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BAKERY REVIEW

Business Magazine for Bakery & Confectionery Professionals

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Bakery Packaging

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Crave for Meringue

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Editorial

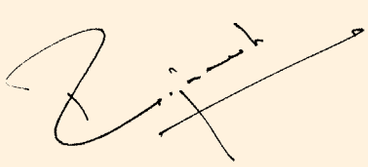
Dessert are the favourites among not only the children but everyone in any age group. Sweets are an inevitable part of almost all festivals and festivities in India. Any social event must end with a dessert – if not an array of them! In India sweets are a gesture of goodwill. Desserts has various aspects including its benefits and the popularity. Cover story expands on the issues connected with this sweet.

Packaging plays an important and prominent role in creating a positive image of the product. It protects the contents as well as gives a visual appeal to the product. The market for packaging is thus increasing at a rapid rate globally. Business story elaborates on the business of packaging in the bakery and confectionery industry including the different types of packaging material and the latest trends.

When you like to sweeten your food, maple syrup can add its distinctly delicious flavour to baked goods, beverages, meat dishes, and more. The ingredient section finds what makes the maple syrup an incredible product and its wide range of possible applications in the bakery industry.

Bakery products are always associated with its flavours, and the taste, last experienced. Also, bakery products are supposed to be eaten as fresh as possible to relish the crispness and aroma of the product. Product section finds Meringue cookies popularity is all set to create a market of its own in India.

Regular sections provide the latest events, news and reports of the industry along with interviews and view points of the stake holders.



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Aahar 2024

The International Food & Hospitality Fair

The latest edition of AAHAR 2024 - the International Food & Hospitality Fair, the most awaited B2B event in Asia, once again proved its position as the largest fair in the food & beverage and the hospitality sectors in India. The 38th edition was held during March 07-11, 2024, featuring new trends in F&B as well as hospitality services, food processing, culinary tech, retail and new innovations at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

AAHAR is organized by ITPO with support of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority (APEDA) and apex industry associations, Association of Resource Companies for Hospitality Industry of India (ARCHII), Hotel and Restaurant Equipment Manufacturers Association of India (HOTREMAI), All India Food Processors Association (AIFPA), Forum of Indian Food Importers (FIFI).

The fair has grown tremendously in size after completion of ITPO's ambitious project, world class Centre at Pragati Maidan. Covering the highest ever 1,10,000 sqm. + (Gross Area), with more than 1800 exhibitors. The show also featured exclusive wine pavilion & networking avenues, and a wide range of Food Products, Machinery, F&B equipment, Hospitality and Décor Solutions, Confectionary item from participants from India and overseas. The fair had good participation of

the foreign companies. The new attraction this year was Nutraceuticals, Aquaculture & Marine Products, Floriculture, Plant Proteins, Dairy Products, Fresh Fruits & Vegetables.

Apart from the meaningful display, the fair offered an insight to operational and food safety concerns and innovations to become energy-efficient, finding budget friendly raw materials boosting productivity, while still aiming for greater profitability.

As expected large number of trade visitors visited Aahar 2024. These included top echelons of the Hotel and Hospitality industry including CEOs, General Managers, Executive Chefs, Executive Housekeepers, Purchase Managers, etc. Besides, senior representatives from catering industry and academic institutions, training hotel management professionals also visited the fair.

Besides the potential to foster business revenues, Aahar also provided an effective platform for the players across global food & beverage and hospitality industry to disseminate/gather relevant information and gauge ongoing and future trends, which greatly benefited the participants at the fair.

The mega event is the right place for importers, overseas trade delegations and Indian players in the food & beverage and hospitality space, and also for policy makers and media personnel to exchange knowledge and information. India's food retail industry is also going through impressive growth phase. Especially, in the backdrop of the impressive growth potential of the Indian food services and food retail industry and with the revival of the Indian hospitality industry, the relevance of a mega event like Aahar simply cannot be overlooked.

EVENT CALENDAR

23-26 April 2024
FHA-Food & Beverage
Singapore Expo 1 Expo Drive
Singapore
https://foodnhotelasia.com

18-21 May 2024
The National Restaurant Show
McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
Chicago, U.S.
https://www.nationalrestaurantshow.com

4-6 June 2024
The Hotel Show
Dubai World Trade Centre
Dubai, UAE
https://www.thehotelshow.com

5-7 June 2024
Annapoorna Inter Food
India International Convention & Expo Centre (IICC)
New Delhi, India
https://www.annapoornainterfood.com

26-28 June 2024
Sigep Asia 2024
Sands Expo & Convention Centre,
Halls D & E,
Basement 2,Singapore
https://sigepasia.com.sg

3-4 July 2024
India Horeca Expo 2024
Trade Fair Complex
Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India
https://indiahorecaexpo.com

11-14 July 2024
The 18th Thailand Retail, Food & Hospitality Services 2024
EH 102, Bitec
Bangkok, Thailand
https://trafs.net

17-19 July 2024
Malaysian International Food & Beverage Trade Fair
Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
https://mifb.com.my

3-6 August 2024
India International Hospitality Expo 24
India Expo centre & Mart
Greater Noida, U.P., India
https://ihexpo.com

4-6 September 2024
Asia Fruit Logistica
Hong Kong International Airport, Lantau
Hong Kong, China
http://www.asiafruitlogistica.com

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POLEN FOOD

Culinary Competition 'Distingu-ISH-ed'

In a show of exceptional talent and creativity, the Indian School of Hospitality (ISH) successfully concluded an exhilarating culinary competition from February 10-12, 2024 at École Ducasse India in Gurugram, India. The competition was organised in partnership with the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), a prominent body representing culinary professionals across India. Their association added prestige to the event, underlining ISH's commitment to nurturing culinary excellence and innovation in the country.

The event drew a diverse array of participants who demonstrated their culinary prowess and were evaluated based on the quality and flavour of their prepared dishes, their organisation, knife skills, cooking techniques, creative presentation, and food safety practices. A total of 288 participants took part in the competition, including 130 10th-grade students, 73 home cooks and bakers, and 85 professional chefs.

The three-day event also featured a wide range of categories tailored to varying levels of proficiency and interests of the participants, including:

Competition for Students

Culinary and pastry arts students demonstrated their skills in Mocktails/ Cocktails, Plated Desserts, Cake Decorating, Three-course set menu, and a special category for students with special needs. The winners of the competition included:

Mocktails / Cocktails:

First Prize: Sanwar Zara Bahadur, Second Prize: Vasudha Sharma, Third Prize: Rishi Agarwal.

Plated Desserts:

First Prize: Kasireddy Royal Narendra Reddy, Second Prize: Mehak Gupta, Third Prize: Khushi Chaudhary & Khushi Maheshwari.

Cake Decorating:

First Prize: Jia Bhamgara, Second Prize: Ria Kaur Anand, Third Prize: Shiva Seth.

Three Course Set Menu:

First Prize: Schuyler Periera, Second Prize: Ira Bansal, Third Prize: Raveena Bisht.

Students With Special Needs: Ansh Malik, Anisha Khosla, Shashank Arora.

Competition for Home Cooks & Bakers

Home cooks and bakers showcased their skills in categories including Grandma's Recipes, Parent & Child and Desserts/Sweets, featuring traditional family cooking. Claiming the top spots were:

Grandma's Recipe:

First Prize: Mehjabeen Khan, Second Prize: Shubham Arora, Third Prize: Yulia Plutkova.

Parent & Child (Live):

First Prize: Jia & Dinaz Bhamgara, Second Prize: Min & Toby Lee, Third Prize: Mahil Iniya Cholan & Karmugil Bhaskar.

Desserts / Sweets:

First Prize: Sarika Jadhav, Second Prize: Sanwar Zara Bahadur, Third Prize: Kishore Kannan.

Competition for Professional Chefs

Professional chefs competed in various categories, including a three-course set menu, plated desserts, artisanal bread display, sculptured cake, and a mystery box challenge, exhibiting their culinary expertise and creativity. Emerging triumphant were:

Three Course Set Menu:

First Prize: Chef Sowdagar Zaeema Khan, Second Prize: Chef Grace Denny Luke, Third Prize: Chef Madhvendra Singh.

Plated Desserts:

First Prize: Chef Pritika Pant, Second Prize: Chef Sana Khan, Third Prize: Chef Natalia Peters & Chef Raagini Poddar.

Artisanal Bread Display:

Second Prize: Chef Mahesh Kumar.

Sculptured Cake/ Celebration Cake/ Wedding Cake:

First Prize: Chef Gurneesh Kaur, Second Prize: Chef Rakshita Maini, Third Prize: Chef Lenin Kumar.

Mystery Box Category:

Chef Piyush Rawat, Chef Schuyler Periera, Chef Tarveen Kaur.

''We are delighted to witness the remarkable talent and passion demonstrated at the ultimate culinary competition at École Ducasse India. The event served as a distinctive platform for culinary enthusiasts to present their skills and creativity, embodying the spirit of culinary excellence and innovation at the Indian School of Hospitality. I once again congratulate all the participants and winners for their outstanding performances and contributions to the vibrant culinary community,'' said Dr Zubin D'Souza, Dean – Culinary Studies.

The Indian School of Hospitality (ISH) has carved a distinctive reputation in offering hospitality management and culinary arts programs in association with globally acclaimed education institutions, including Ecole Ducasse, France, and Les Roches, Switzerland.

École Ducasse is a group of schools established in 1999 by multi-starred Chef Alain Ducasse. He is globally recognised for his exceptional culinary expertise and relentless dedication to excellence, making him an iconic figure in French cuisine.

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APPOINTMENT

Avishek Singha

Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield has appointed Avishek Singha as the Executive Pastry Chef. With an illustrious career of 13-years, Avishek contributes a wealth of experience and expertise, poised to enhance the endeavours of the team. He embarked on his culinary odyssey in 2011 as an Operational Trainee at Oberoi Hotels and Resorts. His journey led him to a breakthrough role as Chef De Partie in 2014, marking the initiation of his venture as an independent pastry chef. Avishek's affiliation with Marriott commenced at JW Marriott, Pune.

"Hunt For The Coolest Fans" Campaign

The Belgian Waffle Co, reveals its latest campaign: 'Hunt for the Coolest Fans' along with Gen Z Star Palak Tiwari. Known for her vibrant personality, she perfectly embodies the spirit of the "Coolest Fan" campaign. The campaign concept is all about capturing the essence of enjoying delicious waffles in a fun and creative way.

The #MyWaffleMove contest participants will have a chance to win iPhone 15, Bose Headphones, Boat Smartwatches, and 1000+ vouchers from the Belgian Waffle Co, perfect to engage the brand's target audience. It's a celebration of individuality and the love for exquisite waffle experiences.

"We are excited to have Palak Tiwari to represent all our cool fans who brim with joy while relishing their favourite waffles, at our stores or in the comfort of their homes. Her energy and enthusiasm align perfectly with the spirit of the 'Coolest Fan' campaign. We believe she will inspire our participants to bring their best moves forward for the contest," said Vrushali Parab, Head of Marketing at The Belgian Waffle Co.

In a delightfully playful video, the vivacious Palak Tiwari is spotted indulging her favorite Triple Chocolate waff-wich at The Belgian Waffle Co's flagship store at Chowpatty. She showcases her unique "Waffle Move", combining the joy of devouring the treat with some fun dance moves.

Redefining Coffee Culture

The recently launched North Star Cafe, located in the heart of HSR Layout, introduced an innovative concept that promises an unforgettable coffee experience, making it a must-visit destination for coffee enthusiasts. North Star Cafe distinguishes itself for its steadfast commitment to the craft of coffee. Boasting an exquisite selection of coffee beans and mastering diverse preparation techniques, the café provides a captivating journey for coffee lovers.

North Star Cafe caters to a diverse range of palates with an extensive menu that includes Café, Bakery, Beverages, Desserts, Continental, and Healthy Food options, the café is the perfect place for every occasion.

Some of the signature Drinks at North Star Cafe include the North Star Pistachio Latte, Spiced Coffee and Cacao, Mint and Bird's Eye Chili Moch and the North Star Coffee Tonic. While coffee takes center stage, the café also offers a delightful selection of basic bakeries and snacks. Discerning palates can indulge in savoury and sweet dishes, including croissants available in various enticing flavours and lip-smacking all-day breakfast platters.

"We are thrilled to introduce North Star Cafe as a unique destination for coffee enthusiasts in Bengaluru. With a focus on quality, innovation, and a welcoming atmosphere, we aim to redefine the coffee experience for our patrons," said Ms. Devanshi Tripathi, the visionary leader behind North Star Cafe.

North Star Cafe draws inspiration from the burgeoning coffee culture in the country, aspiring to provide the quintessential space for coffee lovers to relax and revel in their coffee passion. In every sip and every moment, North Star Cafe weaves a narrative of sophistication, innovation, and indulgence.

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Nature's Basket Unveils its Concept Store

Nature's Basket, part of the RPSG group, the premier destination for gourmet and fresh produce, announces the grand opening of its revolutionary experiential branch at Krishna Curve Mall, Mumbai. This new location promises an unparalleled shopping experience, blending the finest quality products with a unique and immersive environment.

Nestled near the "Queen of Suburbs of the city, the new Nature's Basket Artisan Pantry, the third concept store by Nature's Basket in the country at Krishna Curve Mall, takes grocery shopping to a whole new experiential level. Featuring state-of-the-art experiences such as dedicated wine cellar,

artisanal cheese, farmer's market, live cooking gourmet studio, and chocolate studio, this branch is set to redefine the way Mumbaikars approach their culinary journey with a crafted experience.

"At Nature's Basket, we are committed to providing our customers with not just groceries but an immersive culinary experience. Our new concept store at Krishna Curve Mall is designed to create a shopping experience unlike any other, offering a curated selection of the finest products and a space where food enthusiasts can indulge their senses," said Shashwat Goenka, Chairman, Spencer's Retail and Nature's Basket.

Si Nonna's Expands its Footprint

Get ready to indulge in the most authentic handcrafted sourdough pizzas with Si Nonna's! The first original sourdough

pizzeria is on an expansion spree with the recent launch of two new outlets, one in the bustling Phoenix Market City, Kurla and another at Inorbit Mall Vashi. With the addition of two new outlets Si Nonna's is also present in Mumbai at Kamla Mills, Jio World, Fun Republic and one store in Pune at FC Road.

Each sourdough pizza, meticulously crafted with time-honoured techniques, transports you to the piazzas of Naples. The newly launched outlets are all set to captivate palates with its unwavering commitment to Neapolitan tradition. In addition to Sourdough Pizzas patrons can indulge in Salads, Starters, Home made dips, desserts and beverages.

Ayush Jatia, the mastermind behind Si Nonna's, says, "We're thrilled to bring the essence of Si Nonna's to Kurla and Vashi and we can't wait to showcase our passion for authentic Italian food with their communities. Come gather at our tables, let the warmth of our hospitality envelope you, and prepare to be swept away by the magic of Si Nonna's."

Sweet Symphony at Mishri

Mirador Hotel Mumbai's latest offering, Mishri, promises to indulge patrons in the purest form of love through an exquisite array of sweets and savouries. Mishri, (which, in English, means Rock Sugar or Sugar Candy) is more than a sweet shop; it's a collection of special moments that accompany you through every phase of life.

Its menu has a collection of sweet sensations, where each specialty promises an extraordinary and delightful experience. From the opulent richness of Anjeer & Date Burfi to the exotic allure of

Tiramisu,showcases culinary finesse.

Besides delicacies like Chocolate-based Mithai, featuring the luxurious Malai Barfi, it offers a unique fusion of flavours in Sugar-Free Kaacha Gola Sandesh. The outlet seamlessly blends tradition with innovation in every delectable bite. Beyond sweets, Mishri also offers an assortment of savoury delights, from Punjabi Samosa and Masala Ghugara to Nylon Khaman, ensuring a perfect balance for every discerning palate.

It claims that each sweet is thoughtfully prepared to impart health benefits, from improving eyesight to alleviating fatigue and balancing bodily functions.

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Exploring Flavour Innovation in Chocolate Confectionery

By Tulsi Joshi

In recent years, chocolate consumption in India has seen significant growth, with a sizable portion of consumers embracing this indulgent treat. Mintel research shows that six in 10 Indians have consumed chocolates in the past three months through June 2023, with a notable percentage expressing interest in trying new flavours. Despite this burgeoning interest, there remains untapped potential in flavour innovation within India's chocolate market. For example, flavour innovation in chocolates in the US is approximately 3.7 times higher than in India.

Here, we delve into the opportunities for flavour innovation in chocolate confectionery, examining the appeal of traditional Indian flavours, such as mithai, and the emergence of fruity variations.

Leverage the interest in mithai flavours

Traditional Indian sweets, known as mithai, hold a special place in the hearts of many Indians. Mintel research shows that one-third of consumers express interest in mithai-flavoured chocolates compared to international dessert flavours, thus presenting a promising opportunity for brands to cater to local preferences.

By infusing chocolates with flavours reminiscent of beloved mithai such as gulab jamun, rasgulla, and jalebi, brands can offer a modern twist on traditional delicacies. Moreover, the introduction of limited edition assortment packs inspired by mithai flavours can further enhance consumer engagement and excitement.

It's also essential for brands to recognise

the diverse preferences across different regions in India. While flavours like gulab jamun may resonate more with consumers in the West, those in the East may prefer rasgulla. Understanding and catering to these regional nuances can strengthen brand appeal and ensure broader market penetration.

Furthermore, drawing inspiration from local mithai stores that have successfully integrated desi flavours into their offerings can provide valuable insights for chocolate brands seeking to tap into regional tastes. For instance, local brand Bombay Sweet Shop introduced the Indie Bar, featuring layers of pepper caramel, coconut fluff, patissa/soan papdi (a local sweet delicacy), and dark chocolate. According to the brand's website, its chefs experimented with soan papdi and recognised its potential for inclusion in a chocolate bar.

Expand offering of fruity variations

Fruity flavors are mainstream in India's chocolate market, with 18% of product launches featuring fruity variations. Brands can capitalise on this by introducing seasonal fruity variations, as seen in markets such as Germany, the UK, and Japan.

Mango is emerging as a particularly sought-after flavour. The recent launch of Cadbury Dairy Milk's tangy mango flavour exemplifies this trend, leveraging nostalgia and seasonal appeal to captivate consumers. A niche segment of experimental consumers are also interested in trying flavours like apple, guava and pineapple – further diversifying the chocolate flavor landscape.

Brands like YBC Nago Me Time Spice & Chocolate Apple & Cinnamon Chocolate (Japan) showcases unconventional fruity combinations such as apple and cinnamon to capture the interest of consumers.

What we think

The relatively limited number of flavour launches in India compared to other markets presents a ripe opportunity for both existing and new brands to establish themselves as flavour specialists. By embracing local tastes, exploring regional variations, and experimenting with novel flavour combinations, they can cater to diverse consumer preferences and carve out a distinctive niche in this increasingly competitive chocolate landscape. There remains abundant potential for creativity and exploration in the realm of flavour innovation, and this will remain a key driver of growth and market differentiation.

The author is Mintel's Senior Food & Drink Analyst based in Mumbai. She is responsible for analysing and providing insights on India's food and drink market.

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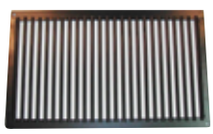
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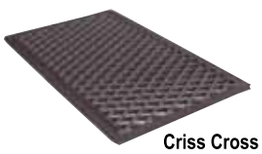
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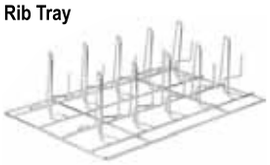
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Perforated Pan 2/3

S.S Idli Tray

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Desserts

A delicacy that cannot be deserted

Dessert, derived from the French word, "deserver", which means "to serve well" is believed to have originated in ancient civilisations where people ate nuts and fruits rolled in honey. The sweet delicacy, desserts, is, today lapped up by people of all ages. There are various views on this delectable delicacy like their effect on one's health, whether they should be had before or after meals, et al. **Ashok Malkani** tries to unfathom some of the issues connected with this sweet and much cherished repast.

Mention desserts and your imagination soars to all the sweet delicacies. Just thinking of desserts makes one drool but all that talk about ill effects of sweets makes you hesitate from gulping down the delectable delicacy in front of you. But have you ever wondered why your mood goes from drab to fab when you sink your teeth into that chocolate cake in front of you? This is because sugar in the desserts causes your brain to release endorphins such as serotonin, which are responsible for making you feel happy, cheerful and calm. It may be mentioned that sweets are also great stress relievers. However, they should be consumed in moderation.

Divyanshi Patel, Executive Chef, The Astor Goa says, "Consuming desserts in moderation poses minimal health risks. Overconsumption of any food, including desserts, can have adverse effects, emphasizing the importance of balanced and varied dietary choices."

Parimal Sawant, Director Culinary, Meluha The Fern An Ecotel Hotel and Rodas An Ecotel Hotel, Mumbai, is of the view, "Sweet treats should be savoured in moderation, as the key principle for any type of food consumption is 'everything in moderation.' Consuming desserts too frequently can contribute to weight gain and various health issues, including diabetes and heart disease. To maintain a healthy weight and overall well-being, it's advisable to adhere to the recommended frequency of enjoying desserts once or twice per week. Desserts can still be part of a healthy diet by avoiding overindulgence and refraining from daily consumption.

Nikhil Menon, Head Chef Pastry/ Culinologist (R&D) at Mizu Izakaya, Mumbai, feels, "Desserts are essentially sugar. Too much sugar is definitely bad. Dessert intake should always be done in moderation. There is always an option of trying low sugar or alternative sugar desserts which are better than desserts containing refined sugar. Remember less is more. This way we can enjoy your favourite dessert for a longer time."

The general concept seems to be that desserts should be had in moderation. No wonder the word "desserts" turns into "stressed", when spelt backwards!

Good For Health

But desserts consumed in moderation can, according to research, have nutritional value. Chocolate lovers will be happy to learn that desserts high in cocoa content, like a bar of dark chocolate, are chock-full of nutrients, like Fiber, Iron, Copper, Magnesium and Antioxidants. Existing studies show dark chocolate affects heart health positively. Thus, there seem to be diverse views on this dish. So are desserts good for health? Do they help one relax?

Parimal says, "Desserts can contribute to relaxation for a few reasons. Consuming sugary foods can trigger the release of endorphins in the brain, leading to feelings of pleasure and reward. Ingredients like chocolate have the potential to induce the release of endorphins, serving as natural mood lifters.

Additionally, indulging in a sweet treat can offer a temporary distraction from stress and worries. Moreover, the act of enjoying something delicious can be a form of self-care, promoting relaxation and pleasure. But, while desserts can aid in relaxation, moderation is key to maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle."

Parimal Sawant

Nikhil adds, "Desserts can help you relax definitely but they should be treated as rewards which can be consumed on special occasions."

Divyanshi declares, "Indulging in desserts can contribute to relaxation by triggering the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. The act of enjoying a sweet treat can provide comfort and satisfaction, leading to a sense of relaxation. Also, it certainly can help to improve our mood."

The Popularity

Consumption of desserts should be done in moderation is an advice that is doled out by almost everyone yet love and desire for something sweet is a craving experienced by the young and old. So why do people love desserts and what is their popularity in India?

Parimal disclosed, "People love desserts for a variety of reasons beyond just satisfying a sweet tooth. Desserts often evoke nostalgia, reminding us of cherished memories associated with special occasions, family gatherings, or childhood treats. They provide comfort and indulgence, offering a momentary escape from the stresses of daily life.

Additionally, desserts can stimulate the

senses with their enticing aromas, vibrant colours, and diverse textures, providing a sensory experience that goes beyond mere taste. Whether it's the creamy richness of a cheesecake, the comforting warmth of a freshly baked cookie, or the decadent delight of a chocolate truffle, desserts have a unique ability to evoke joy and pleasure, making them beloved treats for many."

He further adds, "Desserts are the cherry on top of life's endeavours – often seen as a reward for good behaviour or hard work. From receiving candy as a child for being good or doing chores to treating your adult-self to cakes for meeting goals, desserts are often considered a well-deserved pleasure for a job well done. Even diets have cheat days. They're a standing ovation for your taste buds, a round of applause for your efforts. Desserts have sensory properties different from the main dish, so being full and feeling satisfied are two very different things."

Speaking about the love for desserts in India he states, "Desserts hold a cherished place in Indian cuisine, offering a delightful array of flavours and textures that reflect the country's rich culinary heritage. From classic favourites like gulab jamun, jalebi, and rasgulla to regional specialties such as Mysore pak and modak, there's a sweet treat to satisfy every palate. These delectable confections are not only enjoyed during festivals and celebrations but are also deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of India.

He adds, "With readily available ingredients such as milk, ghee, sugar, and aromatic spices, Indian desserts not only captivate the taste buds but also embody the warmth and hospitality of the nation's culinary traditions. Lastly, the art of making desserts is often passed down through generations, creating a strong sense of tradition and nostalgia associated with these sweet treats. Families take pride in their signature dessert recipes, which are lovingly handed down and perfected over time. This tradition fosters a sense of community and connection, as people come together to share not just food but also stories and memories associated with their favorite desserts."

Divyanshi avers, "Love for desserts is rooted in their ability to provide a delightful sensory experience. The combination of sweetness, textures, and flavours triggers

Nikhil Menon

pleasurable sensations, making desserts a universally cherished treat. Additionally, it has a magical quality that can lift anyone's mood, regardless of age.

They are enjoyed by both children and adults alike. In India they are extremely popular not just for their sweetness, but also for their cultural significance. Sweets are commonly associated with celebrations and festivals and are a symbol of happiness and good fortune. For instance, during festivals like Diwali, sweets are distributed in every household. It is also believed that offering sweets to guests makes them feel happy and strengthens the bond between the host and the guest."

Nikhil declares, "People love deserts because it gives them the release of feel good hormones like dopamine when they consume their favourite dessert. They are always transported to nostalgic feelings when they consume their desserts. More than the feeling of fullness desserts offer fulfilment of the soul."

He continues, "Desserts have been always popular in India, as each region boasts about their own special dish which they are proud of. Apart from the traditional desserts our people are also open to trying desserts from around the world as many of them travel outside the country and bring those influences back into the country."

The History

Talking about popularity of desserts in India, it may be mentioned that history of sweet in the country can be traced back to 500 BCE when records suggest both raw sugar (gur, vellam, jaggery) and refined sugar (sarkara) were being produced. In ancient India, sweet dishes were prepared by using honey, jaggary or fruit. Milk-based desserts became popular in the Moghul era, which brought Persian influence in Indian desserts.

Nikhil states, "India has a long tradition of dessert making. Initially they were made by expert chefs or halwais who used local ingredients and sweeteners. Till today many families in India have their own halwai who makes different dishes for the entire family. I think jalebi is very popular in India but it has its origins in Persia."

He continues, "I think malpua, made from a batter that has been fermented overnight, has a deep history. Many variations exist all over india. Some recipes call for use of egg, while some recipes are accompanied with rabdi."

Divyanshi declares, "India has had a strong affinity for desserts for centuries. It dates to the Vedic period, around when honey and fruits were the primary sources of sweetness. The Rigveda, among other early Indian texts, mentions a honey and milk-based offering called "Madhuparka," which was made during rituals and celebrations. This practice laid the foundation for the significance of sweets in religious and cultural contexts.

As India evolved, so did its sweet offerings. Sugarcane was cultivated and processed into sugar, providing a readily available source of sweetness. Later, the Mughals, with their Persian roots, brought with them a rich tradition of sweet delights, and exotic ingredients like saffron, rosewater, and dry fruits. I believe the most popular dessert is Gulab jamun, introduced in India by the Moghuls. However, the oldest dessert in India is Malpua, which is offered as a part of the traditional Chappan Bhog to Lord Jagannath daily."

Parimal states, "The history of desserts in India is rich and diverse, spanning thousands of years and influenced by various cultures and regions. Desserts, or sweets, hold a significant place in Indian culinary traditions and are often associated with festivals, celebrations, and religious ceremonies. During the medieval period, the Mughal Empire

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had a profound impact on Indian cuisine, especially desserts. Mughal rulers introduced techniques such as cooking with milk, cream, and dry fruits, which became integral to many Indian sweets. Famous Mughal-era desserts like Shahi Tukda and Gulab Jamun are still enjoyed today.

Each region of India has its own unique dessert traditions, influenced by local ingredients, cultural practices, and historical factors. For example, in the northern states of Punjab and Haryana, rich and creamy desserts like Rabdi and Phirnee, while in the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, desserts like Payasam (a sweet rice pudding) and Mysore Pak (a rich, fudge-like sweet) are celebrated."

Types of Desserts

Craving for something sweet is a feeling that often arises suddenly. And you want to try something sweet that different. There are a variety of desserts that are different and unique. However, they fall into four different categories. Some of the major ones are frozen desserts, cold desserts, dessert drinks, fried desserts, puddings and custards and baked desserts. But what are the most popular desserts and which is the most expensive one?

Divyanshi discloses that four major types of desserts are custards, puddings, baked desserts, and fried desserts.

She adds, "Kaju barfi, a diamond-shaped Indian sweet made with cashews is considered one of the most luxurious desserts. While popular, its status as the most expensive may vary, as it depends on factors such as ingredients and craftsmanship."

Parimal lists the most popular desserts as:

Gulab Jamun: These deep-fried milk dumplings soaked in sugar syrup are beloved for their rich sweetness and melt-in-your-mouth texture.

Rasmalai: Soft cheese dumplings soaked in sweetened, thickened milk flavored with cardamom and saffron, rasmalai offers a delicate texture and a creamy, aromatic taste that's hard to resist.

Jalebi: Crispy, spiral-shaped deep-fried batter soaked in sugar syrup, jalebi is known for its bright orange color and crunchy exterior with a syrupy, sweet interior.

Divyanshi Patel

Kheer: A creamy rice pudding made with milk, sugar, and flavoured with cardamom, saffron, and nuts, Kheer is a comforting dessert often served at weddings, festivals, and special occasions.

Halwa: A broad category of desserts made from grains, lentils, fruits, or vegetables cooked with ghee, sugar, and flavoured with cardamom, nuts, and saffron.

He avers, "These desserts are popular in India due to their rich flavours, use of aromatic spices, and cultural significance. They are often served as a sweet conclusion to meals or as treats during festivities and celebrations, embodying the warmth and hospitality of Indian cuisine."

Speaking about the most expensive dessert he discloses, "'The Exotica' holds the title for one of the most expensive mithais/desserts in India, priced at Rs 50,000 per kilogram. Crafted by the well-known sweet manufacturer 'Chhappan Bhog' in Lucknow, this bite-size delicacy is made with 7-8 premium ingredients sourced from various parts of the world. The recipe includes blueberries from the USA, macadamia nuts from South Africa and Australia, hazelnuts from Europe, pine nuts, saffron, and mamra badam from other regions. To add a touch of luxury, it is garnished with 24-carat gold, living up to its extravagant name. While 'The Exotica' is popular worldwide for its uniqueness, it is not as widely embraced among the masses due to its exorbitantly high price."

Nikhil asserts, "When it comes to Indian desserts, Bengali moira community makes a lot of varieties of chhenna based desserts which are very popular. The same ingredient when treated in different ways yield different results in terms of texture and flavour. Given the variety it appeals to large audience."

He adds, "I think dessert are made expensive by addition of unnecessary elements like 24 karat gold varq which in my opinion adds zero value. Instead, people who are smart will rather go to their sweet spot to get their most preferred dessert which has always stood the test of time."

Consumption

There is a belief among some that desserts should be had before meals while a majority are of the view that it should be had after meals. When should they be had and why is a question that is niggling in everyone's mind.

Parimal states, "Desserts are typically consumed after meals in many cultures. This tradition stems from the belief that desserts provide a sweet and indulgent conclusion to a meal, offering a satisfying end to the dining experience. Having dessert after a meal also allows the palate to transition from savoury to sweet flavours seamlessly.

However, there are instances where desserts might be enjoyed before or during meals. Some individuals may prefer to start with a small sweet appetizer, while others may enjoy dessert alongside their main course–examples include combinations like Aam Ras and Poori or Halwa Poori. In certain cuisines, such as French or Italian, it's common to partake in cheese or fruit as a palate cleanser before the dessert. Ultimately, the timing of dessert consumption depends on personal preference and cultural practices, whether enjoyed before, during, or after a meal."

Devyanshi declares, "Preferably, desserts are recommended to be eaten after meals. This allows for better digestion and ensures that the nutritional needs of the main meal are fulfilled before indulging in the sweetness of desserts."

Nikhil says, "Normally desserts are consumed after a meal. It would be advisable to have a varied diet high in fibre and complex carbs to avoid instant sugar spice. Always have controlled portion size when having your dessert."

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Recipes for Desserts

Luscious Orange Delight

Ingredients

Olive oil	250ml
Icing sugar	500gms
Butter	250g
Almond powder	250g
Flour	250gms
Whole eggs	10nos
Milkmaid	40g
Orange juice	according to taste
Orange food Colour	a few drops
Caramelised sugar	300gms

Method

Firstly for the base, caramelise sugar and pour in a round tin. And then mix all the above ingredients and pour the batter to the mould.

Bake in a Double Boiler at 180 deg c for 30/40 mins

Divyanshi Patel, Executive Chef, The Astor Goa.

Chirote (Maharashtrian Delicacy)

Ingredients

Refined flour (Maida)	3/4 cup
Fine semolina (barik rawa)	1/8 cup
a pinch of Salt	
Ghee, hot for deep-frying	1 tablespoon
Oil, for greasing	
Pistachios powder	for garnish
Sugar syrup	
Sugar	2 cups
Green cardamoms	2-3
Milk	1-2 tablespoons
Ghee	2 tablespoons
Cornflour/ corn starch	1/2 cup

Method

Take refined flour in a parat. Add semolina, and salt and mix. Make a well in the centre and add the hot ghee and mix till the mixture comes together. Add 1/3 cup water, mix and knead into a semi-soft dough. Cover and set aside for 10-15 minutes.

To make the sugar syrup, heat sugar and 1 cup water and mix well. Break the green cardamom pods and add into the mixture. Cook till the sugar melts.

Add milk and mix. Reduce the heat, collect the scum that floats on top of the sugar syrup and discard it. Continue to cook till one string consistency. Take the pan off the heat.

To make the paste, take ghee in a bowl and mix till it is smooth. Add corn flour in batches and mix till a smooth thick paste is formed.

Divide the dough into 3 equal portions and shape each portion into a ball and press it lightly.

Grease the worktop with some oil. Place the flattened dough portion and roll it into a thin disc. This is a chapatti.

Take a chapatti on the worktop and spread a portion of the corn flour paste on top. Place the second chapatti over it. Apply a portion of the corn flour paste on it and place the third chapatti over it. Lightly roll and apply another portion of the corn flour paste over it.

Tightly roll the layered chapattis into a cylinder. Fold the ends and cut into 1 inch pieces. Roll out each piece into a small disc.

Heat sufficient oil in a kadai. Deep fry the small discs, a few at a time, till light golden brown and crisp. Drain on an absorbent paper.

Dip into prepared warm sugar syrup and drain on a wire rack. Allow the chirote to cool to room temperature.

Arrange the Chirote on a serving plate. Garnish with pistachios powder and serve.

Parimal Sawant, Director Culinary, Meluha The Fern An Ecotel Hotel, Rodas An Ecotel Hotel, Mumbai.

Creme caramel

Ingredients:

For the Caramel:	
Granulated sugar	1 cup (200g)
1/4 cup (60ml) water	
For the Custard:	
Eggs	4 large
Sweetened condensed milk	1 can (14 oz/397g)
Evaporated milk	1 can (12 oz/354ml)
Vanilla extract	1 teaspoon

Method:

1. Preheat the Oven: to 350°F (175°C). Place a kettle of water on to boil for the water bath.

2. Prepare the Caramel: In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the granulated sugar and water. Heat over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves.

Once the sugar has dissolved, stop stirring and let it boil. Swirl the pan occasionally to ensure even caramelization. Cook until the syrup turns a deep amber color, which may take around 7-10 minutes. Be careful not to burn the caramel.

Once the desired color is achieved, immediately pour the caramel into the bottoms of your ramekins or custard cups, tilting them to coat the bottom evenly. Set aside to cool and harden.

3. Make the Custard:

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, and vanilla extract until well combined and smooth.

4. Pour the Custard Mixture:

Carefully pour the custard mixture over the cooled caramel in the ramekins or custard cups.

5. Prepare the Water Bath:

Place the filled ramekins or custard cups in a baking dish large enough to hold them without touching. Place the baking dish in the preheated oven.

6. Bake:

Fill the baking dish with hot water from the kettle, being careful not to splash water into the custard cups. The water should come about halfway up the sides of the ramekins.

Bake for about 45-55 minutes, or until the custard is set around the edges but still slightly jiggly in the center.

7. Chill and Serve:

Once baked, remove the custard cups from the water bath and allow them to cool to room temperature. Then, refrigerate them for at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight, to chill and set completely.

To serve, run a knife around the edge of each custard cup to loosen the creme caramel. Place a serving plate on top of the cup and invert it to release the creme caramel onto the plate, allowing the caramel sauce to drizzle over the custard.

Serve chilled and enjoy your delicious creme caramel!

Nikhil Menon, Head Chef Pastry/Culinologist (R&D) at Mizu Izakaya

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Bakery Packaging

Packaging in any industry, is important as it protects the contents as well as gives a visual appeal to the product. Packaging is all the more important in bakery industry as majority of its products have to be protected from humidity and several other external factors. The market for packaging is thus increasing at a rapid rate globally. This is indeed a tempting opportunity for enterprising entrepreneurs to venture into this business. Ashok Malkani delves on various aspects of the bakery and confectionery packaging industry including the different types of packaging material, the latest trends and the rules and regulations for starting the business.

First impressions in any business are long lasting. And packaging plays an important and prominent role in creating a positive image of the product. Packaging, in bakery industry is all the more essential as it not only makes the article look presentable but it also provides protection, safety, enhanced usability to name a few.

Packaging also keeps the product intact throughout its logistics chain from the manufacturer to the end user by protecting it against humidity, light, heat and other external factors. Another functional key factor of packaging, particularly food products like bakery items, is that it includes a description of the ingredients and nutritional information of the packaged good.

In other words, packaging is useful due to the following factors:

- It protects the product.
- It prevents it from spoiling.
- It provides vital information of the packaged product.
- It decreases costs.
- It means economy

Why it is Important?

Packaging may be said to have become one of the major factors for promoting the sales of the product. This is all the more essential in case of bakery products and convenience food. The products helping in boosting the packaging industry are: Bread, Cakes, Pastries, Biscuits, Breakfast Cereals, Frozen Bakery & Desserts.

According to IMARC's latest report, "Confectionery and Bakery Packaging Market: Global Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2024-2032", the global confectionery and bakery packaging market size reached $ 114.5 Billion in 2023 and is expected to touch $ 176.5 Billion by 2032, exhibiting a growth rate (CAGR) of 4.78% during 2024-2032. An increasing demand for convenience food is one of the reasons for rising demand for packaging material, particularly for bakery and confectionery products.

According to Research And Markets The

Indian bakery market size reached $ 11.3 billion in 2022 and is expected to reach $ 21.2 billion by 2018 exhibiting a CAGR of 11.06% during 2022-2028.

All this would mean an increase in demand for bakery packaging material.

The world of baked delights has ben booming and bakery market, like well-proven dough, is expected to puff up to $ 570 billion by 2027. That, according to YoonPak, is a steady growth rate of 2.6% since 2020.

Packaging in the bakery and confectionery sector is a specialised area and involves usage of various materials and technologies to ensure moisture resistance and the ability to maintain the quality and freshness of the contained items.

Segmentation

Bakery and confectionery market is split by type and application. The market segment by types is thus: Paper Packaging, Glass Packaging, Plastic Packaging and Others

Many different types of packaging materials are used for storage of bakery products. The packaging material should be such that it does not hinder the baking quality by trapping heat or moisture. The main utilitarian purpose of packaging is retaining the taste and texture of the product, as most baked goods don't have a long shelf life.

Some of the materials used are:

Brown paper: This is the cheapest material. It is used merely to ensure that the product is protected while it is being transported.

Parchment paper: This is one of the best bakery and confectionery packaging material as it can keep the contents from being spoiled over a long period. Thus it gives the product long storage life.

Kraft paper: It is known for its strength and flexibility and strikes a balance between cost and performance. However, this paper is not impermeable to air and moisture, which can compromise the freshness of bakery products.

Custom food paper: This environmental friendly, cost effective paper has various uses in bakery industry.

Greaseproof paper: This is specifically used for producing molded cups.

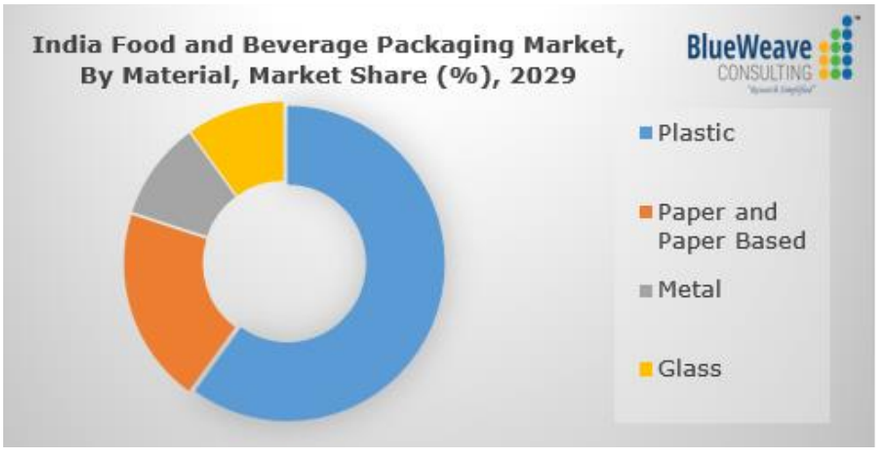
Metallized film: This is one of the best materials as it can trap heat and moisture over a long period of time. Besides, one can also easily print on it.

Plastic sheeting: It allows customers to view the product and enables them to know exactly what they are buying.

Cake boxes: These are used to transport baked goods from the bakery to the end user. As the box can be opened from both sides it is easy to remove the cake horizontally from the top. Even corrugated bake boxes are available to ensure safety of large expensive cakes.

Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP): is used to protect products like naan, wraps, bagels, pita, buns from molds. Use of MAP can extend the shelf life of non-dairy products.

To succeed in the bakery and confectionery packaging material business, it is also necessary for a new entrant in the industry to know about the most sold items by bakeries so that the venture is profitable. According to IMARC currently



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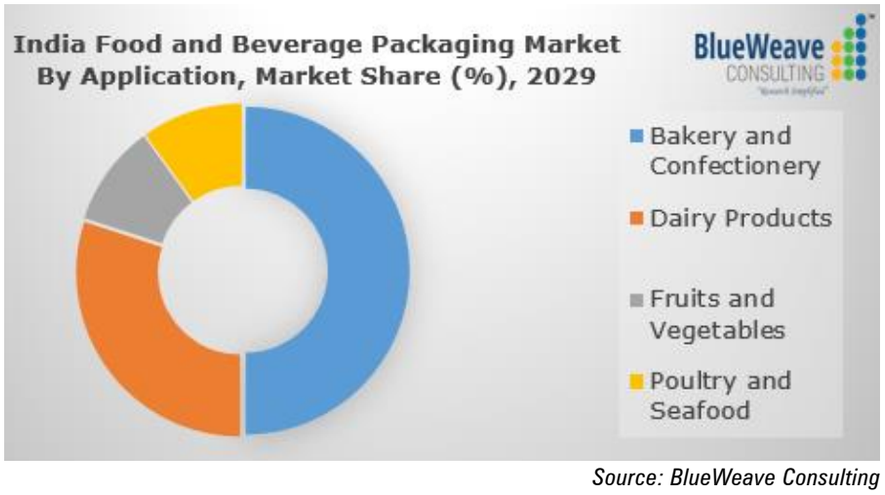

Source: BlueWeave Consulting

biscuits hold the largest share market. Market research firm, Mordor Intelligence states that biscuits/cookies formed the major share of commodities traded or consumed globally in 2021, followed by regional variations of breads as well as rolls.

According to informed sources biscuits and cookies industry account for nearly 72% of the sales in the Indian bakery market. India, it may be mentioned, is the second largest producer of biscuits in the world. The cake market is forecasted to be worth $ 882.24 million in 2024.

Packaging Trends

Packaging of bakery goods doesn't end with just glamourising the product or protecting it from external contaminants or preventing de-moisturising of the packed goods like bread, cookies, etc. It has also to keep pace with the latest trends.

Bakery and confectionery packaging technologies have undergone significant changes and developments in recent years. Increasing environmental awareness has encouraged sustainable packaging alternatives including biodegradable, compostable and recyclable packaging materials.

Environmental sustainability has become a critical factor in packaging of bakery and confectionery goods. There is a growing awareness among consumers about environmental impact of packaging waste which has become the driving force for increasing demand for eco-friendly packaging which is made from materials which are biodegradable, recyclable. A new entrepreneur venturing into bakery and confectionery packaging industry should be aware that manufacturers presently in business are exploring alternative materials like paper, bioplastics, and plant-based materials, which have a lower carbon footprint and are eco-friendly.

Sustainability has taken centre stage and the latest trend is to use materials, particularly packaging materials, that mother nature can get back in her groove. Compostables and biodegradable packaging has, therefore, become the mode. Green wave is totally reshaping the bakery and confectionery packaging industry.

Artisanal packaging has witnessed a remarkable conflux of environmental stewardship. There has been a surge in adoption of compostable substrates which, while preserving the essential robustness and integrity of protection of the baked goods, reduce carbon footprint.

Edible packaging is another environmentally sustainable format of packaging. Experimentation with packaging that can be consumed along with the product is gaining traction. Here sustainable bio degradable material, which generates no waste, is used. There are two types of edible packaging: films, and coatings. The difference between the two is that films are first formed separately and then applied to the food product, while coatings are formed and applied directly to the food. Polysaccharides, proteins, and lipids are biopolymers used to fabricate edible films or coatings as packaging.

As we progress into the future, packaging trends in bakery and confectionery industry are going to continue to evolve to meet consumer demand for sustainable, simple and innovative packaging techniques.

The Priorities

So, when you deem of entering this business, as it is not only profitable but is growing at a rapid rate, you have also to take other aspects of bakery packaging, like the latest trends and materials used in bakery and confectionery packaging, into consideration. One can leverage opportunities by prioritising resilience and innovation. For successful business you have to maintain investment discipline, follow business eco-systems and retain strong commitment to sustainability.

Confectionery and Bakery Packaging market players are directing investments toward acquiring new technologies, securing raw materials through efficient procurement and inventory management, enhancing product portfolios, and leveraging capabilities.

Products & uses of materials for bakery and confectionery packaging

Material Type	Enviro-Friendly	Aesthetics	Insulation	Moisture Resistance	Suitability for Goods
Cardboard Boxes	Yes (if uncoated)	High	Low-Moderate	Depends on Coating	Cakes, Bread, Pastries
Kraft Paper Bags	Yes	Moderate	Low	Low	Baguettes, donuts
Plastic Containers	No (typical plastics)	High	Moderate-High	High	Cookies, Cupcakes
Foil Lined Bags	No	Low	Moderate	High	Hot Pastries, Takeaway Baked Goods
Biodegradable Plastics	Yes	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	Any Bakery Product
Cellophane	Yes (if plant-based)	High	Low	Moderate	Candies, Confectionaries
Glassine (Waxed Paper)	Yes	Moderate-High	Low	Moderate	Baked Goods, Cookies
Compostable Containers	Yes	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate-High	Eco-Conscious Markets
Sturdy Plastic Boxes	No	High	Moderate-High	High	Premium Cakes, Pastries

Business Essentials

There are several essentials that a new entrant in the bakery and confectionery packaging industry has to be aware of. One of them is that there are three types of packaging. They are:

Primary Packaging: This is the initial layer of packaging which comes in contact with the bakery and confectionery product. One example of this would be the eye-catching wrappers of chocolates or the bread packaging.

Secondary Packaging: Also known as the stock keeping unit, it groups a specific quantity of the product. This type of packaging is necessary for transportation of goods to the retailers.

Tertiary Packaging: This is the bulk or transit packaging. It is used for grouping and ensuring streamlined transport of large quantities of the product.

One can specialise in any one of the packaging options or go in for more than one option.

Setting a Manufacturing Unit

For starting the business you have to create a comprehensive business plan like determining the type of packaging you want to manufacture, identifying your buyers, selecting a location and the investment that would be needed for starting the business.

There are vital steps to be taken like:

Arranging funds: If you do not have sufficient funds of your own, you have to arrange for it. For this you can choose crowdfunding or seek business loans from banks. You could also approach investors or venture capitalists. There also a few other production linked incentive schemes.

Getting machinery: After you have created a business plan and decided on the location, the next step is to get the required equipment. The size and complexity of the equipment will depend on the area of the unit where the machinery is to be set up. Be sure that you align your equipment investment with the potential demand from the prospective buyers.

Registration of the business: To operate legally you have to register your business. For instance partnerships require registration under specific regulations.

FSSAI registration: Registration under the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is essential, according to Food Safety and Standards Act 2006. You must obtain specific registrations or licences depending on your annual turnover and scope of operations. Major registration categories are:

Basic registration: for small businesses or start ups meeting the defined annual turnover criteria

State FSSAI Licence: for mid-sized companies with an annual turnover ranging from Rs. 12-20 crores

Central FSSAI Licence: for large companies enterprises with an annual turnover exceeding Rs. 20 crores.

There are also other mandatory licences which one must acquire. They are:

Shop and Establishment Act Registration
State Pollution Control Board License
Import Export Code
GST Registration
Trademark Registration

Employees: You have also to be able to get workers with appropriate knowledge of manufacturing and assembling proper packaging which would be appreciated by the bakery and confectionery industry.

A packaging company should also, for its success, think about going online through one of the many consumer-friendly e-commerce platforms available. However, for going online you have to contemplate on several aspects like:

Trademark registration
Seller's Permit/Vendor's License
Non-disclosure Agreement
Employee Contracts and offer letters
Business Plan
Website Terms of Use Agreement

Conclusion

Indian bakeries offer a diverse range of food treats like breads (which are used in several snacks like sandwiches, burgers, et al.), puffs and pastries, biscuits and cookies, cakes, muffins, khari and toast, besides naan, kulcha, pizza bread, etc. All this gives ample opportunity for an enterprising person to come up with attractive and innovative packaging material to make a success of the business. ■

Crave for Meringue

Today's society is health conscious, and is in constant search for fat free items. Meringue cookies provide an outlay for those, as it is naturally fat free or very low in fat, depending upon additional ingredients.

Bakery products are always associated with its flavours, and the taste, last experienced. Also, bakery products are supposed to be eaten as fresh as possible to relish the crispness and aroma of the product. Meringue is an exotic French delicacy, which is not a regular commercial bakery product in the Indian market. Meringue being a nascent product in the Indian market is looked at with amazement. But as the market tends to grow slowly it might just pick up the necessary drive for its popularity.

Meringue (pronounced muh-RANG) is a confection made chiefly of sugar and whites of eggs whipped together and baked crisp; a small cake or shell of this, usually decorated or filled with cream. Meringue is all set to create a market of its own coming out of the kitchen where its raw fluffy form (before baking) is used for many international recipes on a regular basis.

Conquering Continents

There are several types of meringue, with the three most common being French, Swiss and Italian. Each type varies based on preparation, texture and stability. In France, meringue eating and baking meringue cookies is an old tradition. One can see them in many bakeries and cafés throughout the country. Meringues are also a tradition in countries such as Italy, Switzerland, Portugal and other Europeans.

The introduction of meringue cookies in America took off quite late, considering the proximity of the country (from Europe) with respect to the East. The first Champagne French Bakery Café was opened in Southern California. The meringue cookies were introduced as one of the primary bakery items in that café. People loved the delicious sweet flavour and unique texture, instantly.

Nowadays, pre-packaged meringue cookies thrive market in the West. They are considered as a perfect item, unique in itself, and attractive in appearance. They have a long shelf life as compared to other bakery cookies. Generally for cookies, it is advised to have it fresh; their shelf life is very less and measured in terms of hours, for those who respect quality and freshness. In case, they are packed well or stored with precautions,

their shelf life can be increased. Thus meringue cookies are considered better than the other counterparts in terms of lifespan.

The primary way one could get a meringue cookie is to bake it or buy it from a traditional bakery. Changing lifestyles also played an important part in the success of Meringue market in the West.

The market in India is a nascent one because meringue is hardly a choice that is heard of. In big hotels and restaurants, meringue is used for some continental dishes and thus prepared in the kitchen by the chefs themselves. It is also important to mention that meringue preparation for food recipe should not be confused with meringue as cookies.

Preparation

Meringues only require 5 ingredients to make, but they can be a little bit finicky – even the weather can affect them. Winter is a great time to try them out, as you're much less likely to have a very humid day this time of year, and humidity is one of the greatest nemesis of meringue cookies.

A meringue is a stiffly beaten mixture of egg whites, cream of tartar, and sugar. There are two types of meringue - soft and hard. The difference between the two is the amount of sugar added to egg whites. Soft meringue is made with only a small amount of sugar and is used as a topping for pies and cakes.

This recipe is for a hard meringue, which has a larger proportion of sugar to egg whites than a soft meringue. It is placed in a piping bag and piped into various shapes like shells, disks and cookies. They are baked in a slow oven to dry the meringue and it end up with a crisp, crumbly, and delicate meringue. Once baked, hard meringues can be filled with whipped cream, custards, curds, ice creams, fresh berries, etc.

To ensure the egg whites reach maximum volume, make sure that the bowl and beater that are used to beat meringue is completely grease and moisture free. Any moisture can ruin meringues. It is easier to separate eggs while they are cold (Egg yolks could be refrigerated for other purpose). Once separated, egg whites are covered till they come down to room temperature. Crack your eggs in a separate bowl when separating the whites. Even a tiny bit of yolk can ruin meringues, so crack each egg in a small bowl before adding it to the bowl that will be mixing the meringue batter in.

Use of castor sugar is preferred as it is easier to dissolve in egg whites than the granule ones. Add the sugar gradually, one table spoon at a time, and give it a chance to dissolve before adding more. Test that the sugar is completely absorbed by taking a small bit of the batter and rubbing it between fingers – if it's not, it'll feel gritty. Don't stop until stiff peaks are reached. The batter will take several minutes, at least, of beating to achieve stiff peaks, but keep going. It will increase in volume and be very thick and glossy.

Don't over-beat the batter, either! Once stiff peaks achieved then stop. Stir in a extract and any food colouring at this point, but don't push it because over-beating the batter is just as bad as not beating it enough.

Cream of tartar is tartaric acid and is a fine white crystalline acid salt that is obtained as a by-product during wine preparation. It is used in the whipping of egg whites to stabilize them and allow them to reach maximum volume.

For the baking process, oven is preheated to 170°C (325°F) and baking sheets is lined with parchment paper before pouring the fluffy mixture of meringue.

Finer Points

Adding sugar gradually to the egg whites ensures that it completely dissolves and does not produce a gritty meringue. Baking meringues in a slow oven allows for gradual evaporation of the moisture from it. If the oven temperature is too high, the outer crust of meringue dries up quickly and set too. This results the inside of the meringue being chewy and sticky instead of dry, crisp and crunchy. It also leads to separation of outside crust from meringue.

If the oven temperature is high, the meringue might show brown colour due to caramelisation of sugar. The baking process of meringue takes longer time on a humid (rainy) day than on a dry day. To prevent cracking of meringue, one should not open the oven door during the first half to three quarters of the baking time. In meringues, ¼ cup (around 50 grams) of granulated white sugar is generally used for every egg white used.

Beneficial Aspect

Today's society is health conscious, and is in constant search for fat free items. Meringue cookies are naturally fat free or very low in fat depending upon additional ingredients. The primary ingredients are sugar and egg whites.

Meringue can be prepared without any use of preservatives or artificial flavours in any form for preparation of cookies. Cookies need to be baked at an exact temperature for just the right amount of time for standard quality.

There are many flavours that thrive the international market. There are various flavours that are introduced every now and then. This includes vanilla, toasted coconut, chocolate, orange, rainbow vanilla, chocolate chip, mint chocolate chip, and many more. ■

The Delicious Syrup

Maple syrup is definitely a product of Mother Nature and it has a very unique profile. It is a syrup, which is generally prepared from the xylem sap of sugar maple, red maple, or black maple trees. Although preparing this syrup from other maple species is also being done. Maple syrup is a 100 percent natural sweetener.

It is perhaps the healthiest sweetener you can get and it tastes absolutely great. Maple sap (comprising 98 percent water, 2 percent natural sugar and minerals) is extracted with a tap from the maple trees, mainly in Canada and North-eastern America (80 percent of the global production of maple syrup comes from the province of Québec in Canada) at the beginning of spring (mid-March to end of April).

The combination of freezing nights and warmer days triggers a chemical reaction that pushes the maple sap from the roots up into the core of the maple tree. Then, after maple sap is extracted, by a heating and boiling process, the water is evaporated from the sap and then the remaining thick sugary syrup is filtered. Result is the pure maple syrup that is savoured across the globe. The legend says that the native Americans were the first to recognise maple sap as a source of energy and nutrition. The maple syrup is infused with a unique flavour but the chemistry behind this flavour is still wrapped in enigma.

Healthy Option

For better health, we all know it's best to cut back on sugar intake–but for most people, that doesn't mean that sweeteners must be stricken from the menu entirely. When you'd like to sweeten your foods, maple syrup can add its distinctly delicious flavour to baked goods, beverages, meat dishes, and more. Although maple syrup is a sweetener, and therefore should be limited in the diet. It may contribute to better health in unique ways, in most cases, you can get these benefits from a small portion size.

Maple syrup offers some impressive health benefits of its own, particularly because of its high amounts of manganese and riboflavin, Manganese is essential to bone and tissue formation, blood clotting, proper immune response. Riboflavin, meanwhile, helps create usable energy from the food we eat and may play a role in the prevention of cancer and migraines.

Interestingly, compared to the other sweeteners like honey, cane sugar, corn syrup or table syrup, maple syrup always contains a higher rate of natural benefits. For example, 60 ml of maple syrup contains 160 mg of potassium and 56 mg of calcium when 60 ml of honey contains 45 mg of potassium and 3 mg of calcium. Maple syrup is lighter on calories than average sweetener.

Maple syrup also offers advantages over honey for people with certain chronic health conditions. With a lower glycaemic index, it would be a better choice for those with diabetes or other blood sugar issues. People with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) may be able to digest maple syrup better than honey because of the type of sugars it contains. Maple syrup and honey both contain simple sugars, though fructose (in honey) may not be tolerated as well in individuals with IBS.

The health benefits of maple syrup are renowned. It has 54 disease-fighting antioxidants which together contains anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetes properties. It has polyphenols that can help in keeping blood sugar levels in check. 100 percent pure maple syrup has sweetness of sugar without the side effects. It is spruced with vitamins and nutrients, and is gluten free.

Grading

The maple syrup can be differentiated by several grades. Maple syrup is graded as Light, Medium, Amber and Dark, depending at which crop stage the sap is extracted. The earlier stages provide lighter and more subtle taste of maple syrup and the later ones are darker syrup with more pronounced taste because of the presence of more nutrients in the soil in the preparation of the later stage maple syrup versions.

The darker version of maple syrups which are endowed with a comparatively stronger maple flavour are generally used for baking or in recipes, while the lighter version of maple syrups are generally used directly as syrups.

Potential Concerns

As liquid sweeteners, honey and maple syrup has similarities for nutrition. Both contain no appreciable amount of fat or protein, with carbohydrates from sugar supplying all of their calories. Both also boast some micronutrients and antioxidants. Research has revealed promising levels of antioxidants in both honey and maple syrup that could contribute to reducing oxidative stress–a key component in preventing some chronic diseases.

Both honey and maple syrup produced from natural source and are brown, viscous, and sweet, they can seem interchangeable. But there are distinct differences in the nutritional makeup of these two sweeteners, as well as different

best practices for when to include each in your cooking and baking.

Honey is slightly higher in calories, carbohydrates, and sugar than maple syrup, but a little lower in fat. Maple syrup has more micronutrients, such as calcium and manganese, but it also has more sodium than honey. Although honey has only eight more calories than maple syrup in a single tablespoon, this can add up fast, depending on the amount of sweetener you use.

Sometimes, the decision of when to use honey and when to use maple syrup doesn't have to do with nutrition or even taste. Vegans, for example, often choose not to consume honey because it's an insect by-product. Those who have adopted a vegan lifestyle may prefer to sweeten foods with maple syrup, which is 100% plant-based.

Honey may contain small amounts of the bacteria Clostridium botulinum, which can cause botulism poisoning in babies. Stick to maple syrup or other sweeteners for babies under 12 months old, even in baked goods or cooked preparations.

A commitment to eating more locally may also factor into your choice of honey versus maple syrup. While honey can be harvested almost anywhere honeybees live, maple syrup is native only to a relatively small region of eastern North America.

Applications

What makes the maple syrup an incredible product is its extremely wide range of possible applications in the food & beverage industry. Especially, in the bakery industry, it has numerous uses. It can be used in cookies, muffins, cakes, pies, bread, icing, butter cream, topping, glaze, pastries, meringue, macaroons, biscuits, etc. Maple syrup is often savoured with pancakes, waffles, oatmeal and porridge. It is not only used as a sweetener but also as a flavouring agent and as an ingredient in baking.

Maple syrup also has wide applications in the dairy industry as a top or / and bottom topping in yogurt, in ice cream, gelato, sorbet, or as a topping for frozen desserts. The role of maple syrup in the confectionery industry also cannot be discounted. It is used in fudge, fondant, chocolate, truffles, dried crystallised fruit, in jams, granola bars, muesli, spread, nut mix, dried fruits, etc. Maple fondant or chocolate maple syrup can be delectable options to explore. Maple syrup also has applications in alcoholic beverages, meat, fish and sea food and even in the cosmetics industry.

Besides myriad health benefits and applications across industries along with great taste, maple syrup is endowed with a long shelf life, which varies from 24 months in plastic jars to 48 months in glass bottles. However, it should be stored in a fridge once opened. It would gladden the hearts of many bakery industry professionals in India to know that maple syrup is now available in India. ■

Equipment for a Baker

If you are thinking to start your own bakery for a long time, the best time is right now. The Indian bakery market, irrespective of the condition of the economy, is growing at a healthy rate. Be it the biscuits segment or pastry, most bakery items in India are selling like hot cakes. According to a report Indian bakery market is expanding at a compound annual growth rate of 9.3 percent during 2019-2024.

But to tap the demand for bakery products, one needs to be passionate about the business. More importantly, it is essential to understand the nature of the demand and produce such products that cater to that demand. Such demands may vary from area to area. For example, if there could be demand for sugar-free bakery products in a particular area, customers in another area may crave for heavy sugar-loaded products. In yet another area, there could be demand for products belonging to both segments. While there are now bakery items which are valued in all parts of the country, every locality in a diverse country like India also has its own unique set of demands. Understanding these area-specific demands would help a budding entrepreneur a lot.

The best thing about starting a bakery is that you do not need a huge amount of capital for this business, especially in this age of social media. There are examples of chefs who started their own business by posting images of their creations first on Facebook and later on other platforms such as Instagram and now TikTok. The following that they have on these platforms have helped them become successful entrepreneurs.

While baking skills and quality of products is what goes a long way in establishing a successful bakery business, one cannot deny the importance of the right kind of tools in producing delicious products. Some of these essential pieces of equipment for bakery are:

Oven: Of all the equipment, oven can be called the soul of a bakery. But you should purchase oven only after deciding what you will make because there are

different types of ovens in the market. Whether you would need a conventional professional's oven, a convection oven or any other type of oven would completely depend on the kinds of products you want to produce. Each oven comes with its own advantages and disadvantages.

Mixers: Similar is the case with mixers. Besides the countertop mixers, a good dough mixer and an emulsion blender could be extremely useful.

Dough Proofer: To make the dough-rising process simple, you need proofers which optimise heat and humidity. Proofers can be of great help as they contribute greatly in streamlining the production process.

Bakeware: You need to purchase bakeware as per your need. But whether you purchase bread pans, muffin tins or cake pans, make sure you buy good

quality products as the cheaper ones may easily dent or warp.

Smallwares: Besides the bakewares, you will also need a lot of small wares. And it is not just about the spoons, mixing bowls or spatulas. You will also need such essential items such as icing tips, pastry knives and flour sifters. Better make a list of all such items so that nothing is missed.

Dough sheeter: Those who are planning to produce pastries, they may find a dough sheeter extremely useful as it can help them save a lot of time. This is because rolling out dough by hand

generally takes quite a lot of time. Moreover, the dough sheeter will also help you standardise the process.

Work table: It is better to go for a wood top work table as it is often considered ideal for preparing tasks such as kneading dough and flouring.

Bread slicer: If the focus of your business is bread, better get a bread slicer

which will help you present uniform slices quickly. Besides, it will also help you save a lot of time.

Sheet pan racks: These racks allow the bakery items that you produce space to cool. But you need to purchase these racks as per the space and capacity that you want.

Refrigeration: The importance of refrigeration in a bakery cannot be over emphasised. Key ingredients in a wide range of bakery products are cream, milk and eggs. All these products need refrigeration. But you need to get the correct unit to fulfill your need.

Dry storage: You need proper storage for dry ingredients like flour and sugar as these ingredients form the foundation of a lot of bakery products.

Display case: The visual cues play a very important role in the success of a bakery. So it is better not to make any compromise on the display case. An attractive display can make the delicious items that you make look even more sumptuous.

It is, however, important to note that this is not an exhaustive list of tools that one would need while starting a bakery. What is important is to define one's needs first and then purchase the essential items so that money is not spent unnecessarily on goods that find no use. So planning well, right from the beginning, is key to establishing a successful bakery business.

To find the suppliers of these products ask for recently launched 2024 Hammer Buyers' Guide, which will give you information on all major manufacturers and suppliers across India of Bakery equipment and supplies. ■

As Food Travels...

Transportation of food has given rise to hygiene problem apart from the convenience it brings along with itself. The subject of food hygiene, in the current scenario, is going through a makeover. This has been possible because there is a rise and substantial concerns over the kind of food being served across the food counters or prepared in front or are the packed ones, both among the consumers and concerned authorities.

Food essentially is a perishable product but modernization has given us the key to maximize its storage life or shelf life through refrigeration, addition of preservatives and/or adding life through specialized storage techniques, like vacuum packing, etc. Yet, it's been noticed that food, still, tend to face the trepidation of contamination and fall short of hygiene standards that is warranted.

Food is supposed to be manufactured, stored, prepared and sold in a safe and hygienic manner. There are a number of standards and legislation that guide those in food business like hygiene requirements for shops and eating houses, clean and sanitary food premises and that food is labeled correctly and is safe to eat.

In the development of food safety, HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) - a method to prevent unsafe food - plays an important role. HACCP together with prerequisites such as Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), form the Food Safety Elements, which provide the tools and methods to ensure safe food. In this regard, securing HACCP certification is also important. Therefore all suppliers need to adhere to Indian government regulations.

Ensuring Food Safety

Food standards, hygiene and safety are the responsibility of local authorities and it is producer responsibility in a food service business to make sure that the regulations are fully enforced and complied with in the business. This involves following good hygiene practices and using reputable, temperature-controlled vehicle distributors who can transport food items safely and at the right temperature to the required destination.

One must take all reasonable steps to reduce contamination and eliminate the growth of bacteria and toxins while food is being transported. There is a need to ensure the quality of food in transit by:

- Developing a model food policy and food supply guidelines for remote area stores, outlets, that are connected to supply source
- Investigating food transport issues and finding for any contamination
- Developing and applying suitable standards for improving store and food handling by concerned people, and
- Promoting awareness of food hygiene, especially those who are directly associated with packaging of food and coming in contact of food materials in semi or pre-cooked form.

Transportation of Food

Food is known for its multi dimensions. Now, it travels to far off distances. Hence, this has given rise to another kind of problem apart from the convenience it brings along with itself. That is the concern over food hygiene while transit. How far it protects the food from any contamination, or does that harm the preservation of food due to non-compatible conditions required for temporary storage while transportation, are the doubts that cover and hover over and over again.

For transportation of food items, vehicles must be clean, in good repair and be regularly maintained to ensure optimum levels of food safety and hygiene. Stringent checks should be implemented to make sure that food contamination does not occur, and products do not spoil because of incorrect storage practices.

Any food that is classed as being perishable should be transported in a temperature-controlled vehicle. Any food which can support the growth of bacteria and the formation of toxins should be maintained at or below 8°C and transported in suitable, temperature-controlled vehicles that closely monitor and adjust temperatures to make sure that this level is not exceeded at any point in the journey.

Many illnesses associated with food poisoning are a result of bacteria such as listeria, salmonella, clostridia shigella and e-coli to name a few. Without adequate temperature controls, this bacteria can flourish and cause serious illness in consumers, particularly the elderly, young children and people with weakened immune systems. Certain types of bacteria are so dangerous because they cannot be detected by the senses, i.e. through sight, smell or taste.

Information about food safety and food handling processes are required to be given to all people contributing to the transportation process. Nowadays, it takes place in most fast food chains where centralized kitchen are located at a particular place and pre-prepared food are sent through cold room trucks (cold chain) to various outlets within the city or even farther.

In a situation like this ensuring food safety becomes a priority and is definitely an issue. There is a need to follow strict procedures, adherence to Indian government regulations on food, health and hygiene.

Every process which deals with preparing or selling of food can be classed as a food business activity and includes preparation, processing, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, handling, packaging, storage, selling and supplying. And securing safety in all respect will have to be achieved at any cost.

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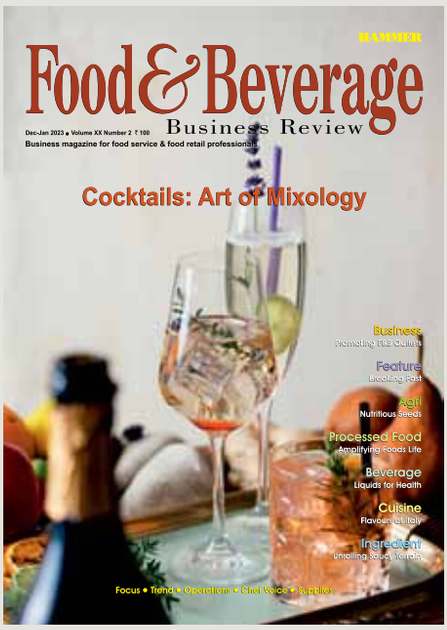

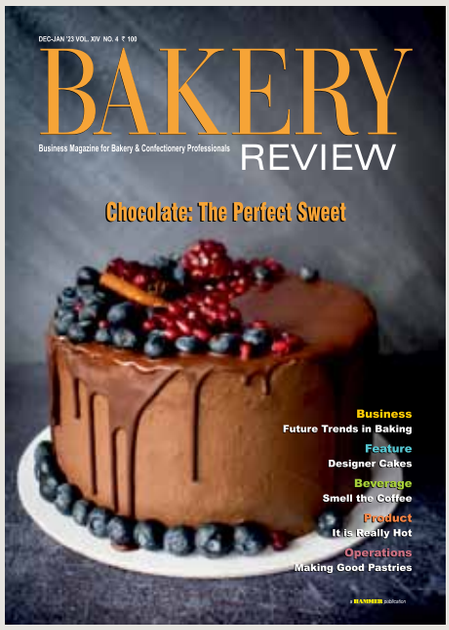

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Suite Heart Forever

Established in 1987, with a view to serve the travel and tourism Industry, Petals pioneered the portion pack in Northern India thereby improving the catering standards especially in the Travel Industry. The Petals brand Suite Heart sachets and blister packs are well known for their quality because premium quality ingredients and packaging material are used and hence can be served with confidence. They can be trusted because completely automated and hygienic processes are used ensuring the safety of users. The Suite Brand of Portion packs have now become popular as correct portion size helps immensely in controlling waste as also giving the user his money's worth. The entire range of Petals products can be customized to promote the image of the company. They are also available in the attractive, standard Suite Heart packing. Portion packs in the form of sachets, blister packs or kits aid inventory control, are easy to handle and store and also increase shelf life of the product. Petals is also actively involved in packaging development where the entire task of design, material selection, testing, procurement and packaging of a product is undertaken. Contract Packaging of products with facilities specially created with the required ambience is another field in which Petals specializes. The company has been ISO 9001 certified. Although based in New Delhi, Petals has satisfied clients all over India. Their long list of Prestigious clients include the Indian Railways, Indian Airlines, hotels and Hotels and Hotel chains like ITC., ITDC. etc and leaking Fast Food chains.

Petals Packaging Company
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Subscription-Based Service Robots

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

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

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

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

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

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"Fun Loving, Honest, Creative and a Foodie"

Avishek Singha, Executive Pastry Chef, Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield

Avishek Singha recently joined Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield as the Executive Pastry Chef. With an illustrious career of over 14 years, Avishek brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise in the field of baking. He has worked with well known hotel properties such as Conrad Bangalore & Pune and Hyatt Regency Kolkata, leaving a lasting impression everywhere he went. In 2019, Avishek joined JW Marriott Pune and now he's ready to work his magic at Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield.

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

What are the current hot trends in Indian Bakery industry?

People seem to be veering towards Health and Wellness. Our guests are generally asking for products that are gluten free, match Keto and Vegan diet criteria and of course for alternatives for sugar.

How did you become a Pastry Chef?

I was inspired by my mother to become a chef. After my industrial training I made up my mind to take pastry as my specialization. I feel baking is like magic where we put in life, and its a place where chemistry and imagination mingles.

What is your working (Cooking) philosophy?

I cook to make the world a better place and spread love and happiness through my food.

What are your Hot Selling bakery items?

Oh there are a few actually. The Dutch Truffle Cake and Petit, St. Sebastian Cheesecake Nirvana, Pana Au Chocolate, Lemon Coconut Danish, Nutella Croissant, Vegan Brownie and the Signature soft centred cookie.

What is the demand these days in Bakery?

The demand is in customized cakes, Wedding Cakes, Healthy Desserts, Sugar Free Bakes and Cookies.

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

I try to keep my desserts low on sweetness, I focus more on nut base flours to substitute for refined flour. I opt for organic Jaggery for the substitute for sugar.

Your favourite tool? And why??

Small Palate knife. As it is a versatile tool and serves many purposes.

What are the challenges a bakery chef has to face in his job?

The most challenging part of our job is Customization. Guests most of the times like to customise their order for example a cake design, flavour, topper and so on but our aim remains to exceed their expectations at all times.

Creativity and Imagination. A pastry chef is expected every day to deliver creative products and sometimes it can get challenging.

What do you like about your job?

It is never boring. There is a new challenge and every day I have the opportunity to create something exciting.

What is your strength as a bakery chef?

My team, our hard work and passion for our work is my strength.

What are you passionate about besides baking?

I enjoy painting.

How do you like to de-stress?

I enjoy going on long rides on my bike and have good food.

What are your dreams?

To make India famous in the world of Pastry.

What is your Mantra for success?

Be honest to yourself.

Your favourite ingredient which you like to use more often and why?

Chocolate, because of its vast applications and different textures.

Your fav chef who has influenced you?

Chef Saurabh Shahi. He is one of the most renowned pastry Chef in India and abroad and he is my mentor and always motivates and guides me.

What do you personally like to eat as your fav comfort food?

Dal Rice and Fish Curry with Potatoes.

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Ask for Recipes

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