HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Business Review

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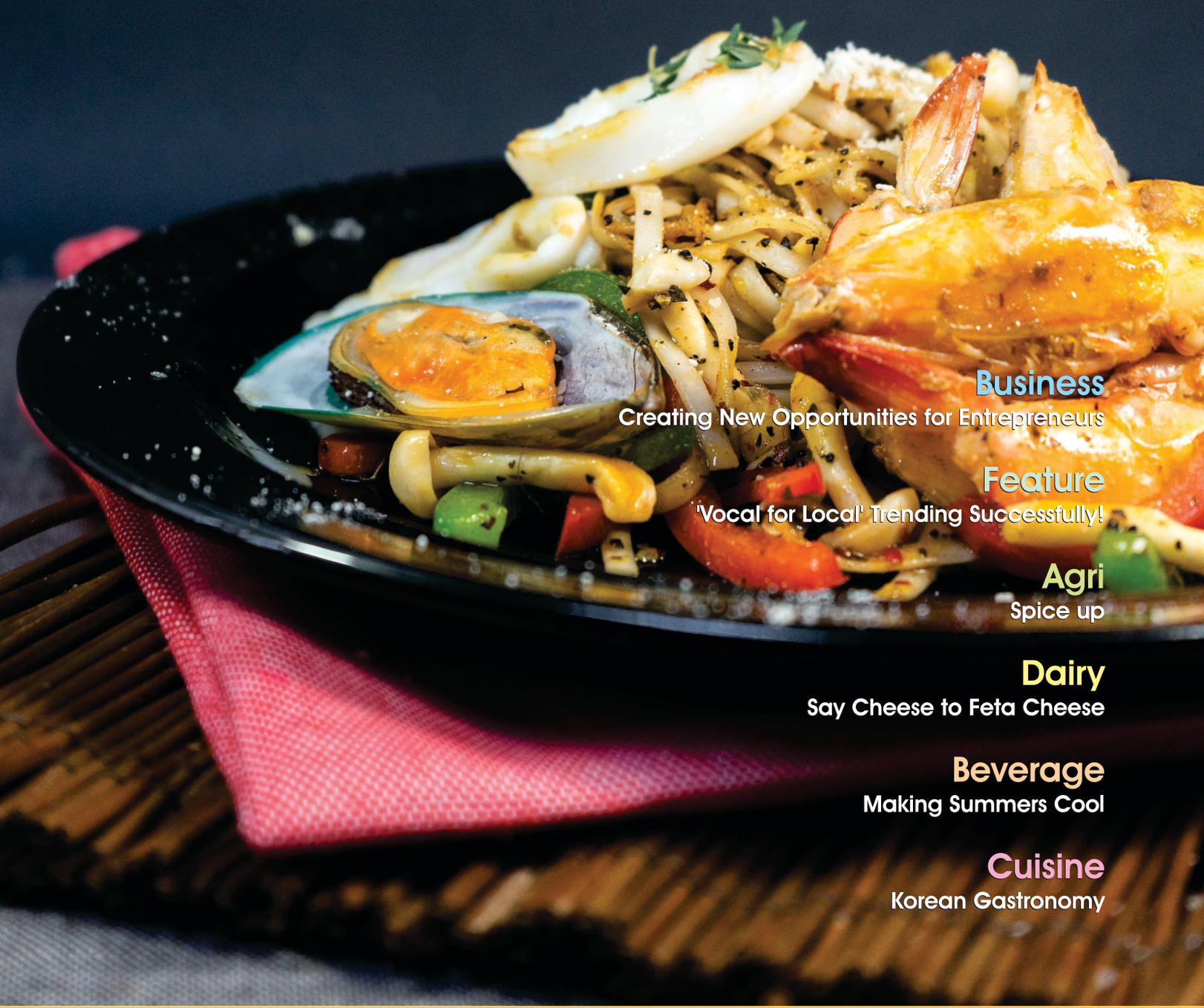
Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Fusion Food

The Culmination, Growth and Future



Business
Creating New Opportunities for Entrepreneurs

Feature
'Vocal for Local' Trending Successfully!

Agri
Spice up

Dairy
Say Cheese to Feta Cheese

Beverage
Making Summers Cool

Cuisine
Korean Gastronomy

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for more **information**

With India's rich culinary heritage and diverse regional cuisines it is possible it can create a cuisine that is exciting, appealing, effervescent and delectable. Fusion food has opened up a world of creativity for chefs leading them to experiment with ingredients, presentation and techniques. Cover story examines various aspects of fusion cuisine, an artful blend of traditional culinary food, and examines this gastronomic culinary phenomenon, including its evolution over the years and its future.

Mostly people pondered on what makes the food not only extremely appetizing but also look enticing and have an alluring aroma. It is because of various food ingredients present in the food. Food ingredients' market in India is growing exponentially and the growth is expected to continue in the years to come. Business story discuss the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in this fast growing business segment.

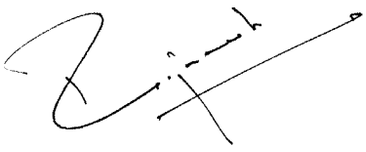
Feature story talks about 'Vocal for Local' concept being embraced by various institutions in their operations. Leading hospitality professionals share how the properties are the true embodiment of the concept.

Agri section finds how different herbs are now used by the various segments of the foodservice industry including fast food.

In summers one need more fluid to keep themselves hydrated. Beverage section finds that summer coolers are not only refreshing and rejuvenating but also play a necessary role during summers to keep you healthy.

The essence of Korean cuisine is largely based upon rice, vegetables, and meats. Cuisine section elaborates on the flavours and presentation of food in Korea which is closely associated with the climate of its different regions.

The regular news, events and report section updates you on what is latest in the industry.



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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.

The specialised B2B event for the food & beverage and hospitality industry has grown by leaps & bounds during the recent years and is today regarded as a well -known destination for global vendors and sourcing professionals from the food & beverage and hospitality industry across the planet.

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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CHEF-CC
(Copper cleaner)
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(Machine dish wash)
- **CHEF-RA**
(Rinse aid)
- **CHEF-DS**
(Descaler for Kitchen Utensils)

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- **SUPER BRIGHT-OPAL**
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FSCAI at Aahar 2024

The Food Service Consultants Association of India (FSCAI), brought together some of the finest food service and hospitality consultants of India along with select well established brands of HoReCa segment together, on to a common platform at Aahar2024.

FSCAI Confluence 2024 was held on the 9th March 2024, at the Bharat Mandapam, in continuation of the goals of FSCAI to bring together all stake holders of the food service and hospitality industry for common benefit of the industry and profession.

Consultants from Ahmedabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Kochi, Dubai and other cities joined the brand heads and country heads of some of the finest food service equipment and solution providers on the occasion to discuss the common issues and to find solutions for improvement and betterment.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajesh Chowdhury, the Founder - Director of the Association said "Since inception of the FSCAI about three years ago, we have worked to bring together the consultants in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation, and I am happy to state that, this is surely happening. Never in the past, have so many leading consultants shared a common platform. This is a unique accomplishment and the credit goes to all our members, and the industry stake holders, who have put their trust in us. Adding to this, the presence of some of the finest brands of the HoReCa sector, coming together to share the current and emerging trends and technologies, is a hearty welcome note", he said.

The President of the Association, P Sravan Kumar highlighted the value addition the association brings to the profession. He said the coming together of consultants is an indication that future belongs to those who believe in seamless working, combining domain specific talents of each consultant. He also said the association has made a mark as a platform for launching new equipment, products and technologies in HoReCa segment.

The FSCAI Confluence 2024 saw some deliberations on the issues challenging the industry, discussed common problems, fellowship and networking, and ended on a happy note with all participants agreeing to continue the effort of greater collaboration and better cooperation, and march towards a seamless knowledge bank.

Consultants and brand leaders were felicitated for their contribution to the sector and value addition to the association in particular and the profession in general. The event was curated and hosted by consultant Prateek Gaikwad.

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Culinary Art India 2024

Culinary Art India 2024, five days of competition and culinary excellence, hosted by the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), alongside the 38th edition of AAHAR International Fair, showcased the talents of over 600 chefs in 8 competition categories, competing on an internationally modeled stage.

The 16th edition of Culinary Art India witnessed display of creativity, skill, and innovation across various culinary disciplines. The event featured competitions judged by a panel of WACS-certified jury members from India and abroad, setting new benchmarks for culinary excellence. This year's competitions are being chaired by Chef Gautam Sethi, Cluster Executive Chef, Accor Hotels, Kata, Phuket, Thailand, with Chef Arvind Rai serving as the organizing secretary.

Chef Davinder Kumar, President of the Indian Culinary Forum, said, "This edition of Culinary Art India celebrates culinary artistry while inspiring innovation and excellence among chefs nationwide. It's been a privilege to witness such remarkable talent and creativity on one platform. Culinary Art India serves as a platform for chefs to showcase their skills and elevate their craft to international standards, fostering growth and camaraderie within the culinary community and setting new benchmarks for excellence."

Chef Vivek Saggar, General Secretary of the Indian Culinary Forum, expressed his satisfaction with the event, stating, "Culinary Art India not only celebrates our rich culinary heritage but also fosters learning and skill development. It remains a cornerstone in the culinary calendar, reinforcing India's global culinary reputation. With its focus on innovation, education, and collaboration, the event inspires and elevates the culinary profession in India and beyond. The Indian Culinary Forum's mission is to encourage and inspire junior chefs, raise culinary standards nationwide, and serve as a platform to promote Indian culture and cuisine globally."

The primary objective of CAI is to provide a professional platform where culinary professionals can showcase their individual and collective skills, creativity, and expertise, while also fostering learning, sharing experiences, partnerships, and networking in a competitive environment. Reflecting on the resounding success of Culinary Art India 2024,

The Winners of 18 Categories

3-Tier Wedding Cake
Shakeel Ahmad, NG Asane Nancy and Aditi Khare

Authentic Indian Regional Cuisine
Sumit Singh and Rabbi Khan

Contemporary Sushi Platter
Chinlop Lecha

Chocolate Mania
Ravi

Artistic Pastry Showpiece
Sanjeev Sagarwal and Yuthika Sharma

Artistic Bakery Showpiece
Vinod Singh Rawat

Petit Fours or Pralines
Oshien Kaur and Prashant Pachori

Plated Appetizers
Kishan Gupta, Dev Arora, Sanskruti Pravin and Harihara Sudan

Live Cooking CDP & Above
Trilok Chand

Live Competition Rice Dish
Randhir Kumar, Raveena Bisht, Aditya Dev and Khushbu

Cake Decoration- Dress the Cake Live
Sharddha Vyas, Shally Sabharwal and Aayushi

Plated Desserts
Diksha Khandelwal, Feridon Paiwand and Pei Dulom

Mocktail Comptetition
Mohit Karnani, Ricky Singh, Sandeep Panwar, Aanya Verma, Ishaan Kaushal, and. Anant Chowdhary and Teekshita Naveen Kumar

Fruit & Vegetable Carving
Sheikh Salman, Kesaven G, Ankith K Shetty, M A Akash George, Sreya Aneesh, J Mathan and Bhoomika R

Live Cooking Students/Apprentice
Raunaq Bir Singh, Rishi Goyal and Sarjam Baskey participated

Live Competition Sandwich Making
Ashwani Kumar, Reena, Samarjeet Singh and Sanyam Chopra

Three Course Set Dinner Menu
Siddharth Sharma, Prashant Bisht, Kartik Kashyap, Kamal and Shresth Agrawal

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National Culinary Challenge - 2024

NFCI Group of Education recently hosted the "National Culinary Challenge - 2024" (NCC 2024). The event garnered participation from over 800 enthusiastic culinary talents representing 20 campuses across Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka.

The competition, organized in three theme-based rounds, aimed to showcase the culinary brilliance of students. The first round witnessed 800 students engaging in the revival of old and

lost recipes. The subsequent round featured the top 200 students preparing Millet-based main courses from international cuisine. The grand mega final round, attended by the best 45 students, revolved around Traditional Indian Cuisine, challenging participants to prepare three courses in one hour and thirty minutes, including a millet-based dish.

The event's success can be attributed to the visionary leadership of NFCI's esteemed Directors - Ms. Brijinder Kaur Nagpal, Peminder Singh Nagpal, Dr. Anjna Joshi, and Sanjeev Kashyap, along with Executive Director Naveen Dua. Their guidance aimed to make the event a testament to innovation and creativity in the culinary arts.

The grand finale witnessed the presence of distinguished hospitality chefs who served as judges, evaluating the culinary masterpieces crafted by the participants. Alongside, the event honored respected Guest of Honors:

City Radio - Ms. Seema Soni, Punjab Technical University - Rajneesh, Deputy Registrar, Golden Tulip - Sanjeev Thakur, General Manager, Chef Sunny Katoch, Executive Chef, Ramada Encore - Rohit Sammi, HR Manager, Chef Paramjit, Executive Chef, Holiday Inn - Chef Sikander, Executive Chef, and Shivak, HR Manager.

The meticulous execution of the event was led by NFCI's corporate team members, including HOD Academics Chef Pawan Ailawadi, Head Chef Ram, Controller of Examinations Ajay Chandel, HR Manager Rajeev, HOD Accounts. Akshay, Project Manager Aman Chawla and Digital Manager. Mohit.

NFCI expressed gratitude to the esteemed panel of judges, sponsors, and media partners for their invaluable support, including sponsors - Professional Hotelwares, Havells, Cremica, Mr. Truk, JK Furniture, Jain Bhai, Arnav Enterprise, Arc Fittings, and Inaayat; and media partners - FM Radio City 91.9, World of Hospitality, and Hammer Hotels & Institutions.

Eight prestigious awards were distributed, recognizing outstanding culinary achievements:

Best Starter: Mr. Gourav Sharma, NFCI Barsar

Best Main Course: Ms. Revati Kocheri, NFCI Belgaum

Best Dessert: Mr. Ram Dua, NFCI Ludhiana

Consolation Prizes (NFCI Patiala): Mr. Pushpinder Singh, Mr. Sharu Anand, Ms. Kamaldeep Kaur

Consolation Prizes (NFCI Varanasi): Md Anish, Ms. Ban Devi, Mr. Sagar Jaiswal

Second Runner-Up: NFCI Karnal - Mr. Abhshik, Mr. Prince, Ms. Ishita

First Runner-Up: NFCI Jalandhar - Mr. Dev, Mr. Sehajdeep, Ms. Nishtha

Overall Winner: NFCI Chandigarh - Mr. Navdeep, Ms. Khushi, Ms. Neeru

NFCI, with its network of 20 institutes across India, takes pride in nurturing culinary talent and fostering excellence in hospitality education. Through hands-on learning, industry-relevant curriculum, and international exposure, NFCI continues to empower aspiring chefs and hospitality professionals.

Fusion of Korean and Japanese Delights

Tiger Yaki, the highly anticipated fast casual Korean & Japanese quick-service restaurant, is set to unleash its culinary magic in Bangalore. Founded by Chef & CEO Rahul Vasandani & co-founded by CMO Karan Sharma, Tiger Yaki has already established a loyal following with its two outlets in Mumbai (Bandra & Andheri). Now, Bangalore can experience the tantalizing blend of Korean and Japanese flavours for themselves, brought to the city by franchisee ASAR Hospitality, co-founded by Mohammed Aseem, Rohit Golia, Aryan Menon, and Sarfaraz Nawas.

Located at St. Marks Road (Opposite SBI), the restaurant goes beyond just serving delicious food. The brand embraces innovation, convenience, and a welcoming atmosphere, making it a place to celebrate tradition and modern culinary delights.

Tiger Yaki has become synonymous with excellence in Korean and Japanese cuisine. Their unique selling proposition lies in their dedication to using only the freshest ingredients to create culinary masterpieces. Each dish is a harmonious blend of authentic Asian flavors, ensuring an unforgettable gastronomic experience. From the tempting Takoyakis and gyozas to the decadent cheese corn dogs, the sizzling Fiery Tiger, and the savory Bulgogi Tiger with a side of Spicy Kimchi, Tiger Yaki

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Bhutan to Bharat - A Culinary Journey

Accor has announced a unique culinary collaboration with acclaimed Chef Michael Swamy, that is billed as a delectable interweaving of the rich traditions of the Land of the Thunder Dragon's cuisine with the diverse flavours of India. The exclusive "Bhutan to Bharat - A Culinary Journey" dinner events will be presented across India in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bangalore.

Known as the "Last Shangri-La," Bhutan, with its dragons and tigers, majestic mountains, and ancient traditions, is a nation like no other. The Bhutanese cuisine, characterized by a delightful array of flavours, textures, and aromas, is a celebration of tradition, community, and the bountiful offerings of the land. A highlight of the culinary collaboration will be the exploration of Bhutan's National Dish, Ema Datshi, a soulful broth of cheese with simmered chilies served with red rice.

The four-city tour will kick off with a Seven Course chef special menu and a La Carte menu featuring an Indo-Bhutanese Dining Experience at HONK, Pullman New Delhi Aerocity, from 15-24 March, 2024. The journey will then continue with a curated buffet experience at The Square, Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences from April 25 - May 5.

In Mumbai, Chef Michael Swamy will present his feast at Food Exchange, Novotel Mumbai International Airport, from May 24-June 2, 2024, and La Utsav Restaurant & Alfresco by 1026AD at Grand Mercure Gopalan Mall in Bangalore from will play host to the unique culinary experience from 21-30 June, 2024.

Puneet Dhawan, Senior Vice President Operations, Accor India & South Asia, expressed his enthusiasm for the unique collaboration, saying, "Chef Michael Swamy's expertise and the unique flavours of Bhutan combined with our team of talented chefs is sure to create a memorable culinary journey for your guests. Offering distinctive and immersive experiences like this demonstrates our commitment to providing high-quality and memorable experiences for our patrons. It is wonderful way to introduce our guests to the rich culinary heritage of Bhutan, while showcasing the skills of our talented chefs."

Commenting on his excitement for the culinary collaboration, Chef Michael Swamy said, "Bhutanese cuisine is a hidden gem and I am honoured to bring its unique flavours to the forefront. Through this culinary journey, I aim to create an unforgettable experience that transcends borders and celebrates the rich tapestry of flavours that Bhutan and India have to offer."

Event by EU CURRANTS SEA

A special event was held at "Imperial China" Restaurant in hotel Hilton Mumbai, by the EU financed campaign "EU CURRANTS SEA", the Agricultural Cooperatives Union - Aeghion, Greece (P.E.S. Union), established in 1935, and consists of 44 agricultural cooperatives with active membership of about 6,000 active growers.

During the event, attendees had the opportunity to have productive discussions with representatives of the participant organization, Agricultural Cooperatives Union - Aeghion S.A., and get informed about the delicious and superior quality European black currant. In parallel during the special live cooking show that took place, the attendees had the chance to savour dishes specially prepared to highlight the delicious Corinthian currant.

"European Currants" is the natural product resulting from the desiccation of the Corinthian Currant – a Greek grape variety (named "Black Currants from Corinth"), which goes under the scientific name Vitis Vinifera L. This variety

is characterized by very fine, thin-skinned, extremely juicy and intensely flavoured berries. Furthermore, currants are practically seedless, a trait that gains them a distinct competitive advantage when compared to other raisin varieties. Their excellent aroma and rich flavour distinguish them as the world's best variety.

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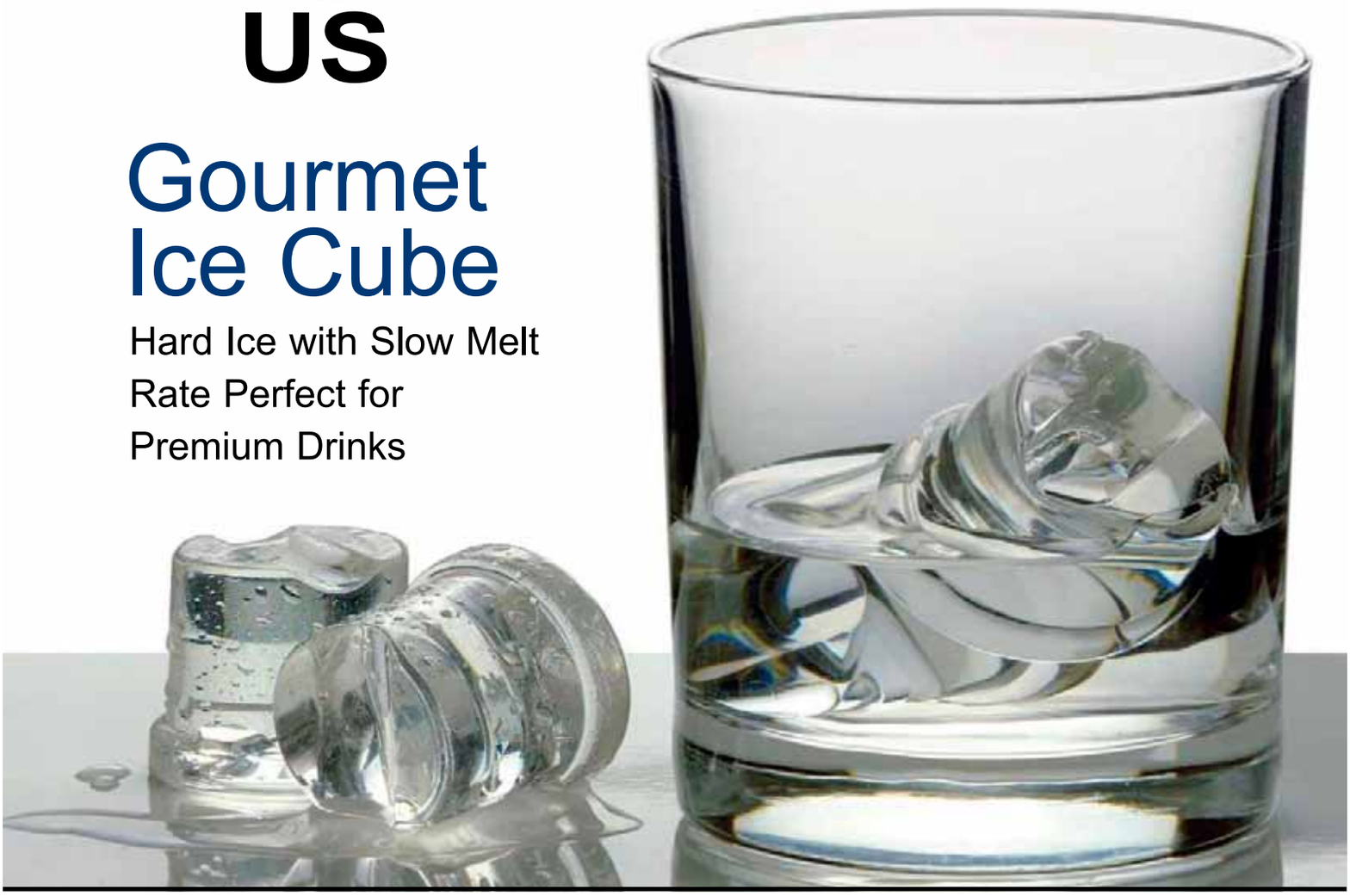

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The Future of Combi-Ovens

UNOX, a leading Italian brand, renowned for designing and manufacturing high-performance commercial ovens catering to the food service, retail, pastry, and bakery sectors, introduced its latest range of cutting-edge combi-ovens – CHEFTOP-X and BAKERTOP-X at Aahar 2024.

This marked the first-ever unveiling and showcasing of these state-of-the-art cooking systems in India, further solidifying UNOX's position in the combi-oven category.

Vikram Goel, Managing Director, UNOX India, expressed the brand's commitment: "The unveiling of the CHEFTOP-X and BAKERTOP-X combi-oven series marks a significant milestone in our journey to empower chefs with cutting-edge technology. We are not merely introducing a new line of combi-ovens; we are revolutionizing the way culinary professionals create, innovate, and excel in their craft. Our dedication extends to strengthening our presence in India and supporting the growth of the food service industry. With our extensive range of ovens and dedicated support, we aspire to empower chefs and food businesses to achieve their culinary goals."

Tailored for gastronomy and bakery applications, the CHEFTOP-X and BAKERTOP-X not only cater to food service professionals' unique preferences but actively seek feedback to improve and align their performance with chefs' expectations. By incorporating advancements such as "HEY Unox!" for voice operation, these ovens revolutionize efficiency and control in the professional kitchen, enhancing the culinary experience.

Sorozai Opens at Mumbai

'Sorozai', launched by Aditi Malik and Simple Kaul along with Ankit Anand and Suraj Shetty, and under the visionary prowess of Shailesh Singh, is the latest gem in the city's culinary crown, promises an adventure that blends authentic flavours with a dash of European finesse and continental flair, and providing the warmth of Goan life.

The venture brought under the banner of Green Turtle Hospitality, showcase the Portuguese architecture that grace the landscape. Goa's cozy, vibrant local homes, wrapped amidst the serene historical churches, provide a striking backdrop to the diverse and delectable cuisine that defines this coastal paradise. The interiors are carefully done in a symphony of colours and textures, echoing the vibrant hues of Goan streets and the soothing tones of coastal landscapes. Wooden accents and rustic furnishings evoke Goan homes' charm, while seafoam green splashes transport guests to the shores of Goa's pristine beaches. The traditional Goan claywork and intricate tilework create an inviting and enchanting ambiance

The spicy seafood curries, refreshing beer and cocktails, and sweet coconut desserts, Sorozai was conceived as a culinary homage to the Goan way of life, with its name deriving from the Konkani words for 'Soro' (Alcohol) and 'Zai' (Would you like?), embodying the welcoming and carefree essence of Goan hospitality.

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Blanca: A Culinary Haven

Set in the beautiful two-floor, where classic Victorian design meets a Bohemian Coastal aesthetic, Blanca is a popular Café and Restaurant Bar, located at the popular Chattarpur address of the capital. The brainchild of Harman Mander, the concept is created more than only a dining spot. According to him, the entire exquisite space a blank canvas of moments carefully curated to celebrate the joy of free living.

The very name "Blanca" holds a deep significance, representing the soul of the restaurant's vision – a white canvas, symbolizing an open, versatile space where individuals can explore their thoughts without any hesitation. This unique concept perfectly creates a space that radiates free-spirited creativity and a connection to nature.

With a total seating capacity of 88 covers, Blanca offers both outdoor and indoor seating, inviting guests to relax in the ambiance of their choice. The venue brings together a collaboration of brands, ensuring a diverse and exceptional experience for patrons. From reinvented classics to daring fusions, the offerings promise a feast for the senses.

Dining

Blanca's vision behind the food and beverage menu is rooted in the belief that food is a universal language that unites people and places. Each bite is a brushstroke, creating a mosaic of tastes that celebrates the diversity of culinary traditions and ingredients. From serene mornings to vibrant evenings, Blanca's curated menu captures the essence of commitment to epicurean excellence, offering a gastronomic experience that marries classics and innovation.

Crafted by a team of visionary chefs, mixologists, and baristas, the menu is a flavourful journey that tells a story with every dish and drink. From signature breakfast creations to specialty coffees inspired by iconic destinations, each experience is a work of art. This culinary philosophy infuses vitality, transforming humble ingredients into gourmet delights.

The signature dishes include Blanca Turkish Eggs, Very Berry Smoothie, Smoked Beets and Burrata Salad, and relish Blanca Grilled Salmon. For vegetarians, Persian Falafel, Kotsu Fried Rice, Rainbow Poke Bowl, The Ultimate Meatless Burger, are exquisite delights.

The drinks menu boasts innovative fusion inspired classics. Sip on gut friendly smoothies like Goddess Goodness, Juice of The Jungle or savour rich Espresso Tiramisu, Mango Passionfruit Iced Tea, and indulge in the unique Salted Caramel Affogato.

Additionally, the menu also features collaborative brands like Bili Hu Coffee, Makaibari Tea, Sepoy, and St. Pellegrino.

The Team

Meet the culinary magicians behind Blanca, Head Chef Nandu Krishnan, and Head Barista Raju Jana. With 13 years of culinary experience, Nandu fearlessly explores new techniques and flavours, creating visually stunning and delectable dishes. Raju, with over six years of pioneering expertise in forte coffee, infuses each brew with an exceptional depth of flavor, making every sip an exploration of taste.

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Providing New Solutions and Innovations

Paul Harper, a seasoned professional with over 35 years' experience working in the food service equipment industry and now leading Alto-Shaam's team in the Asia Pacific Region, sits down with us to discuss his journey and Alto-Shaam's innovative contributions to the global food service sector.

With such an extensive background in the food service equipment industry, what initially inspired your career path?

My passion for both culinary arts and the hospitality industry sparked my interest in this field. I saw an opportunity to bridge the gap between traditional craft based culinary practices and modern technological advancements in food service equipment, and this is what drove my career towards the food equipment/manufacturing side of the industry.

Your early career mentions a culinary background. How has this influenced your approach to business within the food service equipment industry?

Having spent time training and working as a chef in my early years, understanding the dynamic of the kitchen and people has been invaluable. It allows me to empathize with the challenges faced by chefs and food service professionals, guiding the development of equipment solutions tailored to their specific needs. This synergy between culinary expertise and technological innovation is the cornerstone of my approach.

Share some highlights of your global business endeavours and the impact they've had on industry growth?

Over my career, I've had the privilege of working for a number of leading food service equipment manufacturers developing the introduction of new innovative products, significantly expanded market reach and revenue streams, forging strategic partnerships on a global scale and leveraging a strong network in the industry.

Innovation is key in any industry. How do you ensure your products remain at the forefront of technological advancement in your current position at Alto-Shaam?

Alto-Shaam is recognized for its continuous commitment to research and development of new solutions and innovations in the industry. By staying abreast of emerging technologies and consumer trends, we're able to anticipate market demands and tailor our product offerings accordingly. Collaboration with industry leaders and investing in state-of-the-art facilities further enhance our capabilities to deliver innovative solutions that redefine the standards of the food service industry today.

Looking ahead, what do you envision for the future of the global food service equipment industry, and how do you see yourself contributing to its evolution?

The future of the food service equipment industry remains healthy, I see the dynamics of our global markets changing with more focus on our emerging markets in the Middle East & Asia. The commitment of Alto-Shaam to manufacturing in India underscores our dedication to this growth trajectory, and my focus will remain in nurturing these opportunities for Alto-Shaam for the foreseeable future.

APPOINTMENTS

Bidyut Saha

Taj Corbett Resort & Spa has appointed Chef Bidyut Saha as its new Executive Chef. With 19-year career in the culinary world, Chef Bidyut brings a wealth of knowledge, innovation, and a passion for creating unforgettable dining experiences. He did his Diploma in Hotel Management & Catering Technology from NSHM Academy, West Bengal. Launching his career at the renowned Radisson White Sands Resort in Goa, and later worked with Country Inn & Suites, Royal Albatross Moderna in Egypt, Ramee Group of Hotels & Resorts in Dubai, Park Hyatt & more.

Divyanshi Patel

The Astor Goa has appointed Ms. Divyanshi Patel as its new Executive Chef. With over 8 years of culinary expertise she did Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Culinary Arts from the Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad, and the University of Huddersfield (United Kingdom), where she graduated with honours and earned recognition from Asia Pacific Marriott International. She was R&D Chef at Bangalore, Chef de Partie at Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa, Chef de Partie at Hilton St. Julians in Malta, and Commis at two Michelin-starred restaurants in Spain.

Wong Chin Sheong

JW Marriott, Kolkata has announced the appointment of Chef Wong Chin Sheong as the new head of their chic restaurant, Vintage Asia. His journey in the culinary arts started over twenty years ago, and since then, he has worked at renowned luxury hotels and restaurants across various countries. His passion for Chinese and Asian cuisine and innovative approach has earned him a stellar reputation in the industry. Throughout his career, Chef Wong has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, effectively managing kitchen operations and inspiring culinary teams to deliver outstanding results.

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Fusion Food

The Culmination, Growth and Future

Fusion food cuisine is not something that has been discovered "out of the blue". It is just an amalgamation or mixture of dishes that we have been consuming since long. It is an artful blend of traditional culinary food, not only from different regions within the country but also from different parts of the world, by adventurous and courageous chefs to sate the appetite of diners aspiring for something new and thrilling to quench their hunger for something different, diverse and, at the same time, appetising and scrumptious. Ashok Malkani examines various aspects of this gastronomic culinary phenomenon, including its evolution over the years and its future.

The cooking traditions from different corners of the world combined with India's rich culinary heritage and diverse regional cuisines is inevitably prone to lead to a cuisine that is exciting, appealing, effervescent and, at the same time, delectable. A cuisine which titillates the taste buds! And the name designated to this vibrating bubbly food is Fusion Food.

Fusion food has, today, opened up a world of creativity for chefs leading them to experiment with ingredients, presentation and techniques that has endeared this cuisine to not only diners across the globe, but more particularly in India.

One may ask what is fusion food and how has it evolved over the years?

V.H. Suresh, Corporate Executive Chef, Platform 65 explains, "Fusion food is a culinary concept that combines elements and techniques from different culinary traditions to create innovative and unique dishes. It involves blending diverse ingredients and cooking styles to produce a harmonious and delightful fusion of flavours.

Fusion food gained popularity in India during the late 20th century when chefs started experimenting with traditional Indian ingredients and flavours alongside global influences. This trend has since grown, especially in urban centres, where people are more open to culinary experimentation. Its popularity is on the rise as diners appreciate the exciting marriage of traditional Indian and international flavours.

Over the years, Indian fusion food has evolved significantly. Initially, it involved blending Indian spices and ingredients with western or other international cuisines. However, chefs have now taken it to new heights by incorporating elements from various regional Indian cuisines, creating a diverse and rich tapestry of flavours. This evolution has been driven by a desire to innovate, experiment with textures, and present a modern twist to traditional dishes, appealing to a wider audience with varied palates."

Manish Yadav, F&B Manager of Jaisalmer Marriott Resort and Spa disclosed, "The popularity of fusion food in India has grown steadily since its inception in the late 20th century, especially in urban areas where people are more open to trying new culinary experiences. Indian fusion food has evolved significantly, blending traditional Indian flavours and ingredients with influences from various cuisines such as Chinese, Italian, Mexican, and Middle Eastern.

Chefs have creatively incorporated elements like spices, sauces, and cooking methods from different cultures to create fusion dishes that appeal to modern palates. This evolution has led to the emergence of diverse fusion cuisines like Indo-Chinese, Indo-Italian, and Tex-Mex Indian fusion, which can be found in restaurants across the country and even at our Jaisalmer Marriott Resort and Spa Kitchen, where we celebrate fusion food by elevating world cuisine."

He further adds, "The rise of food bloggers, social media influencers, and food-centric television shows has further popularized Indian fusion cuisine, inspiring home cooks and professional chefs alike to experiment with innovative flavour combinations and presentation styles. As a result, Indian fusion food continues to evolve, reflecting the dynamic culinary landscape of the country and its openness to culinary experimentation and creativity."

Buddha Vikram Tandan, Chef De Cuisine of Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun

Neeraj Rawoot

Sarab Kapoor

V.H. Suresh

Ritesh Sen

Beach adds, "There are various forms of fusion food, including regional fusion which combines food from different regions or sub-regions. Food mash-ups are also a form of food fusion, this is one of the fastest-growing food trends from around the World.

The fusion food era in India started three decades ago (1990–2000) when travel and trade started to gain momentum. Just when people started crossing the borders of their state or country, a whole new cuisine amused them. Additionally, the new internet-crazy generation has explored multiple varieties of food being served commonly in other countries and parts of India and demanded the same in their city."

Ritesh Sen, General Manager - Food & Beverage, The Fern Hotels & Resorts, declares, "Fusion food has witnessed a steady ascent, particularly in urban hubs and among the younger demographic, who exhibit a greater willingness to explore novel culinary experiences. This culinary trend has spurred the establishment of restaurants specializing in fusion cuisine across major cities nationwide.

These establishments curate menus that showcase a rich tapestry of fusion dishes, seamlessly blending elements from various cultural backgrounds. In essence, fusion food has ingrained itself as a noteworthy component of India's culinary landscape. It serves as a mirror reflecting the nation's diverse cultural influences and the ever-evolving palate of its populace."

Neeraj Rawoot, Executive Chef of JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa states, "Chefs, at times, mix elements of two or more cuisines in a dish, to bring in some zing in the monotonous menus. However, many a times it's demand from the guest to create "kuch hat ke" experience."

He continues, "This 'fusion food' has been popular in India since time immemorial. The exposure to international cuisine and then creating something out of it which matches the Indian palate is what has led to explosion of fusion food. A very common term in our Chinese restaurants is 'manchow' which is a Chinese version of soup originated somewhere in our North East States."

Celebrity Chef, Sarab Kapoor, adds, "The fusion food trend allows chefs to experiment creatively with various ingredients, introducing new and exciting culinary concepts. Indian fusion cuisine has evolved over time to incorporate a diverse range of influences, offering innovative and unique dining experiences."

Successful Amalgamation

India has a vast repertoire of regional cuisines. Thus a blend of these cuisines could effectively produce an array of fusion food dishes. However, with international tourism on the incline, there is not only a combination of regional dishes but also international delicacies being introduced in today's fusion food. There has been a positive and efficacious combination of these cuisines which have been largely appreciated by the diners. The amalgamation has proved successful globally and is practiced all over the world.

Neeraj claims, "You get to see not only amalgamation of several regional touches in a dish but due to international exposure we have also incorporated certain versions of western food into our staples. Italian and Chinese are the most popular international cuisines in India and their spices, cooking method, inspirations can be seen in Indian fusion food."

He adds, "Traditional Indian flavours are mixing very well with global cuisine. I don't mind eating a chilli chicken with a butter garlic naan. Likewise, India being a vegetarian diversified country has adopted many international dishes in our very own desi avatar like Veitamese Bahn Xeo crepe filled with version of cheese and veggies or a Phad Thai being made like a noodle with loads of vegetables. Eventually, these dishes have changed their originality to our comfort food, making them into the category of fusion food."

Ritesh declares, "Fusion cuisine has not only brought together flavours from different regions of India but also from different countries. Cuisines from several regions and countries are more favoured for fusion food format due to various factors such as historical context, cultural exchange, migration patterns, and culinary innovation."

He adds, "Fusion food has become an international phenomenon. Some of the countries whose fusion food is particularly favoured include:

United States: whose diverse culinary

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landscape is influenced by immigration and cultural exchange. American fusion cuisine often combines elements from various ethnic cuisines, resulting in dishes like Tex-Mex (Texan-Mexican fusion), California sushi (Japanese-American fusion), and Korean BBQ tacos (Korean-American fusion).

Japan: Japanese fusion cuisine, known as "yōshoku," blends traditional Japanese ingredients and cooking techniques with Western influences, particularly from European cuisines.

Singapore: Singaporean cuisine is a melting pot of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other Southeast Asian influences, reflecting the country's multicultural heritage."

As far as Indian flavours blending with global cuisine is concerned, factors like cultural exchange, globalization, and the inventive spirit of chef have created dishes which are delectable. Some of the common methods through which traditional Indian flavours are making their mark in global cuisine are:

Spice Blending: Indian spices like cumin, coriander, turmeric, cardamom, and garam masala are renowned for their unique tastes and aromas. These spices are now used to season dishes in global cuisines, adding depth and complexity. For example, an Italian pasta dish might get a flavour boost from Indian spices like cumin and coriander.

Sauces and Condiments: Indian sauces and condiments, such as curry sauces, chutneys, and pickles, are becoming popular in global cuisine.

Ingredient Substitutions: Traditional Indian ingredients like lentils and chickpeas are finding their way into global recipes as substitutes or additions.

Fusion Dishes: Chefs are crafting fusion dishes that blend elements of Indian cuisine with other global flavours.

In essence, the infusion of traditional Indian flavours into global dishes not only adds a delightful twist but also reflects the evolving and inclusive nature of contemporary culinary experiences.

Manish states, "Fusion cuisine within India often involves combining elements from different regional cuisines as well as global dishes. For example, dishes like Butter Chicken Pizza (a fusion of North Indian flavours with Italian pizza) or Malabar Chicken Tacos (blending South Indian and Mexican influences) showcase this regional

Buddha Vikram Tandan

fusion. When it comes to fusion food from different countries, some cuisines and regions have become particularly favoured for fusion experiments due to their popularity, accessibility, and compatibility with other flavours."

He cites some of the fusion cuisines as:

Asian Fusion: Asian cuisines, such as Chinese, Japanese, Thai, and Korean, are often blended or with Western influences to create dishes like sushi burritos, Thai curry pizza, or Korean barbecue tacos. These cuisines are favoured for fusion due to their bold flavours, versatility, and increasing popularity worldwide

Mediterranean Fusion: The Mediterranean diet, known for its emphasis on fresh vegetables, olive oil, and seafood, lends itself well to fusion with other cuisines. Mediterranean flavours are often combined with Middle Eastern, Italian, or Spanish influences to create dishes like falafel tacos, hummus pizza, or paella risotto

Some of the most favoured fusion food dishes are Butter Chicken Pizza, Schezwan Dosa, Indo-Chinese Manchurian Noodles, and Tandoori Momos, among others."

Buddha declares "Fusion food cannot be categorized according to any one particular cuisine style and it has played a part in many contemporary restaurant cuisines since the 1970s. The fusion of Indian cuisine with global culinary styles began primarily in the United States, where chefs aimed to craft dishes that blended traditional Indian spices with local ingredients. The creation of chicken tikka pizza by an Indian restaurant in Glasgow, Scotland, in the 1970s is one of the earliest examples of Indian fusion cuisine. This dish ingeniously combined the classic Italian pizza base with the flavours of traditional Indian chicken tikka, resulting in a delectable and distinct culinary delight."

Speaking about the most favoured fusion food dishes by Indians, he declared, "The fusion of Indian and Western cuisines is gaining immense popularity. From Indian-style Pizzas and pasta with desi twists to Indo-Mexican Burritos and Fusion Burgers, chefs are skilfully combining traditional Indian spices, techniques, and ingredients with global culinary concepts, resulting in unique and mouth-watering creations."

It's not just the West that is influencing Indian cuisine. Fusion with global flavours from Asia, the Middle East, and beyond is also making waves. Think Sushi with an Indian touch, Thai curries infused with Indian spices, or Middle Eastern-inspired biryanis. These innovative combinations showcase the harmonious fusion of diverse culinary traditions".

Suresh explaining the effect of fusion food globally states, "Chefs worldwide are experimenting with innovative techniques to infuse the rich and diverse tastes of Indian cuisine into global dishes. This fusion takes various forms, including the integration of aromatic Indian spices like cumin, coriander, cardamom, and turmeric into a wide array of international cuisines.

Indian-inspired sauces and marinades, such as tandoori and curry-infused options, are enhancing the flavour profiles of dishes across different culinary traditions. Chefs are inventing seamless crossover dishes that blend Indian and international elements, from tacos with Indian-inspired fillings to pizza topped with tandoori goodness.

Modern plating techniques showcase the vibrancy of Indian flavours in visually appealing ways, combining traditional garnishes with contemporary aesthetics. The success of this fusion lies in the harmonious balance achieved between respecting traditional Indian flavours and embracing global culinary techniques, offering diners an exciting and delightful gastronomic experience."

Standouts include Paneer Tikka Pizza, marrying Indian paneer tikka with pizza, and Butter Chicken Pasta, combining creamy butter chicken gravy with pasta. Masala Quesadilla blends Mexican quesadilla

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with Indian masalas, while fusion sushi rolls infuse Japanese artistry with Indian flavours. Chilli Chicken Tacos and Biryani Burrito bring together Indo-Chinese and Mexican influences, respectively. Desserts like Gulab Jamun Cheesecake and Chai Latte Ice Cream showcase innovative transformations of classic Indian sweets."

He further elaborated, "One key element of creating a unique and innovative gastronomic experience is the skilful integration of flavours, where chefs artfully combine sweet, salty, sour, and umami tastes to achieve a well-balanced and dynamic palate."

Sarab revealed that cosmopolitan cities with diverse populations also tend to embrace fusion food for its innovative and eclectic offerings.

She continued, "Asian Fusion cuisine offers a fascinating blend of ingredients from diverse culinary traditions, resulting in entirely new yet familiar dining experiences. Ingredients like soy sauce, kaffir lime leaves, basil leaves, 5-spice blend, and lemongrass contribute to this unique fusion. Key elements of Asian fusion food include a balance of sweet, sour, salty, and spicy flavours, along with the use of fresh herbs and aromatic spices. Innovative combinations of traditional Asian ingredients with global influences further enrich the culinary landscape, offering a rich tapestry of flavours and textures.

Spread of Fusion Food

Over the years this culinary marriage which started with fine dine gourmet restaurants has proved so popular that it has spread to even street food and desserts. Everything from canapés to pasta, burritos, paella, biryani to classic soups, and macarons to cocktails was transforming the food scenario.

Manish avers "The concept of fusion food has influenced even street food leading to the creation of innovative and eclectic dishes that blend elements from different culinary traditions. A few examples are Kimchi Quesadilla, Sushi Burrito, and Chicken Tikka/Paneer Tikka Pizza. Fusion food has made Chefs think out of the box, and they have come up with fusion desserts, which offer an exciting opportunity for chefs to experiment and push the boundaries of traditional dessert-making, resulting in a wide range of creative and delicious treats."

Manish Yadav

Buddha disclosed, "The idea of fusion food has become popular as street food since a long time. Street food vendors are experimenting with global ingredients and cooking styles, offering creative mash-ups like Butter Chicken Tacos, Samosa Burgers, and Chaat-inspired Bruschetta. Ram Ki Bandi, in Hyderabad, serves dosas like Pizza Dosa, Palak Paneer Dosa, Corn and Cheese Dosas. Raju Omelette, in Vadodara, serves a variety of eggs such as Boiled tikka, Boiled Crush, and Green Omelette.

He added "As far as the trend of fusion food spreading to even desserts is concerned, I would say that the rich flavours of our desserts are always enjoyable, embracing them in a new manner while keeping their essence intact is a step toward this globally trending concept of fusion food. Some of popular desserts following this concept are Jalebi Caviar, Mithai Cheesecake, Gajar Halwa Strudel, Peach/Alphonso Phirm, Kesar Badam Cupcakes, Thandai Mousse, Apple Jalebi, and Motichoor Rabri Parfait."

Neeraj adds, "Gulab Jamun cheese cake, Coffee rasgolla tiramisu, baked boondi are examples of creative desserts where you see fusion to the core."

Ritesh claims, "Fusion food is popular with street vendors across world. With their creativity and adaptability, they often incorporate elements from different cuisines to create unique and delicious dishes that cater to local tastes. A few examples of street fusion food dishes are:

Paneer Kathi Roll (Indian Fusion): It features marinated and grilled paneer wrapped in a paratha. This fusion adds a portable and convenient element to traditional paneer dishes, offering a delightful mix of spices and textures.

Pizza Dosa (Italian-Indian Fusion): involves spreading pizza sauce and cheese on a dosa. This fusion combines the crispy texture of dosa with the cheesy goodness of pizza, creating a unique street food item with a delightful blend of Italian and Indian flavours.

Tandoori Momos (Indian-Chinese Fusion): These Momos (a Tibetan Nepalese dish) are typically marinated in tandoori spices and then grilled or baked, infusing them with smoky flavours and a hint of Indian spices. The fusion brings together the savoury taste of momos with the bold and aromatic notes of Indian tandoori cuisine."

Speaking about desserts he states, "Chefs and pastry artists around the world have been experimenting with innovative combinations of flavours, techniques, and cultural influences. Here are a few examples of fusion desserts:

Rabri Mille Feuille: This dessert combines the rich and creamy Indian sweet, Rabri, with the French pastry Mille Feuille. The result is a delightful fusion of textures, with the flakiness of the pastry complementing the velvety Rabri.

Motichur Parfait: Bringing together the classic Indian dessert Motichur Ladoo with the French parfait, this fusion dessert layers the crumbly and sweet Motichur Ladoo with whipped cream or yogurt. The combination offers a balance of traditional Indian flavours and the smooth, creamy texture of a parfait.

Bell Pepper Halwa: This unique fusion dessert takes the concept of halwa and adds a twist by incorporating bell peppers. The bell peppers are cooked down with sugar and ghee to create a sweet and slightly savoury halwa.

Suresh too is of the view that fusion food has made inroads in street food "with unique flavours, resulting in innovative dishes like Butter Chicken Tacos, Vada Pav Sliders, Chow Mein Biryani, Pizza Dosa, and Samosa Chaat Tacos. These fusion delights combine textures, flavours, and presentation in surprising ways, appealing to those seeking adventurous culinary experiences on the go."

Speaking about its impact on desserts he claims, "Desserts now showcase global influences, with chefs experimenting with cultural crossovers, hybrid creations, and the fusion of sweet and savoury elements. Traditional desserts are reimagined and

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presented in new contexts, reflecting a creative and multicultural approach to sweet creations. The result is a diverse and innovative dessert landscape that captures the essence of global culinary fusion."

Sarab asserts "Fusion food has brought a new twist to beloved street food delectable like chaat by introducing creations like Taco Chaat and Wonton Burrata Chaat. Innovations such as the Samosa Burger and Pav Bhaji Bruschetta have also gained traction. Experimentation is key in fusion cuisine, requiring an understanding of flavour pairings. This experimentation revitalizes traditional recipes, offering exciting and unique tastes for those seeking culinary adventures."

She continues, "Fusion desserts offer a delightful twist, blending global flavours with traditional Indian classics. Popular creations like Rasmalai Mousse, Gajar Halwa Tart, and Thandai Panna Cotta showcase this harmonious fusion of Indian and international dessert elements."

Future of Fusion Food

With increasing popularity of fusion food, it is believed that the number of restaurants serving fusion food is on the rise. But is this popularity going to last for long? One may ask Is the rise in the number of fusion food restaurants growing only in Metros and what is the future of fusion food?

Ritesh claims, "While Indian restaurants serving fusion food are more commonly found in metropolitan areas, there has been a notable increase in their presence in Tier II and Tier III cities. As culinary trends have evolved and consumer preferences have shifted, Indian fusion restaurants have begun to expand their reach to smaller cities and towns across the country."

He continues "The future of fusion food is dynamic, with trends leaning towards global culinary collaboration, health-conscious choices, and sustainability. Technology may drive innovations, while cultural exchange and inclusive approaches shape new, authentic fusion experiences. "

Sarab states, "While fusion food is more prevalent in urban centres, including metros, there's a growing presence of fusion cuisine in Tier II and Tier III cities as well. Many restaurants across India offer fusion dishes alongside traditional fare to cater to diverse tastes. Thus the future of fusion food seems promising, as it continues to evolve and

Recipes

Deep Fried Flakes Mushroom

Ingredients:

Mushrooms (medium size)	250g
Capsicum, finely chopped	1
Onion, finely chopped	10g
Green Chilies, finely chopped	2
Ginger, chopped	1 tsp
Garlic, chopped	1 tsp
Bread Crumbs	200g
Butter	10g
Salt, to taste	
All-Purpose Flour	50g
Corn Flour	50g
Egg	1
Oil (for deep frying)	250ml
Chilli Flakes, to taste	

Method:

Clean the mushrooms and remove the stems.

Finely chop the mushroom stems and set aside.

In a pan, melt butter over medium heat.

Add chopped onion, ginger, and garlic. Sauté until the onions are translucent.

Add chopped mushroom stems, capsicum, and green chillies. Cook until the vegetables are tender. Season with salt.

Allow the mixture to cool.

Take each mushroom cap and generously fill it with the prepared vegetable mixture.

In one bowl, mix all-purpose flour, corn flour, and a pinch of salt.

In another bowl, combine breadcrumbs and chilli flakes.

In a separate bowl, beat the egg.

Dip each stuffed mushroom into the flour mixture, then into the beaten egg, and finally coat it with the breadcrumb mixture.

Heat oil in a pan for deep frying.

Fry the stuffed mushrooms until they turn golden brown and crispy.

Remove excess oil by placing them on paper towels. Serve hot as a delicious appetiser or snack.

Chef VH Suresh, Corporate Executive Chef, Platform 65

Chicken Tikka Pizza

Ingredients

Pizza Dough

Active dry yeast	2 1/4 teaspoons (1 packet)
Warm water	1 cup
Sugar	1 tablespoon
All-purpose flour	3 cups
Salt	1 teaspoon
Olive oil	2 tablespoons

Chicken Tikka Topping

Boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces	1 lb
Plain yogurt	1/2 cup
Lemon juice	2 tablespoons
Garlic, minced	2 cloves
Ginger paste	1 tablespoon
Garam masala	1 tablespoon
Ground cumin	1 teaspoon
Ground coriander	1 teaspoon
Paprika	1/2 teaspoon
Turmeric	1/2 teaspoon
Salt and Pepper to taste	
Vegetable oil	2 tablespoons
Onion, thinly sliced	1
Bell pepper, thinly sliced	1
Tomato sauce or pizza sauce	1/2 cup
Shredded mozzarella cheese	2 cups
Fresh cilantro leaves for garnish (optional)	

Method

In a small bowl, combine the warm water, sugar, and active dry yeast. Let it sit for about 5-10 minutes until foamy.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt. Add the yeast mixture and olive oil. Mix until a dough forms.

Knead the dough on a floured surface for about 5 minutes until smooth and elastic. Place the dough in a greased bowl, cover it with a clean kitchen towel, and let it rise in a warm place for about 1-2 hours until doubled in size.

While the dough is rising, prepare the chicken tikka topping. In a bowl, combine the yogurt, lemon juice, minced garlic, ginger paste, garam masala, ground cumin, ground coriander, paprika, turmeric, salt, and pepper. Add the chicken pieces and toss to coat. Marinate for at least 30 minutes, or ideally, refrigerate overnight for more flavor.

Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C). If you have a pizza stone, place it in the oven to preheat as well.

Heat the vegetable oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the marinated chicken pieces and cook until browned and

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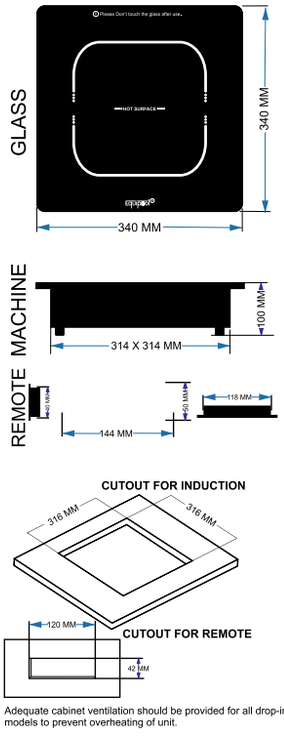

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adapt to changing culinary trends and consumer preferences. With increasing globalization and cultural exchange, fusion cuisine is expected to thrive."

Buddha declared, "In the last decade or so, several fusion cuisine restaurants, offering path-breaking dishes that are imaginative yet satisfying, have sprung up around the country. Some of the best fusion cuisine restaurants are Salt House in Kolkata, Eeka in Mumbai, and Bombay Canteen in Mumbai. I believe that Fusion will be in great demand in the coming days."

Manish disclosed, "While Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Kolkata, have a significant number of Indian fusion restaurants, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of these cities and the openness of urban dwellers to culinary experimentation, the trend of fusion cuisine is gradually making its way to Tier II and Tier III cities across India as well.

With time-increasing exposure to global food trends through social media, travel, and television, residents of smaller cities are becoming more adventurous in their culinary preferences. As a result, you can now find Indian fusion restaurants in cities like Jaipur, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Lucknow. All this shows that the future of fusion food holds great promise as culinary boundaries continue to blur and cultural exchange accelerates in our globalized world."

Neeraj stated, "Fusion food in the form of snacky, fun food goes well with the young crowd. Farzi Café and Papaya are two brands in Bengaluru's metro sector which have been very popular. However, Tier II and Tier III cities are also becoming a hub of fusion food. It is mostly flourishing in wedding menus where its diversity and show off plays a key role in menu planning. Vodka shot panipuris are creation of our weddings only.

This fun food has been there since ages and it will be there forever. It has its own markets. Connoisseurs, who are well travelled and who enjoy only authentic food, might not like it. But there is a big chunk of market for international food in this desi flavour or vice versa"

Suresh avers, "The prevalence of Indian restaurants serving fusion food has been on the rise, and it's not limited to metropolitan areas alone. The trend has gradually extended to Tier II and Tier III cities as well. Fusion food is promising and dynamic, with continued growth and evolution anticipated. As culinary boundaries continue to blur, chefs are likely to explore even more innovative combinations, drawing inspiration from diverse cultural traditions.

The emphasis on sustainability and health-conscious choices may influence the integration of global flavours with locally sourced and organic ingredients. Technology and social media will likely play a significant role in spreading and popularising new fusion concepts, allowing for greater exposure and experimentation. With an increasingly adventurous and globally connected food culture, the future of fusion food is expected to be characterised by creativity, diversity, and a continual celebration of culinary exploration." ■

cooked through about 6-8 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

Punch down the risen dough and divide it into two equal portions. Roll out each portion into a 12-inch circle on a floured surface. Place the rolled-out dough on a pizza peel or parchment paper.

Spread half of the tomato sauce or pizza sauce evenly over each pizza dough. Top with the cooked chicken tikka pieces, sliced onion, and bell pepper. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella cheese over the toppings.

Transfer the pizzas to the preheated oven (either directly onto the pizza stone or onto a baking sheet) and bake for 12-15 minutes until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is melted and bubbly.

Remove the pizzas from the oven and let them cool slightly. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves if desired. Slice and serve hot.

Manish Yadav, F&B Manager of Jaisalmer Marriott Resort and Spa

Butter chicken Pasta

Ingredient's:

Chicken Tikka	100 gms
Makhani gravy	80gms
Penne pasta	120 Gms
Cream	20ml
Chopped garlic	1tsp
Parmesan cheese	1tblsp
Kasuimethi	1tsp
Salt to taste	
Butter	10gms

Method

Melt butter in a pan add the chopped garlic and sauté till it's translucent, then add the diced chicken tikka and toss for a while.

Then add the makhana gravy to the chicken and cook for 3 mins in the meantime dip the pasta in hot water for 2 mins, drain, and add it to the sauce.

Add the seasonings and finish it with cream and cheese sprinkle some kasturimethi on top and serve hot.

Buddha Vikram Tandan, Chef De Cuisine of Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach

Butter Chicken Pizza

Ingredients

Pre-made pizza dough (store-bought or homemade)	1
Cooked and shredded chicken (marinated in tandoori masala or butter chicken sauce)	1 cup
Butter chicken sauce	1/2 cup
Diced onions	1/2 cup
Diced bell peppers (red, green, and yellow)	1/2 cup
Shredded mozzarella cheese	1 cup
Chopped cilantro (for garnish)	2 tbs
Olive oil, for brushing	

Instructions:

Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C). If you have a pizza stone, place it in the oven to preheat as well.

Roll out the pizza dough on a lightly floured surface to your desired thickness. Transfer the dough to a pizza pan or a piece of parchment paper.

Brush the surface of the dough with olive oil.

Spread the butter chicken sauce evenly over the pizza dough, leaving a small border around the edges.

Sprinkle the cooked and shredded chicken over the sauce.

Scatter the diced onions and bell peppers over the chicken.

Sprinkle the shredded mozzarella cheese evenly over the pizza.

Transfer the pizza to the preheated oven (either directly onto the pizza stone or onto a baking sheet) and bake for 12-15 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is melted and bubbly.

Once the pizza is done, remove it from the oven and let it cool for a few minutes.

Garnish with chopped cilantro before slicing and serving.

Serve your Butter Chicken Pizza hot and enjoy the delicious fusion of Indian and Italian flavors!

Ritesh Sen - General Manager - Food & Beverage, The Fern Hotels & Resorts

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Food Ingredients Business

Creating New Opportunities for Entrepreneurs

Food ingredients' market is growing at a rapid pace in the country. India is growing exponentially and the growth is expected to continue at least for over half a decade. This offers a good business opportunity for all kinds of ingredient manufacturers and suppliers. Food ingredients is a fast-growing billionaire industry and offers enterprising entrepreneurs an attractive and appealing opportunity for venturing into the field successfully. **Ashok Malkani** finds that the consumer preferences, due to a sedentary lifestyle, are undergoing a rapid transformation and there is a heightening interest in eating healthy food, giving rise to an increasing demand for healthy food ingredients. It is believed that India is one of the four countries with the greatest potential for special food ingredients. But everything is not smooth sailing and hunky-dory. A new entrepreneur entering this arena has to face some challenges. But these are not insurmountable and can be overcome by making a thorough study of the market.

When a delectable dish is presented before you there is an immediate urge, or craving, to gulp it down. And as you take the first bite the delectable taste and flavour entices you to finish the dish and order for some more. But have you ever pondered on what makes the food not only extremely appetizing bur also look enticing and have an alluring aroma. The answer is: Food Ingredients!

A novice may wonder as to what are food ingredients? Well, food ingredients – or additives – are added to the food to make it more tasty, enticing and flavourful. These additives not only make the food look scrumptiously attractive but also satiates the diners' demand for more nourishing food.

Today, this increasing demand by the diners for a more alluring, appetising and nutritious food has revved up the market for food ingredients. The increasing number of F&B outlets have also increased the demand for the same.

The global food ingredients market, according to Precedence Research, surpassed $ 335.32 billion in 2023 and is projected to hit around $ 511.33 billion by 2032, expanding at a CAGR of 4.80% during the forecast period from 2023-2032.

The Data Bridge Market Research (DBMR) is of the view that rising awareness regarding a healthy lifestyle is expected to act as one of the major driving factors for the growth of the Indian food ingredients market. The DBMR report elaborates that the rise in demand for food ingredients is also due to the expansions of convenience stores in the country.

According to DBMR, increasing use of food ingredients coupled with growing ready-to-eat foods & convenience foods has surged its demand. It predicts that the

India Food ingredients market will grow at a CAGR of 6.7% during the forecast period of 2022 to 2029.

Looking at the increasing demand for food ingredients, enterprising entrepreneurs would be keen to enter this attractive business. But there are several factors that these entrepreneurs need to understand before entering this segment of the food industry.

Types of Ingredients

The new entrepreneurs must be aware of the types of food ingredients used by the master craftsmen or women – preparing delectable dishes for daily consumption.

Substances added to food, but not regarded as foods are like colouring additives, dough strengthener, enzymes, fat replacers, firming agents, flavouring substances, flavour enhancers, food additives, Ph control agent, yeast nutrients

Some of the other food ingredients, besides spices (or masalas) that are added to the food are:

Extractions from foods, [e.g. Fats, Oils, Sugar].

Substances from nature [e.g. Honey, Maple Syrup] or landscape [e.g. Salt].

Condiments [Herbs].

Baking and cooking aids [e.g. raising agents, baking powder, vinegar, citric acid].

Fractionated modified food substances [e.g. esterified oils, modified starches, isolated protein]

Fortifications [added vitamins, minerals, or trace elements]

Manufactured seasonings [e.g. sauces, marinades, dressings].

Health and Nutrition

Ashish Paliwal, Sector Expert and Commercial Head of Agriculture, Food and Bioenergy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Delhi, states, "The food ingredient sector is driven by overall promising prospects for the Indian food industry, and the ingredients are expected to be an important part of the next growth wave in India."

The changing and stagnant lifestyle has made consumers aware of their health, making them careful about what they consume. The trend has been for healthy food which is gluten-free, low-calorie, sugar-free, dairy-free, and plant-based.

The current lifestyle has also created a trend for more convenient foods that can be consumed on the go and, at the same time, provide nutrition and be good for the health. To achieve this target, more attention is being paid to food ingredients that are healthy.

A new entrepreneur desiring to enter the food ingredients' market has, thus, to be aware of what are nutritious and health benefitting ingredients. According to Euromonitor's Top Trends Influencing India's FMCG Industries in 2021 report, 69% of India's population look for healthy ingredients in food and beverages, a 5% increase from 2019. The trend, after the Pandemic has risen over the years.

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According to Markets and Markets, the global health ingredients market size is predicted to go up from $100.5 billion in 2022 to $146.3 billion in 2027, growing at a CAGR of 7.8%. The report further states that development and commercialisation of health ingredients are not only complicated and costly but also uncertain. According to TechSci Research India report, 2025-2029, Natural Food ingredients market valued at $ 20.1 million in 2022 is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 5.03% through 2028. Natural food ingredients are perceived as healthier and more wholesome. Avendus Capital, the investment banking arm of Avendus Group, discloses that India is the fastest-growing health food market expanding at 20% CAGR and the number of health-conscious consumers is expected to rise to 176 million in 2026 from 108 million in 2020.

Healthy Ingredients

Many ingredients like millets (a whole grain), lintels, spices, etc., not common in other cuisines are common in Indian cuisine which contains several ayurvedic ingredients. This is mainly because Ayurveda, the country's classical medicinal system, is rooted in the idea that food has both nutritional and medicinal value. Today, there are innumerable healthy ingredients and spices in the market.

A few of these ingredients are:

Chickpeas (Channa): Used in various ways in Indian cooking they are often associated with hummus. They are high in protein and fiber. According to USDA data, half a cup of chickpeas has more than 7 grams of protein and more than 6 grams of fiber. They contain several essential nutrients – including dietary fiber, healthy fats, folate, magnesium, potassium, iron, and vitamins A, E, and C. These beans, according to research, are also rich in antioxidants and minerals that have been linked to positive health benefits.

Mung beans (Mung): They are a good source of protein and fiber. According to research published in the Journal of Food Science, these beans are also rich in antioxidants and minerals that have been linked to positive health benefits. A study published in the Journal of Science and Food Agriculture found that unlike many other beans, the carbohydrates in mung beans seem to be easier to digest, so eating them doesn't cause the usual digestive side effects.

Kidney beans (Rajma): Eating these organ-shaped red beans, as per research, lower incidence of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, obesity, and coronary heart disease. They contain fewer carbohydrates compared to some other beans. It is believed that they contain resistant starch, a fibrous substance that resists digestion and may help improve insulin sensitivity and have a potentially beneficial effect on gut health.

Lentils (Daal): According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, these flat shaped seeds, which come in a variety of colours and flavours, are a great source of protein. They are also a good plant source of iron, with more than 3 g per half-cup, as per USDA data. Lentils are also considered to be rich in soluble fiber, which can lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

Among the spices, some of them are:

Turmeric (Haldi): This golden yellow spice is one of the healthiest ingredients in Indian recipes. Derived from a root, the active chemical compound, curcumin, has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, as per a study published in Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology. It is believed that taking a curcumin supplement may be a safe and effective treatment for major depressive disorder. Besides adding flavour and colour, it can, in conjunction with other spices, like black pepper, enhance absorption of curcumin by 2,000 percent.

Ginger (Adrak): A systematic review published in January 2020 issue of "Nutrients" found evidence to support that its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects helped soothe nausea and digestive discomfort. Another study found that it helped in reducing pain in various applications and, as an aromatherapy it showed promise for decreasing menstrual, migraine, knee pain and even muscle soreness. It is believed to prevent cancer, heal ulcers, control weight gain and relieve digestive problems.

Cummin seeds (Jeera): This versatile herb is believed to be good for reducing obesity. According to USDA data, 1 teaspoon of ground cumin can provide nearly 6 percent of the recommended daily intake of iron.

Garlic (Lasoon): The main biologically active ingredient of the pearly white pods of this popular ingredient, allicin, which helps to support people suffering from a variety of medical conditions such as high and low blood pressures, high cholesterol, coronary heart disease, cancers, fibrosis, etc. It also helps to decrease serum glucose, total cholesterol, triglycerides, urea, uric acid, creatinine, AST and ALT levels. Garlic can also help to improve the immune system, prevent sickness, and preserve good health. It can activate the lymphatic system, which aids in the evacuation of waste from the body.

Cinnamon (Dal Chinni): This brown-coloured stick, obtained from the bark of the Cinnamomum tree, has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anticancer properties. Cinnamon has also been linked to improvements in blood glucose, which may help with insulin sensitivity and decreasing fasting blood sugars. It is also believed to support people suffering from diseases such as Alzheimer's, Type 2 diabetes, and Parkinson's.

Fenugreek (Methi): This herb, as per several studies, is likely to lower blood sugar levels in people with diabetes or prediabetes. Providing minerals, protein, and fibre, it has also been recommended as a supplement to increase milk production in breastfeeding women.

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Mint (Pudeena): This versatile herb exhibits multiple health beneficial properties, such as prevention from cancer development and anti-obesity, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, and cardioprotective effects.

Curry leaves (Cury Pate): They are a rich source of vitamin A, vitamin B, vitamin C, vitamin B2, calcium, and iron. Chewing these leaves helps to prevent stomach disorders, diabetes, premature greying of hair and eyesight problems. They help in the treatment of dysentery, diarrhea, diabetes, morning sickness, and nausea.

Rosemary (Gulmehendi): This deeply fragrant herb is commonly used to add flavour and aroma to food items, especially soups, stews, roasts and stuffing. It has significant antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, anti-apoptotic, anti-tumorigenic, antinociceptive, and neuroprotective properties. It boosts memory, improves mood, stimulates circulation, protects the immune system, detoxifies the body and protects it from bacterial infections, prevents premature aging, and heals skin conditions.

Business Challenges

While starting any food business – including food ingredients – can be exciting and rewarding it also requires careful planning and preparation. One has to understand several aspects of the business before venturing into it.

Some essential elements to be considered by an entrepreneur before entering any business are:

Funding: First time entrepreneurs often struggle to secure funding. If they do not have sufficient funds they have to look out for investors or lenders and convince them about it being a profitable investment. Traditional sources like banks may be hesitant to lend to startups. Lack of collateral, a robust business plan, and a track record can be significant hurdles. To secure govt. loan it is mandatory to have a business plan. You could avail of MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) loans. This loan is a credit facility that banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) provide to small and medium-scale businesses. They offer MSME loans with limited or no collateral at reasonable interest rates.

Govt. regulations: Starting a food business in India involves navigating a complex web of regulations and licenses. The first crucial step is incorporating your company or LLP, with the recommended choices being a Private Limited Company or a Limited Liability Partnership. Beyond this, you must obtain an FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) registration or license, which is mandatory for food-related ventures. Local registration, either as a factory under the Factories Act or under the shops and establishment act for smaller units, is essential. Additionally, if your food business employs over 10 individuals, registration under labor laws like PFO and ESIC is required. Finally, securing GST registration is necessary for the smooth functioning of your business, as it applies to the supply of goods and services. All these licenses and registrations are crucial.

Marketing: One of the primary challenges faced by B2B food ingredients producers and dealers is customer engagement i.e. capturing customers' interest in their products and the capability to convert this interest into sales. This can be achieved by making your materials visually compelling and emphasising on the importance of application of these goods in their products.

Export Market

According to Spices Board's Trade Information Services (TIS) department, despite the COVID Pandemic, spices export from India continued its upward trend during 2020-21 and attained an all-time high of $ 4,068.45 million for the first time in the history of spices export and the same trend continued during 2021-22, with exports touching 1404357 tons valued Rs.31761 crore ($ 3952.60 million).

It may be mentioned that India's spice production accounts for over one-third of the global production.

Documents needed for initiating spice export business are:

Incorporation Certificate for the business from the Registrar of Companies

Import Export Code from the Director-General of Foreign Trade

Registration cum Membership Certificate from the Spice Board

Goods and Service Tax registration for tax purposes

MSME registration

Trademark registration to protect your brand in foreign markets

Food Safety and Standard Authority of India registration or license

Passport size photo

Phytosanitary Certificate

Authorized Dealer Code from a recognized bank

Bank certificate and statement

Company PAN card

BIS certification under the ISI

Conclusion

The food ingredients market is growing at a rapid rate and there is ample opportunity for entrepreneurs who are aspiring and determined to make a success of their business. The popularity of Indian spices also offers an opportunity for enterprising businessmen to venture into exports. According to a report by IndexBox the global spice market is expected to grow at a CAGR of over 3.5% from 2022 to 2025, and is expected to be worth $ 40 billion by 2025.

Make a thorough study of the pros and cons and you ae sure to succeed in this masaledar business! ■

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'Vocal for Local' Trending Successfully!

By Sharmila Chand

The hospitality industry has been making incessant efforts towards embracing 'Vocal for Local' concept in the operations. Procuring locally grown produce, showcasing local arts and crafts, employing the local community and establishing sustainable energy in the infrastructure, have been some of the key steps well taken. Here we talk to leading hospitality professionals as they share how the hotels are a true embodiment of the concept.

Vaishali Momaya, General Manager - Operations (Gujarat), The Fern Hotels & Resorts

At The Fern Hotels & Resorts, we are deeply passionate about celebrating India's diverse local cultures and creating

an environment of inclusivity. We ensure that significant efforts are made to promote 'Vocal for Local' at each of the hotels by including elements from local cultures, dance, music, and food to enrich our guests' experience and promote local artisans.

One exemplary practice of this commitment is showcased at The Fern Gir Forest Resort, Sasan Gir, where we host 'Dhamal' dance performances performed by the Siddhis, a local community. Accompanied by local musicians playing traditional instruments such as flutes, Ramban, Dholak, Tabla, and Sitar, these performances not only create a rich cultural experience for our guests but also serve as a source of employment for these talented local artists.

Furthermore, as part of our 'Vocal for Local' initiatives, we prioritize the upliftment of local communities and environmental stewardship. To achieve this, we ensure that at least a minimum of 2% of our staff is hired from the local communities. This not only fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment within the local workforce but also contributes to the economic growth of the region. Moreover, we extend our support to local artisans by promoting and showcasing their products at our hotels. By featuring locally made artisanal products, we not only provide exposure to these talented individuals but also create additional employment opportunities within the community.

Chef Jerson Fernandes, Director of Culinary, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach

"Vocal for Local" emphasizes the importance of supporting local farmers and businesses by prioritizing seasonal, locally sourced produce. This

trend not only promotes sustainability but also celebrates the unique flavours and diversity of regional ingredients.

Personally, I fully embrace this concept and incorporate seasonal local produce into my culinary creations at Novotel Juhu, whenever possible. For instance, during the summer months, I feature dishes on my menu that highlight fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables sourced directly from nearby farms. By doing so, I not only support local producers but also offer my customers a taste of the region's vibrant culinary heritage.

Kulpreet Kaur, Director of Sales and Marketing, Hyatt Centric MG Road, Bangalore

We take great pride in our commitment to the 'Vocal for Local' concept at our hotel. Here are a few examples of the measures we take to promote this concept:

Green Energy: 90% of our energy needs are met by clean, green, and sustainable solar energy, sourced from a third-party provider. This initiative helps us reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Supporting Local Artisans: We source Channapatnam dolls and other wooden

"At Holiday Inn Cochin, we guide guests off the beaten path to discover the hidden gems and treasures of Kerala. These tours not only offer a glimpse into the local way of life but also provide opportunities to interact with communities and explore lesser-known attractions. By showcasing the diverse landscapes and cultural heritage of Kerala, we not only create unforgettable experiences for our guests but also actively contribute to supporting local tourism initiatives."

Fino Babu, General Manager, Holiday inn Cochin

toys authentic to Kannadiga culture, which are used as giveaways to our guests. Additionally, the wall outside The Bengaluru Brasserie is created by a local 3D printing artist. These collaborations with local artisans not only support the community but also showcase the rich cultural heritage of Karnataka.

Local Ingredients: Our Chef's Special Menu at The Bengaluru Brasserie features dishes like Kundapuri chicken with Thatte Idli, Chicken Chettinad, and Alleppey Chemmeen Curry, all of which are staples of South Indian cuisine. We source all our ingredients and spices from local vendors, located within a few kilometers of the hotel. This not only ensures the freshness and authenticity of our dishes but also helps us reduce our carbon footprint by sourcing locally.

Fino Babu, General Manager, Holiday Inn Cochin

At Holiday Inn Cochin, we conscientiously advocate 'Vocal for Local' through all our initiatives. From sourcing authentic dishes and local ingredients in our culinary offerings to promoting Kerala's rich culture through thoughtful artisanal gifts and curated city tours, we are committed to celebrating local delights and supporting sustainability initiatives.

Celebrating Local Gastronomic Delights: We passionately endorse the 'Vocal for Local' initiative, particularly in our culinary endeavours. We believe that food is a vital aspect of culture, and to support local communities, we actively seek out authentic and traditional dishes from remote areas of Kerala.

We prioritize sourcing ingredients from local farmers and markets. By doing so, we not only ensure the freshness and authenticity of our dishes but also actively contribute to reducing environmental impact. Our commitment to showcasing regional culinary gems in our food festivals allows guests to immerse themselves in the vibrant gastronomic heritage of the destination.

Showcasing Kerala's Rich Heritage with Thoughtful Gifts: In alignment with the "Vocal for Local" ethos, Holiday Inn Cochin takes pride in promoting the rich tradition and culture of Kerala. We go beyond ordinary gestures by sourcing and presenting guests with locally-made products, including chips, snake boats, and other traditional items. These distinctive gifts not only serve as unique souvenirs but also emphasize the craftsmanship and heritage of our region, providing guests with an authentic taste of Kerala.

Exploring Hidden Gems with Locally-Curated Tours: Committed to the spirit of "Vocal for Local," our dedication extends to our meticulously curated tour packages.

Pankaj Saxena, General Manager- Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi

Nestled in the vibrant city of Pune, Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi stands as a enduring charm of Maharashtra's culinary heritage. Beyond providing a mere hospitality experience, our hotel is deeply committed to embracing and promoting the essence of 'Vocal for Local' in every aspect of our operation, making us a beacon of responsible tourism and cultural celebration.

"In essence, Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi is not just a place to stay; it is a cultural immersion, a culinary journey, and a celebration of everything that makes Pune unique. As we continue to champion the 'Vocal for Local' initiative, we invite guests to join us in savouring the flavours, embracing the traditions, and supporting the communities that define the soul of Maharashtra"

Pankaj Saxena, General Manager- Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi

Step into our premises, and one will immediately sense the warmth and authenticity of Pune's local flavours. Our culinary journey begins with a meticulous selection of indigenous ingredients sourced directly from local farmers and artisans. From farm-fresh produce to handcrafted spices, each element in our kitchen tells a story of tradition and dedication to quality.

Indulge in our corporate Thali spreads, where signature dishes like Bharli Vangi, Thalipeeth, and Solkadhi take center stage, offering a tantalizing glimpse into the rich tapestry of Maharashtrian cuisine. During breakfast, guests are treated to a symphony of flavours with offerings like Misal Pav, Batata Wada, and Kothimbeer Wadi, all carefully curated to showcase Pune's culinary prowess.

But our commitment to local goes beyond the confines of our kitchen. Every Sunday, our brunches spotlight the bounty of our very own kitchen garden, where fresh herbs, tomatoes, and chilies flourish under the Pune sun. In a nod to sustainability, we also champion local millets and produce, inviting farmers to join us in promoting these nutritious staples

during our themed brunches.

Collaboration lies at the heart of our ethos, and we take pride in partnering with local home chefs to infuse their signature touches into our menu offerings. Whether it is a family recipe passed down through generations or a contemporary twist on a traditional favourite, these collaborations enrich our culinary repertoire and offer guests an authentic taste of Pune's diverse culinary landscape.

Beyond food, Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi is dedicated to supporting local artisans and craftsmen, providing them with a platform to showcase their talent and preserve traditional art forms. From intricately woven Navvrari frames adorning our concierge desk to handcrafted woven products available for purchase at our 'BLU Shop', every corner of our hotel is a canvas for local creativity and craftsmanship. Our commitment to ethical sourcing and community engagement extends to every aspect of our operation, ensuring that every guest experience leaves a positive impact on both the local economy and cultural heritage.

Chef Amandeep Singh, Executive Sous Chef, The Westin Mumbai Garden City

We champion the concept by incorporating seasonal local produce into our menu. This not only showcases the freshness and flavour of locally grown ingredients but also supports our local

farmers and ensures that our dishes are of the highest quality. For example, our seasonal salads feature a variety of locally sourced vegetables and fruits, such as heirloom tomatoes, leafy greens, and berries, contributing to sustainability efforts by reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transportation.

Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels & Resorts

Be embracing 'Vocal for Local' concept, we strive to support and promote local communities, businesses, and artisans. We source our ingredients from local farmers and food producers. Additionally, we have partnered with local artisans to showcase their crafts in our hotel, providing them with a platform to display and sell their products to our guests at Signum Boutique.

At all of our resort locations, we collaborate with local craftsmen and communities to create unique guest experiences such as farming, cooking, and art workshops to enrich their stay. Furthermore, we believe in

collaborating with nearby businesses for various services and supplies. For instance, utilizing local laundry services, employing local tour guides for our guests, and sourcing decor and furniture from regional craftsmen are some of the ways we integrate the 'Vocal for Local' principle into our operations.

Chef Praveen Anand, Culinaire Chef at Dakshin, ITC Grand Central

In the premium dining South Indian restaurant 'Dakshin' in ITC Grand Central, we've fully embraced the 'Vocal for Local' concept by integrating it into our operations. Here are a few examples illustrating how we practice this concept.

Local Sourcing and Sustainable Food Practices – For example Guntur chilly from Andhra Pradesh, Byadgi Chilli, Karnataka, Boria Chill, and Tamil Nadu are used for preparing the dishes that represent these respective states. We prioritize sourcing ingredients from local farmers and producers from each region from where the exact dish is from.

Additionally, we actively seek out organic and sustainable farming practices, promoting environmental stewardship and healthier dining options. For instance, we collaborate with nearby organic farms to source seasonal fruits and vegetables, reducing our carbon footprint and supporting eco-friendly agriculture.

Community Engagement and Empowerment: We believe in empowering the local community by creating employment opportunities and fostering skill development. By prioritizing local talent, we strengthen community ties and promote inclusivity within our workforce. Moreover, we actively engage with community initiatives and cultural events, showcasing the rich heritage and traditions of the area to our guests.

Promotion of Indigenous Crafts and Artisans: We showcase the rich cultural heritage of our region by featuring indigenous crafts and artisanal products in our restaurant. From handmade textiles and artwork to locally crafted furniture and decor, we celebrate the unique craftsmanship of local artisans. ■

"By incorporating several initiatives into our operations, we not only align with the 'Vocal for Local' ethos but also enrich the overall guest experience with a genuine sense of place and community connection. Our commitment to sustainability, community empowerment, and cultural preservation underscores our dedication to responsible hospitality practices."

Chef Praveen Anand, Culinaire Chef at Dakshin, ITC Grand Central

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Spice up

There's nothing to beat the aroma of herbs when introduced to ingredients it is to be cooked with. Most herbs are easily available but one should look out for those with a vibrant colour and aroma, keeping in mind that it goes with the food in totality.

Just like Indian cuisines use a lot of spices and herbs in preparing and seasoning, fast food these days also uses a lot of spices and herbs for seasoning and for making the food delectable. But the use of herbs and spices was alien to the European culture. With the arrival of new cultures from the Mediterranean and Asian herb growing regions, herbs eventually gained popularity in Europe and America, which too started with the humble pizza and evolving it into the exotic proportions, it has achieved today.

Fast food in India is a phenomenon that has caught on the fancy of young executives and students. Liked by many, this jhat pat khaana is not only filling but is also light on the pocket. There is a mad scramble among the fast food chains to cash on this growing fad. Pizzas, pastas and hotdogs, the list is endless...

Popular Herbs

Hardy herbs like rosemary, marjoram and sage will stay green and fragrant for a week or two, as long as they are refrigerated and don't get wet. But tender herbs like basil, dill, cilantro, tarragon and chervil need extra attention. Herb Butter enhances everything from grilled seafood, chicken to rice, pasta and soups.

Pizza owners in the fast food industry uses authentic Italian herbs like Oregano, Parsley, Basil, Thyme, Rosemary, milled Black Pepper and Marjoram. At the same time ethnic Indian herbs and spices like mint, corriander, red chillies, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, aniseed and cumin are also being used.

Some of the popular spices and herbs include:

• Greek Oregano or Origanum vulgare hirtum in scientific terminology has a strong flavour. For best results one uses fresh leaves, as topping for pizza; in fact this was the way Greek Oregano was initially used for pizzas and not as an ingredient in the sauce.

• Sage or Salvia officinalis is very often used with Thyme for beans and soups. Eating out experience can be spiced up with a combo of freshly chopped or dried sage, mint, rosemary, oregano and basil.

• Spanish Tarragon is much easier to grow. With a slightly sweet flavour it is perfect for pasta and other dessert dishes.

• A member of the mint family, Basil (dried) is a favourite in Italian and Mediterranean cuisine. Also known as the 'herb of kings', it can be teamed up with other herbs and flavourings like garlic, oregano and lemon. It can be used as a seasoning for pizza, spaghetti sauce. Use the leaves either fresh or dried.

• Widely used in Italian cuisine, chopped Capers can be used for topping pizza.

• Also known as sweet laurel, Bay leaves come from bay or laurel tree, native to the Mediterranean. The leaves are usually used dried and should be removed before food is served. They have a woody, sweet flavour with a slightly minty aroma that works well in soups, pasta sauces, and fish items.

• A hot favourite in Indian cuisine as well, Corriander (seeds) is a member of the carrot family and is a native of southern Europe. Corriander can also be used in Hot Dogs.

• Herbes de Provence: A blend of herbs including oregano, savoury, rosemary, thyme, marjoram and lavender that is commonly used to flavour stews, chicken, kebabs and pizza.

• An oval shaped seed, Nutmeg is normally grated fresh just before use. With a piney, citrus-like aromatic flavour combined with sweet and bitter tastes, it is a perfect topping for cheese dishes including sauces and pasta.

While these spices most certainly add the much-desired flavour to food, some of the spices that were traditionally used in Indian cuisine are also gradually finding way into the fast food menu. For example, the mustard sauce; bright yellow in colour with a peculiar smell, it is this sauce that adds that tangy 'zing' to Bengali dishes lending it a special aroma. In India, it is being used for a long time. Now it is finding patrons in pasta and burger lovers who are relishing its taste.

Apart from mustard another Indian herb that is finding acceptance in international market is our very own desi pudina or Mint.

Similarly there are others like cumin (jeera), which is used in Mexican cuisine. Aniseed (saunf) is used in liqueurs (as after meal digestives). There is even a pan (beetle leaf and nut) flavoured liqueur in the UK.

The world is becoming or has become a 'global village' and the very fact that the average Indian consumer goes to places, proves that point literally! Indians seem to have imbibed international tastes and are willing to experiment. Therefore fast food joints are coming up with new flavours and additions to their menu for wooing guests. There's an ever-increasing segment of our demographics that is keen on experiencing new flavours and most importantly willing to experiment.

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Dr. Anjali Hooda,
Medicine Practitioner

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Making Summers Cool

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

The body perspires more in summers, and one need more fluid to keep themselves hydrated, and thus summer coolers are not only refreshing and rejuvenating but also play a necessary role during summers to keep you healthy.

By taking inspiration from the world renowned British poet PB Shelley's immortal lines, we can say that if summer comes can summer coolers be far behind? Yes, summers are here with their full power and fury and the need for cool and refreshing summer coolers to find temporary reprieve from the scorching heat is fast spreading across our mind, body and soul.

Common Summer Coolers

Having a predominant summer season, it is natural for India to have a long tradition of summer beverages. Some of the well-known traditional Indian summer cooler beverages include thandai, lassi, aam panna, jal jeera, shikanjvi among others. They are mostly had in Indian homes, especially during summers, and also in streets of India. There are several variants of lassi such as mango lassi, strawberry lassi, and rose lassi. There can be sweet and as well as salty lassi.

Thandai, which is a mixture of almonds, fennel seeds, watermelon kernel, rose petals, pepper, vetiver seeds, cardamom, saffron, milk and sugar, is more famous in North India, especially in Varanasi, than in other parts of the country. The delightful drink is often associated with the Maha Shivaratri and Holi festival. There are different varieties of thandai but the most common and popular are perhaps the badam (almond) thandai and bhaang (cannabis) thandai.

The traditional sherbets of khus (vetiver), kokum, amla (Indian gooseberry) or wood apple are also wonderful home-based summer coolers, which can bring serenity to the jaded senses, after they are being subjected for long hours to the relentless and sweaty summers.

After a tiring day amidst summer heat, a glass of chilled aam panna, made with unripe green mangoes, can bring one a sense of refreshing bliss. This drink is immensely popular in the summers of north and north western India. It also has usage in other parts of the country.

And jal jeera and shikanjvi sellers with their handcarts and huge clay pots are a

regular sight in the streets of north India during summers. Shikanjvi has simple ingredients like lemon juice, black salt, roasted cumin powder and sugar with mint leaves for garnishing but the drink, if made well, can prove that simple things in life can be priceless. Jal jeera is a salty beverage while shikanjvi is sweet, but both can give a momentary ethereal feel.

Bel sherbet or a beverage from wood apple juice with jaggery and lemon juice is not only rejuvenating in summers but can also be a healthy beverage in general. Besides hydrating, the beverage can protect you from sun strokes and cure running stomach. One can find lots and lots of wood apple juice vendors in the often unbearable Delhi summers.

Then of course, coconut water and sugarcane juice are also important beverages to make your summer a bit cool and refreshing. Another such a drink which is popular in Kerala is sambharam or neer mor. It comes across as spicy buttermilk comprising curd, green chillies, ginger, cumin seeds powder and yoghurt. The beverage is endowed with digestive and hydrating properties. However, this drink's appeal is not limited to Kerala alone. It is consumed all over India, especially during summers, with every region of India having its own variant. In north India, it is known as chaas.

Besides these relatively popular beverages, there are many lesser known or region specific summer drinks in India, which need to attain pan-India popularity by the efforts of our food service and food retail industry.

Solkadhi is another delectable drink. This beverage, whose important ingredients are kokum and coconut milk, is abundantly consumed in Goa and Maharashtra's coastal region. However, its popularity has sadly not reached other parts of India, which it richly deserves. The drink can not only relax the body and mind but has anti-oxidant characteristics. It can easily balance a rich, spicy meal.

If Maharasthra and Goa have their solkadhi, the south India has its nannari sherbet. This refreshing cool summer beverage with out-of-the-world flavour has nannari or sarasaparilla roots and citric acid as its primary ingredient. And of course, water, sugar and lemon juice. Nannari is an effective and natural coolant. Addition of crushed ice will add to the delight of the drink.

Take the case of taal sherbet or nongu sherbet. Ice apple is called taal in Bengal and nongu in Tamil Nadu. This wonder drink which has infusion of milk is expected to impress you with its flavours and health quotient and can make you wait for the summers again.

Phalsa sherbet is another uncommon but spectacularly delightful beverage for the summers. Phalsa or Grewia asiatica has a wonderful tart flavour. Its size is similar to that of blueberry. Phalsa facilitates digestion and prevents dehydration.

The ancient city of Madurai is not only famous for its temples but also for its Jigarthanda, which are offered at the roadside stalls through the city. The essential ingredients of this delectable beverage include milk, almond gum, sarsaparilla root syrup, and sugar. This concoction is garnished with ice-cream. The drink can give one a cool refreshing

retreat of delightful moments from the scorching heat.

Piyush is a popular summer beverage in Maharashtra and Gujarat, but it is not known much outside these states. It is a heavenly creamy beverage made with the combination of shrikhand (a popular sweet in Maharashtra and Gujarat), buttermilk, nutmeg, dry fruits and saffron in right quantities. The drink's literal meaning is amrit or the drink of the Gods, and after drinking piyush with its nectar like taste one may realise why it is so named.

Healthy and Refreshing

A summer cooler refreshes the mind, body and soul during summers. And the fun gets doubled if that drink is healthy for your body too. Some of the healthy summer coolers one could opt for during the angry summers include mango panna with infusion of brown sugar, fresh watermelon juice, buttermilk, coconut water and tomato juice. The food service industry should serve all these healthy summer coolers more abundantly.

Take the case of lime juice, which is easy to prepare and can act as a healthy summer cooler. It helps in skin care and digestion. This common beverage can also help in controlling blood sugar and in preventing heart disease, and towards preventing scurvy.

Cough and acidity remain away from the person who drinks grape juice regularly. Taking grape juice in the morning without sugar helps in alleviating migraine. Furthermore, grape juice contains micronutrients like copper, iron and manganese that help towards the healthy development of your kid's body and mind.

As we can see, healthy summer coolers don't necessarily include fancy beverages. Your good old tea can also be used as a healthy summer cooler, spruced with enriched antioxidants.

It could be easily expected that with the wave of health consciousness and beauty consciousness spreading through post-modern urban India in a big way, and with the Indian restaurant goers, particularly the young generation of Indian restaurant goers with frequent exposure to overseas travels, becoming more experimental in terms of their food & beverage choices, the demand for refreshing and healthy summer coolers are only expected to increase among the guests in the Indian food service industry, in the near future. This in turn, is expected to induce the Indian food service industry to come up with more and more innovative and healthy summer coolers to beat the heat with elan and style.

Industry's Role

There are many more indigenous beverages in India whose taste can easily induce you to chuck that branded bottle of mundane carbonated beverage. Many of these drinks deserve nationwide popularity and in this regard our food service and food retail industry can play a significant role.

Now is the right time for big, established branded players to explore India's indigenous summer beverages market in a big way. It is about time we have chilled sugarcane juice or piyush or taal sherbet packaged in bottles flooding the market. The idea is to amalgamate tradition with innovation. These exercises are expected to assume quick nationwide popularity. Similarly, packaged coconut water or wood apple juice or packaged solkadhi by branded players for example are expected to have immense market appeal.

Some of these very Indian drinks can also be creatively explored by our bartenders to create fascinating mocktails or even innovative cocktails, wherever feasible, and also comes up with innovative summer coolers from time to time for their guests to beat the heat.

As soon the summers knocks on the door, the industry launches new recipes or variants of summer beverages to attract demanding consumers. Restaurants, coffee shops and juice bars introduce a range of cool beverages to their menu. This range is also termed as summer chillers. It can be frappes, fruit-based refreshers and for the coffee devotees there could be coffee chillers.

Consumers sit back, chill and cool off at their favourite joint enjoying new and eclectic range of cool refreshing beverages. The new beverages menu with a variety of options for everyone appeal to different moods and tastes.

Frappe brings the classic taste of the popular Indian dessert in a glass. It is a smooth chiller to down, served with a shot of whipped cream and topped off with crunchy almond flakes. Creamy Toffee Frappe has got rich toffee sauce blended into a chilled frappe, topped with whipped cream and scrumptious butterscotch.

The choices offered also include cool jamun slush, which combines the flavour of jamun or black plum with a zing of secret seasoning. It can revitalise the taste buds. Sugarcane refresher brings sugarcane juice, infused with lemon, spicy ginger and soothing khus.

One can say that introduction of innovative summer coolers is a happening summer season trend across the Indian food service industry. Here we can see that summer coolers can be totally non-alcoholic or could be infused with alcoholic beverages. ■

Recipe

Berry Punch

Ingredients
175 gm blueberries
1.5 litres raspberry and cranberry juice, chilled
1 cup vodka
175 gm raspberries
250 gm strawberries
1 lime
1.25 litres lemonade, chilled
Ice cubes

Method
Combine all blueberries, raspberries and strawberries in a punch bowl.
Add juice and vodka.
Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour to allow flavours to develop.
Thinly slice lime. Cut slices into small wedges. Stir through punch.
Add lemonade and ice. Serve.

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Say Cheese to Feta Cheese

Whether you are having your morning burger, evening pizza or savouring a glass of premium wine at night, cheese can be the ideal accompaniment to all of these. This wonderful food product has various ways of finding the routes to your stomach.

Formed by coagulation of the milk protein, cheese has been there since time immemorial in most societies across the world. People are using this milk product in myriad ways. Over the years, men have learned to produce cheese in different textures, forms and flavours with the milk of cow, sheep, goat and buffalo.

The feta cheese of Greece has a niche position in the world of cheese. Rich in protein, fat, vitamin and calcium, feta is a white cheese, traditionally made with sheep and goat's milk, where the percentage of goat milk does not exceed 30 percent. For several months, feta is cured in a brine solution. The cured cheese turns dry when brought out of the solution and becomes crumbly.

The PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) Feta Cheese is protected in European Union from 2002. PDO cheese is exclusively used for cheese produced in traditional geographical regions of Greece. It is produced from the milk obtained from local sheep breeds.

Salt is used as a preservative in this Greek cheese. However, if you wish to lessen the sharpness of salt in feta cheese, it can be soaked in fresh cold water or milk for some time. Often cut in the sizes of square cakes or loafs, feta cheese is available in both its soft tangy aroma and also in a slightly solid form.

While feta cheese provides an excellent source of nutrients like calcium, phosphorus and protein, all of which have been proven to promote bone health. Calcium and protein help maintain bone density and prevent osteoporosis, while phosphorus is an important component of bone.

It also contains high amounts of sodium and saturated fat. Feta is lower in fat than many other cheeses, however, and is considered a reasonable option to eat in moderation. The fat content in feta cheese varies between 30- 60 percent, although in most cases, one finds around 45 percent of milk fat in feta cheese. The moisture content of this grainy white cheese is approximately 56 percent. Because it's not traditionally made from cow's milk, but with milk from sheep and goats, it's also easier to digest.

The Origin

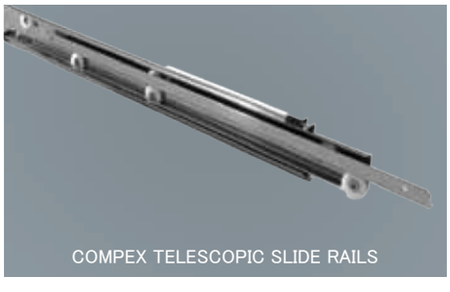
Greece is the haven of cheese production. Despite anthotyros, batzos, galotyri, graviera, katiki, kefalograviera, kpanisti, ladotyri, manouri, metsovone, myzithra, touloumotyri and a host of other Greek cheeses, feta cheese generally tops the popularity chart in Greece among cheeses. Legends have it that Gods sent Apollo and Cyrene's son Aristaios to bestow the Greeks with the gift of cheese making.

This 'gift of everlasting value' has stood the test of time, which, according to the myth, was first prepared by Cyclope Polyfimos. Many trace the history of cheese making to 4000 B.C. However, the earliest reference of cheese making is found in Homer's Odyssey.

Since then, numerous Greek scholars and writers have referred to cheeses in different contexts. But specific reference to feta cheese was first historically recorded during the Byzantine Empire. Therefore the term 'feta' bears an Italian origin, meaning slice. In the literature of the Byzantine era, special reference was made to the Crete region of Greece for cheese making.

Even today, feta cheese is mainly produced in the mountainous regions of Greece where sheep and goats are generally reared. Lesvos Island, Thrace, Thessaly, Sterea, Peloponnese, Macedonia and Epirus are today the prime hubs of feta cheese production.

It is an essential component of the Greek diet and linked to daily life and culture of Greece. It is integral part of Greek cultural identity and historical tradition.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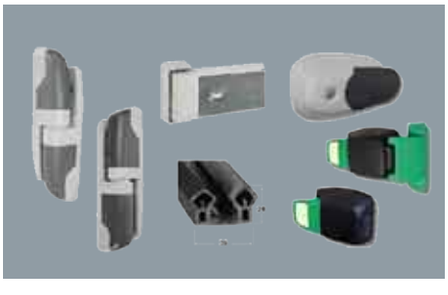

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The Production

Feta cheese in Greece is today produced by both small diaries run by families, and as well as large industrial units. Traditionally, the mixing of sheep milk with goat milk is prevalent in the feta cheese production. But to produce good quality feta cheese, the share of goat milk should not exceed more than 30 percent.

For large scale production, milk is brought to the dairies in large kegs and it is coagulated within two days. The feta is soaked in brine, either in metal containers or in wooden barrels, for at least two months, so that it matures properly. Before packing it for sale, the cheese is sometimes matured for the second time in refrigerators for some time. Feta is sold both in airtight containers and also in packages with natural brine.

Here it deserves a mention that in preparing authentic feta cheese, condensed milk, milk powder or artificial preservatives are not used.

Like many traditional foods, feta has evolved, and variations have emerged, each carrying a hint of the locale and the specific techniques cherished there.

Traditional Feta: This variety, which many around the world identify as the quintessential feta, boasts a firm yet crumbly texture. When it hits the tongue, there's an unmistakable tang, reminiscent of pastoral lands and ancient culinary traditions.

Creamy Feta: As the name suggests, this variant is a treat for those who prefer a softer consistency. Its velvety texture makes it perfect for spreading on rustic bread or freshly baked crackers.

Barrel-Aged Feta: Aging cheese in wooden barrels isn't just a process; it's an art. The wood interacts with the cheese, lending it not only a robust and enhanced flavour but also subtle smoky undertones.

Block Feta: Often found in larger blocks, this type is generally milder. It's perfect for those who prefer subtlety over the intense saltiness of its counterparts. Its form lends itself well to slicing, making it a favourite in sandwiches and cheese platters.

Major Dishes Using Feta Cheese

Greek Salad: A medley of fresh vegetables topped with feta.

Spanakopita: Spinach and feta encased in flaky phyllo pastry.

Feta Bruschetta: Toasted bread topped with tomato, basil, and crumbled feta.

Fetatziki: A twist on the tzatziki sauce with added feta.

Melitzanosalata: A Greek eggplant dip with a generous addition of feta.

Feta and Herb Stuffed Peppers: Bell peppers filled with a mixture of feta, herbs, and sometimes rice.

Bouyourdi: A baked appetizer of feta, tomatoes, and chili peppers.

Feta and Olive Tapenade: A spread made with feta, olives, capers, and olive oil.

Bourek: A savoury pastry from the Balkans and Middle East, often filled with a mixture of feta and spinach or meat.

Watermelon and Feta Salad: A refreshing summer salad combining sweet watermelon cubes, mint, and crumbled feta.

The Usage

Feta cheese is widely used in several Greek dishes. It is an important component of most Greek salads, pizzas, pastries, tyropita and spankopita. Stuffing the cheese in fishes or crumbling it on omelettes is also very common. The Greeks also like the cheese garnished with olives, roasted red peppers, herbs or nuts, with a pinch of oregano. Many habitually eat baguette with feta cheese. Well, you may also like the salty flavour of feta with a glass of beer.

The culinary versatility of feta makes it a favourite ingredient worldwide. Its crumbly texture, combined with its tangy flavour, lends itself to a myriad of dishes, from starters to desserts.

Salads: The most iconic representation of feta in salads is the Greek salad – a refreshing ensemble of ripe tomatoes, crisp cucumbers, olives, red onion, drizzled with olive oil, and crowned with a block or crumbles of feta.

Baked Dishes: Feta's melting quality when heated makes it a favoured ingredient in baked goods. Spanakopita, a savoury Greek pie filled with spinach and feta wrapped in layers of phyllo, stands testimony to this.

Grilled Feta: When grilled, feta undergoes a transformation. It turns soft, golden, and develops a smoky undertone. Best enjoyed with a drizzle of olive oil, cherry tomatoes, and fresh herbs.

Desserts: Feta in desserts may sound unconventional, but sweetened feta, especially when paired with honey, figs, or baked into pastries, can be a delightful treat.

Toppings: The crumbly nature of feta makes it a go-to topping. Be it on pizzas, omelettes, bruschetta, or roasted vegetables, a sprinkle of feta can elevate the dish's taste profile. ■

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"Focusing on Skills and Merit, rather than Gender, to Thrive in the Culinary World"

Susmita Biswas, Junior Sous Chef, Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi

As a passionate Chef, Susmita Biswas is always committed to growth, she approaches her craft with a perpetual student's mindset. Whether gleaning wisdom from seasoned mentors or embracing fresh perspectives from aspiring chefs, she values the diverse insights that shape her culinary journey. A connoisseur of cooking shows, she eagerly absorbs new plating styles and techniques, demonstrating a keen eye for presentation.

Armed with a diploma in nutrition, she worked for two years in the field and then switched to the hospitality industry. She says, "My two-year stint as a nutritionist provided invaluable insights that I now seamlessly integrate into my role as a chef. Understanding the intricacies of food composition and its impact on health has enhanced my approach to creating innovative and nourishing dishes. I leverage this knowledge to curate menus that not only tantalize the taste buds but also prioritize wellness. This fusion of culinary artistry and nutritional expertise enriches my culinary journey, driving me to continuously evolve and innovate."

In an informal chat with **Sharmila Chand**, she talks about her work philosophy and more…

What is your philosophy of cooking?

To me, cooking is more than a task; it is an art form - a delicate balance of creativity, quality ingredients, and community connection. Each dish I create is a testament to my dedication to achieving harmony in flavour and aesthetics, bringing joy to both the cook and the diner.

What is your specialization?

Specializing in Western cuisine and the art of plating, my journey into the culinary world took a detour through the realm of nutrition. Yet, my passion for cooking ultimately led me to embrace the culinary arts fully, blending my expertise in both fields to create innovative and nourishing dishes, especially curating Wellness Menus.

What is your source of inspiration?

Inspired by my mother's appreciation for the culinary arts, I found unwavering support from my Executive Chef when I first ventured into the industry. Despite the challenges faced as a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field, I persevered, recognizing the evolving landscape of opportunities for female chefs.

If you were not a chef?

If I hadn't pursued a career as a chef, I might have delved deeper into the realm of nutrition, considering my initial detour in that direction. However, my passion for cooking ultimately prevailed, leading me to embrace the culinary arts fully. Cooking has always been my true calling, and I can't imagine myself in any other profession.

What is the current status of gender equality in your department of the hospitality industry?

In my department of the hospitality industry, there's been a noticeable shift towards gender equality, albeit gradual. While there are still more men than women in leadership positions, there's a growing awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion. The industry is becoming more receptive to female chefs, and I'm hopeful that with time, we'll see even greater strides towards gender equality.

How has your journey been as a female chef?

The journey as a female chef has been both challenging and rewarding. I've faced obstacles and stereotypes in a traditionally male-dominated field, but I've also witnessed a gradual shift in attitudes towards gender roles. While the imbalance still exists, there are more opportunities emerging for women in leadership roles within the culinary industry. Despite the challenges, I remain optimistic about the evolving landscape and the increasing recognition of female chefs' contributions.

For me, the key to success lies in transcending gender stereotypes and competing on equal footing with my male counterparts. I believe in focusing on skills and merit, rather than gender, to thrive

in the culinary world.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging part of my job is maintaining a delicate balance between creativity, quality, and efficiency. As a chef, I constantly strive to innovate and create dishes that not only taste delicious but also visually stunning. However, this requires meticulous planning, attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure, especially during busy service hours.

What skills are required to be a good chef?

To be a good chef, especially as a female chef, a combination of skills is necessary. Firstly, technical proficiency in cooking techniques and food preparation is essential. Additionally, creativity, attention to detail, and a keen sense of taste and aesthetics are crucial for crafting exceptional dishes.

Effective communication and leadership skills are also important, particularly for aspiring female chefs aiming to break down barriers and ascend to leadership roles within the industry. Above all, determination, resilience, and a passion for the culinary arts are indispensable qualities for success in this field.

How do you de-stress yourself?

Beyond the kitchen, I find solace in playing the guitar and indulge my passion for fusion cuisine by learning from Michelin-starred chefs.

Fav Spice?

Cardamom holds a special place in my heart for its aromatic qualities, while turmeric's vibrant hue and health benefits make it a staple in my culinary creations.

Fav Cuisine?

Pasta, in all its forms, reigns as my favourite cuisine, with my recent experimentation in fusion dishes garnering acclaim.

The most rewarding moment in your career?

The most rewarding moment in my career was when a guest compared my culinary skills to those of Michelin-star Chef Vikas Khanna. It was a validation of all the hard work, dedication, and creativity I've poured into my craft. Knowing that my dishes can evoke such admiration and appreciation fills me with immense pride and motivates me to continually push the boundaries of my abilities.

10 years from now?

As I look towards the future, I aspire to ascend to the role of Executive Chef, eager to inspire the next generation of chefs and break down barriers for women in the industry.

Career advice you would like to give to other upcoming female chefs?

My advice to aspiring female chefs is simple yet profound: shed the label of "Female Chef" and embrace the title of "Chef" with confidence and determination.

Korean Gastronomy

Originating from ancient agricultural traditions, Korean cuisine has evolved through a complex interaction of the natural environment, and different cultural trends. It has more than 100 variations of fermented cabbage. Korea has a rich tradition of street foods, particularly in the sprawling markets. From tiny carts to kiosks, one can sample everything from mung bean pancakes to soondae, a light, spicy sausage.

Topographically, Korea stretches out from north to south and is narrow from east to west. Therefore, the climate varies greatly from the northern region to the southern region. Since the northern region is mountainous while the southern region has more plains, their produces are also quite different.

In each region of Korea, common people cooked local produce generation after generation, based on the local characteristics and historical tradition; stemming from the unique climate, topography and produce.

Moreover, the flavours and presentation of food in Korea are also closely associated with the climate of its different regions. Since the summer is short and the winter is long in the northern region, the food is not as salty or spicy as the food of the southern Korea region.

In northern region of Korea, people tend to prepare a generous amount, indicating the personality of the local people. On the other hand, dishes in the south are saltier and spicier, and seasonings and salted fish are used more.

Since the northern region of Korea is mostly mountainous, dry-field farming is common and cereal crops are produced in abundance. Meanwhile, in the central region bordering on the western coast and the southern region, rice crops are the main product. Therefore, while those living in the northern region of Korea commonly ate rice mixed with cereals as their staple, those living in the south ate plain rice or rice mixed with barley.

In mountainous regions of Korea, meat and fresh fish are scarce. Therefore, salted or dried fish and seaweed and mountain plants are often used. In coastal and island regions, fish, shellfish and seaweed harvested from the sea are used as the main ingredients in dishes.

The Cuisine

The essence of Korean cuisine is largely based

upon rice, vegetables, and meats. Traditional Korean meals are known for the number of side dishes that accompany steam-cooked short-grain rice. Commonly used ingredients include sesame oil, doenjang (fermented bean paste), soy sauce, salt, garlic, ginger, pepper flakes and gochujang (fermented red chilli paste). However, ingredients and dishes vary by province.

Korean food is eaten with chopsticks, called jeosgalag, and with a long spoon, usually made from stainless steel. All Korean food is cut into bite-sized pieces, but especially foods in the soups and stews, where everything is usually braised until it falls apart.

Bap (Rice)

Bap is the staple of Korean food. It is actually steamed rice which sometimes may also include other grains. There are many kinds of bap depending on the ingredients such as:

huinbap (white rice); japgokbap (rice with barley, millet, and beans); byeolmibap (rice with vegetables, seafood and meat); and bibimbap (rice mixed with namul and beef).

Juk (Porridge)

A traditional dish called juk consists of grains simmered for a long time with 5 to 7 times the volume of water. There are many varieties of juk depending on the ingredients. Juk is not only served as a main dish but it can also be part of a special meal. It is served to patients and eaten for health.

Guksu (Noodles)

Korean noodles are made by kneading wheat flour or buckwheat flour and drawing the dough into long coils. Noodles helped develop the use of chopsticks in Korea.

Mandu and Tteokguk

A specialty of the North Korea, Mandu is a dumpling made of thin wheat flour wrappers stuffed with fillings, then steamed, or boiled in jangguk (soy sauce soup). Tteokguk consists of diagonally sliced white rice cakes that are simmered in jangguk. Traditionally, it is served on the first day of the year.

Guk (Soup)

Guk is a soup of vegetables, seafood and/or meats, boiled in water. Some varieties of guk are:

malgeun-jangguk (clear soy sauce soup), tojangguk (soybean paste soup), gomguk (rich beef soup) and naengguk (chilled soup).

The standard Korean table setting always has bap and guk. It is said that guk helped to develop the use of spoons in Korea.

Jjigae (Stew)

Jjigae has less water and more solid ingredients than soup, and it is saltier. Varieties include malgeun-jjigae (clear jjigae) and tojang-jjigae (soybean paste jjigae).

Jeongol (Hot pot)

Its genesis was as a royal court food. Jeongol consists of meat, seafood, mushrooms and vegetables simmered in broth at the table, which is usually partaken just before serving for dinner, or as a dish to accompany liquor.

Jjim (Steamed dish)

Jjim is a dish of main ingredients cooked

with seasonings in deep water. It may be boiled with soup just above the solid ingredients, or steamed.

Seon (Steamed or parboiled stuffed vegetables)

Seon means 'good ingredients.' It is a dish comprising vegetables such as pumpkin, cucumber, eggplant and cabbage or tofu stuffed with beef and/or mushrooms, that is steamed or parboiled in broth.

Jorim (Braised dish)

Jorim is a cooking method to braise meat, seafood or vegetables with soy sauce or red pepper paste, on low heat. The ingredients are cooked for a long time to allow the flavours to seep in. It may have strong seasonings and can last a long time.

Cho (Janggwa) — Seasoned and braised seafood

Cho (janggwa) is a dish of boiled sea slugs, abalone and mussels with seasoning on low heat. Then starch liquid is added and boiled. The resulting soup is quite thick and glossy.

Bokkeum (Stir-fried dish)

Bokkeum is a stir-fry of meats, seafood or vegetables. There are two types of bokkeum dishes; one is just stir-fried in an oiled frying pan, the other one is stir-fried with soy sauce and sugar.

Gui (Grilled dish)

Gui is a dish of grilled meats, seafood or vegetables which is grilled after seasoning.

Jeon and Jeok (Pan-fried dish)

Jeon is a dish of pan-fried meats, seafood or vegetables after they have been minced or sliced and coated with wheat flour and beaten egg. Jeok is a dish of pan-fried ingredients after they have been seasoned and skewered.

Hoe, Pyeonyuk, and Jokpyeon

Hoe is a dish of raw meat, fish or vegetables seasoned with vinegar soy sauce, vinegar red pepper paste, or mustard. It can also be blanched in boiling water. Pyeonyuk is a dish of pressed and sliced beef or pork. Jokpyeon is a dish of long-simmered ox-head and ox-feet that is solidified and sliced.

Mareun-chan (Dry side dish)

Mareun-chan is a dry side dish made of salted and seasoned meat, seafood and/or vegetables that can be stored for a long time. It is enjoyed dried or fried.

Jangajji (Pickled vegetables)

Jangajji is a side dish of pickled vegetables that include Korean radish, cucumbers, bellflower roots, and garlic in soy sauce, soybean paste or red pepper paste. It can be stored for a long time.

Jeotggal (Salt-fermented seafood)

Jeotggal is a side dish of marinated shrimp, anchovies or clams with salt that is fermented. It is served as a side dish or used as a seasoning.

Sukchae (Parboiled vegetables)

Sukchae is a dish of parboiled vegetables. It may be mixed or fried with seasonings. Sukchae is a popular basic side dish in Korea.

Saengchae (Fresh salad)

Saengchae is a seasonal fresh salad dressed with vinegar, soy sauce, red pepper paste or mustard. It is sweet and sour. This method of preparation is best for preserving the taste and most of the nutrition in the ingredients.

Kimchi (Seasoned and fermented vegetables)

Kimchi is a dish made by marinating Korean cabbage and Korean radish with salt, seasoning it with red pepper, garlic, green onion, ginger and salt-fermented seafood, mixing it thoroughly and letting it ferment. Kimchi is the quintessential side dish in Korea. It is a typical fermented and storable food.

The Drink

Soju

Soju is the most popular form of alcohol, sometimes called 'Korean vodka'. It's a clear spirit made from rice that's ubiquitous in Korea. One can find a selection in almost every restaurant and even in convenience stores. The fruity variation; citrus tastes like orange and grapefruit are very popular, though there was a particular craze for chocolate-mint.

Makgeolli

Makgeolli is very different drink also made with rice,. Mild-tasting, milky white, and lightly fizzy, it's a slightly thicker drink with less of a kick than soju. Like many yeast-fermented brews, it's old enough that the drink's history is a bit muddled, but according to local legend in Busan, it was invented locally, at the Geumjeongsanseong Fortress during the Joseon Dynasty in the 14th or 15th century.

Eumcheong

Eumcheong are non-alcoholic beverages from Korea.

Desserts

Tteok (Rice cake)

Tteok is a dish made by steaming, frying, or boiling rice powder or other grain powder after it has been sprinkled with water. It is served at ceremonies and holidays without fail.

Hangwa (Korean cookies)

Hangwa are traditional Korean cookies. There are many varieties depending on the ingredients or recipes such as yumilgwa, gangjeong, sanja, dasik, jeonggwa, suksilgwa, gwapyeon, yeotgangjeong and yeot.

Table Settings

Traditional Table Setting

In the traditional Korean table setting, all dishes are served on one table at the same time as an open space pattern. Table settings are classified as bap-sang (regular dining table) with cooked rice as the main dish, juk-sang (porridge table), myeon-sang (noodle table), juan-sang (liquor table), dagwa-sang (refreshment table), and gyoja-sang (large dining table).

Dining Table Setting

The ordinary dining table setting features cooked rice as the main dish. Banchan (side dishes) are arranged according to the recipes, ingredients, colours and temperature of the food with emphasis on balance. There are 3, 5, 7, 9, and 12-dish table settings according to the number of side dishes.

Porridge Table Setting

This table setting features porridge as the main dish. Non-salty and mild side dishes such as nabak-kimchi (radish water Kimchi), bugeo-bopuragi (seasoned dried pollack flakes) and jeotguk-jjigae (salt-fermented seafood stew) are good accompaniments to the porridge.

Noodle Table Setting

In the noodle table setting, noodles, tteokguk, or dumplings are the main dish. This table setting is good for a lunch or a quick and simple meal.

Liquor Table Setting

The liquor table setting entertains guests with liquor. Some side dishes served with the liquor include dried meat or fish slices, jeon, pyeonyuk, jjim, jeongol, saengchae, kimchi, fruit, rice cakes and/or Korean cookies.

Refreshment Table Setting

The refreshment table setting is for enjoying non-alcoholic beverages. Gaksaekpyeon, yumilgwa, yugwa, dasik, suksilgwa, saengsilgwa, hwachae and/or cha (tea) may be served.

Large Dining Table Setting

This table setting serves food to many people at a large table at the same time on holidays or for ceremonies. ■

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Gonzo

For An Immersive Dining Experience!

By Sharmila Chand

Looking for Japanese Izakaya and a typical Thai Dive Bar vibe, wait no further, just grab a table at Gonzo, in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. Strategically located in the market hub near PVR Priya cinema, the restaurant promises to make your evening a memorable one.

The quirky interiors and the Asian street eats make this place the most frolic hotspot in South Delhi, and perfect rustic setting to visit with your gang. Enjoy a playful decor, simply delicious food, and drinks that are super generous with the quality of ingredients only at Gonzo!

Why Gonzo, the name?

Well, Gonzo means aggressive or crazy, it derives inspiration from Dr Gonzo portrayed by Johny Depp in the movie Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas; here sanity takes a back seat as you surrender to the madness that surrounds you. The lively place initiated by Sushobhit Sehgal & Deepak Datwani, is a gourmet haven serving an absolutely offbeat mix of edibles. The founders embarked on a quest to push away the boundaries of conventional dining, offering a wild atmosphere reflected by the diner's decor and culinary array.

With picture-perfect corners and the gas infused red neons spilling all over the place an arcade game from the 90s Gonzo is nothing short of an Asian eatery during the day & a diner straight from the streets of Bangkok or Tokyo during the evenings. There is an extensive menu laden with Pan Asian, Thai and Japanese flavours; alongside lip-smacking specialties like dimsums and sizzling stone bowls, that you'd love.

A cosy seating area to accommodate about 35 pax and a lovely open balcony contribute to the fun and casual-dine ambience of the place. Gonzo is a visual treat for lovers of aesthetics, and a haven for the food connoisseurs who aren't willing to compromise with their taste. Huge variety of dimsums & baos, as many as 38 kinds, are served.

Some of the Signature Veg Dishes are Pepper Cheese Wontons, Cream Cheese & Bell Peppers wrapped in a wonton sheet, Crispy Black pepper tofu, Crispy Tofu tossed with fresh crushed peppers & oyster sauce, Tofu Edamame Sizzling Chilli Basil Sizzling Bowl in Chilli Basil, Tofu Edamame in Chili Basil Sauce, Gonzo Spl Veg Caterpillar Sushi and Avocado Cucumbers wrapped in a sushi roll.

Notable Signature Non-Veg Dishes include Pork Xiao Long Bao, Juicy Pork Dumplings, Chicken Yakitori Gyoza, Gonzo chicken & leek yakitori wrapped in a gyoza sheet pan seared to perfection and Kung Pao Chicken Sizzling Stone Bowl, and Spicy Prawn Yellow Curry Dimsum.

With its ultimate focus on delivering quality food accompanied by an assortment of speakeasy drinks, the bar is soon to become a crowd favorite! Drinks not to be missed are Phat Dragon - Mixed Berry Lemonade with fresh cut dragon fruits; Spiced Mango - fresh mango juice fresh basil & bird's eye chilli toppped with tonic water.

Go ahead, call your squad to snap a picture, grab a bite and sip one of Gonzo's many irresistible drinks! You will ask for more!

The Passionate Founder

The owner, Sushobhit Sehgal has been in the F&B space for the last 8 years, successfully running three cloud kitchen brands: The Spice Trail, The Wok Trail, and Fat Guy's Kitchen. Fat Guy's Kitchen has now expanded to four locations across Delhi NCR.

In the realm of F&B consulting, he has set up four cafés for a renowned co-working space in Gurgaon, including the Lenskart corporate office, and contributed to the restaurant and clubhouse at Mahindra Lifespaces apartments in Gurugram.

"Gonzo has been a passion project, representing an effort to bring a Bangkok dive bar and a Japanese street-style izakaya concept to Delhi. Being foodies ourselves we have put in our heart & soul into the place for & are trying to serve some really good food."

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Canned Food Products

Bueno Foods International is a leading provider of high-quality canned food products in Delhi, India. With a commitment to delivering nutritious and delicious canned goods, they cater to the diverse culinary needs of customers while ensuring the highest standards of food safety and hygiene.

Their mission is to offer convenient and healthy food solutions to consumers while maintaining the freshness and flavour of the products. They aim to become the preferred choice for canned foods by consistently exceeding customer expecta.ons and adhering to ethical business prac.ces.

They specialize in a wide range of canned food products, including: Canned fruits and vegetables Ready-to-eat meals and soups Sauces and condiments Cold Pressed oils

At Bueno Foods, quality is the top priority. They source the finest ingredients from trusted suppliers and employ stringent quality control measures throughout the production process. The state-of-the-

art facilities are equipped with modern technology to ensure the freshness, taste, and nutritional value of canned goods.

They have established a robust distribution network that spans across Indian Sub-continent and its surrounding regions. The products are available in supermarkets, grocery stores, hotels, restaurants and online platforms, making them easily accessible to consumers across the city.

The company is certified by regulatory authorities for adherence to food safety standards and quality management systems. The certifications include Halal, ISO 9001 and FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India), demonstrating its commitment to excellence in every aspect of our opera.ons.

Bueno Foods International
shobhit@buenofood.in

Taste & Nutrition Solutions

NuTaste, a renowned name in pioneering taste and nutrition solutions for brand owners in the food & beverage industry, boasts a team of over 25 dedicated food scientists and operates a BRC certified, in-house manufacturing unit. With the capacity and expertise to develop upscale innovative solutions, from syrups to sauces, marinades to seasoning, NuTaste stands as a beacon of culinary innovation.

Understanding the escalating demand for nutritionally enriched diets, NuTaste's team of experts tirelessly crafts inventive formulas and blends tailored to the distinct requirements of clients and their consumers. The commitment to quality and consistency remains steadfast, with NuTaste exclusively sourcing the finest ingredients and employing state-of-the-art technology to ensure each product surpasses the highest standards.

More than just a food tech enterprise, NuTaste emerges as collaborative partners in curating exceptional dining experiences. Enter a realm of flavors where innovation knows no bounds, and where NuTaste's ingenuity harmonizes with your imagination to redefine culinary possibilities. Welcome to NuTaste, where extraordinary tastes are born.

NuTaste Food & Drink Labs Pvt. Ltd.
connect@nutasteworld.com

Stoneware & Porcelain

Established in 1975 by two Dadoo brothers Satya Prakash Dadoo & Hari Prakash Dadoo, Dadoo Ceramics has only objective to manufacture and export high quality ceramic products for Home Stores, Hotels, Restaurants, Corporate Market.
The company is the recipient of National Awards by President of India for Quality products two times in 1994 & 2006 for both Bone China and Stoneware with top ceramic export award several times and has marked presence on the global map.

The works are located at Khurja (90 km from New Delhi) having a strong infrastructure in 12000 sq. mtr. equipped with latest automation with their design team giving customized products according to the demand of clients.

The stoneware products are handmade, high fired at 1200 degree cent. Lead free, cadmium free, food safe. They are exporting products to USA, Europe, Russia, UAE and also doing domestic supplies.

In the current year 2024 the company has introduce the Porcelain handcrafted Crockery collection, the perfect addition to all types of kitchens. These are made with lead-free materials; this crockery is not only food safe, but also microwave safe for easy reheating. With a timeless design and durable construction, the Crockery is sure to elevate the dining experience.

Dadoo Industries
mail@dadooceramics.com

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Ritesh Sen, General Manager - Food & Beverage, The Fern Hotels & Resorts

A true and passionate hotelier with over 25 years of experience in hotels, restaurants, and cruise liner, Ritesh Sen is a passionate and dedicated worker. He places great importance on imparting knowledge to his team, ensuring that the legacy of authentic cuisine is cherished by patrons. He started his career way back in 1997 as part of the kitchen brigade, ascending to the position of Corporate Chef and now General Manager. His love for food among all things has made him a wanderlust, having travelled all across the globe in his earlier phase of life and currently in India wherein he is overlooking the F&B operation of 100+ hotels all across.

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

What do you enjoy most about being a Food & Beverage Head?

When you lead a team of talents, the best and the most enjoyable part is that you work with a bunch of emotions that are so varied in nature yet are working towards a common goal.

Is your job challenging?

Yes, F&B has and will always be challenging so much so that eventually you start loving the challenges it throws up.

Time – Food, like justice, is always time bound. Justice Delayed is Justice Denied. If your food does not end up in the stipulated time, it fails to deliver its charm

Cost - Like any business proposal, cost is always crucial to your profitability. You have to be precise in order to have a profitable business

Team - F&B is always teamwork; you never achieve anything by your own effort. Nurturing and keeping a skilled team intact is a big challenge these days.

Competition - Hotels and restaurants are mushrooming these days like never before. In order to keep oneself in the business, one needs to be very vigilant of its competition

Logistic - Procuring the right materials at the right price and keeping/storing them in a sustained environment is always a challenge.

Any tips or insights you exercise to strengthen your team?

Train your team so much that they can leave your organisation anytime, however keep your team in such a way that they never leave you. This mantra advocates that you must keep your team self-motivated, happy, and upskilled at all times. Also, one should stick to their present company for at least a minimum of two years in order to understand the company as well as oneself in terms of professional area.

How has been your experience in the present position?

It has both been challenging and rewarding. Opening and operating hotels pan India with multi-linguistic staff and achieving the core essence of the company has been worth all the effort.

What are the challenges of working here?

Being in a company which is venturing into tier 2 & 3 cities, re-locating skilled manpower, identifying proper vendors, and keeping an eagle eye view of the operation of all hotels is certainly a challenge.

How is it different from other places?

Freedom to make decisions and maintaining a positive rapport with the unit and its stakeholder makes it a different workplace from others.

What excites you the most here?

Being able to travel to different parts of India along with tasting their original regional food makes my job very interesting.

What is the USP of your F&B outlets?

Common minimum breakfast spread

Authentic regional food

Affordability

Friendly and interactive chef concierge service

What is your working philosophy?

My working philosophy has always been – "Today is the day when you have to do the best."

Anything else you would like to say?

Always believe in the saying – "Hard work always gives you the result you seek."

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