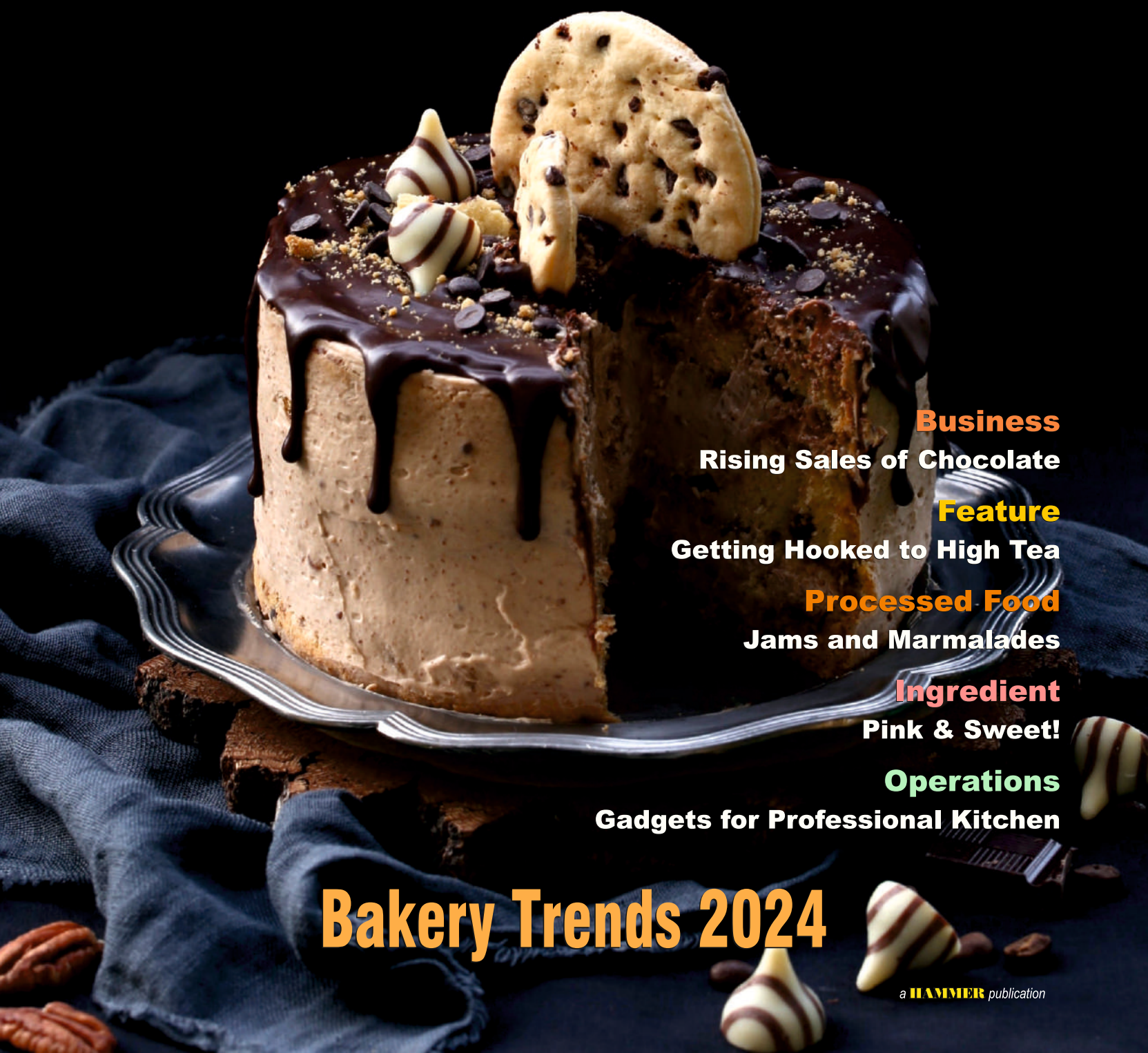


DEC-JAN '24 VOL. XV NO. 4 ₹ 100

BAKERY

Business Magazine for Bakery & Confectionery Professionals

REVIEW



Business

Rising Sales of Chocolate

Feature

Getting Hooked to High Tea

Processed Food

Jams and Marmalades

Ingredient

Pink & Sweet!

Operations

Gadgets for Professional Kitchen

Bakery Trends 2024

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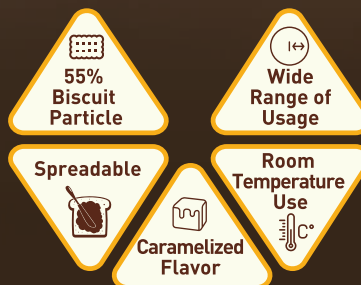
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Editorial



Creating sweet memories is by having sweet and delicious bakery items like cakes and pastries. The bakery industry will witness trends favouring classic cake flavours like chocolate and vanilla, alongside a rise in unique and exotic options. Also customers are becoming health conscious and wary of things that would affect their health adversely. Cover story finds how bakers in the coming year have adapted their products to new trends to meet the demands of the consumers.

The demand for chocolate in India is increasing as Indians have a sweet tooth. Their love for all things sweet is expected to push demand for chocolate products higher in the coming years. Business story finds that main two reasons for the increasing demand for this is because it is an ideal gifting option and also because bakeries are increasingly using it to add higher delicacy to their products.

Peaceful environment and ambience with soft strains of music, aid in soothing the frayed nerves of modern stressed-up executives. Several Tea Lounges & Bars have sprung up in major cities to rejuvenate sagging energy and morale of modern executives. Feature story finds how these lounges & bars are influencing guests to get habituated to traditional tea serving ritual of afternoon tea, in modern format, to experience an entire world of aroma and flavours.

The major stories are well complemented by the rich information disseminated through topics other regular sections provide including latest news, reports, and features on the Bakery operations.

BAKERY

REVIEW

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Sigep

The Dolce World Expo

20-24, January, 2024

At Rimini Expo Centre, Rimini, Italy

From 20-24, January, 2024 at Rimini Expo Centre, innovative ideas in the industry took the centre stage at Sigep-The Dolce World Expo (45th edition), the international artisan gelato, pastry, bakery and coffee trade show, organized by IEG - Italian Exhibition Group. The Vision Plaza, hosted key dolce foodservice speakers who talked on excellence in innovation, globally trending topics and scenarios, including Circana, US leading advisor on consumer behaviour. According to their reports, "out-of-home" consumption in Europe is up +12% on 2022, with dolce bakery products alone accounting for 11.4 billion.

More than 5,000 business meetings, with the buyers from 160 countries, took place at the stands of the 1,200 exhibiting brands from 35 nations, thanks to over 500 top buyers from 84 countries through the collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, ITA - Italian Trade Agency and IEG's network of regional advisors.

Foreign attendance was highest from Europe (Spain, Germany, Romania, France, Greece), the Balkan area (Croatia, Serbia, Albania), the Middle East (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon), Africa (Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia), North America (USA, Canada), Central South America (Brazil, Argentina, Mexico), Asia and South East Asia (China, South Korea, Japan, India).

A full programme of events over the five days of the show featured no less than three international competitions with 25 countries taking part in the Gelato World Cup, Junior Pastry World Cup and European Gelato Challenge.

During the five days of Sigep, Rimini presented product innovations, new consumer trends and show-cooking with the most authoritative Masters of artisan production.

New pastry and gelato trends included the return of fruit among the main ingredients to meet health-promoting needs. Sugar-free gelato is also on the increase in this respect. But there were even those who have decided to break the mould by offering savoury versions of gelato.

There were big surprises from the world of chocolate with the emergence of cuvées made from chocolate of different origins. From snacks to ingredients to create aperitif platters for vegans, to new flavours of butter, aromatized with salmon or curry, and to coffee produced from the outer skin of the beans, the atmosphere in the halls was linked to the future of consumption evolution and to those new ideas that can offer original contexts and scenarios.



Contexts that range from product to packaging, more modern technology for machinery and attention to environmental sustainability, started with some of Sigep's stands: recyclable, designed to last for several years and to reduce waste production by 50%.

Junior Pastry World Cup

This year France won the Junior Pastry World Cup, the world's only team event aimed at young under-23 talents, held at Sigep, for the seventh edition with 11 teams competing. The winning team consisted of two young pastry chefs and a team manager, namely

Pierre-Henri Roullard, Alistair Smith and Julien Maheux. Second place went to Chinese Taipei, with the trio Kuo Yi Lee, Che Wei Lee and Shang Cheng Wang; while Hong Kong, with Yiu Man Roger Fok, Lok Yin Lee and Ho Man Yiu, came in third.



This year's theme, chosen by contest chairman Roberto Rinaldini, was 'Myths and Legends': describing a myth or legend of the team's home country to enhance its culture and history through the pastry chefs' creations. And, since 22 nations were competing, the artworks came from all over the world: Australia, Chile, the Philippines, France, Peru, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Malta, South Korea and Uzbekistan.

The different trials ranged from artistic chocolate and sugar presentation, to modern chocolate cake, a typical street food dessert from their home country, and a vegan glass sorbet. They were judged by an international jury consisting of the team managers of the 11 teams with Maestro Iginio Massari as president of honour and Maestro Eugenio Morrone as president of the jury.

The Indian team was represented by Whitecaps, made up of Prerna Kothari & Sayed Sadiya, Pastry Chefs, mentored by Ravi Dhuriya.



Let's create together

Masterline, a division of Bunge India offers India's largest selling and most trusted range of specialized bakery fats, shortenings and margarines.

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It has led the way in the Indian bakery industry with assured quality and service and constant innovation.



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Läderach Plans Expansion in India

Swiss chocolatier Läderach, holding almost 5% share of the Swiss chocolate market, is looking for further expansion in India. The brand has a total of 180 stores,



of which close to 50 are in Switzerland, and therefore, has its largest presence in its home country, followed by the US.

Läderach inaugurated its first chocolate boutique this year in New Delhi's upscale mall, DLF Emporio, in exclusive partnership with DS Group, marking its official entry into the Indian market. Läderach now plans further expansion by opening at least six stores in the next two years, in addition to selling through the company's proprietary e-commerce platform.

Johannes Läderach, CEO of the family-run chocolate business, emphasized India's promise as a market and cited the significant opportunity presented by Indian consumers discovering the brand globally. The brand faces challenges and stiff competition along with complex import duties in India. However, after 16 years of talks, India and Switzerland have inked a deal for a free trade agreement this year at Davos. While the outline has been agreed upon, the details of the agreement are being finalized.

India currently imposes a basic duty of 30%, an IGST of 18%, and an additional social welfare surcharge of 10% on imported chocolates. Läderach chocolates, positioned in the premium segment, are priced at around Rs. 1,200 for 62gm or approximately Rs. 2,000 per 100gm in India.

L'Opéra Launches Art Cafe Gurgaon

L'Opéra launches Art Café at MG Road in Delhi, second, revisited and expanded, edition of the initial concept which was inaugurated by the Honourable Minister of State, Madam Neelakshi Lekhiand, H.E. Ambassador of France Emmanuel Lenain at Bikaner House. A quintessential symbol of French Pâtisserie and Bakery in India, L'Opéra has been the pioneer in bringing the French concept of "Salon de Thé" (Tea Room) to the Indian capital. All L'Opéra outlets are



designed and operated in such manner as to transport the guests and patrons to the heart of Paris through their refined atmosphere and exquisite products.

"Our Art Cafés introduce an exciting, artistic dimension to our established concept. For these outlets, we decided to use elements that refer to France's architecture and culinary tradition. We not only chose colours such as pastel green, pink, light grey but also ceramic floor tiles which recall the traditional bakeries located in the heart of Paris. Additionally, we have added a few elements of art deco style and innovative displays that one can discover inside the outlet. Along with the décor, original, reasonably priced artworks take centre stage, meticulously curated by the talented art expert, Dr. Vladimir Zeitsev. These pieces are not only available for admiration but can also be purchased, allowing patrons to take home a piece of art that resonates with them," says Kazem Samandari, Founder and Chairperson, L'Opéra.

Hard Rock Cafe Strikes a Chord

Hard Rock Cafe, is now back in Pune at Amanora Mall, Hadapsar. Situated on the ground floor East block, the cafe offers a vibrant blend of indoor and outdoor spaces. Hard Rock Cafe Pune is not just a restaurant; it's a living embodiment of rock 'n' roll spirit. With an indoor section reminiscent of rock history and an extensive outdoor area perfect for Pune's weather, the cafe offers a unique blend of nostalgia and contemporary vibes. The cafe's commitment to 'Love All Serve All'.

What sets the cafe apart is not just its delectable American cuisine but also the mesmerizing blend of great music that resonates within the walls. Enjoy the vibrant ambiance with options for both indoor and outdoor seating.

Hard Rock Cafe takes pride in being the cafe within the mall that hosts spectacular live music and events, creating an immersive and entertaining atmosphere. The cafe showcases artifacts of legends like Eric Clapton, Bruce Springsteen, Madonna, Aerosmith, U2, Stevie Nicks, Bon Jovi, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Ramones, and Cher.

"We are happy that Pune is now, once again, an official member of the Hard Rock family. We bring the spirit and philosophy of the brand to a country rich in musical and food traditions by presenting a modern vision of a remarkable restaurant at a strategic location in Pune," said Tom Perez, Vice President of Franchise Operations, Hard Rock International.





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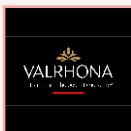


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SCAN HERE

Roastery Coffee House Expands to Dwarka

Specialty Coffee Roasters, Roastery Coffee House announces the expansion to Dwarka marking the brand's 7th establishment in India and its 3rd in Delhi-NCR, following its successful ventures in Khan Market and Noida. The new outlet spans over 3000 sq ft and can accommodate up to 60 patrons at once. The launch of the Dwarka outlet comes at the backdrop of Roastery Coffee House's expansion to Finland, making it India's first coffee brand to ever expand to the European continent.

Established in 2017 as a Specialty Coffee Roaster in Hyderabad to foster coffee culture and bring coffee lovers together, Roastery Coffee House has rapidly become a beloved coffee haven, with a strong presence in Hyderabad, Kolkata, Noida, Lucknow, Jaipur, and now Delhi.

Speaking on the occasion, Nishant Sinha, Founder of Roastery Coffee House remarked, "Roastery Coffee House is more than just a coffee brand; it's a movement.

Our expansion to Dwarka underscores our dedication to introducing premium coffee to diverse communities across India. We're thrilled to bring our signature brews and ethos closer to coffee aficionados in this vibrant part of Delhi."

Roastery Coffee House is a staunch believer in building things from scratch at off-beat locations and creating experiences that are not just vintage but also authentic. The brand welcomes all

age groups from 5-year-olds wandering through the handcrafted-pottery adornments to 70-year-olds basking in the open sunlight while sipping their coffee.

Embracing Modern Indian minimalism in its interiors, the café offers many hot and cold brews. Some of the best-selling beverages include ROASTERY signature cranberry coffee, specialty cappuccino, specialty cold brews, and manual brew coffee accompanied by a comforting home-style European menu for the patrons to gorge on.

Roastery Coffee House is committed to offering a sustainable, zero-waste ethos and providing customers with a diverse array of Indian coffee from estates like Thogarihunkal estate, Baarbara estate, and Tribo estate. The brand prides itself on sourcing and roasting some of the finest coffees globally, with all its blends scoring a commendable 86 points or more.

What sets the brand apart is their dedication to brewing perfection. The coffee is meticulously crafted using distinct global techniques such as French press, aero-press, pour-over, syphon, and more. However, it does not just stop there—Roastery Coffee House takes innovation to the cup by infusing fresh ingredients like cardamom and cinnamon into their blends, creating a symphony of flavors that make the palate come alive.



Zimero Sweetens the Scene

Zimero has established itself as the trending destination for ice creams, promising a unique and indulgent experience for connoisseurs of fine desserts. One of Delhi's best ice cream brands, its unique ice creams have been thoughtfully crafted to showcase a harmonious blend of bold and new traditional and international flavours.

Zimero's portfolio stands out for its distinctive flavours, which include South Indian Filter Coffee, Ghana Dark Chocolate, Triple Berry Bomb and Bourbon Brownie Bash, in addition to internationally inspired flavors like Strawberry Cheesecake Snowstorm, Red Velvet Cape, and Belgian Chocolate Overdose.

"One of the hallmarks of Zimero's approach is our unwavering commitment to quality. We believe in giving our customers an authentic and very unique ice cream experience, and we aim to keep it as natural as possible. The ice creams are expertly

made with dairy as the main ingredient, with an intentional focus on abandoning artificial colours and flavours.

Zimero uses little to no preservatives to protect its exceptional taste while upholding its commitment to staying natural. Recognising the diverse tastes of today's consumers, Zimero also offers gluten-free, 100% vegetarian, vegan, and sugar-free options, as well as curating flavours made with jaggery as an alternative to sugar. One can have our ice creams even when they are following a vrat or a traditional fast," says Shuchi Jain, the owner of Zimero.

In addition to the bold ice cream selection, Zimero also prides itself on offering a carefully curated selection of sauces, including delectable choices like maple, vanilla, chocolate, and caramel, all of which are intended to take the ice cream experience to new heights.



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Exquisite Vegan and Gluten-Free Delights

The Art Lab Patisserie & Bakery, under the creative guidance of the esteemed Chef Kiran Ahir, is thrilled to announce the arrival of a tantalizing universe that redefines the essence of vegan dessert luxury. Drawing from an illustrious educational background at the prestigious Les Roches Institute in Switzerland and a wealth of experience garnered from renowned establishments such as the Four Seasons, Chef Kiran Ahir's lifelong passion for the art of baking finds its pinnacle in The Art Lab Patisserie & Bakery. Here, every dessert is a testament to a relentless pursuit of perfection and a dedication to the art of creating sensory marvels.



The Art Lab Patisserie & Bakery's distinct culinary prowess shines through their exquisite vegan and gluten free desserts, capturing the essence of indulgence without compromise. They use a meticulous blend of premium gluten-free flour, luscious vegan nut butter and carefully sourced dairy-free components to create a vibrant medley of flavours that not only captivates the taste buds but also astounds with their artistic realism.

The menu offers an array of meticulously crafted delicacies like Petit Gateaux and Entremets, each designed to tempt the palate. The Petit Gateaux and Entremet selection feature enchanting flavours such as Earl Grey and Raspberry-flavored Papillon, classic Forest Cake, luscious Fromage with lemon and blueberry baked cheesecake, delightful Hazelnut and Chocolate flavoured Entremets Cake, Gift, Tiramisu-inspired Coffee, and tantalising Passion made with Ghanian Milk Chocolate and Passionfruit. Relish the luxurious elegance of masterfully tempered Chocolate Bonbons, along with a delightful medley of Praline, the guilt-free ecstasy of the Healthy Chocolate Sticks, and the irresistible charm of their Biggies (cookies) collection. Boasting four mouth-watering flavors - Noir, Hazel, Pistache, and Nutter - there's something for every taste.

"The Art Lab Patisserie & Bakery unveils a mesmerizing world of vegan and gluten-free desserts, harmonizing culinary finesse with artistic brilliance. Each masterpiece is a testament to our unwavering dedication to creating visually stunning delicacies that tempt the senses and redefine the boundaries of plant-based confectionery. Prepare to embark on an extraordinary journey of flavors and artistry, where every creation echoes a symphony of passion and innovation" shares Chef Kiran Ahir.

A Cosy New Café in Bandra

Find a semblance of home at the newfound restaurant The Nest in Bandra. The recently opened space in the city's cosmopolitan hotspot distinguishes itself with a warm, fuzzy ambience paired with curated coffees and cultivated comfort food. A cosy reading nook to a faux fireplace emulates the sense of being in one's confine and your appetite being well taken care of by the warm hospitality of the servers.

Helmed by the vision of Khushal and Priyanka Kotak, The Nest is an emotion to build a 'home' in the immersive café culture. "We believe in the saying 'Athithi Devo Bhava' and want to make sure anyone who steps in our restaurant feels that way by giving them a great culinary experience and a warm ambience. The nest is whatever you want it to be; may it be a place to work, to bring your loved one out on a date or your daily hangout place. For us, more than serving food and beverages, it is about serving an experience to each and every one who walks into the doors of our place. We want to inculcate a sense of belonging and create a 'second home' for our guests," they say.

This thought is reflected in the subtle-toned interiors. Bamboo work, jute mats, jute rope chairs and earthy tones of beige, and off-white green don the space. With a select



collection of coffees sourced directly from the farms, they promise a distinct flavour to one's everyday potion.

Pair them with a comfort menu that includes the best Asian, Continental, European, Lebanese and café staples. Some of the signature dishes from their menu include toasties on sourdough bread, handmade pasta, sushi and ramen. All the breads are freshly baked guaranteeing a fresh luscious feel and an enticing aroma of the specialty coffees. If you have a sweet tooth, their signature dessert Kunafa Nest with Gulab Jamun will linger on your tastebuds.

As you step in, it feels refreshing and distinct from the typical restaurant aura that beautifully comes to life in its interiors. Small plantlets create a natural aesthetic that resonates with a feeling of calm and shadowy comfort in one's peaceful corner at home. There is a small library with books from different genres, so you can pick up a good read if you are alone. For a group of friends, there is a collection of board games to play and reminisce about the good old days.

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Cake Me Away!

NOTO, Mumbai's healthiest dessert brand, is launching a line of guilt-free, low-calorie classic cheesecakes that are about to take the city by storm. NOTO has become synonymous with the creation of guilt-free treats. Their diverse product line, which includes gelato, ice cream, mini bites, and



popsicles, demonstrates a commitment to redefining indulgence. NOTO proves once again that they're here to redefine guilt-free indulgence with this line of cheesecakes.

Each delectable, 30 percent less calories cheesecake comes in four tantalizing flavours, each a testament to the marriage of exquisite taste and guilt-free indulgence. Sink your teeth into "Bis Crush's" velvety embrace, an irresistible dance of Bischoff's iconic notes and guilt-free satisfaction. With "Rocher Romance", feel the invigorating jolt of Cocoa and Hazelnut when the strong flavours meet the creamy swirls of light yogurt in a symphony.

Or go back to basics, with "I Love New York," a classic cheesecake that sparks an explosion of delicious flavours with every bite. It is also has no added sugar, making it extra light and extra healthy. "Blueberry Bliss" brings the ultimate fruity rendezvous, offering an idyllic array of flavours with a beautiful tarty topping. These are not just cheesecakes, these are mouthwatering out-of-body experiences that will change the cheesecake game forever- and they are so healthy that you can keep eating them without feeling an ounce of guilt!

According to Ashni Shah, the co-founder of NOTO, the cheesecakes at NOTO perfectly balance quality and decadence. She says, "With the release of these delicious treats, we are excited to continue our dedication to guilt-free indulgence without sacrificing flavour. We make these cheesecakes with healthy Greek Yogurt instead of heavy cream cheese, making them light and creamy!"

Nonna's Opens Fourth Outlet

Building upon the success of its distinguished locations in Mumbai and Pune, Nonna's, India's first original sourdough pizzeria, presents its fourth, and most stunning outlet within the vibrant corridors of Jio World Plaza, BKC. With a commitment to delivering an unparalleled Italian dining experience all the way from the cobbled streets of Naples, Nonna's not only raises the bar but shatters it.

The interiors seamlessly blend contemporary elegance with the timeless allure of Italian design, creating an immersive experience. Every corner is a feast for the eyes, inviting to immerse in an unparalleled dining experience that feels like an extension of the cobbled streets of Naples. Nonna's transcends mere dining; it's an extravagant journey through the finer things in life.



Nonna's meticulously crafted menu invites you to savour the richness of authentic Neapolitan flavours, expertly encapsulated in every dish. From their signature handcrafted sourdough pizzas- boasting over nine varieties, to an array of carefully selected appetizers, Pannouzzos, beverages and delectable desserts, Nonna's promises a dining experience like never before. Each item on the menu is a celebration of authenticity, inviting you to embark on a sensory journey through the vibrant and tantalizing tastes of Italy.

Ayush Jatia, the visionary behind Nonna's, excitedly states, "With the launch of our newest outlet at Jio World Plaza, we aim to redefine the boundaries of an authentic Italian dining experience, creating a space where every visitor is not just a guest but a cherished part of our family. We invite you to join us in this celebration of flavors, where every dish tells a story and every moment is an unforgettable experience."

Ultimate Grilling Experience

Woodside Burger Shop announced the launch of their latest, most exciting innovation, the 'Grillmaster.' Designed to elevate the grilling experience to new heights, the Grillmaster is set to revolutionise the culinary landscape in Mumbai and redefine the art of grilling.

Grilling as an international phenomenon usually involves a number of items, is tedious, takes time and is done in backyards. But not the Grillmaster! This kit includes a number of burgers of your choice with all the ingredients required to grill & assemble with no outside ingredient requirement.

This kit contains a 100% natural single-use grill. Inside the packaging, there is a visual assembly instruction leaflet with instructions for firing up the grill in a few simple steps. These grills can be disposed off very easily as well. Available with a variety of permutations and combinations in burgers, the Grillmaster is perfect for your next outdoor adventure!

Sumit Gambhir, the visionary founder of Woodside Burger Shop, expressed his enthusiasm about the launch, stating, "We are thrilled to introduce the Grillmaster to our customers in Mumbai. This innovative grilling technology represents our commitment to delivering unparalleled quality and taste in every bite. With the Grillmaster, we aim to redefine the grilling experience and provide our patrons with an unforgettable culinary journey wherein they can grill their own burgers and enjoy them freshly flipped and off the grill."





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Polen Food Hosts Indian Delegation

Polen Food unveiled its premium pastry and chocolate products to Indian chefs and the Hammer Publishers team at its R&D Center in Istanbul, Turkey. The exclusive two-day event, hosted at cutting-edge Research and Development Center, focused on showcasing key offerings, including the Vizyon Select chocolate line and Vizyon Sugar Paste category.

Polen Food's commitment to innovation and collaboration was underscored during this strategic gathering. The immersive sessions were dedicated to exploring avant-garde applications, devising intricate recipes, and cultivating creative concepts tailored to the dynamic landscape of premium pastries.

As a beacon of culinary excellence, the company aimed to create an environment that fosters synergy between the visitors and Polen Food's expert team. This initiative marks a significant stride toward advancing the realms of gastronomy, where the intersection of tradition, cultures and innovation propels the

industry forward. The event encapsulated Polen Food's dedication to excellence, innovation, and partnership, reflected its position in the global industry once more.

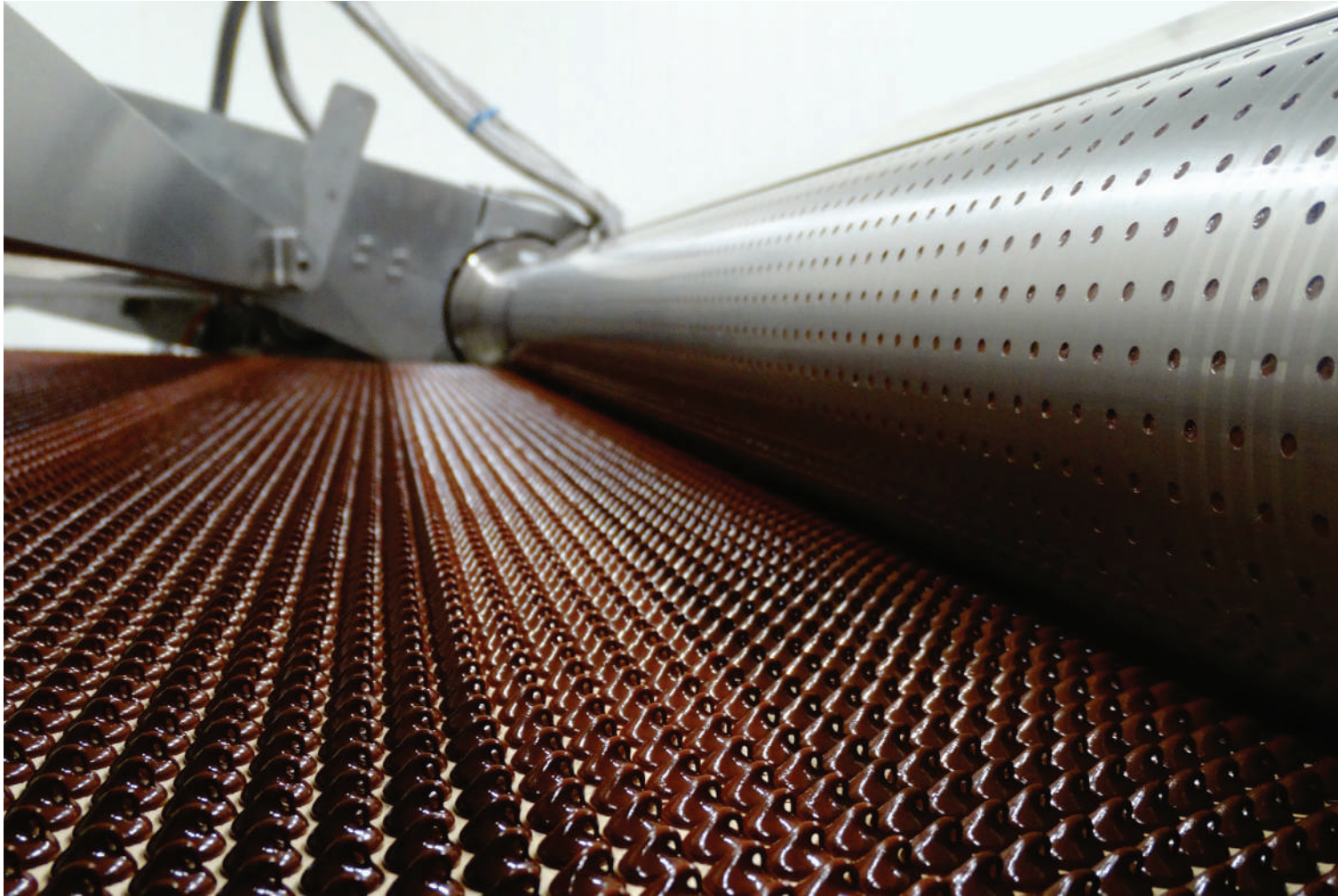
Established in 1997 to serve the flour and bakery products sector, Polen Food started its journey with the production and sale of flour and bread improvers. It has become one of the leading international companies in the sector in a short span of time due to value it offers through quality and innovation, and it's constantly developing team, researcher spirit, solution-oriented and innovative

approach.

Polen Food, the leading company of Turkey in the flour improver sector, has successfully included in its product portfolio in the pastry, chocolate and industrial sauce markets, as well as the world bread market. With its high production capacity and highly equipped infrastructure the company ensures complete solution for its clients needs in the flour & pastry sector. The company operates in a total area of 32,000 m² production facilities, located in Istanbul Esenyurt, Çorlu European Free Zone and Çorlu Türkgücü.

Polen Food, which has a widespread customer network in the domestic market, continues its way with firm steps in the global sense with its exports to more than 60 countries. In addition to the support it offers to its customers with its well-equipped workforce and continuously developed technical infrastructure, Polen shares its knowledge with its customers through seminars, training and application studies organized at the R&D and Innovation Center.





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Bakery Trends 2024

Every occasion that is close to one's heart is an instance for celebration and one way of making creating sweet memories is by having sweet and delicious bakery items like cakes and pastries. There is an array of delectable desserts that one can choose from when you are planning to have celebrations for special occasions like birthday or some other memorable moment. While cakes, pastries and other sweets will make you drool, people are, nowadays, becoming health conscious and wary of things that would affect their health adversely. Bakers have thus, adapted their products to meet the demands of the consumers. **Ashok Malkani** tries to fathom the trends that are likely to take place in bakery products in the New Year – from flavour to cake decoration, etc.

The mouthwatering taste and affordability have endeared bakery products to consumers. However, with times, the tastes and trends change. As we enter the New Year conjectures are being made of the changing trends. Predictions for the New Year are rife.

VH Suresh, Corporate Executive Chef at Platform 65, states, “As we enter the New Year in 2024, the bakery industry will witness trends favouring classic cake flavours like chocolate and vanilla, alongside a rise in unique and exotic options such as pistachio and matcha. Combinations like citrus and herbs are gaining popularity, and the colour palette is shifting towards natural and muted tones with occasional metallic and jewel tones.

Health-conscious trends will drive the use of alternative and nutritious ingredients, including gluten-free options with almond or coconut flour and natural sweeteners like honey. Cake decoration is set to embrace hand-painted designs, minimalistic elegance, and technology like 3D printing.

The industry is adapting to the plant-based trend with more vegan options, replacing traditional dairy and egg ingredients. Wider gluten-free product offerings with alternative grains like rice and quinoa are also anticipated. Overall,



2024 promises a dynamic year for the bakery industry with a mix of classics, innovation, health-conscious choices, and creative decorations.”

Danish Khan, Executive Pastry Chef at Conrad Pune, claims, “Over the past four years, there has been a rise in the introduction of bakery items with lower sugar claims, particularly in major cities

where these claims have gained popularity. This pattern will continue throughout this year as well.”

Gauri Varma, founder and CEO of Confect, says, “There are three trends likely in the New Year. One is coffee and tea infused desserts. The other is the use of more ascetic ingredients moving away from processed foods and working closely with natural flavours. Experimenting with healthy flowers and focusing more on natural sugars. There is going to be a lot of Fusion. I see a lot of deserts, embracing local cultures across the globe and creating brilliant Fusion.”

Cakes’ Flavour

As far as trends in cakes are concerned different trends have flourished and floundered over the last ten years. Heart-shaped lambeth cakes, oil-based sponge, reduced sugar cakes are cakes which have seen ups and downs over the last decade. So, what would be the flavour (chocolate, pistachio, etc) and colour that would be favoured by the buyers during 2024?

Danish declares, “The most favoured cake flavour that was – in the past years – and will continue to be during 2024 is chocolate. Chocolate cake is always in style since it goes well with so many other flavours, such as strawberry, pistachio or chocolate mousse, or different frosting flavours. Chocolate taste combined with various combinations.”

He adds, “As far as colour is concerned, every themed cake included some colour. It can be any colour, but as people become more aware of their health, they want natural colours that are chemical-free, sustainably derived, and of high quality.”

Suresh avers, “In 2024, the cake flavour landscape is poised to showcase a delightful mix of both classic and innovative tastes. While enduring favourites like chocolate and vanilla are expected to remain popular choices, there is a discernible shift towards more adventurous and globally-inspired flavours. Exotic options such as matcha, with its vibrant and earthy notes, may capture the attention of buyers looking for a contemporary twist.

Additionally, floral-infused flavours like elderflower or hibiscus are predicted to make a mark, providing a touch of elegance





Gauri Varma



VH Suresh



Danish Khan

and uniqueness to cake selections. Buyers may also show a preference for nostalgic flavours with a modern twist, such as revamped versions of childhood favourites like s'mores or cookies and cream. Overall, the evolving taste preferences in 2024 suggest a diverse and exciting array of cake flavours that cater to a broad spectrum of palates."

Speaking about colours, he claims, "In the realm of cake and pastry decorations in 2024, a captivating array of colours is anticipated to define the aesthetic trends. While natural and muted tones are expected to continue making a statement, there's a growing inclination towards bolder and more vibrant hues.

Jewel tones, such as deep emerald greens and rich sapphire blues, are predicted to add a touch of opulence to cake designs, especially for special occasions. Additionally, a resurgence of pastel shades, albeit with a modern twist, may appeal to those seeking a more understated elegance. Metallics, like shimmering gold and copper, are projected to maintain their popularity, bringing a sense of sophistication to icings and decorations.

Overall, the colour palette for cakes and icings in 2024 is set to be diverse, offering a range of options from the timeless to the avant-garde to cater to varied tastes and preferences."

Gauri too is of the opinion that chocolate flavour would be popular. She add, "However, one would have to pair chocolate with new combinations and present them in a unique way. Also the use of nuts with tea and coffee pairing is going to be a very big demand for 2024. As far as colouring is concerned, I would say that these would largely be natural or imparted by the ingredients. I don't think artificial colours would be used for sponges, however, having said that red velvet is here to stay."

Health Consciousness

With diabetes and obesity on the rise more and more people are becoming wary of their food choices and seeking out high-quality, low sugar alternatives. How would the bakery industry satisfy the health requirement of the consumers?

Danish declares, "Numerous facets of our lives were altered by the pandemic,

including what and how we ate. In 2020, people all across the world began to prioritise nutrition to boost immunity. Four years later, there has been a significant shift in consumer views and behaviours about food. Taste, texture, and health have all become more important considerations for consumers as they take a more proactive approach to their diets, covering everything from immunity to digestive health and eating habits."

He continues, "There are a lot of options available for baking that are healthy. For example, refined sugar can be substituted with dates or jaggery, and sugar with no calories that doesn't affect blood insulin is available for purchase. Flour can be substituted with gluten-free flour or any other cereal flour, but we will need to slightly alter the recipe."

Suresh states, "In response to the growing trend of health-conscious consumers in 2024, the bakery industry is expected to adapt by incorporating a variety of wholesome and nutrient-rich ingredients into its products.

To meet health demands, there will likely be an increased emphasis on alternative flours such as almond, coconut, and cassava, catering to gluten-free preferences.

Natural sweeteners like honey, maple syrup, and agave may replace traditional refined sugars, offering a more considered approach to sweetness. In line with the demand for nutritional value, superfoods such as chia seeds, quinoa, and matcha could become prevalent additions, providing added protein, fibre, and antioxidants to baked goods. Coconut oil, known for its health benefits, might continue to replace traditional fats in certain recipes.

Moreover, the industry may witness a rise in plant-based ingredients as consumers embrace vegan and vegetarian lifestyles. Egg substitutes like flax eggs and aquafaba, along with plant-based milk alternatives such as almond, soy, or oat milk, might find increased usage in bakery products. Overall, the health-conscious bakery trends in 2024 are likely to centre around the use of minimally processed, nutrient-dense ingredients, allowing consumers to indulge in their favourite treats with a heightened focus on overall well-being."

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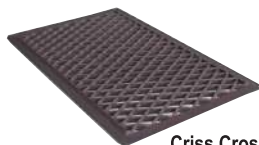
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Gauri confides, “Personally I come from the school of thought which considers that cakes taste best with full sugar, full fat. However the growing trend is to extract sweetness from other sources such as nuts, natural sweeteners like vegetables (carrots, beetroot), Stevia, (which is a great alternative), honey and jaggery. But to be honest, they’re not really healthier options when it comes to a sugar content perspective. Ingredients I see working the best but in smaller proportions in each desert is Stevia. However, I personally like to sweeten deserts with pure fruit purée.”

Glutton Free and Plant Based Foods

The health consciousness has also brought in the concept of consuming gluten free and plant based foods. It is believed that this demand would have more emphasis in 2024. How does the bakery industry intend to meet this demand in 2024?

Gauri declares “Having run a 100% plant-based company manufacturing over 600 products I would see that the future is very, very bright. The sustainability of using plant based products is huge. It doesn’t take away from flavour or taste in any way, for large sugar decorations in the Bakery world. Bakery is one industry that can really move to plant based sweeteners smoothly as opposed to hot kitchens.”

She adds, “Today gluten free food has become a lifestyle choice. It is no longer going to be a niche market.”

Suresh disclosed, “Bakeries are utilising alternative flours such as almond, coconut, rice, and tapioca to create gluten-free baked goods. These alternative flours not only cater to individuals with gluten sensitivities but also offer diverse and unique flavour profiles. Additionally, bakeries are investing in gluten-free certifications and clear labelling to assure consumers of the safety and suitability of their products.

The industry is also exploring innovative gluten-free recipes for a broader range of items, including bread, pastries, and cookies. As part of this trend, some establishments are implementing dedicated gluten-free production spaces to prevent cross-contamination, enhancing the overall accessibility and quality of gluten-free options for consumers with specific dietary preferences or restrictions.

The bakery industry is also undergoing a notable transformation as consumers increasingly shift from animal-based to plant-based food preferences. Bakeries are adapting by incorporating plant-based ingredients, such as alternative milk and egg substitutes, to create a diverse range of vegan-friendly products, expanding their offerings beyond traditional baked goods.

This shift aligns with broader dietary

trends, including gluten-free and allergen-friendly options, as well as a focus on innovative flavour profiles using ingredients like matcha and coconut. Clear labelling and effective marketing strategies are being employed to highlight plant-based offerings, catering to a growing market of health-conscious and environmentally aware consumers.

In response to this health conscious and environmentally aware consumer some bakeries are also prioritising sustainable sourcing practices and engaging in collaborations to enhance their plant-based product lines. The evolving landscape of plant-based baking is reshaping the industry by promoting creativity, inclusivity, and a more environmentally sustainable approach.”

Danish avers, “The COVID-19 epidemic



caused a sharp increase in the demand for gluten-free products. The increasing concerns that consumers have for their health and wellbeing may be the cause of this increase. The pandemic has increased consumer interest in the nutritional performance of products. Today gluten-free flour is readily available in the market. These ingredients, such as ragi, millets, and multigrain, are easily found in the market and are also incredibly healthful choices.”

He added, “Demand for baked goods and other vegan-friendly products is rising as more people embrace a plant-based diet. By providing a broad selection of mouthwatering, premium plant-based sweets that appeal to both vegans and non-vegans, vegan bakeries may profit from this trend. Additionally, consumers are increasingly inclined to look for vegan options as they become more conscious of the ethical and environmental consequences

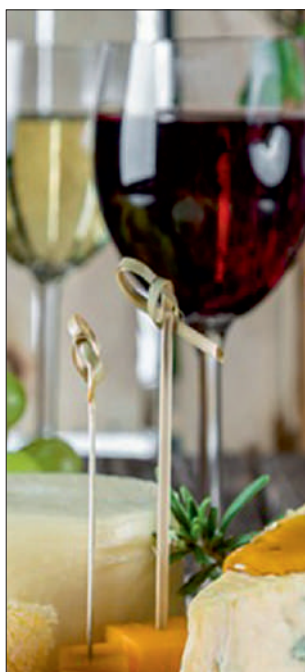


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of ingesting animal products.”

Trends in Cake Decoration & Icing

Cake decoration, as everyone knows is more than an art form, it demands creativity. A beautifully decorated cake creates unforgettable memories for the special occasion on which it is received. Cake decoration has, at present, transcended mere frosting and fondant. During the New Year there is likely to be an exciting evolution in cake decoration

Suresh affirms “In 2024, cake decoration is set to witness a dynamic interplay between classic elegance and technological innovation. Anticipated trends include a rise in hand-painted and watercolour-inspired designs, offering an artisanal touch with intricate patterns and creative aesthetics.

There is a notable shift towards minimalistic and elegant cake designs, characterised by clean lines and subtle textures, reflecting a preference for understated sophistication. Personalised and customised cakes tailored to specific occasions will continue to be popular, featuring unique toppers and edible prints.

The integration of technology is expected to play a significant role, with 3D printing facilitating intricate decorations and digital printing enabling highly detailed and customisable designs. Emerging technologies such as projection mapping and augmented reality may add dynamic and interactive elements to cake displays.

Additionally, cake decorators might explore innovative edible materials, including metallics, organic flowers, and natural-based edible paints, contributing to both visual appeal and a unique culinary experience. These trends collectively

highlight a harmonious blend of traditional craftsmanship and cutting-edge techniques in the evolving landscape of cake decoration.”

Elaborating on trends in icing he claims, “They are set to offer a diverse array of styles to cater to various preferences in the world of cake and pastry decoration. A notable shift is expected towards natural-coloured buttercream, with an emphasis on using fruits, vegetables, and plant-based sources for soft and muted hues. Lighter alternatives like whipped cream and ganache are projected to gain popularity, providing a smoother texture and a more moderate sweetness that complements a variety of cake flavours.

The sleek and modern finish of mirror glaze is anticipated to remain a favoured choice, adding sophistication and visual appeal to cakes. Textured icings, including rustic or semi-naked finishes, are likely to persist, offering a more natural and handcrafted aesthetic. Additionally, artistic techniques like ombre and watercolour effects may see increased usage, contributing creativity and uniqueness to cake designs.

Icings adorned with edible flowers and botanical elements are expected to be on-trend, aligning with a broader appreciation for organic and visually appealing cake decorations. The continued use of edible metallics, such as gold and silver, is anticipated to bring a touch of luxury and elegance to cakes for special occasions. Overall, the icing trends for 2024 offer a rich palette of options, allowing for both creativity and customisation in the art of cake decoration.”

Danish declares, “New trends in cake decorating appear every year, and the industry is always changing. We can

anticipate both some fascinating new innovations and a continuation of some of the popular patterns from the previous years. In cake shops, automation and artificial intelligence are becoming more commonplace, with machines replacing many of the manual operations that were previously performed. While automation helps expedite the cake decoration process, artificial intelligence (AI) can optimise baking temperatures and timings. These advances not only boost productivity but also give cake store employees more time to work on more imaginative projects.”

Commenting on icing, he states, “At present, the Mirror Glaze Cakes are a unique craze on social media. When it comes to persuading you to order or prepare something for pure enjoyment, the Mirror Glaze Cakes are the epitome of elegance and perfection. In the realm of designer cakes, it is the most recent design that is in style.”

Gauri avers, “Cocoa Butter, Spray Butter, Cream, Swiss Marine Butter Cream and Ganache are the new trends for 2024. There has been a trend of using in-edibles for decoration on cakes such as acrylic, Toppers, fake flowers, plastic balls to name a few and the trend is here to stay. Personally I prefer edible decorations any day and the charm of being able to do something beautiful in Sugar is timeless.”

She adds, “Experimenting with different types of Butter Cream, coloured Ganache and Cocoa Butter Spray is where I see the future in icing and frostings. We have been using whipped cream cakes for a very long time and slowly demand for new alternatives is increasing. Different textures taste has kept up with the pace at which the bakery industry is growing. So the new icings are a trend and are there to stay.”

Conclusion

Bakery product, likes cakes, pastries, tarts, brownies, et al. also serve as delightfully tasty desserts. Desserts not only satisfy your craving for sweets but also serve in bringing people together. In 2024, the dessert industry is set to witness some exciting trends that will cater to the evolving preferences and health concerns of consumers.

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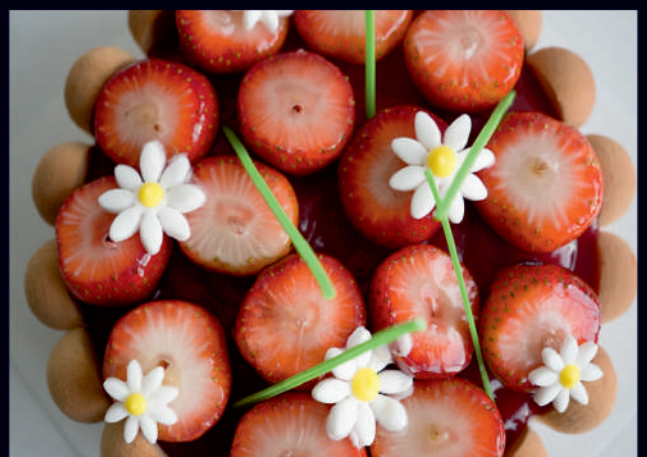
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Recipes

Mixed Dry Fruits Pastry

Ingredients

Plain flour	250g
Eggs	2
Sugar powder	80g
Baking soda	1/4 tsp
Butter	80g
Vanilla essence	5g
Dates	20g
Raisins	10g
TuttiFrutti	A few
Cashews	10g
Whipped cream	1 cup

Method:

Mix 250g of plain flour, 1/4 tsp of baking soda, and 80g of sugar powder in a large bowl. Ensure they are evenly mixed.

Crack 2 eggs into the dry ingredient mixture.

Melt 80g of butter and add it to the bowl.

Pour in 5g of vanilla essence for flavour.

Chop 20g of dates, add 10g of raisins, a few tutti-frutti, and 10g of chopped cashews to the mixture.

Mix everything thoroughly until a smooth dough is formed.

Cover the bowl and let the dough rest for 2 hours. This allows the flavours to meld and the dough to rise slightly.

Set the dough into a cake mould, ensuring it is evenly distributed.

Preheat an OTG oven to 250°C.

Place the cake mould in the preheated oven and bake for approximately 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the centre of the cake.

While the cake is baking, whip 1 cup of cream until it forms a thick paste.

Once the cake is baked and cooled, cut it into layers.

Spread the whipped cream between the layers, creating a layered structure.

Cut the layered cake into even sizes.

Serve and enjoy your delicious Mixed Dry Fruit Pastry!

Vanilla Mixed Berry Cake

Ingredients:

Plain flour	250g
eggs	2
sugar powder	80g
baking soda	1/4 tsp
butter	80g
vanilla essence	5g
Sugar syrup (amount not specified)	
whipped cream	1 cup
berry pulp	100ml

Method:

In a bowl, mix plain flour, eggs, sugar powder, baking soda, melted butter, and vanilla essence until well combined.

Make sure it becomes a smooth batter consistency.

Set the batter aside for 2 hours to allow it to rest and develop flavour. Preheat the OTG oven to 250°C.

Pour the batter into a cake mould.

Bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes or until the cake is done. Use a toothpick to check for doneness; it should come out clean when inserted into the centre of the cake.

Once the cake is done, remove it from the oven and let it cool.

In a separate bowl, whip the cream until stiff peaks form.

Cut the cooled cake into two layers.

Spread a layer of whipped cream on one cake layer, then place the second layer on top.

Continue spreading whipped cream on top of the second layer.

Apply a generous amount of berry pulp on the top of the cake.

Optionally, you can drizzle sugar syrup over the cake for added moisture and sweetness.

Your Vanilla Mixed Berry Cake is now ready to be served! Enjoy!

Triple Chocolate Box

Ingredients:

Cooking chocolate	500g
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Butter	1 cup
Warm milk	1.5 cups
Eggs	4
Vanilla extract	1 tsp
Sugar	2 cups
Maida (All-purpose flour)	2 cups
Cocoa powder	1/2 cup
Baking powder	1.5 tsp
Whipping cream	1 cup

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius for the cake.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the cake mix, eggs, warm milk, butter, and vanilla extract.

Use an electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds. Increase the speed to medium and beat for an additional 2 minutes until well combined. Stir in the cooking chocolate chips.

Pour the batter into a greased and floured cake pan.

Bake in the preheated oven for approximately 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 10 minutes.

While the cake is cooling, prepare the chocolate glaze. In a small saucepan, mix sugar, milk, and butter. Constantly stir and bring to a boil over medium heat, boiling for 1 minute.

Remove from heat and stir in chocolate chips and vanilla until the chocolate is fully melted.

Once the cake has cooled for 10 minutes, pour the chocolate glaze over it.

Set the cake in a squared box and allow it to cool. Your Triple Chocolate Box Cake is now ready to be enjoyed!

Feel free to add any additional chocolate chips, shavings, or cocoa powder as a garnish for extra chocolatey goodness.

V.H. Suresh- Corporate Executive Chef - Platform 65

Neapolitan Cookies

Ingredients

Icing sugar	100g
Butter	200g
Flour	300g
Egg + vanilla	1no.
Cocoa powder	10g
Strawberry powder	10g

Method:

Divide the dough into 3 batches
Add coco powder in 1st batch
Strawberry powder and red gel colour in 2nd batch
Leave the 3rd batch as vanilla flavour
Layer all 3 doughs on top of each other and chill for 2 hours
Cut into square or circles as per your desire
Preheat oven at 180
Bake at 180 for 10 mins

Spiced Carrot Cake

Ingredients

Egg	60g
Sugar	125g
Baking soda	3g
Salt	2g
Cinnamon	2g
Flour	62g
Carrot	95g
Oil	95ml

Method

In a bowl whisk sugar and egg till light and fluffy
Mix all dry ingredients and carrots

together

Fold in dry ingredients in the egg mixture

Lastly fold in your oil and make a smooth batter

Grease the baking tin with butter and dust flour

Pour in the batter

Preheat the oven at 180 degrees

Bake at 180 for 10-12 mins

Dust with icing sugar and serve

Caramel Chocolate Fondant

Ingredients

Butter	50
Dark choco	75
Egg	1
Yolk	1
Sugar	27
Flour	17

Caramel sauce

Extra cocoa powder and butter for greasing and dusting the mould

Method

In a bowl whisk egg and sugar till light and fluffy

Melt butter and chocolate together

Add chocolate mix in eggs

Fold in the flour and make a smooth batter

Grease the mould with butter and dust well with cocoa powder

Fill 1/2 the mould with batter

Scoop in 2 spoons of caramel in between

Cover the rest of mould with batter

Preheat oven at 180

Bake at 180 for 8 mins

Once out of the oven demould immediately and enjoy

Lemon Lavender Cranberry Tea Cake

Ingredients

Egg	120g
Sugar	140g
Cream	60g
Salt	pinch

Lemon essence

Lavender essence

Flour 108

Baking powder 5g

Butter 40g

Method

In a bowl whisk egg and sugar till light and fluffy

Add lemon and lavender essence

Add cream

Fold in dry ingredients well till no lumps

Fold cranberry

Lastly add melted better and make a smooth batter

Grease you tin with butter and dust flour

Pour in the batter

Preheat the oven at 180

Bake at 180 for 14-16 mins

Chef Gauri Varma, founder and CEO of Confect

Milk Chocolate Baked Karanji

Ingredients

Sweet Paste Dough	
Icing Sugar	50 gm
Unsalted Butter	100gm.
Flour	160gm
Salt	1gm
Vanilla extract or essence	Few drops
Milk Chocolate coconut filling	
Milk Chocolate	100 gm
Desiccated coconut	40 gm
Cardamom powder	3 gm
Milk Wash	
Milk	20 ml
Icing sugar	20 gm

Method

For Sweet paste dough

Cream together the butter and sugar very lightly – do not overmix, or you will add too much air to the pastry

Add the flour and salt and mix until you have a combined dough. Flatten out slightly then wrap in cling film and rest in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before rolling

For Filling

Melt the dark chocolate in the microwave, then stir in the desiccated coconut and the cardamom powder.

Milk Wash

Blend milk with sugar together.

Assembling

To create a checkerboard, roll the sweet paste dough and cut it into strips.

Fill the centre with the filling, then fold it into a half-moon.

After brushing on milk wash, bake the item for 16 to 18 minutes at 180°C, or until golden brown.

Danish Khan, Executive Pastry Chef at Conrad Pune



Rising Sales of.... **Chocolate**

Indians have a sweet tooth and this fact is proof of the booming demand for chocolate. Their love for all things sweet is expected to push demand for chocolate products higher in the coming years. Chocolate is not just loved in India but there is a global yearning to have this delicacy. The popularity of this cocoa product can be gauged by the fact that it has special day – World Chocolate Day – dedicated to this product. **Ashok Malkani** finds that main two reasons for the increasing demand for this is because it is an ideal gifting option and also because bakeries are increasingly using it to add higher delicacy to their products.

Chocolate, called Theobroma Cacao, or “food of the gods”, by Carl Linneaus, the 18th-century Swedish naturalist, echoing earlier beliefs. According to ancient history Maya, were probably the first people in South America to cultivate the cocoa plant. The popularity of this item grew when the Spanish conquistadors brought it to Europe in the 16th century. Mass-production methods were developed during the Industrial Revolution, to make it more widely available and at an affordable price.

Today, one may say that chocolate is a multisensorial nature’s gift. It appeals to all five senses – Sight, Touch, Hearing, Smell and Taste – due to its various attributes like colour, snap, mouth feel and complexity of flavours and aromas. All this has made it a favourite with the Indians, ensuring its rising popularity and market.

According to Mordor Intelligence the Indian Chocolate Market is expected to grow from \$ 2.07 billion in 2023 to \$ 2.86 billion by 2028 growing at a CAGR of 6.64% during the forecast period (2023-2028).

According to Verified Market Research the chocolate market would see a rise from \$2.1 billion in 2022 to \$ 4.3 billion in 2030.

The main two reasons which can be attributed to the growth of chocolate industry are that it is becoming the ideal gifting option and also because bakers have increasingly been using chocolate in almost all its products.

Chocolates as gifting option have a special significance during Valentine’s Day. However, today, it is finding a special place on birthdays and several other occasions. It is, slowly, replacing the traditional India Mithai. It has acquired a strong symbolic meaning of love, care and happy life. Chocolate is one of the most popular foods in the world, and people of all ages and cultures enjoy it.

The sweetness of chocolates combined with the scintillating velvety textures and opulent taste have, today, become the ideal gift for all celebrative occasions!

Eesha Sukhi, Founder of Blue Bop, Mumbai, avers, “Chocolate is an excellent gifting option for special occasions due to its universal appeal and indulgent taste.”

Chocolate is an expression of warm feelings. Giving it as a gift expresses your feelings of love and gratitude for the person to whom you are presenting it.

There are several advantages of offering chocolates as a gift. A few of them are:

Universal appeal: It is a universally accepted and loved gift, which transcends languages, cultural nuances and is loved by all generations.

Expression of warm feelings: Chocolates are said to speak directly to the heart and express the presenters’ feelings of gratitude and love.

Irresistibility: With their chocolaty and tempting scent they are irresistible.

Affordability: They are not only affordable but they have longer shelf life than sweetmeats. Also, their different shapes, tastes, and sizes makes them easier to store.

Eesha states, “The advantages of opting for chocolates as a gift are many. You can customize chocolate gifts by selecting specific flavours, brands, or even creating a personalized assortment, adding



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a thoughtful touch to your gift. It is extremely practical with a strong feel good factor, in addition, you can choose from a variety of options, and present them in elegant and festive packaging, thereby enhancing the visual appeal of the gift and making it suitable as a gift for all occasions."

So what kind of chocolate is best for a gift? Why?

Eesha answers, "There is an interesting mix of chocolates one can gift, like: Assorted chocolates, gourmet or artisanal chocolates, truffles, dark chocolates, sugar free or vegan chocolates, customized chocolate gift baskets, festive flavoured chocolates, and personalized chocolates."

Chocolates are not just presented by individuals but even corporates are, currently, preferred to give chocolates as gifts on festive occasions. Nowadays Corporate chocolate gift baskets are most popular, as they are a way to show your employees, clients and partners how much you appreciate their business.

According to giftsenda, an international gifting platform, the \$242 billion corporate gifting market is expected to reach \$306 billion by the year 2024. It states that 76% of employees prefer gifts they can share with either family or teams. And what is more sharable and appreciable than chocolates!

Eesha confirms the preference of chocolates as gifts by the corporate by stating, "Many corporate entities choose chocolates as gifts instead of traditional sweets. Some companies also choose to customize chocolates with their logo or brand colours, turning them into branded gifts that leave a lasting impression."

There are many reasons why corporate chocolate gift baskets are most popular. One, they are thoughtful and personalized gifts that show you have taken the time to think about the recipient, secondly they are not only unique and creative way of showing your appreciation but they are also an affordable option for impressing your employees or clients. It may also be mentioned that besides having innumerable options like milk, dark, and mild chocolate, they also have a longer storage life compared to other sweets.

It may be mentioned that chocolates have a long history as being offered as a gift item.



Eesha Sukhi

Eesha, explaining the history of chocolate as gifting option, says, "The tradition of gifting chocolates has a rich history dating back centuries. The consumption of chocolate dates back to ancient civilizations. They used cacao beans to make a bitter beverage, and the Aztecs believed that chocolate had aphrodisiac properties. When the Spanish explorers brought chocolate to Europe in the 16th century, it was initially consumed as a beverage among the elite. The addition of sugar and other flavorings transformed it into a more palatable treat.

Chocolate became associated with luxury and indulgence. European royalty, including Queen Victoria, exchanged elaborately decorated chocolate gifts. It became a symbol of wealth and sophistication, the 19th Century industrial revolution and advancements in chocolate production made it more accessible to the general population. Chocolate boxes, particularly heart-shaped ones, started to appear, and the concept of gifting chocolate gained popularity."

She adds, "Richard Cadbury, a British chocolatier, played a significant role in establishing the tradition of gifting chocolates for Valentine's Day. In the mid-19th century, he introduced the first heart-shaped box of chocolates, creating a link between chocolate and romance. Over time, chocolate manufacturers capitalized on various holidays, creating themed packaging and marketing campaigns. Chocolates became a go-to gift for occasions like

Christmas, Easter, and other celebrations. Then came the evolution of packaging: the development of attractive and decorative packaging further enhanced the appeal of chocolates as gifts. Artistic and seasonal designs on chocolate boxes contributed to the tradition of giving chocolates during holidays and special occasions."

She continues, "One can say that the evolution of chocolate gifting reflects changes in societal attitudes, production methods, and marketing strategies over the centuries."

Factors for Offering Chocolates as Gift

Two of the main reasons being attributed to preferring chocolates as gift are its packaging and health factor

The alluring, attractive and elegant gift packaging by chocolate manufacturers is one of the reasons for boosting chocolates as the ideal gifting option. Chocolate brands and marketers have understood that people prefer custom chocolate boxes instead of generic packaging. When people are mesmerized by the unique design of packaging, it triggers an impulse of buying that product brand. Perfect and attractive packaging involves selection of material, design, typography and colour selection. Eventually it is packaging and its quality that will lead the public to perceive and taste your chocolates.

So, what are the packaging techniques employed by chocolatiers?

Eesha enlightens, "Chocolate manufacturers employ various packaging techniques to boost sales during the festive season. Some common strategies include festive themes packaging and colours, limited edition packaging. Personalization options like transparent packaging, promotional bundling like chocolates with flowers, emphasis on high quality & premium ingredients & discounts & promotions has been responsible for making this the preferred gift."

Another reason for preferring chocolates is the belief that they are not harmful to your health.

According to WebMD, chocolate is especially rich in flavanols like epicatechin and catechin, as well as anthocyanins and



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phenolic acids. All of these compounds help protect your cells from inflammation, improve your brain function, and boost your immune and cardiovascular health. Dark chocolate can also give you cardiovascular support.

John Hopkins Medicine adds that antioxidants in dark chocolates have been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of clotting and increase blood circulation to the heart, thus lowering the risks of stroke, coronary heart disease and death from heart disease.

However, there are adverse views too.

British Heart Foundation warns that chocolate is high in sugar and saturated fat. It is of the opinion that chocolate is a high-energy (high calorie) food, and too much can result in excess weight, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Medical News Today lists some of the facts thus:

Chocolate consumption has long been associated with conditions such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and hypertension.

Chocolate is believed to contain high levels of antioxidants.

Some studies have suggested chocolate could lower cholesterol levels and prevent memory decline.

Chocolate contains a large number of calories. People who are seeking to lose or maintain weight should eat chocolate only in moderation.



Dhruva Sanyal

Thus there seems to be mixed sentiments about the health effects it can have on your health.

Eesha opines, "Most of the time eating chocolates is not good for your health due to the Calorie and Sugar Content. The health conscious people can choose dark chocolates which may offer certain health benefits. People with certain health conditions, such as diabetes, should be mindful of their chocolate consumption due to its sugar content or they should opt for sugar free diabetic friendly options."

Speaking about dark chocolates, she declares, "Individuals with diabetes or heart problems should be cautious about their chocolate consumption. I may add that choosing high-quality chocolate, portion control and being aware of ingredients and nutritional content can contribute to making informed choices."

Future of Chocolate as Gift Option

As consumers become more mindful of their health the chocolate manufacturers are responding with innovative offerings. A report by Barry Callebaut states that dark chocolate, rich in antioxidants, is on the rise as a nourishing and indulgent choice. According to Agronfoodprocessing.com, dark chocolate is poised to become the fastest-growing segment in the Indian chocolate market.

California-based Dr. Bharat Rakshak, DDS, MDS, informs that high-quality dark chocolate can offer antioxidants, enhance heart health, and potentially uplift mood

through compounds like flavonoids and theobromine.

Usage in Bakery Products

While one of the reasons for increase in demand for chocolates is its preference as a gifting option compared to the traditional India Mithai the other is bakers using it to elevate their products. The chocolate manufacturing companies contribute in helping the bakery industry to come up with new products, using chocolate.

Marit Allen, market segment development manager of Barry Callebaut, in a presentation at the International Baking Industry Exposition (IBIE) in Las Vega, in 2019 stated that chocolate could elevate ordinary bakery foods. She disclosed that adding cocoa liquor to a brownie imparts a richer, fudgier, and more robust chocolate flavour to it while using cocoa powders without alkali results in a deeper color and cleaner label.

Barry Callebaut, plays a significant role, as a B2B supplier, in promoting the usage of chocolate in bakery products.

Dhruva Sanyal, Managing Director, Barry Callebaut India, speaking about market for chocolates in India, says, "India is one of the fastest-growing markets for chocolate and as leaders of the cocoa and chocolate industry, we participate in several engagement activities to provide inspiration to chefs and bakers on how they can upgrade their festive offerings through the use of our chocolate and cocoa products. There are 3 key channels through which we stay connected and inspire the chef and baker communities. First, we have a strong presence across key F&B trade fairs where we showcase our portfolio and engage with existing and potential customers via LIVE demos conducted by our ambassadors. This way, we provide our customers applications of the products."

He adds, "Digital platforms are also a key channel for us, where we keep fueling ideas and inspiration in the form of trending recipe videos, technical know-how and tips to work with chocolate. We also curate festive specific content that showcases the use of chocolate paired with iconic Indian flavours and sweets to bring together the best of both worlds, while showcasing the



versatility of chocolates.”

He continues, “Our Chocolate Academy training center, located in Mumbai, serves as a knowledge hub for all things chocolate. It’s a state-of-the-art training facility that focuses on educating, training and inspiring chefs and artisans. The center also provides technical support and tools to help chocolatiers and chefs navigate the chocolate business.”

With bakers increasingly using chocolate, from a B2B standpoint, how do chocolate companies perceive the impact of emerging trends in pastry and desserts on their clients?

Dhruva stated, “Consumers’ attitudes and needs are constantly evolving. This impacts the way people indulge in chocolate and other treats. In Barry Callebaut, we conducted surveys and found three key spaces that will drive trends in the pastry and dessert in the near future. They are:

A need for Intense Indulgence, where consumers seek immersive experiences such as treats that excite with multi-

sensorial experiences, tell a unique origin story or offer a unique or rare taste experience.

Creating Mindful Indulgence experiences, where consumers want to indulge without compromising their (physical and mental) well-being, the health of others or the planet. Here plant-based solutions, sugar solutions, clean labels and sustainability become a key factor to capture consumer interest.

And lastly Healthy Indulgence, where consumers actively and intentionally make choices that has a positive impact on their health, such as products that are rich in macro & micro nutrients.”

He disclosed, “Keeping the above trends and consumer needs in mind, we adapt our product offerings and strategies to align with these directions and ensure we provide the relevant solutions to chefs and bakers to address consumer needs.”

He declared, “For us, the Chocolate Academy training centre plays an important role in fueling innovation and providing solutions to existing and potential customers.

The Chef team at the Chocolate Academy is constantly working with customers to innovate and identify solutions relevant to their business needs. Some of the innovation areas we work on are taking inspiration from the global pastry landscape, diving deeper into the science of flavour pairings, providing customized experiences and exploring health conscious alternatives.”

Conclusion

With the overall technological advancements, one may conclude that the future of chocolate – with a kaleidoscope of possibilities like rich flavors, mindful ingredients, and innovative production methods – as well as the increasing preference to offer it as a gift in place of other traditional Mithai is definitely likely to increase its demand in the future.

Yes, with the increasing trend of opting for chocolates as gifts for all special occasions and the bakers increasingly using chocolate to increase the allure of their products there is every likelihood of the increased demand for this item in the years to come. ■



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Getting Hooked to High Tea

The busy executive today is more prone to stress than what they were a few years ago. And one of the ideal ways of relaxation is discussing things with a friend over a cup of tea. Peaceful environment and ambience with soft strains of music, aid in soothing the frayed nerves. Several Tea Lounges & Bars have sprung up in major cities to rejuvenate sagging energy and morale of modern executives.

Tea is no longer a 4 o'clock ritual where staid aristocrats with stiff upper lip gather round to have their cuppa with a few Marie biscuits. Gone are the days when people poured tea from fancy teapots and commented on the Nilgiri, Darjeeling or Assam aroma. Now hi-tea has become an affair for a fiesta. It all began, years ago, when the Indian government, in its endeavour to popularize tea as an international drink, opened Tea Centres around the country.

The Tea Centre at Churchgate, Mumbai, was conceptualized with the intention

of the busy businessman relaxing and, possibly discussing their plans, over a cup of tea. Initially, the centre drew a mixed crowd, all anxious to participate in a new experience. But soon the novelty wore off. And the clientele tapered off inspite of a range of teas being offered. Soon samosas and other snacks were also included on the menu card. However, it did not help in retaining the clienteles, which decreased considerably.

But the Tea Centre continued and,



in course of time, some enterprising entrepreneurs who realized that the executives are opting for tea over hard liquor, particularly in the afternoon and early evening hours decided to step in. The tea lounges with a lush ambience and offering variety of teas to the elite strata, started popular conversation - Chai Pe Charcha. The asset of these lounges is the ambience. They have tried to emulate the ambience of the coffee shops at 5-star hotels.... and, at times, more than succeeded.

In fact, tea has acquired a new connotation. It is no longer the hot or iced tea. Now you can get it in flavours like lemon, orange, and even chocolate. And it comes in an array of colours - green, yellow, red, brown, etc. There is a new Tea Bar which brews mean concoctions that will not only set your taste buds tingling but will also please your visual senses - with all their colourful glory. So now you can drink to peoples' health and stay not

only sober but also feel exhilarated with the rainbow colours of this brew that rejuvenates.

The Tradition

One of the world’s largest producers of tea, India is a country where tea is popular as a breakfast and evening drink. Tea drinking is more of a habit infused among the Indians rather than a fashion.

In this transitory world, few things have a perennial appeal. Tea is one among those rare things. Tea was there before the composition of Vedas, and teas are still there. More than four-and-a-half millennia has passed since a burning tea leaf floated through the air and found its way into the Chinese Emperor’s mug of hot water... since then the mornings have never been the same for many.

India produces some of the world’s finest teas, as also the maximum varieties. Among the famous specialty flavours are Darjeeling tea and Assam tea from the north, and Nilgiri tea from the south. Tea is normally classified based on its processing, leaf size and grade. Fermentation is the major process in tea production, and it creates two major classifications of teas; black and green tea.

Since ages tea has delighted generations with the elegant tradition of afternoon tea. Chef blended classic and contemporary cuisines to produce a unique and truly satisfying afternoon tea service. Tea companies in association with operators organise tea tasting ritual, where in-house tea sommelier interact with guests and run them through the tea offerings.

The Changing Scenario

Meanwhile, the traditional late afternoon restorative cup or cups of tea with small plates of food to satiate the hunger pangs between lunch and late dinners makes as much sense today as it did centuries ago. Tasting Teas at an upcoming Tea Lounge with a reputation for knowing how to do tea just the right way – from classic afternoon tea with scones to a tea party for the little ones– they rolls out the silver cart for tea aficionados of all ages.

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are on hand to help guide guests through the process of choosing the perfect tea. An assortment of light snacks and dessert menu enhances the tea drinking experience. They also offer a selection of single origin first flush leaf teas of both black and white varieties, while adding, also on offer are the teas infused with home grown herbs – with basil, lemon grass and mint. Guests can thus savour the taste and flavour of classic Indian chai.

High Tea Menu

As the concept of Tea Lounges & Bars is growing in India, the guests are getting habituated to traditional tea serving ritual of afternoon tea, to experience an entire world of aroma and flavours. They can select from a delicious variety of teas and enjoy freshly baked scones with English Devonshire cream, lemon curd and homemade preserves; an assortment of pastries; and delectable tea sandwiches, and Mango Salad on a Corn Muffin. Over a pot of exclusively blended tea, the guests enjoy a three-tiered tray of perfect bite-sized finger sandwiches, buttermilk scones with Devonshire cream and homemade pastries and sweets.

Few places have introduced special High Tea menu for the discerning guests. Here one can enjoy a traditional High Tea menu with a range of delightful pastries and savouries. Among other delightful

offerings, there is also a scrumptious range of sandwiches offered at the Lounges. The pastries and savouries are endowed with unique artistic designs and exude rich taste and thoughtful craftsmanship. They reflect research of various recipes and influence of myriad ingredients from across the globe.

Mostly the platter includes three types of teas – Assam, Organic and Earl Grey. The classic high tea experience comes with a variety of delicacies, which include hot, buttered scones, home-made jams, cakes, little sandwiches filled with cucumber and many more delightful treats; together creating a perfect feel for a late afternoon.

While deciding on a high tea menu chefs try to make the selection look interesting and at the same time keep it light as it is a meal between two main meals, that is lunch and dinner. It should ideally include refreshing teas, finger sandwiches, small



pastries, raisin scones, petit fours, mini pies, traditional fruit cake, lemon tarts, mini chocolate croissants, mini cupcakes, cookie platters and so on. When it comes to sandwiches, it is advisable to refrain from stuffing them with too much meat so as to keep them light. At the end of it, a high tea should not be turned into a main meal as it is generally restricted for casual meetings.

At most of the Tea Lounges, the teas are stored, brewed and served in the absolute traditional style with adequate care and finesse, which facilitates to eventually result in joy and fulfilment to the guest.

The Trend

Tea is arguably the most popular beverage in the world, exuding great aroma and health. What is more, it is probably more popular than ever. However, green teas, matcha teas, and tea lattes are replacing the leisurely sips of traditional steeped black tea, as the health benefits and antioxidant properties of tea varieties are getting more widely explored and appreciated. With more and more people becoming health conscious and tea being touted as a health drink, the concept of Tea Lounges & Bars is expected to further succeed.

The emergence of Tea Lounges & Bars is a natural extension of the growing popularity of tea in the country. This is a parallel trend to the Coffee Café Culture mushrooming in urban India. Tea Lounges & Bars are also sophisticated hang out zones, where one can have refreshing tea and sumptuous snacks along with a sophisticated ambience; an ambience which is conducive for an official meeting as well as a family get together and as well as for a romantic rendezvous. However, in the sleek ambience, the affordability factor of teas may take a beating.

All said and done, considering the current market scenario and food & beverage preferences of Indians, the aroma of teas is likely to only spread in India, and in the near future, in the background of increased disposable incomes and maturation of globalisation, many high-end teas are expected to have wider acceptance in the Indian market, who may be offering uncommon and imaginative flavours. ■



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Jams and Marmalades



Jams, Marmalades, Preserves, Fruit Jellies – all brethren of the same tribe that make our breakfast super special and life at the dining table, generally, sweeter. Armed with the goodness of fruit, often they do not need extra preservatives as they are naturally preserved with the process of cooking in sugar.

The ancient Greek technique of preserving quinces by boiling them in honey was included in the Roman cookery book, *De re coquinaria*. Cane sugar to preserve fruit can be traced back to the Spanish origins in the 16th century. Though we might not taste the difference between jams and preserves, as per the 1975 edition of *The Joy of Cooking* – jams are cooked and gelled fruit purees while preserves are cooked and gelled un-pureed fruit, and it includes a significant portion of whole fruit.

Jams contain both – fruit juice and pieces of the fruit's flesh. Some books however, define Jam as cooked and gelled fruit purees. It should really include the whole fruit, cut into pieces or crushed. Heated, sugar is added to activate the pectin in the fruit. The following extract from a US cookbook describes the process:

Jams are usually made from pulp and juice of one fruit, rather than a combination.

Berries and other small fruits are most frequently used though larger fruits like apricots, peaches, or plums cut into small pieces or crushed are also used for jams. Good jam has a soft even consistency without distinct pieces of fruit, a bright colour, a good fruit flavour and a semi jellied texture that is easy to spread but has no free liquid.

Preserves on the other hand, refer to fruit or sometimes vegetables that have been prepared, canned or jarred for long term storage. Fruit preserved traditionally involve use of pectin and can be made from sweet or savoury ingredients.

English Customs

Scones. Clotted Cream. Tea cakes. They have one thing running common through them when you say them aloud in England. Strawberry Jam! Or indeed Raspberry Jam; maybe the Bitter orange marmalade; additions have been made to the list as the

tight upper lipped British gave the nod to experimenting with their taste buds.

Jams and marmalades became synonymous with the English fare and have been traditionally served both with breakfast and at high tea. French would normally limit it to the tea time but would happily use jams in certain tea time preparations though not as openly as the British. A customary difference is that marmalade is considered more of a breakfast staple and often made of Seville oranges for their slight bitter taste.

Jelly & Freezer Jams

Jellies may be sweet or savoury and in US and Canada it refers to a type of clear fruit spread consisted of firmed fruit juice made with pectin. In England they would be called fruit spread or preserve. Jelly may even be a hot ingredient preparation; essentially the process is similar to jam with the additional step of filtering out the fruit pulp after the initial heating.

Uncooked or minimally cooked (less than 5 minutes) jams are referred to as freezer jam, because they are stored frozen and are extremely popular in parts of North America for their fresh taste.

Versatile Jams

Jams are not just for being enjoyed with tea or other delicacies. There are many desserts that call for a spoonful of jam to bring out the final flavour of the concoction. Or maybe to be mixed as a layer to bring together two differently baked cakes. Jams may be used to decorate ordinary cookies to make them more appealing to the kids.

Impromptu usage of jam with a couple of other ingredients from a humble larder is capable of producing exceptional dessert, depending on the imagination of the one rustling it up.

Imported Goodies in India

With the economy opening up and government allowing imports, importers big

and small brought all international brands to the Indian markets. Suddenly apart from ordinary brands, we have access to luxurious brands that offer reduced sugar, or no added sugar too. Fruits that are not available in India can be enjoyed in terms of jams.

For importers it is a safe bet as often they come with a long shelf life and are packed in sturdy bottles. Even shopkeepers who earlier stocked only the staple Indian jams and marmalades that were just heavy on sugar and sometimes laden with artificial fragrances are now waking up to a better quality product and a decent margin of profit in the imported goodies.

Indian Gems

Before all the foreign goods were flooded in the Indian retail market, we depended on largely Kissan and other similar products which seemed too sweet and lacked substantiality. There were those unsavoury stories about how most manufacturers did not use quality ingredients. Even in those days home made jams were a real treat because you could trust the goodness of it. Aunts and cousins who made them were seasonally in demand. Family recipes were furtively passed on and a daughter in law's position with regard to her mother in law was affirmed only when some of these recipes were passed on.

Then came some NGOs and cooperatives were formed and suddenly good quality

made in India jams and marmalades were available at select shop. Some good quality products that originated in the North Eastern states of India found favour in the market share. Modern retail did their contribution by stocking little known brands that practically flew off the shelf. Many brands died a natural death, either because they became indifferent; or grew international. It was more lucrative to supply to England than to Indian outlets.

Somewhere along the line products like Bhura came on the market and they were definitely more extensively available as also consistent in their quality. They would give a tough run for their money to some of the fancier brands that were bought for recall value. Anything a consumer had bought in England or America became an easily recognized and greedily acquired product.

Marmalades

Ideally, marmalade is a sweet preserve with a bitter tang made from citrus fruit, its rind and of course sugar and in some commercial brands a gelling agent. Although in England it almost always refers to Seville oranges, it may be made from grapefruit, dessert oranges, as also lime and lemons.

Leaving chunks of fruit in the jam has been adapted for other fruit jams too and nowadays it is common place to find pieces of strawberries, raspberries (different from

gooseberries we get in India), cherries especially the black ones, among others.

Tricks of the Trade

Setting of the jam depends on the pectin content of the fruit. Some fruits like gooseberries, redcurrants, citrus fruits, apples etc set very well. Strawberries might need added pectin. Commercial pectin is invariably used in most industrially produced jams. Home made jam or small scale jam makers sometimes rely on adding a pectin rich fruit to a poor setter – like blackberry added to apple. Homemade jams may be for personal consumption, or part of a cottage industry.

Unusual Products

While we are all familiar with the usual fruit jams and jellies; preserves and spreads there are some unusual preparations, typical to certain parts of the world.

Mayhaw jelly is a delicacy in parts of South America. Mint jelly and redcurrant jellies are popular in England with meat and turkey. Grass jelly is from China and is often served in drinks. Almond jelly is a sweet dessert from Hong Kong and Nata de coco is coconut Jelly. Yokan is a sweet jelly dessert from Japan and Muk is a variety of Korean jelly seasoned and eaten as a cold salad. Yet another Japanese jelly is Konjac, also called konnyaku.

Food Value of Jams/Marmalades

Jams are made from crushed or ground whole fruit and have a thick consistency due to high pectin content; Marmalade is a jelly with pieces of fruit suspended in it – citrus peel and juice are frequently the basis of marmalades; and conserves are jams made from a mixture of fruits and usually contain citrus fruit, nuts, and raisins.

Due to high sugar content, all of them are a source of calories. One level tablespoon of the product contains 55 to 70 calories and should be used sparingly by persons on control diets.

For the same reason of high sugar content it should be avoided by those with a diabetic problem and even the claim of no added sugar should be taken cautiously because the concentrated sugars of the fruit is sufficiently high.





Pink & Sweet!

Strawberry is a red, juicy and luscious fruit, grown on strawberry plant. It has several F&B applications. Though in popular perception strawberry is being thought of as a berry, but it is not a berry in strict botanical sense. Strawberry technically is an aggregate accessory fruit, where the fleshy part is not derived from the plant's ovaries but from the receptacle that holds the ovaries. Each apparently looking seed on the outside of the fruit is in reality one of the ovaries of the flower. Henceforth, we would refer strawberry only in the context of fruit.

There's nothing that says "Hello Summer" quite like eating a juicy vine-ripened strawberry that has been ripened

to perfection in the early summer sunshine. Strawberries serve more than just fulfilling the sweet tooth. It is packed with hordes of health benefits, making a nutritious fruit for mind and body.

Popular etymology has it that the name "straw" berry comes from gardeners' practice of mulching strawberries with straw to protect the fruits from rotting. There is an alternative, albeit equally implausible, theory that the name derives from the Anglo-Saxon verb for "strew" (meaning to spread around) which was streabergen (Strea means "strew" and Bergen means "berry" or "fruit") and thence to streberie, straiberie, strauberie, straubery, strauberry, and finally, "strawberry", the word which

we use today.

The name might have come from the fact that the fruit and various runners appear "strewn" along the ground. However, there is no evidence that the Anglo-Saxons ever grew strawberries, and even less that they knew of this practice, as strawberries are originally from the Americas.

The Rich Legacy

Like many other fruits, strawberry too has a rich legacy. The origin of garden strawberry can be traced to 1750s in Brittany, France, but before this wild strawberries were cultivated. Strawberry fruit was first mentioned in ancient Roman literature, in the context of its medicinal use.

French began to harvest strawberries by taking them from forest to their gardens, during the 14th century. Charles V from France had more than 1000 strawberry plants in his royal garden. By the mid16th century, strawberry farming became popular in England. Strawberry's cultivation in Europe gained some momentum by the end of the 16th century.

But modern strawberry as we know today, emerged during the 18th century, through crossing of Virginia strawberry from North America, to which Europe was introduced in the 1600s, and Chilean strawberry, to which Europe was introduced in the early 18th century. According to an academic article, all modern strawberry varieties have come from crossing of Virginia and Chilean strawberries.

Cultivation

Strawberry plants generally require temperate climate to grow. Tropical and sub-tropical climates are generally not conducive to their growth, though some varieties of strawberries can grow in sub-



tropical climates too. Strawberries prefer dry condition, so it is not advisable to overwater these plants. In the off season, strawberries can be grown in greenhouses too. Strawberry is the fruit from a short-day plant. It needs exposure of sunshine of about 10 days of 6-or 8 hours each for initiation of flowering. In winter, the strawberry plants growing strawberry remain dormant.

Well-drained, medium loam soil with high organic matter and with a pH ranging between 5.7-6.5 is ideal for the cultivation of strawberries. The ideal temperature for the growing of strawberries ranges between 60°F to 80°F. Strawberries become ready for harvest after their four to five months of growth.

In India, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Haryana, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are some of the strawberry growing states. In India, strawberry is generally cultivated in hilly areas. Mahabaleshwar, a picturesque hill station in Maharashtra, is well-known for the production of strawberries.

F&B Applications

This delicious fruit has a wide variety of applications for the food service and food retail industry. Strawberry can of course be enjoyed fresh, as a fruit, but can also be made into jams and preserves. Strawberry jam can be a delightful addition to the breakfast tables.

Strawberry or its flavourings can be



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used in milk, ice-cream and milk shakes. Strawberry with cream is a popular dessert in England. In Italy, strawberries are commonly used as a flavouring for gelato. Strawberries dipped in chocolate can be an indulgence to savour.

Strawberry cakes with fresh strawberries are one of the items which if well done, can add value to a bakery outlet. Strawberry cookies can also be tasty accompaniments to evening tea. Strawberry shake is a common beverage across our juice and shake outlets but strawberry juice is also no less delightful and healthy drink, especially during sultry summers. And strawberry banana smoothie can give a wonderfully healthy kick-start to your busy day.

Strawberry on almond and brown sugar crumble and strawberry pie can also be slightly uncommon but delectable additions



to our breakfast tables and so can be strawberry parfait made with strawberry syrup as one of its ingredients. Strawberry parfait can help you tackle the scorching summers better.

Healthy Benefits

Strawberry is one of the most delicious and nutritious fruit. It has the ability to remove harmful toxin in the blood. It is also recommended for sluggish liver, gout, rheumatism, constipation, high blood pressure and even skin cancer. Strawberries contain a range of nutrients, with vitamin C heading the group. They also contain significant levels of phytonutrients and antioxidants, which fight free radicals. These antioxidant properties are believed to be linked to what makes the strawberry bright red.

Strawberries are not only delightful to taste but are also enriched with health benefits. More than 90 percent of strawberry is comprised of water.

Strawberries are an excellent source of Vitamin C and manganese and they also contain healthy amounts of potassium. Strawberries are also enriched with folate, which is very important for pregnant women. Furthermore, strawberries are low in calories and are spruced with healthy antioxidants.

According to research done in 2004, phenolic compounds in strawberries facilitate in lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases by inhibiting the formation of total and bad cholesterol or LDL. Intake of strawberries in right dosages

may improve the health of your heart and may help in lowering blood sugar levels.

This is highly rated as skin cleansing food, even though the skin eruptions may appear at first in some cases. It is also known to clean or rid the blood of harmful toxins and has been reported to help cases of syphilis.

The strawberry, when cut in half and rubbed on the teeth and gums, removes tartar from the teeth and strengthens and heals the gums. The juice should be allowed to remain on the teeth as long as possible in order to dissolve the tartar. The mouth may then be rinsed with warm water.

These are only some of the many healthy benefits of this delectable fruit. So, we can see that in this increasingly health conscious age, the role of strawberries in India's food service and food retail industry demands more importance. Particularly in India's bakery industry, the role of strawberries needs more creative enhancement. ■

Did You Know?

- Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside.
- The average strawberry has 200 seeds.
- To symbolize perfection and righteousness, medieval stone masons carved strawberry designs on altars and around the tops of pillars in churches and cathedrals.
- Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring.
- There is a museum in Belgium just for strawberries.
- Strawberries are a member of the rose family.



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Gadgets for Professional Kitchen



Fixing daily meals for an audience that can number in the thousands is no easy task. For non-commercial chefs, fancy gadgets and tools are nice, but when it comes to preparing menu items in mass quantities, the clear

favourites are big players.

Asking a chef to choose a favourite tool is almost like asking a parent to name a favourite child, arriving at a decision is nearly impossible. Although ingredient quality plays a critical role in any meal, chefs are highly dependent upon the tools they use to prepare those foods.

For most of the chef's paring knife is not only their favourite tool, it's a constant companion. The chef uses knife for everything, from boning fish to peeling potatoes. It's the versatility of the tool that the paring knife fits right in the hand so it lets use skills as a chef. When chef looks at all the other tools that float around kitchen, the knife is the one they always go back to. The knife is built for speed and to make a good clean cut.

The chef uses a double-handled, twin-blade mezzaluna to prepare condiments for some of the most popular dishes. In addition to the cut the mezzaluna produces, there are other fringe benefits.

The combination of the tool's smooth rocking motion plus a double blade covers twice the area of a standard knife. With its compact body and adjustable blades, the mandoline is an important tool in chef's arsenal. The mandoline is critical in terms of timing and labour and they give nice, consistent slice every time. The mandolin adds to mezzaluna and paring knives as one of three essential tools for chef in the kitchen.

No matter how menus change, the mandoline is in use daily. Its adjustable, razor-sharp blade across which vegetables or other foods are carefully pushed, produces slices with an ease, versatility and consistency that can't be matched by knives. Interchangeable blades produce flat, rippled or latticed slices, matchsticks, juliennes or shreds. Although mandolines are equipped with a carriage to hold food and keep fingers safe, the tool has a danger factor. But as long you respect it, there won't be problems.



As with knives, mastering the mandoline is a training issue. You have to be aware of what you're doing and appreciate that the end of a potato is not as important as your fingertip. Slicing is a fundamental task in any foodservice kitchen and the mandoline is only one of several tools chefs employs to slice, dice, chop or grate in quantity.

Some chefs prefer a chinois nearly every day. Chinois is used to strain custards, purees, soups, and sauces, producing a very smooth texture. It's expensive for a strainer but in the end it's a beautiful thing. Using it is one of the most soulful things a chef can do.

The more functional the tool, the better it is. The favourite piece of equipment for the chef is the food processor. It's straightforward, but does anything they need it to. It's about ensuring quality and saving time. Chefs are introduced to new equipment all the time but certain tools are the things that always go with them and that just doesn't change.

Slicing doesn't always cut it, however. There are times when a chef needs to get rough, and when that's called for, a wide variety of all-purpose and specialty slicers, graters, choppers and cutters are available. The electric food processor has usurped the role of many gadgets in some operations, but traditionalists who prefer hand-operated cutting and chopping equipment haven't abandoned box or plane graters, finding these provide more control. Processors are fast but not the tool of choice for gently zesting a lime. Grater/shredder attachments for mandolines also provide slower, more controlled cuts.

Volume separates professional from home kitchens. When salads or slaw need to be made quickly and in quantity, equipment suppliers offer a variety of countertop cutters to transform heads of lettuce into piles of wedges or thin strips. Gadgets that can do the same gentle but firm trick for tomatoes, producing uniform slices for salad bars, also are available.



Weary prep cooks may lobby for wall-mount versions of tabletop cutters. These heavy-duty helpers can ease dicing bags of onions for soup or slicing potatoes for house-made french fries in wedges or shoestrings. And the popularity of sliced, battered and fried onion appetizers has spurred marketing of cutters that can produce a shift's worth of "onion flowers" in minutes.

No gadget is better than a sharp knife in a trained hand, but chefs are not abandoning their slicers.

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Ensuring Transparency and Natural Ingredients

Vikas Toshniwal, Managing Director, Indo Bakels Pvt. Ltd.



Vikas Toshniwal is a seasoned professional with over 22 years of expertise in B2B Business and Commercial Management spanning both domestic and export markets. With a robust background in General Management, including P&L responsibility, Vikas excels in Industrial Sales, Marketing, Business Development, Product Management, Strategy, and Operations. He has a proven track record of working closely with stakeholders and clients across APAC, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

What are the initiatives Bakels India is planning to take up in 2024?

In 2024, Bakels India is planning several initiatives to enhance its offerings and meet evolving customer needs. Firstly, we're prioritizing Clean Label Solutions, ensuring our products align with the demand for transparency and natural ingredients. Secondly, we have invested in Form Fill Seal (FFS) technology both in Dry and Wet lines, to streamline packaging processes and improve efficiency. Additionally, we're focusing on Healthy Solutions, introducing options like Wellbeing Concentrate, Chakki Atta Bread Concentrate, and Chakki Atta Jaggery Mix to promote healthier lifestyles. Lastly, we're expanding our product range with a complete confectionary Range, catering to diverse culinary needs. These initiatives reflect our commitment to innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction.

With the new state-of-the-art facility, what advantages does increased capacity bring to Bakels India's ability to meet market demands?

Our state-of-the-art facility in Tumkur has increased capacity at Bakels India

that provides several advantages in meeting market demands. By expanding our capacity and capabilities, we can offer a wider range of solutions, effectively catering to diverse customer needs and trends. Additionally, with access to global formulations and technology transfer, we can leverage innovative solutions to address specific market requirements efficiently. This enhanced capacity enables us to remain agile and responsive to evolving consumer preferences, ultimately strengthening our position in the market.

Clean label products are gaining popularity. How does Bakels India approach the concept of clean label in its products? Can you share insights on the challenges and opportunities associated with incorporating clean label ingredients into Bakels India's offerings?

At Bakels India, we approach the concept of clean label by focusing on natural ingredients and working closely with our customers to develop baked goods with minimum or no artificial additives. Our products, Bakels Protect 36 and Bakels Protect SR, exemplify this commitment, serving as natural preservatives. These alternatives to chemical preservatives like calcium propionate and potassium sorbate align with the clean label trend, offering our customers cleaner ingredient options for their breads, donuts and cakes.

However, incorporating clean label

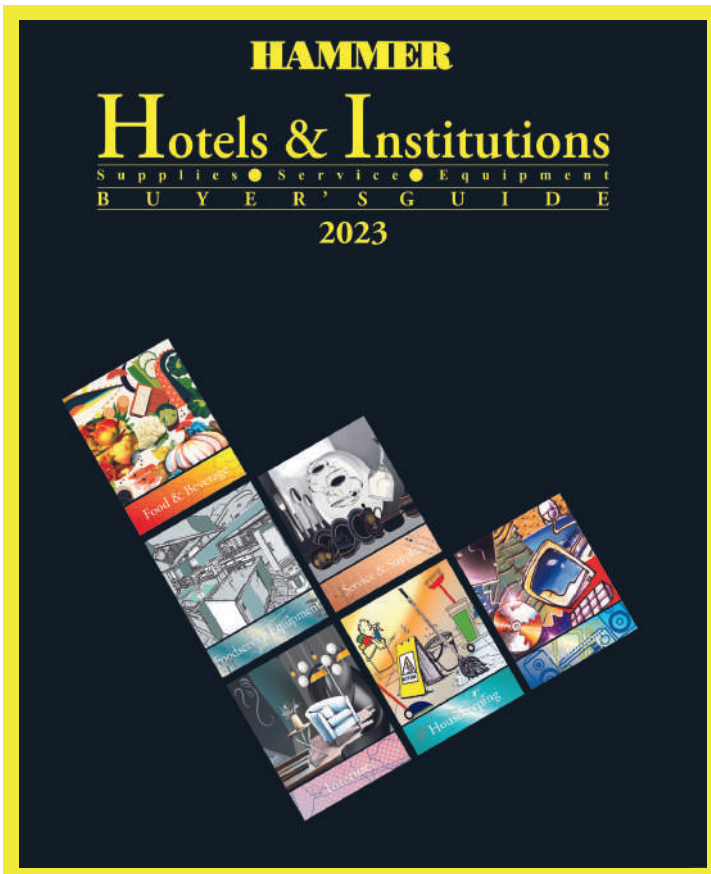
solutions presents both challenges and opportunities. One challenge is ensuring the effectiveness of natural preservatives in maintaining product quality and shelf life compared to their chemical counterparts as well as minimizing the impact of increased product costing. Additionally, sourcing and securing a consistent supply of natural ingredients can pose logistical hurdles. Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for Bakels India to differentiate itself in the market by meeting the growing demand for clean label products. By leveraging our expertise in formulation and technology, we can continue to develop innovative clean label solutions that meet the needs of our customers while staying true to our commitment to quality and sustainability.

In the pursuit of innovation, does Bakels India engage in any global or local collaboration? How does this contribute to the company's success?

Bakels India actively engages in both global and local collaborations as part of its innovation strategy. These collaborations play a crucial role in contributing to the company's success by facilitating knowledge exchange, fostering creativity, and accessing diverse resources. Globally, Bakels India collaborates with international partners, leveraging their expertise, research, and tech transfer to develop cutting-edge solutions tailored to local market needs.

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With the Annual Hotels & Institutions Buyer's Guide 2023, we were able to give the hospitality industry a more informative & updated edition of the Buyer's Guide. This editorial driven guide provides buyers with informative editorials along with the comprehensive database of suppliers on:

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Today more than 40,000 professionals are using our Annual Guide in more than 417 cities across India. The need has increased since the announcement of more than 500 plus hotel projects in the next 2 years and more and more restaurant/Fast food chains entering the arena.

Just as growth and development are continuous, we at Hammer are making continuous efforts to publish our next updated edition of Hotels & Institutions Buyer's Guide 2024.

With this small note we take the pleasure to let you know that you can now be a part of the guide via advertisement contract with us for the next issue and reserve the positions which you may have probably missed out in the last issue.

We welcome suppliers to the Hospitality industry to participate. Our aim is to create the most comprehensive Buyer's Guide as possible. The premium options are available as we have just started informing our existing patrons of the new edition which will be released in March 2024 during Aahara show in New Delhi.

We invite you to be part of our next Hammer Hotels & Institution Buyers Guide 2024 or suggest your vendors to be a part of the same.

Thank you and hoping to have a long and prosperous association for times to come.

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Chef Rahul Gurav, the Pastry Chef at Novotel Mumbai International Airport, with a rich tapestry of experience woven through his career, brings an unparalleled expertise to the hotel's bakery and dessert operations. His journey, marked by stints with Marriott International, Accor, The Oberoi Group, and IHG Hotels and Resorts. At Novotel Mumbai International Airport, Chef Rahul's primary role involves infusing new life into the bakery and dessert sectors. The Gourmet Bar, the hotel's in-house Deli, stands testament to his culinary prowess. Here, guests are treated to an array of his signature dishes, each a masterpiece reflecting his extensive experience and creative vision.

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

What are the current hot trends in the Indian Bakery industry?

In today's era, the Indian bakery industry is embracing several hot trends. There's a growing demand for healthier, gluten-free, and vegan options, catering to health-conscious consumers. Fusion flavours, blending traditional Indian tastes with international influences, are increasingly popular. Artisanal and handcrafted breads are gaining traction, emphasizing quality and craftsmanship. Personalized and customized baked goods, particularly in cakes and pastries, are also in vogue. Additionally, there's a noticeable trend towards using organic and locally sourced ingredients, reflecting a broader push for sustainability and supporting local economies.

How did you become a Pastry Chef?

I became a pastry chef driven by a deep-rooted passion, sparked in childhood through family baking traditions. The joy of crafting sweet delights initially piqued my interest. This enthusiasm grew, guiding me to seek formal culinary education and practical experience in the field. Each step in this journey, from learning techniques to experimenting with flavors, reinforced my love for pastry arts, cementing my decision to pursue this career wholeheartedly and professionally.

What is your Cooking philosophy?

My cooking philosophy centers on sourcing premium, seasonal ingredients to craft visually stunning and flavourful pastries. Emphasizing flavour balance and creativity, I'm dedicated to mastering and

integrating new techniques, constantly seeking ways to enhance the dining experience. This approach not only reflects my passion for culinary arts but also ensures that each dish I create offers a unique and memorable experience for my customers.

What are your Hot Selling bakery items?

Our bakery's top sellers are the artisanal croissants, known for their flaky, buttery layers, the rich and decadent chocolate tarts, and our uniquely flavored macarons, which offer a delightful blend of traditional and innovative tastes, appealing to a wide range of palates.

What about the health quotient? How do you take care of that aspect?

Prioritizing health is integral. To ensure a high health quotient, we focus on using wholesome, nutritious ingredients while limiting additives. Understanding diverse dietary needs, we provide options like gluten-free and low-sugar alternatives. This approach helps cater to various health requirements and preferences, making our offerings inclusive and health-conscious.

Your favourite tool?

The pastry scraper is my top pick due to its multifunctionality. It excels in shaping dough, ensuring precise pastry cuts, and is a champion in tidying up work surfaces.

What do you like about your job?

I am passionate about the creative process in my job, especially the ability to transform

basic elements into experiences that spark joy and happiness in others. It's incredibly fulfilling to see simple components come together to create moments of delight.

What is your strength as a bakery chef?

As a bakery chef, my core strength is in pioneering new recipes, where I meticulously blend unique flavours and textures. This approach ensures that every baked item is not just a treat for the taste buds, but also a delightful experience in terms of its texture and overall culinary balance. This innovation and precision define my signature style in the kitchen.

Your favourite ingredient?

Vanilla is my top choice, beloved for its versatility and classic taste. It elevates both sweet and savoury dishes, adding a subtle yet distinctive aroma that enriches every recipe with a timeless, universally appealing flavour.

What is your Mantra for success?

My success mantra is rooted in ceaseless learning, welcoming every challenge as an opportunity, and maintaining unwavering dedication to perfecting the craft of baking. This approach ensures growth, skill enhancement, and satisfaction in every creation.

What are your dreams?

My dream is to establish a renowned bakery that serves delectable treats while fostering a vibrant community space for those passionate about the culinary arts, making it a beloved local landmark and a hub for food lovers.



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