsters but with diners of all ages, who are looking for something unusual and distinctive. Some place which would not only satiate their taste buds but also be enticing to their eyes. Theme restaurants have a unifying or dominant concept and utilize not only décor and special effects but also other techniques to create exotic environments that are not connected with dining. Sometimes these special effects are supernatural or even taboo. **Ashok Malkani** looks at the history of these extraordinary, eccentric and, at times, weird places. He also tries to gauge their popularity, the intricacies involved in selecting a theme and the future of these remarkable places.

Today, diners are not merely visiting F&B outlets for delectable cuisine but they are also keen to experience new ambience, new surroundings. Thus, the restaurant owners, today, need to serve up an experience to go with delectable meals, because customers, specially millenials, demand memorable moments with their food. And the restaurateurs are eager to provide them with a never-to-forget experience by presenting them with novel surroundings in the form of theme F&B outlets. Yes, theme restaurants are now growing in popularity. These restaurants with eye-catching fun concepts, providing diners with options not seen before, are awakening people's interest. These restaurants not only capture attention of customers through decoration, use of table linen and cutlery appropriate for the theme they are portraying but even the clothing of the staff blends with the theme portrayed by the outlet.

So what exactly is a theme restaurant and are they proving popular?

Twinkle Keswani, co-founder of The Backwaters, Kochi (an experiential waterside restaurant that also organises a series of recreational activities) and Pisco by the Beach, Goa (designed like a resort villa), explaining the concept of theme restaurants states, "A themed restaurant is an establishment where the decor, ambience, and often the menu are designed around a specific concept. This concept can range from a particular cuisine,



geographical location or even a fictional world. The goal is to offer diners a unique dining experience that goes beyond just F&B."

She continues, "These eateries are experiencing a surge in popularity in India. This growth can be attributed to several factors, including the desire for novel and memorable dining experiences. Themes allow restaurants to stand out in a competitive market and attract a diverse clientele. Customers seek not only great food but also an atmosphere that transports them to a different world or time. Themed restaurants are reshaping the dining landscape by offering diners an escape from the ordinary. They provide an opportunity for storytelling through food and decor, creating a more immersive

and engaging dining experience. This, in turn, encourages innovation and creativity in both cuisine and design across the industry."

Sadgun Patha, Managing Director & Founder, Platform 65 (Train Theme Restaurant in Hyderabad) says, "Themed restaurants are innovative dining establishments which go beyond simply offering delicious food. At this restaurant the entire dining experience is designed around a specific theme or concept. In our case, Platform 65 revolves around the world of trains. From the decor to the menu, everything is inspired by the charm and nostalgia of toy trains. Our goal is to transport our guests to a whimsical and unique environment that enhances their overall dining experience. It's all about creating a memorable and immersive atmosphere that complements the food and makes dining with us an adventure in itself."

Speaking about the popularity of these restaurants he declares, "Themed eateries are experiencing a surge in popularity across India. This trend can be attributed to several factors that collectively contribute to the appeal of these unique dining establishments. Firstly, themed restaurants offer a departure from the ordinary dining experience by immersing guests in a world of creativity and imagination. We aim to introduce an element of excitement and novelty, making each visit memorable and distinctive. Moreover, in the age of social media, themed restaurants are highly Instagrammable, with their creative decor and visually captivating dishes, attracting a younger, tech-savvy crowd keen on sharing





Debaditya Chaudhury



Ranbir Nagpal



Prasuk Jain

their experiences online.”

He continues, “The themes often tap into nostalgia, like our toy train-themed establishment, creating a powerful emotional connection for patrons. This nostalgic element allows diners to reminisce and feel a sense of attachment to the restaurant, enhancing the overall experience. Furthermore, themed eateries are typically family-friendly, making them an attractive choice for gatherings with children. The thematic setting and activities for kids provide a stress-free dining experience for parents. Additionally, themed restaurants are effective in telling a compelling story, offering more than just a meal – they provide an immersive narrative that engages guests on a deeper level. From vintage settings to cinematic adventures, these restaurants take patrons on a journey that extends beyond their plates. Lastly, from a business perspective, a unique theme can serve as a powerful branding tool, setting the restaurant apart from competitors and creating a strong identity in the market, all of which cater to the Indian market.”

Prasuk Jain, Founder, Koa, the Bohemian themed restaurant at Juhu, Mumbai, reveals, “To me, Koa embodies a themed restaurant as an enchanting journey, where every detail, from the lively decor to the tantalizing menu, weaves together a captivating story, inviting our guests to immerse themselves in a world of culinary wonder and vibrant experiences.”

He asserts, “Themed eateries, like Koa, are becoming a beloved choice in India because they offer not just a meal, but a chance to step into a different realm, to be a part of a narrative that speaks to their senses and sparks their imagination.”

Debaditya Chaudhury, Managing Director, Chowman Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. (Chowman Chinese restaurant, Kolkata) avers. “A themed restaurant is mainly a concept that dominates a restaurant space, an aspect that is created for various purposes. One particularly important factor is to attract the customer to a space that is unlike others. From the interiors to the decoration, the ambiance of all the different arrangements, menu and the names of the dishes collectively creates the environment of a themed restaurant.”

He adds, “These eateries are growing

popular in India because of the numerous factors involved in creating them. Since it caters to the exact preferences of the customer and provides them with a space according to the mood of the occasion, it makes it easier for them to select a place according to their celebration. A lot of efforts are put in place to create themed eateries, and immense research is undertaken to find out one aspect that will pull the customers to their space. Ambiance is an especially important factor when it comes to choosing a place to visit hence here the theme goes into play.”

Sunaina Errabelli, Director at Halo-Cocktail Bar And Kitchen, Hyderabad, disclosed, “A themed restaurant, like “Halo Cocktail Bar and Kitchen,” is an establishment where the entire dining experience is built around a specific, well-defined concept or theme. In this case, the theme is inspired by the property’s abundant palm trees, shaping everything from décor to the menu.”

She affirms, “Themed eateries have been gaining popularity in India due to their ability to offer a unique and immersive dining experience. Customers are increasingly looking for more than just a meal; they desire an unforgettable experience, making themed restaurants a popular choice.”

Ranbir Nagpal, Founder of Yazu, house of Artisanal Pan-Asian Food at Lower Parel, Mumbai, asserts, “To us, Yazu is more than just a restaurant; it’s an exploration of the essence of Asia, where every dish tells a story and every flavour speaks of the rich, varied tapestry of the continent’s culinary heritage.”

He claims “Themed eateries like Yazu are gaining popularity in India as they offer an immersive experience of Asian culture. At Yazu, we strive to bring alive the essence of Asia through our carefully curated dishes that delicately balance tradition and modernity, creating a culinary journey that resonates with our guests.”

Choosing a Theme

Starting a theme eatery may be a great idea but one has to choose an appropriate theme that would appeal to the diners. So how can one choose the right theme?

Sunaina says, “Choosing a restaurant theme like the one at Halo involves a

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Twinkle Keswani



Sadgun Patha



Sunaina Errabelli

combination of factors. It should reflect the location, target audience, personal interests of the owners, and current market trends, all while aiming to create a distinctive and engaging atmosphere.'

Sadgun elaborates "Selecting a restaurant theme is a meticulous process that begins with rigorous research of the industry. In our case, that is Platform 65, it was a process that combined industry knowledge with a genuine passion for trains. This deep-rooted fascination served as the foundation for our theme, but it was vital to ensure that it aligned with market demands. Extensive market research followed, including surveys, competitor analysis, and consultations with experts in the restaurant industry. This research helped us gain a profound understanding of our target audience and what themes would most resonate with potential customers.

A successful theme should also reflect a personal connection and align with the founder's values. Uniqueness is another critical factor in theme selection. To stand out in a competitive restaurant market, we chose a theme that hadn't been extensively explored in our region. Uniqueness can spark the curiosity and interest of potential patrons. Practical feasibility is equally crucial; the chosen theme must be effectively integrated into the restaurant's decor, menu, and overall dining experience, all while remaining financially viable."

Ranbir disclosed, "At Yazu, we choose a restaurant theme by delving into the heart of Asian culture, selecting recipes that honour the rich traditions while embracing modern influences. We aim to create an experience where every dish not only delights the palate but also serves as a cultural exploration for our patrons."

Twinkle too is of the opinion that your target audience, location and personal interests have to be taken into consideration while selecting a theme. She states, "The theme should resonate with your intended customers and create a cohesive dining experience. At The Backwaters in Kochi the theme not only encompasses the dining experience but also offers unique activities like kayaking, rice boat dining, and a garden space. This theme was carefully crafted to immerse diners in the local culture and natural beauty of the region, providing

a holistic experience that goes beyond traditional dining."

Debaditya declares, "A theme for a restaurant can be selected on various grounds depending on what one has pre-planned, the theme that has not been explored in the market or something that is trending. My selection was made on my travel journey to China. There I explored what makes me feel at home. I wanted my customers to have the same experience of traditional China and authentic Chinese cuisine while sitting back in Kolkata hence I decided to keep my restaurant theme more inclined towards traditional rustic Chinese."

Prasuk disclosed, "At Koa, we chose the restaurant theme by delving into the desires and dreams of our cherished patrons. We carefully curated themes that resonated with their aspirations, ensuring that each visit to Koa is a magical escape, leaving an indelible mark on their hearts."

Aim and Benefits

Theme restaurants not only aim to create delectable meals but also try to create exotic experiences which are largely inaccessible to the public. From the very beginning, theme eateries have tried offering unique experiences for the diners. At times the themes are scary or taboo. Some restaurants in Paris, New York and San Francisco have tried attracted bohemian artists and writers with themes like assassination, imprisonment, death and hell. There are several benefits in starting a theme restaurant. The main one is: attracting and maintaining target audience.

Debaditya says, "A themed restaurant aims to give its diners a unique and leisurely experience beyond the regular mundane setting. In the fast-moving world that we are in today something that is given more preference, than eating, is making memories! Customers are interested in feeding their cameras hence we aim to cater to the customers according to their preferences."

He continues, "There are some great rewards of owning a themed-based restaurant, the prime benefit is using it as an overarching motif to draw diners and create a memorable experience. A themed restaurant gives extended brand awareness since it makes you stand out among your competitors. Its unique ambiance and



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leisure atmosphere creates a base amongst the people and helps attract greater audience through word of mouth. This would not happen in a regular restaurant! You get a broader appeal to pull customers beyond food. The aim of theme restaurant is to give diners an unforgettable culinary experience."

Sadgun too is of the view that the aim of theme restaurants is to attract customers. He avers, "Platform 65, is India's largest train restaurant. What sets us apart is its innovative use of a mini toy train to serve food directly from the kitchen to diners' tables, creating an immersive and delightful experience that's unmatched in the world of themed dining.

Moreover, our restaurants offer a multi-cuisine menu encompassing Chinese, North Indian, Andhra, and Telangana cuisines, catering to a wide range of culinary preferences, unlike many themed restaurants that focus solely on one cuisine. The authentic train-themed decor, including chair-car seats and locomotive wall designs, along with tables labeled with station names like Ahmedabad, Trivandrum, and Kanpur, adds an extra layer of immersion and uniqueness to the experience."

Speaking about benefits of a themed eatery, he states, "One of the most significant benefits is the establishment of a unique brand identity. Themed restaurants create strong and distinctive branding, setting them apart from competitors and leaving a lasting impression on customers. This distinctiveness translates into increased customer engagement. Another advantage is the diverse customer base that themed restaurants typically attract. Their broad appeal spans families with children, groups of friends, couples, and tourists.



Furthermore, themed restaurants benefit from the online buzz generated by their highly shareable experiences. Customers eagerly post photos and videos on social media, expanding the restaurant's reach and acting as a form of free marketing. Also, successful themed restaurants may consider franchising their concept, which can further expand their brand and revenue."

Ranbir reveals, "The aim of Yazu as a theme restaurant is to transport our guests to the heart of Asia, allowing them to experience the magic of authentic ingredients and culinary traditions in a modern and inviting setting. Every dish at Yazu reflects our commitment to delivering an unparalleled Asian gastronomic experience. As the owners of Yazu, we find the joy of owning a themed restaurant lies in bringing the rich, varied flavours of Asia to our guests' tables. It's about creating an experience that not only satisfies the taste buds but also allows our patrons to immerse themselves in the rich cultural heritage of the continent, one dish at a time."

Prasuk declares, "The aim of Koa, as a theme restaurant, is to create a relaxing

place where our guests can escape the ordinary and step into a world of culinary wonders and enchanting experiences. Every element at Koa is meticulously designed to exude an alfresco vibe contributing to an extraordinary journey, leaving our guests spellbound and eager for more.

As the owner of Koa, I see the beauty of owning a themed restaurant lies in crafting unforgettable experiences for our guests. It's about fostering a deep connection and loyalty, allowing Koa to craft narratives that resonate with our patrons, creating memories that linger long after the meal is over."

Twinkle asserts, "The primary aim of a themed restaurant is to transport diners to a different world or time and creating a lasting memory. It seeks to offer not just a meal but an immersive experience that resonates with the chosen theme. The benefit of such a restaurant is that it allows you to create a unique brand identity, stand out in a competitive market and thereby build a loyal customer base."

Sunaina disclosed, "The primary aim of a theme restaurant, such as Halo is to transport customers into a different world or experience. The theme should enhance and complement the dining experience, making it more memorable and enjoyable. Owning a themed restaurant like Halo offers several advantages. These include the ability to attract a niche customer base, generate word-of-mouth marketing through uniqueness, and potentially command higher prices due to the exceptional experience provided."

History

The concept of theme restaurants is not something of recent origin. It started sometime in the nineteenth century in Paris. In the 1890s, at least three different elaborately themed nightclubs were operating in Paris. In the late 1800s restaurants in America began using theme to differentiate themselves from increasing competition. In the early century the "programmatic" or "mimetic" style structures became popular. Even the buildings were shaped in the form of vehicles or animals or even the food they served.

Twinkle states, "The concept of themed restaurants has a rich history dating back



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centuries, but its modern evolution is a dynamic and ongoing process. However, it's challenging to pinpoint a specific origin as themed dining continues to adapt and innovate in response to changing consumer preferences and global trends."

Sadgun revealed, "The concept of themed restaurants arrived in India during the late 20th century, riding the wave of globalisation and shifting consumer preferences. One of the earliest examples was the "Rajasthani Village" concept, offering an immersive cultural experience alongside traditional cuisine. Homegrown themed dining concepts grew. Themes encompassed Bollywood, Mughal heritage, and regional diversity. The rise of social media further fueled the trend, making themed restaurants highly shareable experiences, and contributing to their increasing popularity among Indian diners and tourists."

Debaditya declares, "The concept of theme-based restaurants dates back to the 19th century, originally beginning in the French city of Paris at Montmartre, a Parisian area known for its quintessential architecture. This led to the beginning of the themed café era. These Paris cafes started to stand out because of their unique interiors and environments that were inspired by varied themes."

Sunaina says, "The concept of themed restaurants dates back to the 19th century. Early examples, such as Café de Paris in London, gained popularity as they introduced the idea of creating unique dining experiences by incorporating specific

themes."

Prasuk states, "The concept of themed restaurants has a rich history, born from a deep-seated desire to offer guests an emotional and unforgettable experience. From its roots in the early 20th century to the vibrant present, Koa continues to evolve, weaving immersive and engaging tales that resonate with each patron's soul."

Ranbir avers, "The concept of themed restaurants finds its roots in a deep appreciation for cultural exploration through food. Yazu, too, is a testament to this history, where we meticulously blend authentic Asian ingredients with contemporary culinary techniques, creating a sensory journey that encapsulates the soul of the continent."

Future

Experiential restaurants across the globe, like 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (in Las Vegas), Karen's Diner (Australian chain) or Barbie Café, are proving popular. In India too the future for theme-based restaurants looks bright.

Twinkle asserts, "The future of theme restaurants in India is promising. As the dining landscape continues to evolve, consumers are increasingly seeking unique and memorable experiences. As long as the concepts remain relevant, they are likely to thrive and expand in the Indian culinary scene."

Sunaina affirms, "The future of Halo Cocktail in India appears promising, as it offers a unique and immersive dining experience. With its collaboration with our culinary director Rohan and its nature-

inspired theme, the restaurant is likely to continue attracting customers looking for distinctive and memorable dining experiences, contributing to the ongoing growth of themed restaurants in India."

Sadgun says, "As these restaurants continue to diversify their themes and offer unique and immersive dining experiences that cater to the growing demand for novel and memorable outings, their future is promising. Social media plays a pivotal role in their success, as customers eagerly share their experiences online, it will expand their reach. Franchising opportunities and a focus on preserving local culture will further contribute to their growth. Despite challenges, the future of theme restaurants in India looks bright, driven by their dynamic culinary landscape and the increasing appetite for unforgettable dining experiences."

Debaditya declares, "Themed restaurants have a bright future; it's a great investment to make. The key factor is to always cater to your customer's preferences and shift with the need of the hour. Theme based restaurant looks promising in India, especially with the help of social media. Everyone wants to enjoy a unique dining experience since they invest money so just providing good food isn't enough, summing up an unforgettable experience is the aim."

Prasuk predicts, "The future of theme restaurants in India, including Koa, is a promising tale waiting to unfold. With an increasing demand for unique and immersive dining experiences, themed eateries like Koa will continue to be the storytellers, offering our guests an escape into extraordinary worlds that touch their hearts and leave an everlasting mark."

Ranbir envisages, the future of themed restaurants in India, including Yazu, as promising. He states, "With an increasing appreciation for diverse culinary experiences, themed eateries will continue to play a vital role in bringing the rich cultural heritage of different regions to the forefront, offering guests an opportunity to explore and savor the flavors of Asia in all their authenticity."

So even if the theme of a restaurant is: death and hell, its future, like all other themed restaurants, seems bright! ■

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Increasing Revenue & Profitability

The objective of an entrepreneur to enter into a restaurant business, or any other business, is to rake in revenue and make profits. However it is essential for the entrepreneur to make a thorough study of the business and how one can increase the revenue of the venue. One way of making profits is by increasing the income. But this is not the only means of amplifying profits. Economizing is sure to help in enhancing profits. There are several ways of increasing revenue and increasing profits. **Ashok Malkani** takes a look at some of them.

When an entrepreneur ventures into any business it is mainly due to two reasons: They love what they aim do and to make profits from the venture. To make profits it is essential that the revenue from the enterprise is sizeable. It may be mentioned, for the novice, that revenue is the total income generated by sales while profit is the income that remains after meeting all the expenses.

As F&B industry is highly competitive and customers have a wide choice of choosing a restaurant when they want to dine out , it is essential for a restaurateur to not only to increase sales (in order to achieve higher revenue intake) but also to decrease costs (to achieve a higher level of profits).

According to SmartScrappers (a web scraping service company), the number of restaurants in India, as of September 24, 2023, was 1,59,598. But in spite of the huge number there is ample scope for

an enterprising entrepreneur to enter this field. The restaurant owners claim that the F&B outlets are one of the most important expressions of vibrant culture of the country. According to National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) the industry is estimated to be worth \$ 60 billion (Rs. 4.9 lakh crore approximately) and is one of the biggest revenue generators and job creators.

However, it is important for a new entrepreneur planning to open a restaurant to be aware of how to popularize the place and attract more customers. He has to be clear in his mind about various factors like:

- Who is the target audience?
- How will you attract them?
- How will you create a loyal customer base?

Techniques of marketing have changed over the years. With increasing popularity of social media it is important to increase your presence and popularity on social platforms.

Your food, ambience and service are the major issues which attract customers to a dining venue. Thus images of food, as well as the surroundings, depicted on your web site, is one sure way of attracting diners. They should be instagramable. Social media marketing can gain the attention of customers.

Promoting Your Property

Promoting or marketing of the restaurant is essential. How you would go about it depends on the category of the restaurant, the audience that you aim to attract, location of the property, etc. Establishing your restaurant brand is important. This would depend on the vibe of your restaurant felt by your diners from the moment they walk into restaurant and also how you conduct your social media accounts.

Some of the marketing strategies that you could adopt are:

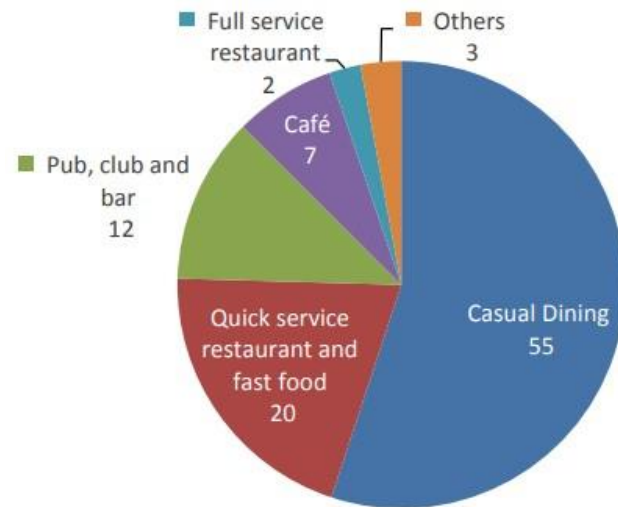
Online optimization: Many restaurant clients look for new places to eat online. Working on your search engine optimization can help list your restaurant's website among the first items to appear on a restaurant-related search. This can be

achieved by posting quality content, making the website easy to navigate and quickly replying to customer inquiries.

Rewarding customer loyalty: Since restaurant business is highly competitive loyalty needs to be incentivized. You can develop reward schemes for repeat customers. Another way of ensuring that the customers revisit the place could be – if they are accompanied by children – to offer gifts for the children. .

Encouraging customers to leave online reviews: Many potential customers are, nowadays, keen on reading online reviews before visiting a restaurant. If you are confident that most of your customers are happy with your restaurant's food, atmosphere and service, you can incentivize them to leave an online review by offering a discount on their next meal.

It is also important to get your customer feed-back and implement their suggestions.



Percentage of different types of restaurants in India (Statistics 2021)

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Optimising Revenue

While all these steps are necessary to increase the customers, it is not the only way to optimize revenue. There are several ways to achieve this.

Upselling: This is one way of increasing the revenue. Upselling means convincing customers to upgrade their current purchase or buy more items. Restaurant upselling is the most common strategy for restaurants to boost their profits. However, for this your staff has to be well trained. They must not only be in sync with all the menu items but also have the ability to develop a rapport with the customers, advising them on what to order.

When customers ask for recommendations the attendant must not only provide informed answers about the dishes but also tell them about the items that pair well with the dishes such as a particular wine or a side item. This would not only be upselling but would also add to the credibility of the restaurant and help in gaining positive reviews.

Training wait staff: During peak hours you have to ensure that the diners do not dilly-dally for too long. If the customers at a table seem to be enjoying leisurely chatter and aren't in a rush to leave, while there are clients waiting for a table, the wait staff could suggest coffee or a dessert as a cue to end the meal.

Revenue of a restaurant could also be raised when the wait staff suggests, in an unobtrusive manner, more expensive items than the ones the customer initially ordered.



Improving quality of food & service: Restaurateurs can deal with high competition and boost profits by merely improving the quality of food and service. The quality of food, from the kitchen to the table, must be competitive with other restaurants in the surroundings. High quality food standards, according to industry stalwarts, can be established and maintained by developing a proper channel of suppliers.

Menu planning: A well designed menu where you position high profit items to catch the customers' eye is an ideal way of ensuring higher revenue. A customer usually starts reading the menu from the top left. It would be ideal to place your high selling and high-profit-margin items there. Your menu descriptions should not only be clear and short but also be able to evoke temptations in the customers.

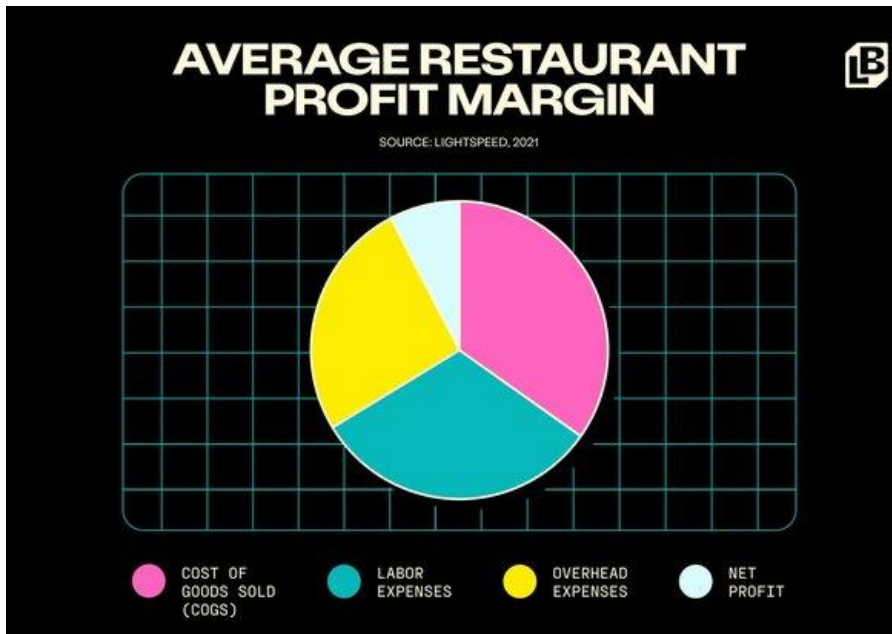
Pricing: Quite often diners prefer to go in for lower priced items on the menu.

This could affect the income. One way of overcoming this obstacle is setting up a price decoy. One can nudge customers to order high-profit-margin items when the price difference between something exclusive and ordinary is not too much. The customers often believe that expensive options are better in quality. This can be more credible when the quality of the exclusive dishes come with descriptions like mouth-watering, succulent, etc.

It is also essential to make changes in the menu as per the festivals. Domino's had, some time back, come up with a 'Navaratri Combo'. Behrouz Biriyani is known to increase the number of biryanis during the month of Ramzan.

Online sale & e-commerce: Encouraging online ordering is another way of increasing sale and revenue of the outlet. This mode of selling allows you to reach a whole segment of new customer base that you may not encounter organically. There is also a higher possibility of the order being for larger group of people which means higher returns.

E-commerce has become extremely profitable for F&B outlets. An online ordering system through your website allows for guests to easily place an order. It is found that 70% of diners prefer to order directly from the restaurant versus a third-party. What is of greater relevance is that 77% of diners visit a restaurant website before choosing to dine with them.



Increasing Profitability

But merely increasing revenue does not mean higher profitability. Revenue is the money earned by selling of the product – in this case, the food & beverage – in



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the outlet. On the other hand, profit is the amount the restaurant has earned after accounting all the expenses incurred.

It is important for a restaurateur, whether already in business or just entering the field, to not only keep track of the revenue but also the expenses undergone while running the restaurant. If your restaurant has extremely high overheads (property rental, special equipment, expensive ingredients, etc.) and very thin margins, though the restaurant may generate high revenue its profitability is likely to be low or even negligible. Or, it could even prove to be incurring losses. Restaurant businesses often fail as a result of poor financial planning.

To optimize profitability some of the steps that can be taken are:

Inventory control: This has a direct impact on the food costs of the restaurant. This task has to be carried out on a regular basis. Poor inventory control can not only lead to stock shortages but also pilferages. A survey carried out by a restaurant association shows that 75% of inventory shortages is due to internal employee theft. This, according to the survey, amounts to about 4% of the restaurant sale. Bars are believed to lose about 20% of their inventory due to theft. In bars, spillages and free drinks too contribute in inventory shortage.

But these are not the only objectives of inventory. There are several ingredients and raw materials, involving significant expenses, which are needed in a restaurant. These often have short shelf life. Thus even a minor mismanagement can burn a hole in the owner's pocket.

Lack of insights into the expiration date, receiving date, locations of goods, etc., which could result in over-expenditure, can have a negative effect on profitability. Misinformation in collection of this data can result in a lack of proper planning, adhoc purchases, and a lot of kitchen wastage. Several restaurants therefore use inventory management software integrated into modern POS systems. This is a sophisticated solution that tracks real-time inventory levels and combats any inventory-

related issues

A restaurateur has to realise that managing accurate inventory is necessary for maintaining a healthy bottom line and ensuring profitability of each item on the menu. Also, it may be mentioned, that during festivals, there is often an increase in demand, which could have an effect on the inventory if one is not able to forecast the demand.

Supplier management: Through this process you are able to ensure that you get the ingredients and raw materials of superior quality at reasonable pricing. A restaurateur has not only to ensure proper dealers (for preparing delectable and fresh items on the menu), but also for miscellaneous other things needed for the outlet like utensils, furnishing materials, etc. Keeping a tab on reliable suppliers who



offer competitive prices, while ensuring on-time delivery, can be a cumbersome process which could be eased by utilizing appropriate software.

Decreasing overheads: While it is not possible to cut down on fixed costs like rent you could try cutting down on variables like salaries, electricity and water. While it is not possible to cut down on staff salaries, one can entrust them with multi-tasking. You could ask the bartenders and servers to clean up the tables, before leaving for home.

As far as cutting down on electric cost is concerned apart from using energy-efficient equipment, you could adjust the air conditioning unit during non-business or slow hours. You can also ask the kitchen

staff to reduce idle times on ovens, boilers, etc . You could also ensure that dish washing machines are turned on only when the racks are full.

Using technology: Usage of technology is on the rise for the success of an F&B outlet. The techs most used by the outlets are point of sale systems (POS), credit card terminals, accounting software, reporting and payroll software, inventory management, kitchen display systems and invoice management systems.

For your guests to have a great experience, your team has to be aware of the likes and dislikes of the guests. For this, it is necessary to create a profile for them, noting how many times they've visited, what kind of dishes they ordered, what wine they usually go for, or even their favourite seat. You can choose a solution that integrates

the data with reservations and everything else, making it a fully automatic process. Having an all-in-one platform simplifies the daily operations of the owner and gathers all guest data in one place, which makes it easier for the team to make each guest feel at home and build special relationship with them.

Technology has transformed the restaurant industry and made it easier for chefs, restaurant managers and team members to focus on each individual guest.

In Conclusion

One may say, in conclusion, that for ensuring higher revenue and increasing profits cost of food is a major contributor. If mistakes and thefts are allowed to increase, the profitability is bound to be adversely affected. One way of avoiding this, is by working with your food supplier to find similar products for a cheaper price, for high cost menu items as well as for cleaning supplies and other perishables.

You are also to work with your in-house staff in order to prevent them from doing mistakes and to lower waste costs. Also, work with your head chef to control portion size on items that are frequently getting left behind by customers. ■

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Small Plates: *Conquering The Menu*

By Sharmila Chand



Variety in flavours and cuisines has made small plates popular with diners who prefer portion control over multi-course meals. It allows wider choices with no wastage. Chefs and food industry professionals share their perspective and benefits of the small plates.

As defined by Ravraj Chandok, Brand Chef, Juliette, Mumbai, "Since small plates are usually shared among a group of people, customers usually end up ordering more than 3 dishes at a time, thereby offering a variety. Furthermore, small plates like Pull Apart Bread take less time to prepare, and the turnaround time to serve the guests is relatively shorter. This quick service keeps the diners happy, and chefs can be more focused on high-quality dishes, not only in



terms of taste but also presentation."

According to Simran Pal Kochhar, Founder, Elina Vara, New Delhi, "The integration of small plates into menus showcases a symbiotic relationship that benefits both diners and restaurants. For diners, the allure



is in the ability to engage in communal dining, sharing and discussing an assortment of dishes that cater to individual preferences. This convivial experience fosters a sense of togetherness, making dining an interactive and memorable affair.

From the restaurant's perspective, small plates offer a fertile ground for culinary innovation. The modest portion sizes provide chefs the canvas to constantly reinvent the menu, adapting it to the ebb and flow of seasonal produce and evolving

gastronomic trends. Ultimately, the rise of small plates represents a departure from conventional dining norms, embracing a contemporary approach that harmoniously marries culinary creativity, portion control, and a delightful social experience."

Gaurav Kanwar, Founder Harajuku Tokyo Café believes, "Small plates have gained popularity due to their wide range of



flavours and portion control appeal. Diners nowadays prefer these over hefty multi-course meals to balance indulgence with health consciousness. Small plates offer a variety of tastes without overwhelming diners, enhancing their dining experience"

Variety in Flavours and Taste

Chef Anurudh Khanna, Multi property Executive Chef, The Westin Gurgaon and Westin Sohna Resort & Spa

At its core, the small plates trend embodies a celebration of creativity and variety. Restaurants around the globe have embraced this concept as a canvas for culinary innovation. Chefs are granted the freedom to showcase their artistic prowess, experimenting with an eclectic mix of ingredients, flavours, and cooking techniques.

This creativity not only tantalizes the taste buds but also challenges traditional notions of dining, inviting patrons to embark



“The concept has redefined the modern dining landscape, introducing a captivating blend of creativity, variety, and interactivity. Its capacity to adapt to seasonal produce, dietary needs, and economic considerations has solidified its place as a culinary movement with both substance and style. As diners continue to seek immersive and novel dining encounters, the small plates trend stands as a beacon of culinary innovation, inviting us all to indulge in the art of gastronomic exploration”

Chef Anurudh Khanna, Multi property Executive Chef, The Westin Gurgaon and Westin Sohna Resort & Spa,

on a journey of flavours and textures. One of the key distinguishing features of small plates is their ability to transform a meal into an experience of exploration and adventure. Unlike conventional dining, where a single entrée dominates the plate, small plates encourage diners to indulge in a medley of dishes.

This approach not only satisfies the palate but also creates a sense of engagement as individuals discover new favourites or embark on culinary escapades into uncharted territory. This empowerment of choice empowers diners to craft a symphony of flavors that resonates with their unique palate.

Ameya Dilip Mahajani, Chef De Cuisine, Yakii, Pune

The increasing popularity of small plates among diners who prioritise portion control over traditional multi-course meals can be attributed to several factors.

In today's market, consumers are not solely driven by pricing considerations; they also seek value in their dining experiences. This value is derived from a combination of factors, with taste, quality, and portion size playing pivotal roles. Diners are willing to invest between 300 to 800 rupees in a dish, but their expectations extend beyond cost.

They expect a delightful taste experience (Taste), uncompromising food quality (Quality), and portions that satisfy their appetite (Portion Size). This shift in dining preferences underscores the importance of offering diverse flavours and tastes in small plates, ensuring that each dish provides a balanced blend of these factors. By meeting

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these expectations, businesses can cater to the evolving demands of today's value-sensitive yet discerning clientele.

Sharad Singh, Director of Operations, The Westin Goa

Portion control is a key factor driving the popularity of small plates. In an era where health-consciousness is on the rise, many diners prefer to enjoy a balanced meal without overindulging. Small plates allow them to do just that by offering controlled portion sizes. This ensures that diners can enjoy their meal without feeling overly full or guilty.

Moreover, small plates encourage variety in dining. Instead of committing to one large dish, diners can sample several smaller ones in a single meal. This variety enhances the dining experience by allowing diners to explore different flavour profiles, ingredients, and cuisines within the same visit. It's a way to cater to diverse tastes and preferences, making it an attractive option for groups with varying food interests.

Dynamic & Versatile

Ameya Dilip Mahajani, Chef De Cuisine, Yakii, Pune

Certainly, I agree with this perspective, as it aligns with the evolving preferences of today's consumers. Modern diners seek more than just single-plate meals; they desire a diverse culinary experience. This includes enjoying a bowl of soup, savouring a few bites of salad, indulging in a selection of appetizers, sharing a communal main course, and concluding the meal with a delightful dessert.

In today's competitive restaurant industry, offering a diverse and engaging dining experience has become crucial for attracting and retaining customers.



Sharad Singh, Director of Operations, The Westin Goa

Small plates offer restaurants the advantage of changing their menus to align with the seasons. This adaptability is crucial for ensuring that the menu remains fresh and relevant throughout the year. By embracing seasonal ingredients, restaurants can keep diners excited about what's on offer, even if they are regular patrons. It creates an element of surprise and anticipation as the menu evolves with the changing seasons. This adaptability not only pleases diners but also supports local farmers and promotes sustainable dining practices.

Chef Anurudh Khanna, Multi property Executive Chef, The Westin Gurgaon and Westin Sohna Resort & Spa,

Indeed – It gives us chefs the opportunity to experiment with a diverse range of ingredients, flavours, and cooking techniques in smaller portions. This allows for more creativity and innovation in developing unique and exciting dishes that can surprise and delight diners. Preparing smaller portions can lead to quicker ticket times and a more efficient kitchen, especially during busy periods.

The malleability of small plates extends beyond seasonal produce, as it allows for a harmonious co-existence with diverse dietary preferences and restrictions. From carnivores to vegans, gluten-free to dairy-free, small plates can be tailored to accommodate a spectrum of culinary needs. This inclusivity not only ensures that every

diner finds something to relish but also fosters a sense of unity, where individuals with varying dietary requirements can partake in a shared culinary adventure.

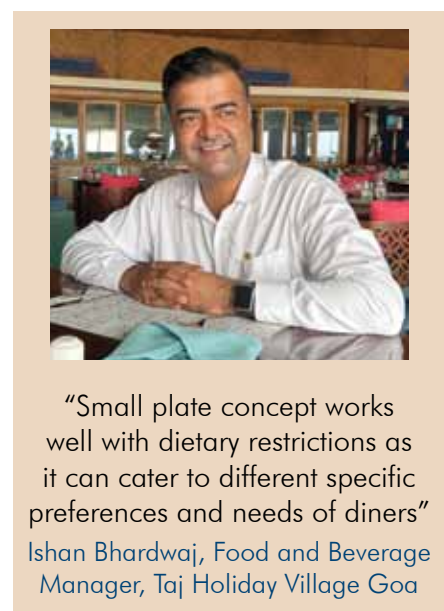
In addition to its gustatory merits, the small plates trend offers a multi-faceted economic advantage for both restaurants and diners. The pricing flexibility of small plates allows diners to curate their dining experience, selecting dishes that align with their preferences and budget.

Small Plates Menu Offer a Win-Win Situation

Chef Shailendra Kekade, Sante Spa Cuisine, Koregaon Park, Pune

In the realm of culinary delights, small plates offer the kitchen a canvas of freedom and creativity. These dishes grant the opportunity to innovate with the freshest ingredients, enabling chefs to playfully combine flavours and techniques that delight the guests' palates.

A perfect illustration of this culinary artistry is our 'Avocado Dynamite Sushi Rolls.' Imagine the harmony of velvety avocado embracing delicately flavoured Japanese rice infused with mirin, all nestled within a nori wrap. Tantalizingly spiced with togarashi, this roll boasts a thrilling, prickly spiciness. The pièce de résistance comes with a lavish smothering of a flavoursome sriracha dynamite sauce that elevates the entire experience to an extraordinary level. Each bite embodies the epitome of inventive, palate-pleasing fusion—a true symphony of tastes that leave guests yearning for more.”





“The concept of sharing small plates encourages social interaction and fosters a communal dining atmosphere, bringing people together around the table.”

Chef Nishat Diwakar, Executive Sous, Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, Goa

Ameya Dilip Mahajani, Chef De Cuisine, Yakkii, Pune

Small plates offer a wide canvas for creativity and not letting the menu become monotonous. Small plates options are dynamic, can be changed as per the seasonal produce.

I aim to consistently craft what I like to call "hero" dishes – those that burst with flavour and make a lasting impression. The beauty of offering smaller plates lies in the opportunity to refine and evolve the subtle components within each dish, adapting them seasonally. This approach allows for creative variations on the same base dish, giving our customers the chance to savour familiar flavours in exciting new forms as the seasons and ingredients change.

Sharad Singh, Director of Operations, The Westin Goa

Chefs find small plates to be a creative playground. With smaller portions, they can experiment with unique ingredients, flavours, and cooking techniques that might not be feasible with larger dishes. This freedom fosters culinary innovation and encourages chefs to push the boundaries of their creativity.

For diners, this means they have the opportunity to try dishes they might not have encountered otherwise. Chefs often use small plates to showcase their signature creations or regional specialties, making the dining



“Nowadays guests are very conscious of what they are eating as well as the quantity of their intake. Small plates enable them to cover a larger taste palate of food and let the kitchen team innovate creatively with the right seasonal ingredients and techniques.”

Chef Shailendra Kekade, Sante Spa Cuisine, Koregaon Park, Pune

experience more engaging and memorable. It's a win-win situation as diners get to savour exceptional culinary creations, and chefs can express their culinary artistry.



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Turkish Hazelnut

Hazelnuts have been around almost forever and Turkey is the most important country of origin for hazelnuts in the world; it accounts for over 70% of world hazelnut production and approximately 80% of world hazelnut trade. Documents support the claim that Turkish hazelnuts have been exported to international markets for the last 600 years.

Though hazelnuts are also grown in USA, with concentration in the states of Oregon and Washington, they are also grown extensively just to the north and in Canada. Popularity of hazelnut is also growing in USA and they too have set up a Hazelnut Council to promote its use but main share of Hazelnut export in countries where it is not grown is from Turkey.

Hazelnut Harvesting

The hazelnut is one of the oldest crops known to humans and is native to the Black Sea coast. Approximately 430,000

hectares of hazelnut trees stretch across the Black Sea region of Turkey. Their processed hazelnut kernel exports are increasing every year due to customer's demand and use of quality control mechanisms at every stage of production.



Orchards of this fruit are densely located along the Black Sea coastline within a zone up to 30 km away from the shore – like a green belt between the sea and the mountains along the coast. The production area for Turkish hazelnuts can be divided into two sub-regions:

Eastern part of the Black Sea region in the Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Trabzon and Artvin provinces.

Middle and Western part of the Black Sea region including Samsun, Sinop, Kastamonu, Bolu, Duzce, Sakarya and Kocaeli regions.

The right time for harvesting is when the fruit begins to fall on the ground with a light shake of the branch. These are then picked up and brought to the thresher floor. The leaves turn brown and the nut is then separated; depending on the weather the total drying period takes 15 to 20 days. This natural drying of the hazelnut in Turkey is what makes their hazelnuts more delicious.

The three primary pieces of equipment used on commercial harvesting are: The Sweeper, The Harvester and the Forklift.

Hazelnuts may be exported in any of its various forms: Raw Kernels, Blanched, Roasted, Chopped and Hazelnut Meal; Sliced Hazelnut or indeed Hazelnut Paste. Hazelnut oil could be used in home cooking, over salads or in coffee and other forms are suitable for ice-cream, cookies, mixed nuts, bakery and in chocolate.

Types of Hazelnuts

Not all Hazelnuts are just the same. They differ in size and shape too.

Round Hazelnuts – are spherical nuts with approximately the same length, width and thickness. These are of medium size and high quality and have high seed yields. They are high in fat and protein rates. These can be easily separated from skin and whitened. They are easy to handle and break because of their circular shape.

Mainly Giresun is the variety of the highest quality in the world. Others in this group are called Palaz, Mincane, Foza, Kan, Cakildak and Kara.

Pointed Hazelnut – is a longer than width and thickness nut. This variety produces more scrap when breaking so they are often marketed in their shells. These types have names Sivri and Incekara.

Almond Hazelnut – the length is much longer than the width and the thickness. They are generally big and showy but would be of lower quality. They do not qualify for breaking and processing and are mainly consumed as a snack, in shells and in undried form. The two types are simply called Circular Almond and Flat Almond.

Decorticated Hazelnut Kernels – These are hazelnuts with a diameter of 13-15 mm



which have been separated from the hard shells and they are the raw material for processed and highly processed hazelnuts.

With a calibre of 13 to 15 mm they are labelled Standard 1. With a measurement of shelled kernel with the calibre of 11 to 13 mm they are Standard 2 and Standard 3 has the calibre measurement of 9 to 11 mm.

Processed Hazelnut Kernels

Most well stocked shops sell hazelnuts either in unroasted raw form or sliced ones. Speciality stores often have other forms including the hazelnut paste which is easy to use and extremely versatile. These are available internationally, and in speciality stores in India in many forms:

Roasted Hazelnut Kernels – Produced by roasting the kernel. According to the buyer (wholesaler) it can be roasted in low, medium and high levels and the skin of the kernel can be removed partially or totally. Used in the chocolate industry and snack for the end consumer.

Blanched Hazelnut Kernels – These are produced by blanching the kernels through removing their skins and separating them from the partially blanched kernels. These too are used in the chocolate industry and manufacturing the salty hazelnuts.

Chopped Hazelnut Kernels

– These produced by cutting the raw or roasted hazelnut kernels in defined mm sizes ranging from 2 to 5 mm. these would be used for ice cream, biscuits, in the bakeries and of course in the chocolate industry.

Sliced Hazelnut Kernels – Produced by slicing the kernels into leaves with an appropriate technique and is mainly used in Bakeries.

Hazelnut Meal – This is produced grinding the raw or roasted hazelnut kernel and is used in bakeries for making and biscuit and in the ice cream industry.

Hazelnut Mash – This is produced by mashing the kernels in a homogeneous form, which are fully or partially skinned and roasted. This makes for a richer taste and may be used by end consumers as well as in the chocolate industry and the bakeries.

Hazelnut Paste – This is semi finished product used for manufacturing hazelnut mash or similar products. This is made by mashing the roasted hazelnut kernels (low, medium or high roast levels) and is once again used by ice cream and chocolate industry.

Fried/Salted Hazelnut Kernels – This is made by roasting the hazelnut kernels and dipping them into salt or frying in oil. These are sold and consumed as end-consumer product.

Roasted In-Shell Hazelnut – These are plain roasted in shell hazelnuts that have been cracked slightly. They can be roasted and dipped in salt or just plain roasted. Once again for the end-consumer, and not angled for any particular industry.

Hazelnut Oil

Hazelnuts contain up to 56% oil. The fatty acid content of hazelnut oils have oleic acid contents ranging from 73% to 83%. Hazelnut oil, pressed from hazelnuts, is strongly flavoured and used as cooking oil or as salad dressing and also for baking.

Edible cold pressed hazelnut oil is a functional product since the ingredients are expected to have additional health functions over basic nutritional properties. Hazelnut oil is used as salad oil, cooking oil, and for food preparation because of its unique flavour and specific characteristics.

It's also used for hair care and as a carrier oil for aromatherapy or massage



oils. Hazelnut oil used as a skin care product is loaded with skin-nourishing vitamins and essential fatty acids that help protect skin against sun damage, boost collagen production, and more.

Foodies Choice

In the food industry, hazelnuts are currently eaten raw, roasted, blanched, minced, sliced, powdered and pureed. Hazelnuts are also used as a premium ingredient in chocolates, biscuits, confectionary products, sweets, pastries and ice cream and in meals and salads. They could be a main component of a healthy diet.

Many top chefs are choosing to include hazelnuts in more and more recipes and dishes because of their excellent flavour and health value. Hazelnut is a miracle nut and most Chefs, individuals who like cooking or just like to experiment may try it as a garnish on almost anything. Hazelnuts can be paired with cheese and fruit. Also jazz up yogurt with hazelnuts and honey. Even Biryani, or a nice topping for good old Gulab Jamun!

Those who like to drink up their hazelnuts there is the vodka based liqueurs such as Frangelico that is increasingly getting more popular in the US and Eastern Europe.

In USA they are also trying to promote Hazelnut butter touting it as healthier than the peanut butter.

Hazelnut is popular as a coffee flavouring, especially in the form of Hazelnut latte. This coffee seems slightly sweetened and less acidic to many



Hazelnut Recipes

Choco Hazelnut Mousse

(For 12 persons and with preparation time of 20 minutes)

Ingredients

- 250 gms Dark chocolate
- 3 Eggs
- 60 gms Castor sugar
- 2 tsp Dark Rum
- 1 Cup cream
- 3 tbsp Hazelnut paste



Method

Melt chocolate till smooth. Beat eggs and sugar till thick and pale. Fold melted chocolate and rum into the egg mixture. Add hazelnut paste. Fold in whipped cream. Spoon mixture into Ramekins or Dessert glasses. Refrigerate for 2 hours or till set. Decorate with chopped hazelnuts.

Hazelnut Ice Cream

(To serve up to 15 persons, ingredients)

Ingredients

- 300 g Roasted Hazelnut, grated or slivered
- 100 g Hazelnut paste
- 500 gms Cream
- 1.5 litre Milk, 500 g Sugar
- 8 Egg Yolks
- 4 Full eggs



Method

Mix cream and milk in a pot and bring to a boil. Beat sugar and eggs in a bowl until creamy. Add a bit of the hot milk into the egg mixture while stirring. Pour the egg mixture into the milk while stirring. While constantly stirring heat it up until its creamy. Be careful to not let it boil. Then add the roasted hazelnut and the hazelnut paste and fill it in dishes to freeze. As an alternative instead of the roasted hazelnuts, crushed hazelnut Krokant can be used for the ice cream.

drinkers, even though the nut is low in natural saccharides.

Health & Nutrition

The health and nutrition of hazelnuts make it an ideal ingredient for various food products. It has distinctive composition of fats (mainly oleic acid), proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins (mainly E), minerals, dietary fibres, phytosterols (beta sitosterol) and antioxidant phenolics.

The hazelnut lipids are rich in mono and polyunsaturated fatty acids and Linoleic. In effect it is the wonder food that controls the blood lipid levels positively. Due to the antioxidant role of vitamin E and its

relationship to CHD and cancer, there is an increased interest of the consumer and the food product industry to include hazelnut in various forms.

Hazelnut cooking oil has a similar composition to extra virgin olive oil with high content in Omega 9 and Omega 6 fatty acid. This makes hazelnuts another healthy cooking oil option with flavourful taste.

Compared to other cooking oils, hazelnut oil has really strong good fats, creating a healthy cooking oil alternative. It has been scientifically proven that a balanced intake of omega 3 and 6 along with a high level of omega 9 reduce the risk of cardiovascular related disease. ■



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The Priceless Spice

To put it simply, saffron is a spice. Of course, this definition also needs to be followed by several descriptions and explanations. One of them is that saffron is the costliest spice on the planet, by weight. This spice is derived from the lavender coloured flower of flowering plant *Crocus sativus*, which is commonly known as saffron crocus. Saffron is produced from parts of the plant's flowers. The dried stigmas along with the styles of the flowers of saffron crocus are called saffron. It should be noted that after their extraction, the stigmas must be dried quickly, or decomposition and mould may set in. Saffron can be brought in strands or stigmas and also in powdered form.

Distinctive Features

About a lakh of flowers of saffron crocus plant are needed to produce 1 kg of saffron. Output of saffron in India is just

half kg per hectare. The difficulty and labour-intensiveness involved in manually extracting large numbers of minute stigmas from the flowers of saffron crocus also attributes to the high cost of saffron in the market. Yes, even today saffron is produced in the way it was done in the ancient period; even today machines have no answer to removing stigmas from the flowers of saffron crocus.

Saffron costs about Rs. 2 lakh per kg. But that is nothing to worry about, for saffron is generally needed in small dosages across the food service industry. A pound of saffron may contain 70,000 to 200,000 strands whereas only a handful of strands of saffron are needed for a given dish where saffron's application is desirable.

One of the distinctive features of saffron is its ethereal aroma, which is similar to that of metallic honey with

hay like notes. Picrocrocin and safranal are the chemical compounds in saffron which endow the spice with its distinct fragrance.

Saffron has a bitter sweet taste and comes in crimson or golden yellow colour. Crimson saffron threads with orange tips are considered to be of premium quality. Good quality saffron should also have slight moistness and should exhibit elasticity.

History and Legends

Historically speaking, the origins of these crimson coloured delicate threads shaped spice can be traced to the ancient Greece but slowly its usage spread across South-west Asia and North Africa, and then to other parts of the world. The cultivation of saffron began about 3500 years ago in Greece. The plant which gives saffron is native to South-west Asia.

The medicinal properties and fragrance of saffron were also well-known in history. The ancient Egyptian healers used saffron to treat varieties of gastrointestinal ailments, while the ancient Greeks and Romans rampantly used saffron as a perfume. Daily saffron baths by wealthy Romans in ancient era was not uncommon.

Today's food service industry in India can take inspiration from the ancient Greece and Rome by using saffron not only as a spice and flavouring and colouring agent in dishes, but also as a perfume around restaurants' ambience to entice guests.

Saffron not only has a rich history but is also associated with interesting legends. It is believed that during the ancient times, Egypt's queen Cleopatra used a quarter cup of saffron in her warm baths, and Alexander the Great of Greece used to heal his battle wounds with saffron.

Geographical Spread

Today Iran is the biggest producer of saffron in the world, where more than 90 percent of the world's saffron production takes place. In fact, almost all the world's saffron are grown in a belt which is bounded by the Mediterranean in the west and mountainous Kashmir in the east. Greece, Morocco, India, Spain, Azerbaijan and Italy are other important global producers of saffron.

The climate most conducive to the cultivation of saffron is the cool dry climate, which should be complemented by well rinsed fertile soil. Maximum saffron in India is produced from Jammu & Kashmir,



cultivation spans across about 3,800 hectares.

Saffron in Foodservice

The culinary applications of saffron are indeed varied. It is used as a spice and colouring agent in food and also to impart/enhance fragrance to the dishes. Saffron has myriad applications in recipes. This spice is extensively used in Indian, European, Iranian, Arab and Moroccan cuisines. Only a pinch of saffron can make a perceptible difference to many dishes.

However, here we would point out some of the culinary applications of saffron in the bakery and confectionery products. Saffron can be used in the preparation of cakes. Honey and saffron cake and orange saffron cake can be delicacies, if prepared rightly. Saffron cupcakes and saffron buns can also add value to the repertoire of bakery products in a bakery. Saffron can also be creatively used in cheeses.

Bakery cafes in India can keep some Indian beverages where saffron plays a role, in their menus. Almond kesar milk (in north India, almond is known as kesar) is a wonderful beverage in India to keep the heat at bay and also alternatively, to keep the cold in check. This beverage can be had in both hot and cold forms. This can be included in the menus of bakery cafes in India, especially in bakery cafes located

in north India, in a more proactive manner. Saffron caramel panna cotta or simply saffron panna cotta can be delightful dessert options to explore. Saffron and chocolates can also be innovatively delightful combination as are saffron and white chocolate truffles. The adventurous can also try saffron ice-cream to delight one's taste buds.

Health Benefits

Besides adding to the spice content, flavour and colour in various dishes, saffron is also spruced with several health benefits. It can be used to get relief from asthma and whooping cough. It can also be used to counter depression and Alzheimer's disease. It is also used as an aphrodisiac.

Saffron comprises many plant-derived chemical compounds which are known to possess anti-oxidant and health promoting properties. The carotenoids present in saffron are shown in studies to have anticarcinogenic properties. Saffron has wound healing and anti-cancer properties, and by acting as an antioxidant, the pricey spice deserves the priceless tag.

According to research studies, safranal, a volatile oil found in saffron, has antioxidant, cytotoxic effect on cancer cells, besides being endowed with anticonvulsant and antidepressant properties. Moreover, saffron can give an impetus to immunity by facilitating in the maturation of white blood cells. It also accelerates the levels of enzymes that can help the body to trace toxins. Saffron can help in blood purification and also in regulation of gastrointestinal function.

Saffron has impressive dosages of many essential vitamins, including vitamin A, folic acid, riboflavin, niacin, and vitamin C. This spice is also spruced with many health inducing minerals, which include copper, potassium, calcium, iron, and manganese. Moreover, saffron is devoid of cholesterol. Saffron can help to lower bad cholesterol or triglycerides' levels in human bodies.

So we can say that saffron in food can not only enhance its taste, flavour and colour, but saffron can also add health to the food. The Indian food service industry should use this priceless spice in its dishes more extensively. ■





One's Oyster

Abraham Lincoln used to throw parties at his home in Illinois where nothing but oysters were served. Oysters are important food, rich in vitamin B12, iron, zinc and copper. Oysters are thought to have regenerative and invigorating properties. It is also considered as an aphrodisiac.

Oysters are considered as a very healthy and enriched in minerals diet. It can be taken raw as well as cooked in meal. Oysters are the basic ingredients in making flavourish seafood items. While not everyone values the peculiar-looking bivalve as essential eating, many consider it a delicacy.

Oysters breed once in a year varying in temperature conditions. A female oyster can produce 100 million eggs during one breeding season. Some oysters produce a gooey substance which coats irritating sand or grit trapped within its shell. This substance hardens into a smooth ball... a Pearl.

Stimulated by increase in water temperature to 18-20 degrees C, oysters generally spawn from May through September. Eggs hatch into free-swimming larvae that settle to the bottom two to three weeks after hatching. They attach (set) to oyster reefs and other hard substrates. The newly attached oysters – called spat – begin to grow at the rate of about an inch per year. Growth rates

can be affected by temperature, food quantity, salinity, and parasitic infection. Shell growth usually occurs in the spring and soft body tissue growth occurs after spawning. Oysters usually enter the market three to five year after spat settlement.

After spending the first part of its life floating freely through the ocean, a young oyster will cement itself to a rock or other hard surface, never to travel again.

Oysters are a culinary celebration; these bivalve molluscs are an ingredient revered world over - a true delicacy. While some still stand to gain from its mystical aphrodisiacal properties, others find its taste and texture akin to a gastronomical wonder. The whole world seems to have caught onto this wonder, yet India has kept a safe distance from it, despite its never-ending coastline and an affinity for seafood like none other. In India it is usually fried or pickled and hardly ever raw, the form in which the oyster is highly considered.

Oyster Types

Ostrea Edulis (European oyster, flat oyster)

The Belon is the most well known of these oysters. They are rounding, expensive, and always flavourful. They should never be cooked. They won't be available in market

during the summers (the non-R months) because this is the time when the oysters spawn causing the texture to become gritty and the flavour to diminish.

Marennnes

The famous green-tinged oysters are raised in Claires, with a high concentration of the chlorophyll-containing diatom *Navicula ostrearia* (a tiny algae). They are grouped as fines de claires, which, according to the rather complicated French system of classification, means they are designated as the most superior in quality of oysters.

Apalachicola (Florida)

It is plump and sweet, with a hint of copper flavour, these oysters have a greenish, deep shell. This is the oyster that was used for Oysters Rockefeller, a dish created at the New Orleans restaurant.

Breton Sound (Louisiana)

These gulf oysters grow wild in the reefs of Louisiana. They vary in saltiness according to the season, becoming sweetest in the spring when the marshes are flooded with fresh water.

Crassostrea Gigas (Pacific Oyster, Japanese Oyster)

This oyster is, with a few exceptions, regarded as inferior for eating raw. It can grow to be 12 inches long, and is therefore



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often simply too large and tough to be good on the half shell. It adapts well to different environments and is widely cultivated outside of Japan, mostly on the West coast of the US.

Kumamoto

This variation of the Japanese oyster is sometimes given its own species name, *Crassostrea Kumamoto*. It was originally cultured on the island of Kyushu in Japan and is now raised in America from the Gulf of Mexico to British Columbia. It has a distinctive, frilly black shell, and the meat is praised as being delicate, even buttery.

Crassostrea Angulata (Portuguese oyster)

They are native to the coastal waters of Spain and Portugal. They are not as refined in taste as the European oyster, and are not usually recommended to be served raw. The shells of the oysters have distinctive purple streaks, and its flesh is tinged with purple at the muscle scar.

Nutrition

Oysters are a great source of taste and nutrition. This seafood has a rich aroma of sea, loaded with nutrients, including protein, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals. This feature makes it an ideal serving for health conscious food lovers. Oyster is always believed to have regenerative and invigorating properties. What oysters lack in calories they make up for in their nutritional content, which includes vitamin B12, zinc, and a unique antioxidant.

Though it's clear that oysters offer impressive health benefits, some potential concerns exist, especially when consuming them raw. Eating raw oyster meat poses a greater risk of bacterial infection. Oysters can also carry Norwalk-type viruses and enteroviruses that can pose health risks.

Additionally, these molluscs may contain chemical contaminants, including heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and mercury. Oysters contain an exceptionally high amount of zinc. While this mineral is important for health, consuming too much can be harmful.

Because of these potential health risks, children, people with compromised immune systems, and people who are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid eating raw seafood. Those who choose to eat raw oysters should be aware of these potential risks. Eating them cooked is much safer since cooking destroys harmful bacteria.

Selection and Storage

Oysters should be brought with the shell. They should feel heavy and full of water. Live ones will be tightly clamped shut, or will clamp shut when tapped. Dead oysters will have loose shells and must be discarded along with those, which have broken shells. The flavour is best when they are consumed within 24 hours of purchase.

Store live oysters in the shell, large shell down, in a mesh bag or in an open container covered with a damp cloth in the refrigerator (no lower than 33 degrees F.) up to five days. Do not seal live oysters in an airtight container – they will not be able to breathe and hence die. Never freeze unshelled oysters. One should refrigerate freshly shelled oysters in their own liquor for two days, but use them as quickly as possible.

Most commercially available oysters these days have fairly clean shells. However, to clean, scrub the beards and dirt from the shells while holding them under cold running water before opening them. When shucking (opening them) oysters, take care to retain the wonderful juice known as liquor. The liquor

should be clear, not cloudy, and without any sour or unfavourable odour.

Shelled oysters must be pasteurized and canned or frozen before sale. Canned oysters suffer a loss in flavour from live, fresh oysters and are usually used in cooked dishes. Smoked, canned oysters are great for appetizers. Canned oysters will have an expiration date and should be stored refrigerated in their liquor in a covered container once opened.

Frozen raw oysters will keep for up to three months. They should be thawed in the refrigerator and then used as fresh oysters for cooking. Cooked oysters should not be frozen, lest you end up with rubber doorstoppers. Use leftover refrigerated cooked oysters within three days.

Drinks with Oysters

Feelings also run high in the matter of which alcoholic beverages best accompany a meal of oysters. Many agree that the flavour of the drink can obscure the taste of the oyster, and that the drinking should be done afterwards, or that an oyster cracker or two should follow a sip before the next oyster is eaten. The Irish traditionally opt for stout or a glass of black velvet (a mixture of stout and champagne). Champagne, in itself, is a popular recommendation; as are very dry white wines.

The Indian Scene

The Indian 'backwater oyster', besides near Vembanad and Pulicat lakes in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, is also found in similar locales along the Andhra and Orissa. Other species, like rock oysters and giant oysters are abundant from Kutch to the Konkan coast in inter-tidal waters.

Chefs in India have no aversion to putting oysters on the menu. It is not largely visible like any other seafood mainly because chefs could not find good quality oysters which they can source consistently. Restaurants with more reliable supply chains feature them on their menu. It remains that oysters cooked in a typical coastal Indian manner are more likely to be found in the coastal areas only.

Oysters kept under moist and cool conditions survive for several days. However it is desirable that they reach the consumer within three days of harvest. With demand being low, there hasn't been a reason to develop consistent logistics to get oysters available around the country. ■

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Crockery Selection

It is said that food is first eaten or for that matter savoured with eyes, that is, if the food is nice to look at then the appetite grows. For the food to look nice a lot of importance is given to the plate in which it is dished out so that it is good to look at and at the same time convenient for the customer to have food from.

No wonder, in a hotel's or a restaurant's kitchen and as well as in hotel's room service, crockery plays a very important role. Presenting your food to your guest can be a tricky proposition, especially if you are not used to making it look pretty on the plate.

Before you begin styling your food, you need to decide on what you will present it. You wouldn't want all your efforts in the kitchen to be ruined by your choice of plates. Plates should complement your food presentation and heighten your culinary skills.

Adding Delight to Eating

The various types of crockery used in hotels' and restaurants' kitchens and hotels' room service depends on the type of menu/ cuisine that is being served. For example,

the requirement of crockery for soup varies from the crockery required for serving pastas (depending on its nature-consistency and texture of food).

If the right crockery selection is made for the right food then this facilitates the eating experience, as ideally eating should not only involve satiating of hunger and palate, but also a celebration of all the senses.



Burkhard Schmidt

Good food with appropriate crockery selection could result in wonders. The right selection of crockery helps to put the right impression on the guest, making them delightful and to think about a repeat visit to the establishment, which may eventually increase the number of footfalls at the restaurant.

According to Burkhard Schmidt, Sales Director Hospitality at Villeroy & Boch, "The appropriate crockery selection depends on the food situation and the establishment. It is therefore important to know how the outlet should be perceived and what the dining experience should be like. The equipment for a premium fine dining restaurant is substantially different to a – for example – a breakfast buffet in the morning."

Nowadays, crockery is used extensively in India in the hospitality sector and due to the evolving hotel industry, the use of crockery has been not only restricted to serve food but also extended in terms of eye appealing presentations and in terms of serving food in a style which lasts long in the minds of the guests and gives value addition to the overall meal experience.

As compared to the earlier half of the last century, the recommendation and buying process of the crockery has become very important in the hospitality sector, which takes into account of the hospitality establishment's theme, interior decor, etc. Overall, institutional crockery purchase has become a more professional exercise for both the buyer and the seller.

Crockery brands now have unique features to showcase. Preferably, they give opportunity to the Chef to present his signature dish in something which combines and completes the array of dishes coming straight from the kitchen to the table. Burkhard assures, "Our sales colleagues are trained according to global examples and standards and can provide excellent advice. Villeroy & Boch has the right choice of tableware for every occasion, especially for premium outlets. And if a unique, sophisticated look is desired, our in-house designers will work closely with the customer to develop a special decor for their tableware."

The shape and design of the crockery is rated quite highly in the process of crockery selection. Although, durability and shipping together plays a vital role in maintaining the crockery for long, more emphasis on the selection process of crockery is placed on how the crockery will bring life to the food and the venue, and how different will it be from others in the competition.

The Crockery Range

The requirement of crockery in hotels varies according to the operational status. For example, star hotels' banquets and room service spaces require economical crockery in porcelain, etc. For premium dining spaces, premium lounges, bars, etc. more expensive crockery is preferred in Bone China and Perception China. The high end premier international brands are preferred for these spaces.

The various types of crockery being used in a hotel's restaurants or other restaurants are salad plate, appetiser plate, soup dishes, pasta plate, round dinner plate, rectangular or oval dish, simple wooden boards, serving platters, enamelware, stoneware, pewter, dessert plate, etc. Besides in tandem with the operations, the type of crockery chosen should be in harmony with the theme, cuisine, menu and decor of the restaurant, whether be it a stand-alone restaurant or a restaurant in a hotel. But most importantly, the choice of crockery perhaps depends on the types of food which is expected to be served on it.

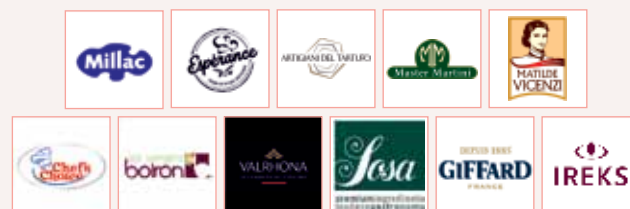
For instance, in an Italian restaurant deep dishes would be used for the food as on a flatter plate it would not be easy for the guest to have food. Another example would be if the restaurant is serving oriental food and the theme of the restaurant relates to red colour, then the dishes can be handmade and be red in colour.

Similarly, for hot beverages, cups or thermal glasses are used, and for solid food items, pasta plates or flat plates are used. Similarly, salad plates are generally used in high-end restaurants for serving various salads, while appetiser plate is the right choice for serving various appetisers like fish, chips or tandoori chicken tikka, etc. B&B plates are the right option for



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restaurant the supplier or the different types of crockery. First step in this direction is to identify the concept of the outlet, its cuisine and style of service, which would lead to the selection of the required crockery through well reputed suppliers.

Consultants along with culinary team at the property connect with the crockery supplier to ensure that the hotel gets the optimum deal in terms of products, replacements, costs and discounts and after sales service. This is done through the reputation build up over time with the vendors and keeping in loop their involvement with hospitality companies to

placing breads and butter that accompany the main course, cheese plates are generally used for the serving of cheese, fish plate can be used for serving of an array of dishes, soup dishes are the preferred choice for serving of soups, dessert plate is for serving various desserts, etc.

The location of serving also influences the crockery selection. For example, if the food is to be served in room for the guest, then the dishes have to be smaller in size so that they can fit into the hot box and the food can be presented in a single shot without disturbing the guest. These are some of the various factors to be kept in mind while choosing from the wide range of crockery options available in the market.

Positioning the right crockery products into each potential market segment, companies do offer different brands for the Indian market. Though tableware technology does not change or move fast, unlike the technology in telecommunications or electronics industry, companies still need to use latest and state-of-the-art technology to produce innovative products.

"The tableware is the canvas and the framework for the food. Next to the food itself, it is the item that is closest to the customer, so it is really important. The crockery must enhance the food creation, not hide or distract from it. For example, a seamless, gleaming white of original bone china from Villeroy & Boch crockery will make fruit or sauces shine for the guest.

A cloche or a raised mirror can even bring the good smell of the food closer to the guest, not just the look and taste. In addition, a beautiful individual design on the tableware and a good design in form will be



remembered and can even be the trigger for a conversation at the table. Together with a nice ambience and attentive service, tableware is another reason why guests will stay longer and come back", expands Burkhard.

Buying Crockery

Proper training manuals are provided by companies in terms of serving of food items. Starting with the selection of the crockery, storage of crockery is also discussed and briefed during various training sessions conducted with the operations team. Systematic schedule for proper record of the breakages is also prepared in order to maintain the stock and financials. Purchasing is eventually done once the best quoted price is placed with regard to the quality of the product.

Consultants use different parameters for recommending to a hotel's kitchen/

whom the products are being sold.

"The balance between a varied appearance and the costs of ownership for the owner has to be brought into balance. Of course, certain signature dishes require a special plate as a frame to make them appealing to the customer. But in general, it is important to keep an eye on the entire inventory of the restaurant in order to achieve the greatest possible variety of combinations.

Villeroy & Boch has been using the same body colours for its porcelain for over 200 years. So our customers can mix and match different items to create different concepts. The good thing is that if you need something new for a new dish, you only need a smaller number of new items because you can combine them with your existing inventory and it still looks perfect and coherent.", suggests Burkhard.

Besides the operations where the



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crockery is applied to, and the F&B options at the outlet or outlets for which the crockery is to be supplied, the cost/budget of crockery in question, durability of that crockery, theme/decor of the restaurant in question all have to be taken into consideration before opting for the ordering of the crockery.

The planning of crockery in hotels' kitchen/restaurants depends on various things like number of restaurants/ types of restaurants (in terms of cuisines), cost of crockery, durability, the theme and décor of the outlet concerned.

The other parameters to consider are temperature at which they are likely to be subject to, the weight of the crockery, and terms for payment, all contribute towards arriving at the final decision of their purchase.

While designing the concept of a restaurant all the things are kept in mind like theme, cuisine, furniture, furnishing, etc. and one of the crucial parts of the concept is the tableware. For a formal restaurant, the plates chosen are generally white in colour, although their shape and size can vary. For a casual restaurant the plates can be of various colours as long as they go along with the theme of the restaurant.

The most important thing to keep in mind while placing the order for crockery is the easy replacement, as crockery is prone to chipping off and breaking. To know the quantity needed for an establishment Burkhard suggests, "The amount needed for an establishment is calculated on par level. It depends on the menu card. We have efficient formulas to calculate the right amount. Maybe our parts are lower to other calculations, but it is because our tableware is proven to be very solid."

He further adds, "I always say you shouldn't change everything. As Sales Director for Villeroy & Boch's hospitality business, my advice is to invest in solid, functional, reliable and durable porcelain with a timeless shape as a core stock. And from time to time, when your chef needs new crockery to emphasise a new dish, invest in matching signature pieces with the same DNA. When it all comes from Villeroy & Boch, it is easy, because our porcelain is proven to be very solid and it always has the same body colours and is therefore easy to mix and match."

He also suggests, "Buy a timeless and solid foundation that will last. Combine it with complementary items when the time or need comes for a new concept. Calculate long-term inventory and monitor attrition rates. If the initial investment is higher because of superior quality, it will pay off the longer you can use it."

The cost of chinaware contributes greatly towards the costing of the restaurant so a lot of importance should be given to its storage and stacking. In star hotels there are different dedicated storages given to glassware, chinaware and equipment. There is also a dedicated dish landing area where the soiled plates are brought from the guest's table for washing with a specific detergent and sanitiser, which is not harmful for the plates. Later they are stacked in different racks and covered for later use.



The Technology

Traditionally, crockery was and still is made of ceramic materials such as earthenware, stoneware or porcelain. However they could also be made of other materials such as wood, pewter, silver, gold, glass, acrylic and plastic. Now these different materials of crockery could be best used as per the theme and design of the place. For example, the unbreakable crockery made of acrylic or melamine definitely gives an edge where there is possibility of rough use. Leading brands keep flexibility when it comes to accommodating change of design, colour, and theme, with the use of technology.

Due to advancements in technology, these days the process of making crockery has become very intricate and scientific. The plates are made with machines and moulds and baked to certain temperature for strength and durability so as to last long.

There are certain themed restaurants which still use handmade plates but they are very costly and less durable as compared to the chinaware made in factories.

Various factors drive technological developments in the manufacture and design of crockery and suppliers usually use the inputs/feedback from hotel's kitchens/restaurants to improve their products.

The crockery marketed to hotels, restaurants, etc. each has its product strengths. For example, some of these products are very India specific and are not used worldwide. The product selection should be done after careful feedback from F&B Managers and Chefs regarding the style and size of the crockery.

New developments and improvements in the realm of crockery are an ever evolving process and companies nowadays are very sensitive to the new requirements and concepts generated by the industry. Suppliers share the feedback on a continual basis with their associate companies overseas who then implement the changes and develop crockery, based on those specific requirements. It is associate company's sustained endeavour to design and develop products as per the changing concepts and requirements.

According to Burkhard, "In the hospitality industry, crockery is used in various operations and for different occasions. The basic quality characteristics are high mechanic resistance, especially at the edges, a flawless hygienic surface, minimal variation of dimensions, resistance to heat and cold and, finally, decors and colours.

There are independently tested legal standards that must be met for products manufactured in Germany. Other quality features include stackability, low abrasion from stacking, easy to serve and easy to clear the table for service."

The most important thing which drives product strategy is based on customer's satisfaction. Thus much effort is placed on research to gather the data and get back with the product and service that fulfills the requirement. This helps in ensuring competitive position. The designs and products must also keep up with the market trend. Thus, it is important for suppliers to always keep developing new designs of tableware as well as be innovative enough to be among the leaders in the industry. ■



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Orchestrating Flavours to Create Culinary Magic

Shailendra Singh, Corporate Chef, Pride Hotel Group



An accomplished culinary professional currently serving as the Corporate Chef at Pride Hotel Group, Shailendra Singh holds a Bachelor's degree in Hotel Management from Mangalore University. He embarked on his journey in the hospitality industry by joining the Jaypee Group of Hotel New Delhi as part of their management training, after which he joined Marriott New Delhi as a CDP and continued on to Carnival Cruise Lines. He also worked with luxury hotels across India, including Hyatt, Taj, and Accor. He has been instrumental in the pre-opening of Oakwood Premier Pune Bistro and Pride Aerocity New Delhi. In 2015, he assumed the role of Regional Executive Chef at Pride Aerocity New Delhi, spanning nearly four years. In 2019, he joined Shanti Hospitality as a Multi Property Executive Chef, and in 2021 he rejoined the Pride Group of Hotels as a Regional Executive Chef. Recognising his exceptional skills and contributions, he was swiftly promoted to the position of Corporate Chef in 2022, overseeing the culinary endeavours of Pride Hotel Group on a broader scale. With a wealth of experience gained over the years, he continues to lend his expertise to the growth and success of Pride Hotels Group.

In an informal chat with [Sharmila Chand](#), he talks about the lessons learnt in the kitchen and more....

How do you define yourself?

I perceive myself as a chef, embodying the essence of culinary artistry. In essence, I see myself as a culinary architect, fashioning experiences that delight the senses and leave an indelible mark on the gastronomic journey of those I serve.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

My culinary philosophy revolves around boundless creativity and continuous exploration. I find immense joy in pushing the boundaries of culinary conventions, consistently seeking novel ways to craft dishes that resonate with innovation. My kitchen is a canvas of experimentation where new ingredients are my colours, and every recipe is an opportunity to conjure enchanting flavours.

What is your area of expertise?

My area of expertise encompasses the holistic spectrum of culinary arts, from conceptualization and menu curation to meticulous financial management and the cultivation of a skilled and motivated team.

Had you not been a chef?

Had I not chosen to be a chef, I would have envisioned myself as a doctor. The allure

of healing and making a positive impact on people's lives through medical expertise has always resonated deeply with me.

What is your source of inspiration?

My inspiration flows from the remarkable influence of my mother, who stood as the first chef in my life's journey. Her culinary prowess ignited my passion for cooking and nourished my appreciation for the art of flavor. From her, I imbibed the crucial lesson that food serves as a universal bridge connecting individuals.

Witnessing the joy that food brought and the smiles it conjured, I resolved to follow the path of a chef. Through the delectable creations that grace our tables, I now have the privilege of kindling happiness and evoking smiles on the faces of countless guests, carrying forward the legacy of warmth and delight my mother ingrained in me.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

According to my experience if you have following skills no one can stop you from being a good chef:

Adaptability - The perfect chef is flexible and adapts to the needs and requests of clients. Being able to adapt means that

you are more flexible, that you take into account the dietary and culinary needs of your customers and use them to adapt and reinvent yourself.

Determination - The perfect chef takes care of all the details service after service. Consistency, effort and daily work in the kitchen are some of the basic "ingredients" that every chef should have. No day is less important than another when managing a kitchen service; caring for every detail is essential. This determination demands a great commitment and a true vocation, without them the long days in the kitchen would be very difficult.

Creativity - The perfect chef creates dishes and gastronomic experiences through research.

Research - The perfect chef cares about culinary trends. Learning about new culinary trends, flavours, ingredients and different pairings is something you will have to do throughout your professional life.

Accuracy and Responsibility - The perfect chef is meticulous, and takes into account cooking times and temperature. To be a chef you have to be very meticulous in everything you do, from the simplest to the most complex task.

Forecast and Planning - The perfect

chef anticipates what the kitchen needs. Managing a professional kitchen is very complex because of the diversity of dishes it offers. It takes a lot of planning to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

How do you de-stress?

When stressed I find solace in engaging with our team members and guests. There's something remarkably therapeutic about exchanging thoughts, sharing experiences, and forging connections that helps alleviate the pressures of the moment.

I also love engaging in conversations with guests about their stay and their overall experience which brings me immense joy. Their feedback and anecdotes provide insights that not only enrich my perspective but also rejuvenate my passion for creating memorable moments.

Moreover, I find immense delight by watching cooking shows. Watching culinary experts weave their magic on screen not only ignites my creativity but also allows me to unwind as I observe the artistic fusion of flavors and techniques.

Fav Equipment?

If I were to select a favourite equipment, it would undoubtedly be the chef's knife. Its versatility knows no bounds, seamlessly adapting to a wide range of tasks that range from precise chopping and skillful slicing to meticulous dicing and refined mincing.

Fav Restaurant?

One culinary haven that captures my heart is the world-renowned Tunday Kebabi in Aminabad, Lucknow. What sets Tunday Kebabi apart is not only its exquisite fare but also the rich heritage and tradition that it encapsulates.

Your Fav Diner?

My favourite guests, without a doubt, are old friends who return to savour the culinary creations. There's a certain warmth in sharing a meal with familiar faces, where the rapport goes beyond food and ventures into the realm of cherished memories and shared experiences.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

My experience in the kitchen has provided me with priceless lessons that have influenced how I approach the kitchen. The proverb "the chef is always right" refers to good habits, hygiene, time management, and a safe work environment. This lesson resonates beyond the kitchen, permeating into efficient daily routines.

Last meal on earth: What would you choose?

As my last meal on earth, I'll choose Olio, Aglio, pepperoncino sauté mushrooms, which are one of my absolute favourites.

10 years from now?

Looking ahead a decade, I envision myself in the role of Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Culinary Operations at Pride Hotels Group. With a decade's worth of experience and dedication propelling me forward, I anticipate leading culinary endeavours with a strategic vision that extends beyond the kitchen.

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Flavours from Canton

Cantonese cuisine has originated from Guangdong province, which is a coastal province in south-east part of Mainland China, adjacent to Hong Kong and Macau. It is the most widely served style of Chinese cuisine in the world. The word Cantonese refers to the name Canton, which is a city in southern China, officially known as Guangzhou today. Broadly speaking, 'Cantonese' refers to the region around Guangdong province and Hong Kong.

Cantonese cuisine, also called Yue cuisine or Guangdong cuisine is one of the eight major cuisines with a long history of about 2,000 years. It is featured with widely use of materials and rich cooking methods. Cantonese cuisine is distinguished by simple dishes that are all about clear, natural flavours, reflecting the region's abundant seafood and agriculture.

The cuisine is generally lightly cooked, not usually fried and the flavour is generally mild, fresh, natural, and slightly sweet. The most famous dishes include White Cut Chicken, Cantonese Roasted Goose and Roasted

Suckling Pig.

While cooks in Sichuan and Dongbei may be very generous with spices, Cantonese cooks use very few heavy spices, thereby facilitating the main ingredients to manifest themselves more potently. Also unlike the cuisines of northern and western China, lamb and goat are not so frequently presented on the Cantonese table. Pork, beef, chicken, fish, and seafood are the primary sources of proteins in Cantonese cuisine.

Seasonings Used

In order to retain the original flavour of the main ingredient, Cantonese chefs are very cautious about seasonings. The seasonings are used to bring out or highlight the

original taste of the ingredient, not to make it. Less spicy ingredients such as peppers, chili, ginger and garlic are used. With the seasonal changes, dishes in summer and autumn are light, in winter and spring are a little bit heavier.

Garlic, ginger, and scallion are the main seasonings used in Cantonese cuisine. There are other seasonings too used in the Cantonese kitchen, like chili peppers, five spice powder, coriander leaves, rice vinegar, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, black pepper, star anise, honey and sugar.

Rice vinegar accentuates the flavour of vegetables, as does a little sprinkling of salt. A pinch of sugar gives food a mildly sweet taste that is characteristic of many Cantonese dishes and snacks. Several sauces are important condiments in Cantonese cuisine. The most widely used sauces in this cuisine include hoisin sauce, oyster sauce, plum sauce, sweet and sour sauce, and soy sauce.

An emphasis in Cantonese cuisine is on preserving the natural flavour of food. A Cantonese Chef would consider it a major





culinary blunder to produce an overcooked or highly seasoned dish. For example, when they cook fresh sea fish, though it is not served raw like that of Japanese sashimi, but to preserve and enhance the delicious flavour, the Cantonese steam it and add just a little soy sauce, ginger and bits of chives. Like the Japanese, Cantonese delight in the natural flavours of fresh sea fish.

Cooking Methods

Stir frying, boiling, steaming, baking, braising, sautéing, shallow frying, deep frying and roasting are the most prevalent cooking methods in the Cantonese cuisine. But here stir-fried dishes are not as common as in Sichuan. Cantonese like to boil soups, braise or roast meats and sauté food too.

These cooking methods are aimed to preserve the flavour of the dishes. Cantonese cuisine also has popular deep fried food that is often eaten as snacks, desserts, or breakfast food.

Cantonese chefs are especially good at controlling heat of fire and dish decorating, and dishes they cooked are not only tasty but appealing in both appearance and smell.

Common Dishes

Signature dishes of Cantonese cuisine include plain boiled chicken, plain boiled shrimps, piglet barbecued over open oven, beef with oyster sauce, snake soup, oil fried shelled fresh shrimps, plain steamed sea food, braised shrimps and sea cucumber.

Certain fermented, dried, or cured ingredients are essential elements in Cantonese cooking's mild flavours. Jiang yao zhu or fishy dried scallops are often added to clear soups or the rice porridge congee. La chang, a sweet, fatty dried sausage that

looks like a cross between a Slim Jim and a pepperoni stick, is added in sticky rice.

In Cantonese cuisine, Xian dan, the wobbly black salted duck eggs, liven up congee with their funky alkaline flavour. And mei cai – salt-pickled Chinese cabbage – is typically cooked with pork fried rice.

All these flavours are brought together with a variety of techniques that includes steaming, stir frying, shallow frying, double steaming, braising, deep frying, and roasting. The latter is a technique known in Cantonese as assiu mai (or shao wei in Mandarin) and includes all forms of roast meats in its ambit.

Steamed white rice is being used as a staple food in Cantonese cuisine. It is commonly served with barbecued meats, steamed fish, or stir fries. Rice is also the main ingredient in elaborate chao fan, fried rice dishes.

Although deep fried dishes are not the mainstay of Guangdong culinary legacy, there are quite a number of them which are popular around the region. A youtiao is a long, golden-brown deep-fried strip of dough. Youtiaos are usually eaten for breakfast with soy milk.

Then there is zhaliang, which is made by tightly wrapping a rice sheet around a youtiao (deep-fried dough stick). Zhaliang is popular in Guangdong and Hong Kong. It is usually partaken with soy milk.

Bao zai fan consists of rice cooked in a ceramic casserole dish of sorts topped with other ingredients and served in the cooking vessel. Popular varieties include spare ribs (pai gu bao zai fan) and Chinese sausage with preserved meat (la wei bao zai fan). Then there is congee-rice porridge—a breakfast staple often eaten with such intensely flavoured items as fermented tofu or preserved eggs.

Recipe: Sweet & Sour Pork

Ingredients

- 1 pound pork tenderloin, cut into small pieces
- 2 1/2 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Salt
- 2 teaspoon of soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon of corn starch
- 3 tablespoon of ketchup
- 3 tablespoon of sugar
- 3 tablespoon of peanut / vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced
- 3 scallions, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
- 3 cups of snow peas, cut in half

Method

Toss the pork with 1/2 tablespoon vinegar and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Mix the remaining 2 tablespoon of vinegar, the soy sauce, corn starch, ketchup, 3 tablespoon of sugar, 1/3 cup water and 1/2 teaspoon salt in another bowl.

Heat 2 tablespoon of peanut oil in a large skillet or wok over high heat. Add the pork and slowly stir until it turns mostly opaque, in about 2 minutes. Remove the pork with a slotted spoon and transfer to a plate. Discard the oil and wipe out the skillet.

Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of peanut oil in the skillet, then stir-fry the garlic with a pinch each of salt and sugar, for 5 seconds. Add the carrots and scallions and stir-fry until crisp-tender; for 2 minutes. Add a little water if the garlic starts to stick to the skillet. Add the pork, snow peas and soy sauce mixture; stir for about 3 minutes until the pork is cooked through and the sauce is thickened.

Noodle Dishes

Cantonese cuisine also has its share of noodle dishes. Shahe noodles are a kind of rice noodles whose birth can probably be traced from the town of Shahe that is now a part of Guangzhou. They are broad and white in colour. Their texture is elastic and a little chewy.

They do not freeze or dry well and are thus generally purchased fresh in strips or sheets that may be cut to the desired width. Shahefen is popular in Guangdong, Guangxi and Hainan, in southern China. ■



Heading the F&B department of a hotel or a restaurant chain or for that matter running a standalone restaurant business successfully is both exciting as well as challenging. It becomes evident that running an F&B operation is not a smooth sailing business at all.

It takes great organisation skills, and consistent hard work; often involving 24x7 engagement to successfully run a restaurant business. One has to have the skills of putting every resource in the right place to one's advantage so that the F&B business can bring in more customers and, hence, result in greater profits.

Managing Matters

As expected, in the realm of F&B, work pressure is indeed high. One needs to balance it well. For time and task it is the guest first. There is no room for the attitude of keeping aside pending jobs, no room for detached approach and no saying 'No' to the guests' needs. However, for stress relief one should allocate at least half an hour for workouts daily.

It is not always a cakewalk to establish a profit making F&B unit. One of the many challenges faced at various levels is the dichotomy when a certain unit is witnessing

a constant traffic of patrons but is unable to reap the expected profits. The burgeoning numbers are not always the sign of a successful F&B outlet, there are different attributes and subtleties that need to be orchestrated to create an F&B unit that is both popular as well as beneficial.

In operations, dealing with a seemingly difficult & unforeseen situation at work is a daily affair for a professional and it is no different at any happening place. One has to be always on the toes as something interesting or the other keeps on happening.

However, challenges are part of the enjoyment for a die-hard professional player. All this actually gives thrill to few and making their work even more interesting. They in fact take challenges as a part of the job and each time they come across a seemingly difficult task and accomplish it, they get sense of satisfaction that is comparable to none.

Having said that, it is very important to manage time and stress as it gives a sense of control and confidence. And how does one do that in the frantic environment of F&B operations, on a day-to-day basis?

Maintaining a 'To Do' list and planning each day by prioritising the task, managing commitments, avoiding procrastination, delegating work, anticipating and being

prepared, avoiding distractions and learning to say 'No' when necessary, concentrating on results rather than the activity, together helps in managing our time and stress, effectively.

Qualities to Counter Challenges

The ability to seamlessly manage the day-to-day operations of the several departments that form the F&B business unit, and the ability to maintain F&B outlets compliant with both internal standards and external regulations, and to manage the influence of unions in a non-confrontational way are the attributes that a successful F&B Manager in a hotel should have.

There are various challenges faced in different F&B units, depending on the mercurial conditions of the markets. The successful F&B Manager needs the ability to gauge the pulse of industry trends and make the overall F&B business unit profitable. She/he must also have the ability to improve customers' satisfaction and increase their loyalty, along with the ability to improve staff performance and their motivation.

Continually upgrading the products and services to match the competition and growing guest's demands is a foremost challenge of the F&B unit. Every guest comes with different expectations based



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upon her/his previous experience/s or the stories she/he has heard. The challenge lies in understanding what guest wants and then exceeding her/his expectations.

Also staff retention, maintaining supply chain, and having limited time for your personal life are other challenges for a successful F&B Manager, which she/he needs to overcome. Countering such multiple challenges has its flip side too. In the service industry it is very difficult to manage your schedule your way and your personal life becomes unplanned.

An F&B Manager needs to be consistent in meeting guests' expectations, should have good operational skills, and have an innovative thought process. Besides these, a successful he/she needs to successfully overcome the challenge of being cost-effective and profitable at the same time, to constantly enhance guest satisfaction without affecting bottom lines.

Thus in order to run an F&B outlet successfully one needs to work well under pressure and be organised, flexible, creative and self-motivated. At the same time, the person running the show must possess high energy, entrepreneurial spirit, and should be a motivational leader, effective communicator and be effective in providing exceptional customer service.

Furthermore, true desire to understand and anticipate the needs of others in a fast-paced environment is most important. Also one needs to have loyal, smart and knowledgeable associates to successfully manage the F&B show.

Managing Food Cost

Food costs play major role in any restaurant's success or failure and is one of the major challenges faced by the F&B Managers. For

example, it is wonderful to have foie gras in the menu, but think twice (or more) if it has a chance of affecting profits. Without making a careful consideration of food costs, perhaps no restaurant (which include restaurants in hotels, of course) can have enduring success in the business. With more precise food cost management, one can eliminate or at least reduce excess inventory and decrease waste, thereby increasing margins and business growth.

Food cost surely is one of the high costs in any F&B operations. COGS (Cost of Goods Sold) is a key calculation whenever fixing price of dishes on the menu. All the elements like procuring costs, stocking costs and preparing costs are added to reach the final figure, which is called the food cost of any item. The formula for calculating total food cost of a restaurant is simple – net food purchases divided by net food sales (here net means after the change in inventory).

F&B Manager has to put many measures together to help in maintaining the food costs in commercial F&B operations. For example, constantly checking the inventory to ensure minimum wastage, maintaining standardisation of recipes and portion size and consistently delivering on the standards, training Chefs on a continual basis to manage food storage and process like FIFO (first in first out), and through pricing the menu items based on their production costs.

Controlled store requisition, keeping the perishable food items at the right temperature so that their shelf lives are

not compromised, ensuring FIFO for all perishable items, controlling the portion size of the dish, establishing yields of the recipes and checking they are being achieved through production, minimising waste in the kitchen and tracking of waste, organising the storage

room and keeping inventory to a minimum, and by ensuring stock rotation to avoid spoilage are some of the effective ways to manage food costs.

Right ordering is essential for keeping the food costs in check. Following standard recipes, which includes standard portion and sizes for vegetables, meats, cheese, etc. is important.

Training and briefing the restaurant employees to care about the food costs and placing food orders as per the requirement are important steps to keep the food costs in restaurants in check. Do not overproduce. This will serve many purposes; it will save costs, facilitate presenting fresh products to the guests and will entail less wastage/spoilage.

Loving the Challenges

Nevertheless, the F&B honchos, if given a second chance, will choose the same department to work. They thoroughly enjoy every moment of their job, which helps them motivate through the challenging tasks or stressful situations.

Being a foodie at heart it becomes easier for them not simply to understand the needs of the customers but also the protocol that needs to be followed when offering products to them. They learn to keep a balance between work and personal life. It is necessary to take a break and managing to find time for indulging in small things, thus making the job of running an F&B unit non monotonous.

There is an added advantage of the profession. Besides the opportunity to taste the best of food & beverage options around, being a people's man one enjoy meeting with some of the top shots and inspirational people around, which this job provides as an opportunity. ■

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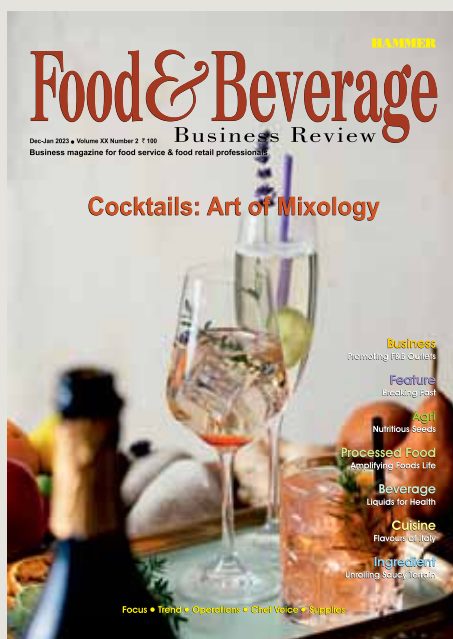
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Kitchen Cleanliness

Nowadays people go out to dine to have a wonderful experience of delicious food prepared in a professional kitchen by a trained Chef and at the same time to enjoy the ambience and surroundings. Restaurant customers expect their food to be cooked in a clean kitchen and to have clean surroundings in service area, regardless of the size or type of the restaurant.

Commercial food production environments such as kitchens, canteens and food preparation areas must adhere to stringent legislation governing their condition and hygiene standards. The comprehensive kitchen cleaning must ensure greater hygiene, higher efficiency and extended life of equipment through proper maintenance, and reduced fire risks.

Food hygiene standards and regulations are now becoming more pronounced with FSSAI becoming more active in food sector. Non-adherence to the regulations can now lead to severe fines that can have a negative effect on profitability, as well as on the

reputation of the business.

Daily cleaning routines can help maintain a good level of hygiene. It's important to clean the floors and counters in the restaurant kitchen on a daily basis. But there are some other kitchen cleaning tasks that do not need to be performed as frequently.

However on less accessible surfaces such as walls, ceilings, lights, equipment and kitchen fittings, the gradual accumulation of grease and fat can provide a potential breeding ground for bacteria. Burnt on carbon and fat deposits must be removed, ensuring any potentially harmful bacteria are eliminated. Poor cleaning procedures can lead to bacterial contamination, spread of diseases, pest infestations and reduced equipment life.

Since kitchens are hot, messy, busy places it is difficult to keep them clean, especially on a daily basis. For this reason, owning a professional, or adopting a high-quality steam/deep cleaning schedule is the ideal solution towards keeping restaurant and other commercial kitchens clean and disinfected.

To ensure that equipment does not get too dirty to be used correctly, it is suggested to do a deep cleaning once a month. Keeping a kitchen clean and disinfected help reduce the risk of spreading food-borne illnesses and cross-contamination.

Keeping a clean kitchen is incredibly important for many reasons. In fact, every workplace should be clean, regardless of what the type of work it is, to provide healthy work conditions. Restaurant and kitchen staff will work better in a clean kitchen than in a dirty kitchen.

Though it is important that food should be prepared on a clean, disinfected surface, but it does not mean that chemical cleaning products should be used on those surfaces. Chemical cleaning products leave a chemical residue which can be transferred to anything that comes in contact with the surface, like skin or food that can absorb that chemical residue. These chemicals can possibly prove to have a link to various health problems for the people working in the kitchen. Chemical residues can possibly

change the taste of prepared food in the kitchen or restaurant, which could affect the business.

In a working kitchen, food splatters and grease get dispersed throughout the kitchen. It can contaminate any to every surface. Thus it is imperative to properly clean a kitchen, including all surfaces, high and low. What is the best and fastest effective solution to keeping a commercial or restaurant kitchen clean, disinfected and chemical free?

Facets of Kitchen Cleanliness

Regular cleaning of all kitchen appliances is an essential prerequisite for serving safe food. For example, cleaning the chopping boards and worktops needs to become a habit before starting the process of food preparation, in order to prevent the spread of bacteria. Having separate chopping boards for meat and poultry products also helps in maintaining long-term hygiene. Using hot water for washing out bacteria from the worktops and chopping boards should be the general practice in kitchens.

Despite the widespread use of disposable napkins in the kitchens, use of cloths and sponges becomes often unavoidable. Dirty and damp cloths can play the perfect spoiler to safe food as they breed bacteria, which can then easily travel to the plate. All kitchen cloths therefore need to be regularly washed and dried before using. Keeping different cloths for separate purposes also goes a long way in keeping the kitchen hygiene intact. Special care needs to be taken in not touching the tea towels after handling meat. It is preferable for the food service professionals operating in food service outlets to keep their nails short and clean. Moreover, hair should be tied while cooking.

Restaurants of star-rated hotels generally have their own SOPs (standard of cleaning process) in place. The Sous Chefs of many hotels monitor the personal hygiene of the staff and cleanliness of all kitchen equipment on a day-to-day basis. Some hotels entrust the Chef on duty to check the nails, hairs and cleanliness of the uniform of the personnel.

In order to prevent a delicious dish to turn into a recipe for multiple diseases, keeping wooden spoons, knives, spatulas, tongs and other utensils spic and span is very essential. For achieving that, washing such utensils at a very high temperature, with good quality detergent has critical importance. A

dishwasher comes very handy to make the tedious task of cleaning the utensils easy and effective. Of course, covering food, whether they are cooked as well as uncooked, is always mandatory for maintaining a hygienic kitchen.

Following the age-old adage that prevention is better than cure, some hotels prefer to keep a wash station outside the receiving area of the kitchen for cleaning food stuffs such as eggs, vegetables and fruits. Stringent norms are specially followed for meat, fish, and seafood products.

Floor cleaning is another aspect of kitchen hygiene that often goes unnoticed. Different cleaning schedules need to be adhered to for maintaining the cleanliness of every nook and cranny of the kitchen of a food service outlet. However, comprehensive cleaning of the kitchen floor of a food service outlet should take place generally at night, when all the movable furniture can be shifted and every corner of the kitchen can be scrubbed with disinfectant.

Adequate and constant supply of electricity and water are other two very important aspects of kitchen hygiene. Sufficient supply of hot and cold water is as important for a clean kitchen as oxygen is to life. Correct lighting is important not only for the Chef for checking the colour of the food, but also goes a long way in maintaining hygiene in the kitchen.

Proper food storage is another important facet for a clean kitchen. Maintaining the required temperature for food products and cleaning the fridge on a regular basis is important for preventing contamination from rotten food items.

Deep Cleaning

Restaurants and other food service establishments face unique commercial kitchen cleaning challenges. By their very nature, kitchens generate high volumes of greasy soils which are very difficult to remove. Just as bad, these soils are tracked through dining areas, restrooms and throughout the facility. The results can be costly, including loss of business, dangerous slip-and-fall accidents and more.

Deep cleaning process could be very much relevant for these following equipments:

Exhaust Hoods

Cleaning the hoods over stoves and ovens is crucial to keep the air quality healthy for everyone who works in the kitchen. You

should start by removing the filters from the hoods and washing them thoroughly. Then, scrub down the hoods themselves to remove any baked-on grease or soil. The traditional way to clean this equipment is to soak the filters in a sink full of hot, soapy water, and scrub the hoods with degreaser solution. These are both dirty jobs, and they require safety equipment to avoid chemical burns and damage to eyes. After applying cleaning solution to the surface, a powerful jet of water will rinse away all grease and soil, leaving the equipment clean and free of contaminants. Rather than letting filters air dry for hours, you can use the powerful vacuum to remove all the moisture from inside the filters.

Walk-in Refrigerators

Walk-in refrigerators are constantly used by most restaurants all day long. Most managers have the floors cleaned every night, the door handles wiped when needed, and the entrance way mopped once or twice a day. This still leaves out the part of the walk-in refrigerator that gets the most use: the shelves. You should pull out all the food from your walk-in refrigerator's shelves once a month and use a spray-and-vac system to apply cleaning solution. Then, you should use the powerful spray to remove soil and foreign objects. You can use the same solution to clean the interior of the walk-in refrigerator from top to bottom, including the walls, the inside of the door, and the floor and entrance way.

Hot Boxes

Whether you call them proofing boxes, steam boxes, or hot boxes, these large pieces of equipment provide a moist environment in which to hold warm, prepared food. These boxes are notorious for growing slimy interiors within a few weeks; when the unit cools, the interior steam and grease droplets get deposited all over the interior walls. You can also use a spray-and-vac here to clean the walls and remove the layer of grease you find inside. Then you can vacuum away all the moisture from inside the unit, leaving it clean, dry, and bacteria-free.

Besides these equipments, deep cleaning operations must clean ovens, cooking surfaces, cutting boards, exhaust hood filters, defrosting freezers, grills. It should sanitise and degrease equipment, enable odour control, clean bathrooms, floors, walls, furniture, air vents, and mixers, juicers, toasters, coffee machines, etc. Succinctly, it should facilitate regular maintenance. ■

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Carnivore-packed products offer unique nutritional benefits that make them stand out from traditional food options. They are typically rich in high-quality proteins, essential amino acids, vitamins, and minerals necessary for optimal human health. These products often prioritize grass-fed, pasture-raised, and free-range sources, ensuring a higher nutrient profile



and superior taste. Additionally, they are often free from additives, preservatives, and carbohydrates, making them suitable for those seeking a low-carb or ketogenic approach to nutrition.

The range includes:

Plain Chicken Salami: Plain chicken salami offers a delectable and protein-rich option for carnivores. Made from lean chicken meat, it is seasoned with natural herbs and spices to enhance the flavour profile. This convenient and versatile carnivore snack can be enjoyed on its own or incorporated into salads, sandwiches, or charcuterie boards.

Chicken Sliced Ham: Chicken sliced ham provides a lean alternative to traditional pork ham. Made from tender chicken breast, it is cured and sliced into thin, deli-style pieces. This carnivore product offers a savory and satisfying option for those who crave the taste and texture of ham while adhering to a carnivorous diet.

Chicken seek kabab: Savor the succulent flavours of Chicken Seekh Kabab, a popular Indian delicacy. Made from finely minced chicken blended with aromatic spices and herbs, these skewered delights are grilled to perfection, resulting in a smoky and juicy texture. Indulge in the irresistible taste of these mouthwatering kababs, perfect for any occasion.

Carnivore India
 anil.sawhney@yahoo.com

INSULATED FOOD CONTAINERS

Zanuff industries Introduces premium insulated food containers, designed to meet the rigorous demands of the hospitality industry. Crafted with high-quality food grade stainless steel SS 304, these container ensures the safe and hygienic transportation of food while maintaining its temperature for extended periods.

With exceptional dual-wall insulation, this container effectively retains hot or cold temperatures, preserving the freshness and flavours of culinary creations during transit. The robust stainless steel construction not only guarantees durability for long-term usage but also facilitates effortless cleaning and upkeep, meeting the highest sanitary standards of the industry.



Available sizes : 9-15-30-50 liters

The thoughtfully engineered design incorporates secure locking mechanisms and a leak-resistant seal, providing peace of mind during transportation and storage.

Whether used for catering events, meal delivery services, or any hospitality operation, the insulated container offers a reliable solution for maintaining the integrity of food from kitchen to table. Innovatively designed and meticulously constructed, premium insulated food container sets a new standard for quality and performance in the industry, elevating the efficiency and professionalism of food transportation for all hospitality professionals.

They are available in 4 sizes i.e. 9-15-30-50 litres.

Zanuff Industries LLP
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SUBSCRIPTION-BASED SERVICE ROBOTS

In an era dominated by technology, cutting-edge innovations are often perceived as exclusive luxuries. The digital landscape is ever-evolving, leaving many on the side-lines, yearning to immerse themselves fully in the world of digitalisation. Yet, a promising solution emerges in the form of subscription-based service robots, poised to revolutionise the concept of smart dining by enhancing affordability, accessibility, and holistic technological integration within restaurants.



In the contemporary restaurant landscape, establishments are confronted with pivotal challenges. Addressing the prevalent issue of employee turnover demands innovative retention strategies. Maintaining a seamless customer experience is crucial; even a single average interaction can significantly impact patron perception. In the wake of the post-pandemic era, stringent hygiene standards require unwavering attention. Managing operational costs while delivering quality service is a delicate balancing act.

Subscription based robots introduces a unique "Pay-as-You-Go" model for the

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restaurant industry, offering enhanced efficiency and affordability to restaurants of all sizes. Using a "plug and play" based model the service robot is ready to use from the moment it is delivered to the customer. It provides end-to-end solutions with complete technology support, thus boosting operational efficiency and ensuring a seamless dining experience for all customers.

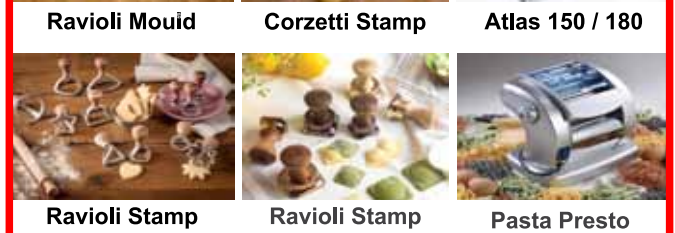
Embracing this model is akin to having a dependable "Robot-as-a-Service" team member. The monthly plan seamlessly covers all vital operational aspects, from maintenance to accessibility features, ensuring a hassle-free experience. No concerns about initial investments, insurance, or cumbersome maintenance tasks – the service provider takes care of it all.

Tailored to suit each restaurant's unique requirements, this versatile solution fits into diverse establishments, from charming local eateries to expansive high-end restaurants. As the restaurant industry undergoes a profound transformation.

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Emphasising on Sustainable and Ethical Practices

Flavius Chettiar, Director of Food and Beverage, The Westin Mumbai Garden City



With over 14 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Flavius Chettiar has assumed new position as Director of Food and Beverage at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. In his new role, he will be responsible for overseeing the re-positioning of the food and beverage venues within the hotel, with a focus on enhancing the overall dining experience for guests. His wealth of knowledge and expertise will play a pivotal role in elevating the culinary offerings and ensuring guest satisfaction. Flavius Chettiar's career in the hospitality industry began with Oberoi Hotels and Resorts in Mumbai, where he laid the foundation for his passion for food and beverage. He graduated from the highly regarded Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development (OCLD) in 2011, further enhancing his skills and knowledge in the field. He is excited to shoulder new responsibilities in his present position that encompass achieving annual budget goals, ensuring guest satisfaction, maintaining departmental profitability, introducing new F&B concepts, and fostering the growth and development of the team.

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

What do you enjoy most about being F&B Head?

The Director of Food & Beverage Service is an extremely fulfilling role for individuals who are passionate about the food & beverage creation in terms of crafting innovative food & cocktail menus and curating exceptional dining experiences for guests coming to the food & beverage outlets of the hotel.

I get great satisfaction in developing the skills and talents of the staff and creating a positive working environment. Along with team as the F&B head, my primary goal is to achieve great revenues, but this can only be done if they team morale is high and they have a leader that leads by example. I also truly believe in networking as this can lead to exciting collaborations and opportunities for growth.

What are your plans to introduce in your present role?

As the Director of Food & Beverage I have some very specific goals and objectives which are in line with the establishment I am overseeing. I also have my own vision and strategies which I wish to implement and they include:

- Introducing Innovative Menu Offerings
- Creating an Enhanced Customer Experience
- Refining the Wine and Beverage Program

Orchestrating Special Events and Promotions

Conducting Staff Training and Development
Focusing on Local Sourcing and Sustainability

Collaborations and Partnerships

What is your working philosophy?

My working philosophy is centered on a set of core principles and values that shape my approach to managing food and beverage operations. Above all, I place a strong emphasis on prioritizing the customer's experience. My goal is to not only meet but exceed customer expectations by providing exceptional service, high-quality food, and creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Ensuring consistency in the taste and presentation of our offerings is a fundamental aspect of my philosophy.

What is your key focus area?

Nurturing and developing the skills and talents of my team is a top priority, as I firmly believe that a motivated and well-trained staff is crucial for achieving excellence in service.

How you plan to create a USP within your hotel brand?

Working with the Westin wellness brand, I place a significant emphasis on sustainable and ethical practices. This includes a focus on

sourcing local, organic, and ethically produced ingredients. I also recognize the importance of social and environmental responsibility in all aspects of our operations. Ethical conduct, integrity, and transparency are essential values that guide my approach to leadership, both within my team and in my interactions with customers and partners.

How do you define yourself?

As the Director of Food and Beverage Service, my role involves highlighting my qualifications, approach to the position, and key attributes. It's essential to effectively convey my qualifications, skills, and values to demonstrate my readiness to excel in this role. My self-definition is tailored to align with the specific requirements and expectations of the establishment where I work or aspire to work.

Lastly, how has your journey been in Food and Beverage industry?

My journey in the food and beverage field is a unique one, shaped by my personal interests, goals, and experiences. It's a path that has seen its share of twists and turns, but with my unwavering dedication, a commitment to continuous improvement, and a deep-seated love for the industry, I've discovered that many professionals can indeed find rewarding and fulfilling careers in food and beverage.

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