

APR-MAY '25 VOL. XVI NO. 6 ₹ 100

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Business Magazine for Bakery & Confectionery Professionals

REVIEW



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The Business of Baking

Feature

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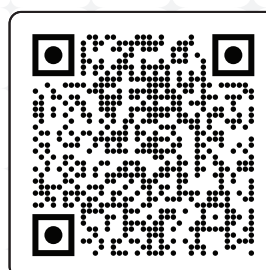
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Editorial



This edition opens on a note of celebration, as we congratulate Chef K Damodharan on receiving the distinguished honour of the Padma Shri, a recognition that brings great pride to the culinary fraternity and the nation as a whole. While we are celebrating this significant milestone, we also direct our attention to the dynamic shift taking place in India's beverage landscape.

The cover story is an in-depth feature on the evolving coffee culture in India, where changing consumer preferences, especially among millennials and Gen Z, are driving the rise of specialty cafés, home brewing, and coffee festivals in India, reflecting a broader lifestyle shift and growing appreciation for artisanal experiences.

We also turn our attention to the business of baking, examining the operational economics of running a successful bakery in today's competitive market, with insights from bakery professionals and consultants highlighting the core factors to keep in mind.

As wedding celebrations become more personalized and elaborate, we explore the artistry of wedding couture cakes that are transforming dessert tables into creative showpieces.

Under the Beverage section, we examine how beverage pricing in India has become a strategic tool that balances consumer perception, market trends, and business needs.

Finally, we delve into the growing influence of matcha, a traditional Japanese green tea, on contemporary baking and how it has emerged as both a health-forward and culturally rich ingredient in patisserie.

In addition to these compelling features, our News, Events, and Reports section provides a rich array of updates, including new product launches and industry movements, ensuring you stay well-informed and engaged with the latest developments.

Rajat Taneja

BAKERY

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Junior Pastry Indian Cup 2025: A Sweet Symphony of Young Talent



The Junior Pastry Indian Cup (JPIC) returns for its much-anticipated 4th edition during IHE Expo 2025, promising two days of artistic brilliance and culinary performance. Set to take place on August 3–4, 2025, at Hall No. 16 – Bakery & Pastry Arena, India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, this national-level pastry competition is a key launchpad for the country's

rising pastry talent.

Organised by Hammer Management & Marketing Services in association with IHE Expo, JPIC 2025 is not just a competition—it's a gateway to the world stage. The winning team will earn the honour of representing India at the Junior Pastry World Cup 2026 in Rimini, Italy, as part of SIGEP World.

This year's theme, "Music & Melody," challenges participants to compose desserts that resonate with rhythm and harmony—both in flavour and form. From edible showpieces to intricate bonbons, every element must reflect this artistic direction.

Competition Format:

- Eight selected teams
- Each team: 2 young pastry chefs (born on or after Jan 20, 2000) + 1 mentor
- Categories include: Dessert in a Glass, Plated Dessert, Entremet, Miniature Pastries, Chocolate Bonbons, and a Sugar or Chocolate Showpiece

Visitors can expect to witness live performances by India's top young pastry professionals, creating everything from plated masterpieces to gravity-defying showpieces. The event also offers an ideal setting to interact with mentors, judges, and pastry educators, while gaining insight into emerging trends and techniques.

Why Attend?

- Discover India's next-gen pastry innovators
- Explore cutting-edge dessert artistry
- Support India's journey to the world pastry stage

JPIC 2025 is where sugar sings, chocolate tells stories, and talent takes flight.

Master Bakers Challenge INDIA 2025 Returns This August



India's premier professional baking contest, the Master Bakers Challenge INDIA 2025, is set to make a grand return on August 5, 2025, at the India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. Organised by Hammer Management & Marketing Services in collaboration with IHE Expo 25, the second edition of this prestigious event promises to showcase the country's finest baking talent.

After the success of its inaugural edition, the 2025 challenge aims to raise the bar with eight shortlisted professional bakers competing in a high-pressure, skill-driven environment. Participants will be required to produce six bakery items—including baguettes, quiches, sweet and savoury breads, fougasse, and bruschetta—within six hours. Products will be judged on technique, flavor, presentation, creativity, and hygiene.

Open exclusively to professional Indian chefs aged 24 and above, currently employed in reputable establishments, the competition emphasizes innovation, excellence, and cultural diversity in baking. The application deadline is July 15, 2025, and early registration is highly recommended due to the contest's selective format.

What sets the Master Bakers Challenge apart is its exclusive focus on bakery craftsmanship, offering a deep dive into dough science, fermentation, and presentation. Contestants will work at individual stations, equipped with top-tier ovens and proofing units, following a pre-briefing session on August 2.

More than a competition, the event is a national platform for professional growth, peer recognition, and networking with culinary experts, food service professionals, and hospitality leaders.

The winner will be crowned "Master Baker 2025", receiving an international trip, advanced training, a trophy and certificate, media coverage, and valuable industry exposure.

For bakers looking to showcase their skills on a national stage, the Master Bakers Challenge INDIA 2025 offers an unmissable opportunity to rise—literally and figuratively.

Together, JPIC and the Master Bakers Challenge embody a shared vision:

To spotlight India's finest baking and pastry talent by promoting excellence, innovation, and professional growth. These twin competitions serve as national platforms to elevate standards, nurture young chefs, and prepare them for global recognition.

Whether you're an aspiring pastry artist, a seasoned baking professional, or simply a connoisseur of culinary artistry, these events at IHE Expo 2025 are unmissable.

For details and entry forms

visit www.masterbakersindia.com or www.jpipastryindiancup.com

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 **POLEN**
FOOD

Kitchen Flame to National Fame: Chef Damu Honoured with Padma Shri

When you think of Tamil cuisine presented with charisma, depth, and dignity on a national platform, one name immediately comes to mind: Chef Damu. Dr. K. Damodharan, popularly known as Chef Damu, currently serving as the President of the South India Chefs Association (SICA), has been recently awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours, for his outstanding contribution in the field of culinary arts. The recognition marks a formal acknowledgment of his decades-long influence on Indian gastronomy, celebrated by food lovers, television audiences, and culinary scholars alike.

Born in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Chef Damu's journey began not in the glare of television lights but in the heat and aroma of traditional Tamil kitchens. Fascinated by the artistry and discipline of cooking, he pursued formal education in hotel management, eventually earning the distinction of becoming the first Indian chef to be awarded a Ph.D. in Hotel Management and Catering Technology.

In 2010, Chef Damu etched his name into the Guinness Book of World Records by cooking 617 dishes weighing over 190 kilograms in 24 hours, 30 minutes, and 12 seconds. This was not just a personal triumph, it was a statement. The world took notice of Indian chefs not just as



kitchen hands but as artists, athletes, and intellectuals. His marathon cooking session was a feat of stamina, creativity, and precision that spotlighted Indian culinary capabilities on an international stage.

"I didn't just want to cook food, I wanted to tell stories, preserve traditions, and push the limits of what a chef could do," Chef Damu once said in an interview. That record-breaking moment was as much about cooking as it was about culture, identity, and pride.

Chef Damu stepped into the teaching profession in 1986 and has headed many hotel management institutes across India.

Renowned for his contributions to culinary education, he has authored numerous research papers and participated in academic conferences, consistently raising the bar for professional kitchen standards. He has lectured at institutions nationwide, mentoring aspiring chefs and advocating for structured culinary education in a country where much of cooking is still passed down informally.

Chef Damu is also well-known for his popular book *Damu's Home Free Style Cook*, which reflects his passion for accessible yet refined home cooking.

Known for his deep-rooted love for Tamil Nadu's culinary heritage, Chef Damu has a special passion for Chettinad cuisine. Demonstrating his dedication to authenticity, he grinds his own masalas and encourages his followers to do the same. Committed to preserving traditional flavors, he travels to the Karaikudi region almost every weekend to collect recipes. "It's one of the few regions in the country that has retained its 2,000-year-old traditions of cooking," he says.

In his humble acceptance of the award, Chef Damu said, "This recognition is not just for me but for every chef, every mother, every grandmother who has kept our food traditions alive."

By honouring him, the nation honours its kitchens, its heritage, and its soul.

Kwality Wall's Unveils 'The Dairy Factory'

In a game-changing move to diversify its offerings, legacy brand Kwality Wall's has launched The Dairy Factory, a range of slow-churned ice creams for elevating the at-home ice cream experience. The Dairy Factory is an ultra-creamy line of ice creams made with real dairy, for a rich texture that lingers with every bite. Available in four popular variants - Vanilla, Butterscotch, Mango, and Chocolate, these party packs and decadent tubs bring the magic of premium ice cream, ready to be enjoyed anytime from nearby stores and quick commerce platforms.

For generations, people have been fascinated by the gastronomic pleasures of handcrafted ice cream. With artisanal expertise and a symphony of extraordinary flavours, The Dairy Factory



celebrates the mastery of slow churning, where patience and precision transform every scoop into a luxurious delight. This new range is crafted with the unique technique of churning ice cream at a much slower pace, which helps in breaking down ice crystals and blending air into the mix. The result? A richer texture and velvety smooth taste that makes you want to slow down and savour every bite.

Made in small batches with fresh milk swirled into a lusciously creamy line of 100% ice cream, enthusiasts can now revel in the euphoria of a timeless dessert from the house of Kwality Wall's. The meticulous slow churning process positions this range as an ideal choice to make any occasion special.

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SCAN TO EXPLORE

Third Wave Coffee Unveils Summer Collection

Third Wave Coffee has launched its limited-time summer menu featuring a range of refreshing beverages and desserts. The seasonal line-up features Bobbles - drinks infused with juicy popping bobas, along with new Mango Treats & Ice Cream - each thoughtfully crafted with a contemporary twist for summers.

This Summer Collection presents 9 new Bobbles, combining refreshing flavors with popping bobas for a zesty, guilt-free treat. Most Bobble beverages are also under 100 calories, a refreshing shift that doesn't compromise on taste. The collection comes as three distinct variants: Bobble Lemonades, available in

Mango, Cranberry Hibiscus, and Lychee Jasmine flavors; Bobble Iced Teas, offering a cooling blend of floral and fruity notes; and Bobble Cold Brews, a sweet-meets-caffeinated combination that delivers a distinctly energizing experience. Available in

Mango, Lychee Jasmine, and Cranberry Hibiscus, Bobble Cold Brews blend the bold richness of coffee with an unexpected twist of tropical fruit and floral infusions. Each variant is crafted to provide a unique flavour experience, allowing customers to choose based on their preferences.

Third Wave Coffee brings back the OG Mango Milkshake - a creamy, rich classic that captures the true spirit of summers



with that rich distinct mango flavour. Customers can also explore the all new Mango Crème Cheesecake and the Mango Velvet Pudding, both offering a modern, flavourful twist on the conventional mango. The menu also features a curated selection of sundaes available at select outlets, for that extra layer of delight. Chocolate-lovers can dig into the Chocolanche Sundae trio, with the Chocolanche Overload Sundae, Messy Vanilla & Chocolanche Sundae, and Blush Chocolanche Sundae. For those craving something rich and nutty, the Nutcracker Brownie Sundae is the perfect pick-me-up treat. If fruity notes are what you seek, the Banana Split Sundae and Sun-Kissed Sundae offer creamy, bright flavours that hit the spot.

Godrej Unveils 8th Edition of Godrej Food Trends Report 2025

Celebrating Seasonality, Sustainability, and Sensory Storytelling in Food

Mumbai witnessed a sensory celebration of Indian culinary heritage as Godrej Industries officially launched the 8th edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report (GFTR) 2025 on 16th March at a special event. Themed 'Seasonality', this year's edition was unveiled through a unique food theatre performance titled Feast for the Future – a powerful blend of storytelling, satire, and sensory drama that explored food as memory, identity, and emotion.

The 128-page edition is a richly illustrated compendium that delves deep into how India is reconnecting with seasonal eating patterns rooted in climate, culture, and consciousness. It captures the insights of over 2,000 food professionals and panelists, gathered through calls, emails, and surveys over the past six months.

Tanya Dubash, Executive Director & Chief Brand Officer, Godrej

Industries Group, remarked,

"GFTR has evolved into a strategic lens through which new products, menus, and food narratives are being shaped. This year's focus on seasonality reflects the growing consumer shift towards authenticity and sustainability."



Curated and edited by Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal, Managing Director of A Perfect Bite Consulting, the report draws inspiration from India's diverse sensory traditions—from saffron fields in Pampore to the Ittar craft of Kannauj. She added,

"The 2025 edition reaffirms that food is more than sustenance—it is storytelling, activism, creativity, and comfort."

The digital edition is available for download on the Vikhroli Cucina, <https://www.vikhrolicucina.com>.

Bakery Review congratulates the team behind GFTR 2025 for crafting yet another insightful and visually stunning roadmap for the Indian food and beverage industry.



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Yummy Bee Unveils Asli Mango 2.0 – Pure Mango Pleasure!

Yummy Bee, India's first café chain dedicated to offering guilt-free indulgence, is proud to launch its much-anticipated Asli Mango 2.0 collection. Crafted with real, authentic mangoes—rather than just flavoring or preservatives—this new offering highlights the true, original taste of mangoes, delivering a fresh, indulgent experience with all-natural ingredients that are sugar-free, gluten-free, and preservative-free.

The Asli Mango 2.0 collection is a celebration of indulgence and tropical flavor, showcasing the bright, juicy notes of original mangoes in every bite. From the signature Mango Pull Me Up Cake, where soft, moist sponge and velvety mango mousse create a stunning, pull-apart experience, to the Mango Tres Leches soaked in pure mango purée with a refreshing tropical twist, each dessert is delicious and offers a guilt-free indulgence.

Savor the Mango Coconut Parfait, with creamy coconut mousse paired with a gluten-free vanilla sponge, or the delightful mini-Mango Pull Me Up Pastry, providing a smaller but equally tasty treat. The Mango Florida Pastry, featuring fresh mangoes, smooth mousse, and edible gold leaf, adds a luxurious element to the collection and delivers pure mango bliss. And for a creamy, refreshing finish, the Mango Cheesecake—crafted with a gluten-free crust—completes this mango-inspired lineup.



Since its inception in 2022, Hyderabad-based café brand Yummy Bee has quickly gained popularity for its health-conscious, guilt-free offerings. Founded by former IT professional and ex-India Under-19 cricketer Sandeep Jangala, the brand combines nutrition with indulgence. With expansion plans into Mumbai and Bengaluru by 2025, Yummy Bee aims to redefine café culture in India.

First Coffee Brews Big with 10 Outlets



For coffee aficionados, First Coffee isn't just a café - it's a revolution reshaping how India experiences specialty coffee. Catering to the modern coffee aficionado, First Coffee makes single-origin, 91 SCA-rated specialty coffee accessible, affordable, and effortless. With its grab-and-go format, edgy street-style vibe, and a menu featuring coffee mixology, boba, and matcha, First Coffee is setting a bold new norm. The brand has a simple belief that great coffee shouldn't be a luxury; it should be part of everyday culture.

India's coffee culture is undergoing a seismic shift, and First

Coffee is leading the charge. While traditional coffee chains rely heavily on ambiance or convenience, First Coffee fuses both - delivering fast, consistent, and superior-quality coffee tailored for the modern, on-the-move lifestyle. Every cup is crafted from 100% Arabica beans sourced from the Harley Estate, a micro-lot, single-origin farm committed to sustainability. Using natural lake irrigation, no chemicals, and renewable hydro and solar energy, First Coffee guarantees that your coffee is good for the planet too.

"At First Coffee, we're transforming how India embraces specialty coffee. Our vision is to make top-quality, single-origin coffee a simple part of daily life, something you grab without overthinking, without overpaying, and without waiting. Expanding to 10 outlets is just the beginning. We're here to build a culture around coffee that's bold, fast, and rooted in today's vibe," says Shiv Dhawan, Co-Founder of First Coffee.

"This is just the beginning," says Sohrab Sitaram, Co-Founder of First Coffee. "With 15 stores projected by the end of this quarter, 25 by the next, and an ambitious 100 outlets by FY26, we are set to redefine the coffee experience across the country."

First Coffee, is expanding rapidly, aiming to make premium coffee an everyday experience by blending quality with accessibility—ushering in a new era of inclusive, daily coffee culture across the country.

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Costa Coffee Eyes India Among Top 5 Global Markets

British coffeehouse giant Costa Coffee, owned by beverage major Coca-Cola, is significantly strengthening its footprint in India with the ambition to position the country among its top five global markets. As part of its aggressive growth plan, the brand is adding nearly 50 new outlets annually in the country.

India currently ranks among Costa Coffee's top 20 international markets, but that position is poised to improve. "India is an important market for us, especially with a fast-growing segment of consumers willing to pay a premium for specialty coffee," said Philippe Schaillee, Global CEO of Costa Coffee. He highlighted that while the premium coffee-drinking base in India is still under 50 million, it is expanding rapidly in double digits.

The chain operates in India through its long-standing franchise partner Devyani International Ltd (DIL), which is celebrating

20 years of collaboration with Costa Coffee. With over 200 operational stores, the brand continues to focus on key metro cities, prioritizing strategic locations like shopping malls, high streets, and highway rest stops. India is also the second country after the UK to introduce Costa Coffee's revamped



store design, featuring vibrant interiors and enhanced digital touchpoints for a contemporary café experience.

Schaillee emphasized the company's commitment to "quality over quantity" in its expansion strategy. "We're playing the long game.

Growth will be consistent, sustainable, and aligned with market demand," he noted.

In India's highly competitive café landscape, Costa Coffee faces strong rivals including Starbucks, Tim Hortons, McCafé,



and Dunkin', along with prominent Indian chains such as Café Coffee Day, Third Wave Coffee, Blue Tokai, and Barista. However, the brand views competition positively, citing global trends where the presence of specialty coffee players in tea-dominated markets has helped grow the category.

According to DIL's FY24 annual report, Costa Coffee India posted ₹151.8 crore in operational revenue, marking a 49% increase over the previous year.

Costa Coffee's expanding presence and consumer-focused innovations are positioning it as a major player in India's evolving café culture.

Le Café by L'Opéra Opens at Le Marché, Delhi

L'Opéra, the benchmark for French bakery and pastry excellence in India, has launched Le Café—a thoughtfully curated café experience now open inside Le Marché, Delhi's long-standing gourmet destination.

Conceived as an elegant extension of L'Opéra's identity, Le Café invites guests into a space that balances charm with functionality. It offers a dual-purpose experience: a refined dine-in setting and an efficient takeaway concept, both designed around the evolving preferences of urban consumers.

The café's culinary direction highlights



L'Opéra's evolving repertoire—from French onion soup and airy omelettes to truffle-filled pastas and wholesome salads. Each dish is handcrafted on-site, showcasing skill, flavour layering, and ingredient integrity.

Bakery professionals will particularly note the integration of comfort classics with modern French fare, setting a new benchmark in mid-format café menus.

The patisserie continues to be a focal point with elegant presentations of both traditional favourites and new creations. Standouts include the Truffle & Hazelnut Éclair and the Red Daisy viennoise, while the bread range features everything from milk breads and whole grain loaves to artisanal fougasse and gluten-free varieties.

Beyond the menu, Le Café emphasizes conscious sourcing, offering organic and locally-sourced ingredients where possible.



Dietary inclusivity is built in—with vegetarian, protein-rich, and vegan options under development.

The café's interiors reflect Parisian warmth with contemporary simplicity, designed to enhance both lingering visits and quick coffee stops. Select Le Café products are also available for retail at Le Marché, allowing guests to bring home a piece of the experience.

Le Café represents a natural progression for L'Opéra—bringing craftsmanship, convenience, and French flair into one cohesive format for India's growing gourmet audience.

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In Memoriam

Shri Rajendra Prasad Mittal Founder, Mittal International



With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Shri Rajendra Prasad Mittal, the visionary founder of Mittal International and a pioneering figure in the Indian hospitality industry.

Shri Mittal played a transformative role in modernizing commercial kitchens across India by introducing world-class commercial kitchen equipment. Under his leadership, Mittal International became a trusted conduit for bringing globally renowned brands to the Indian hospitality market, which raised the

standards of professional culinary infrastructure.

Founded in 1968 by Shri Rajendra Prasad Mittal, the company made a landmark contribution in 1981 by importing and supplying commercial kitchen equipment to India, an initiative that redefined the operational landscape of hotels, restaurants, and institutional kitchens nationwide.

Beyond his entrepreneurial accomplishments, Shri Rajendra Prasad Mittal was a dedicated and respected industry leader. He was a founding member of the ARCHII Association and served with distinction as president of the All India Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Association (AIACRA) for six terms between 2004 and 2023. His leadership was marked by visionary thinking, strategic foresight, and an unwavering dedication to the growth and development of the industry.

His contributions to the Indian hospitality and refrigeration industry will be remembered with immense respect and gratitude.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones during this time of profound loss. May his noble soul attain eternal peace.

FSSAI Guidelines for Recycled PET in Food Contact

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has issued guidelines regulating the use of recycled Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) as Food Contact Material (FCM-rPET).

These guidelines, effective from May, 2025, specifically address the transformation of post-consumer food-grade PET into FCM-rPET resins suitable for food contact applications.

These rules aim to ensure that recycled plastics used in PET bottles meet stringent safety standards and promote sustainability across the sector.

Under the new framework, only r-PET produced through FSSAI approved decontamination processes will be allowed for food contact materials.

Importantly, conventional recycling methods that lack proper decontamination have been prohibited, as per the guidelines.

In addition, to enhance consumer awareness and transparency, packaging made from food-grade recycled PET must now carry a distinct logo, along with a declaration indicating the percentage of recycled PET used.

FHRAI 2025 Convention Set for Bengaluru



The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), the apex body of the Indian hospitality industry, is set to host its 55th Annual Convention from 12th to 14th September 2025 in

Bengaluru, Karnataka. Recognised as India's largest business and networking platform for the tourism and hospitality sector, the three-day Convention promises to be a landmark event.

This year's Convention is expected to draw over 1,200 key stakeholders, including policymakers, hospitality leaders, entrepreneurs, industry experts, and academicians. With last year's theme being 'Tourism@2047: Incredible to Inevitable India,' the 55th Convention also aims to build on that foundation by exploring emerging trends, innovations, and collaborative pathways to shape a more resilient and future-ready hospitality ecosystem.

The FHRAI Annual Convention has long served as a vital

platform for industry dialogue and collaboration, facilitating the exchange of ideas and actionable strategies to enhance the Indian hospitality sector.

Speaking about the upcoming event, Mr. K. Syama Raju, President of FHRAI, said, "The 55th FHRAI Convention is an opportunity to build a roadmap for resilient, inclusive, and eco-conscious hospitality growth in India. Bengaluru, with its global appeal and commitment to innovation, serves as the perfect backdrop for these crucial conversations. We look forward to welcoming industry leaders and changemakers who are shaping the future of tourism and hospitality."

The Bengaluru Convention will feature panel discussions, keynote sessions, technical presentations, and interactive forums, all focused on sustainability, innovation, and strategic growth. With participation numbers rising year on year, over 800 delegates attended the last edition, the 2025 Convention promises even greater momentum and impact.

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Gauri Upanlawar Joins IFFCO Group as Regional Marketing Lead – Asia



IFFCO Group has appointed Gauri Upanlawar as the Regional Marketing Lead- Asia, with a focus on spearheading marketing operations in India. With over eight years of experience in brand management and product marketing, Gauri brings a strategic and consumer-centric approach to the dynamic Indian FMCG and bakery landscape.

Her professional journey began with Value4u, where she played a pivotal role in shaping 360-degree marketing campaigns across the snacks and namkeen category, blending ATL, BTL, and digital initiatives to boost consumer engagement and loyalty. She later joined Bakels India, where she played a key role in driving marketing initiatives for bakery ingredients and solutions. At Bakels, she collaborated with cross-functional teams to lead innovative product launches and develop market-specific strategies that addressed local consumer needs. Her efforts contributed in optimizing marketing spends, improved brand visibility, and identifying unmet consumer needs that shaped new product development.

Gauri's strength lies in her ability to connect data-driven insights with creative storytelling. Whether leading digital transformation, managing high-impact campaigns, or launching performance-driven portfolios, she has consistently delivered strong business outcomes.

At IFFCO, she now aims to channel her experience into shaping the bakery portfolio in India, focusing on innovation, market relevance, and sustainable growth in one of the world's most vibrant and evolving bakery sectors.

Chef Hemant Aswal

Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt, has announced the appointment of Hemant Aswal as its new Executive Pastry Chef. With over two decades of experience in luxury hospitality, Chef Aswal is known for his refined techniques, creative flair, and dedication to pastry excellence.

Aswal holds a diploma in Bakery and Confectionery from IHM Faridabad (PUSA) and began his career with an industrial training stint at Jaypee Palace, Agra. Over the past 20 years, he has been associated with India's leading hospitality brands, including The Imperial Janpath, The Lalit New Delhi, Crowne Plaza Mayur Vihar, Hilton Janakpuri, and most recently, Eros Hotel, Nehru Place, where he served as Pastry Chef.

Aswal's expertise spans bakery, confectionery, event catering, and menu development. He is widely recognised for his innovative creations, artistic pastry showpieces, and his commitment to delivering exceptional quality while optimising food cost and production efficiency. His leadership style has been marked by a passion for mentorship, team development, and maintaining the highest standards of kitchen hygiene and operations.

With this appointment, Andaz Delhi is set to enhance its dessert offerings as Chef Hemant Aswal brings his creative flair and craftsmanship. His arrival marks a delicious new chapter in Andaz Delhi's culinary journey.



Chef Sujit Gomes

Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel and Convention Center has announced the appointment of Chef Sujit Antony Gomes as its new Executive Pastry Chef.

Bringing over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Chef Sujit takes on his new role with a focus on leading the hotel's pastry division, introducing innovative concepts, and maintaining the highest standards of food safety and quality.

Chef Sujit's career spans several esteemed hospitality brands, including J.W. Marriott Goa, Courtyard by Marriott Gorakhpur (Pre-Opening Task Force), J.W. Marriott Mussoorie, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Maldives, InterContinental Abu Dhabi, J.W. Marriott Hotel Dubai, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa in Kuwait, and The Oberoi Group.

Over the course of his career, Chef Sujit has earned numerous industry accolades, including 'Manager of the Month' at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, the 'Best Performer Award' at The Oberoi Grand, a Gold Medal in the Wedding Cake category at the HORECA Culinary Competition, and top honours in Fret Work at the West Bengal competition.

In his current role, Chef Sujit will oversee all pastry-related operations at Sheraton Grand Bengaluru, focusing on innovation in desserts, refining patisserie techniques, and maintaining high standards in food preparation and hygiene. His appointment supports the hotel's ongoing efforts to strengthen its culinary team and reinforce its positioning in Bengaluru's hospitality landscape.





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It Takes Coffee to Wake up Your Taste Buds

Coffee consumption has been increasing over the years. It is no more an invitation for a cup of tea, but a cup of coffee - particularly among the young and young-at-heart. A recent BBC report indicated that over 44% of the Indian population included coffee in their daily routine. While tea still remains a dominant beverage in India, coffee is steadily becoming the preferred drink with the younger population, Ashok Malkani takes a look at the growing coffee scenario in the country and how technology and automation have helped in the evolution of coffee in the country.





Tea, a dominant beverage in India, is witnessing a slow but steady competition from coffee. According to a survey, conducted by the Tea Board of India, 63 % reported consuming tea. A significant percentage of the population, roughly 64%, are tea drinkers. Additionally, 88% of households in India consume tea. A survey by the Tea Board of India found that tea is highly penetrated in India, with 63% of respondents reporting consumption. 62 per cent of Indians still prefer tea. However, coffee consumption, particularly in urban areas, is gaining popularity as a hot beverage. This is being attributed to the rise in number of coffee cafés and the increasing disposable income. Younger generations, particularly millennials and Gen Z, seeking diverse flavours, are patronizing the increasing cafes who are expanding their menus by incorporating specialty coffee options and creating “hang out” zones in urban areas. With over 65% of the coffee shop visitors, who belong to the millennial and Gen Z demographics, no longer considering cafes as a place to grab a quick cup of coffee but a space for socializing and experiencing local culture, this increase in café culture is not

only evident in major cities but also in tier II and tier III cities where consumption of coffee is increasing and expected to double by 2030, with specialty coffee playing a significant role in its growth.

Today coffee has become so popular with the younger generation that we do not only celebrate National Coffee Day but we also have India International Coffee Festival (IICF), organised by the Specialty Coffee Association of India (SCAI) with support



DM Purnesh

from the Coffee Board of India, which is being celebrated from April 25-27 this year at Bangalore. The festival aims to bring together India’s top brewers, baristas, coffee connoisseurs, and home brewers to celebrate everything coffee – from skills and innovation to latte art, beans, and brewing equipment. DM Purnesh, President, Specialty Coffee Association of India (SCAI) says “The inaugural India International Coffee Festival was a landmark event that successfully brought together all key stakeholders of the coffee industry. The enthusiastic participation and positive feedback underscore the growing importance of India’s specialty coffee sector and the need to institutionalize this festival as an annual industry platform.”

The days of instant coffee are fading. The country is in the middle of a coffee boom. The evolution of coffee has been inspiring. Karreena Bulchandani, Founder of Mokai, a Japanese-inspired Mumbai-based all-day diner and coffeehouse, reveals that although the global average coffee consumption is 200 cups per person annually, India lags with just 30 cups per person. There is thus an immense growth potential for the market to grow.



The popularity of coffee is on an upward path. It is no longer seen as a morning energiser or an afternoon pick-me-up; it's evolving into a lifestyle choice. Millennials and Gen Z are, with their zest to experience something new, driving a shift towards specialty coffee, high-quality beans and experimenting with different roast levels to find their perfect cup. This shift towards quality and experimentation is rooted in a movement that began years ago with the efforts of pioneering growers.

According to DM Purnesh, "The specialty coffee movement in India began nearly two decades ago, initiated by a few visionary coffee growers who started producing high-quality Indian specialty coffee. Over time, this initiative has evolved into a vibrant culture. Today, many specialty coffee producers across the country are cultivating exceptional micro-lots, which are being appreciated and enjoyed in specialty cafés nationwide."

In India a wide variety of coffee drinks are imbibed. Some popular options include filter coffee, tandoori coffee, and various espresso-based beverages like cappuccinos, lattes, and mochas.

Coffee Drink Types

There are various types of coffee drinks available in India. Some of the traditional Indian coffee drinks are:

South Indian Filter Coffee: known for its strong and smooth flavor, it is made from hot milk and sugar with infusion obtained

by percolation brewing of finely ground coffee powder in a special filter (aka filter coffee pot). It's a popular choice in South India, particularly in states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.



Tandoori Coffee: Inspired by the traditional Tandoori Chai, it's made by pouring hot brewed coffee into a clay pot or kulhad heated in a tandoor. This gives it a smoky flavor.

'Phitti Hui' Coffee or Hand-Beaten Coffee: is creamy and frothy and super simple to make at home. Using instant coffee, a sweetener, full milk and water, you could also add whatever variation of flavorings you want.

Black Ginger Coffee: Popular in Tamil Nadu, this revolutionary instant coffee Mix with Black Ginger Extract is specifically designed for men's health and for boosting men's hormones.

Karupatti Coffee: This South Indian drink combines strong coffee with the natural sweetness of palm jaggery, called karupatti.

The growing popularity of international coffee styles such as cappuccino, latte, espresso, flat white, and cold brew reflects the evolving taste preferences of Indian coffee consumers. What was once a predominantly filter coffee culture is now expanding to embrace global coffee traditions, driven largely by urban café culture and the younger generation's adventurous palate. Interestingly, niche varieties like Vietnamese coffee, with its distinctive sweetened condensed milk, and rich, spiced Turkish coffee are also finding their place among India's coffee enthusiasts. This diverse coffee landscape not only broadens consumer choices but also encourages local cafés and baristas to innovate and experiment, contributing to a richer and more vibrant coffee culture across the country.

Some of these types are:

Espresso: A strong, concentrated coffee that showcases the pure flavor of coffee beans. It is a simple, yet bold drink loved by coffee lovers around the world. Having a rich, intense flavor that is bold and full-bodied, offering a strong coffee experience, it is made by forcing hot water through finely-ground coffee beans, creating a small but strong shot of coffee.

Cappuccino: This most popular coffee drink in the world, is the preferred drink in 24 countries. It is one espresso shot mixed with steamed milk and foam. The foam is created by frothing up milk using pressurized steam.

Mocha Coffee: a delicious drink that combines the bold flavor of coffee with the rich taste of chocolate. It is made by mixing espresso with steamed milk and adding chocolate or cocoa, creating a smooth and indulgent drink. Inspired by the rich coffee culture of Yemen, where it was first made, it has a sweet, creamy flavour.

Latte Coffee: Made by combining a shot of espresso with steamed milk, then topping it with a small amount of foam, it has a mild, creamy flavor with a balanced taste of coffee and milk. Originating in Italy, where it became popular for its smooth, creamy texture. It's now a favorite coffee drink worldwide.

Macchiato Coffee: Originating in Italy and becoming quickly popular worldwide,

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it is a simple and bold drink made with espresso and a small amount of foamed milk, creating a balanced and strong flavor.

Americano: This Espresso, also called caffè Americano, is made by diluting espresso with water (either hot or cold water). It is believed to have been invented in Italy or Spain after World War II, when American soldiers stationed there.

Frappe Coffee: is a cold, frothy coffee drink, made by blending or shaking ice, espresso, and milk, then topping it with whipped cream. originated in Greece and quickly became popular across Europe.

Café au Lait: Made by mixing brewed coffee and steamed milk in a 1:1 ratio, it has a smooth, rich taste with the warmth of milk and the boldness of coffee. Originating in France, it has been enjoyed since the 1700s. It is especially popular in New Orleans, where it is sometimes flavored with chicory for a smoky taste.

Top Coffee Producing States in India

India, known for its different coffee plantations and unique flavor profiles from different regions is considered as one of the top coffee-producing countries in the world.

Coffee plantation in India is not just treated as a crop, but as a currency. With rising domestic consumption and strong global demand, coffee cultivation has emerged as a lucrative business opportunity. Coffee has a long-standing legacy in India, dating back to the 17th

century when it was first introduced in the hills of Karnataka, making it not just a commercial activity, but a deeply rooted cultural and generational enterprise. Today, India primarily grows Arabica and Robusta varieties using traditional shade-grown methods in regions like Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, which help preserve biodiversity while enhancing flavor profiles.

This renewed growth is being driven by a combination of global supply chain disturbances, especially from Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer, a weakened rupee that boosts export competitiveness, and a rising café culture within the country. Encouragingly, the younger generation of planter families is returning to the fold, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and innovation. They are investing in modern techniques such as drip irrigation, mechanized processes, and replanting of shade trees to ensure long-term productivity and ecological balance.

So which are the top ten coffee-producing states in India, and what distinguishes the flavor and character of coffee from each region? The top ten can be named thus...

1. Karnataka: 71% of the country's coffee output comes from Karnataka's Western Ghats, Chikmagalur, Coorg, (now known as Kodagu), and Hassan regions. The state's weather and altitude provide perfect conditions for growing Arabica and Robusta coffee varieties. Robusta beans are often in demand for use in espresso blends and instant coffee, making Karnataka the

first most important player in domestic and international coffee markets.

2. Kerala: This holds the second most coffee producing state in the cultivation of Robusta beans. Wayanad district is famous for its high-quality Robusta beans which have full-bodied flavour and low level of acidity. Wayanad coffee produces high-quality Robusta beans, which are widely known for their full-bodied flavor and low level of acidity. This coffee is commonly used in espresso blends.

3. Tamil Nadu: which produces around 5 % of Arabica and Robusta coffee beans in its Nilgiri Hills, Yercaud, Kodaikanal, Shevaroy Hills.

4. Andhra Pradesh: one of the most sensational new coffee regions in India it holds the fourth position in coffee producing states in India. Araku valley, located in the Eastern Ghats in the state, is one of the new coffee regions in India producing high-quality organic Arabica coffee.

5. Odisha: Karapur in Odisha, produces about 2% of Arabica coffee having mild and balanced flavor profile.

6. Assam: mainly known for its tea cultivation has moved into coffee cultivation and Cachar district in the State, with its unique soil and climatic conditions has moved into coffee cultivation. Providing opportunities for local farmers and supporting the growing Indian coffee industry. It produces less than 1% of the coffee.

7. Tripura: In its North Tripura, Gomati region small but growing share in Arabica and Robusta Varieties. Coffee farming here is still in its early phase, but the growth possibility is quite.

8. Nagaland: Mon, Mokokchung region in the State has emerged as one of the coffee cultivation states. The hilly terrains and tropical climate provide it with a perfect environment for producing Arabica coffee.

9. Manipur: Another northeastern state, is making a steady progress in cultivating organic coffee in the high-altitude regions of Ukhrul, Senapati.

10. Meghalaya: Due to its cold weather and altitude, which are beneficial conditions for coffee cultivation is, in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills regions, producing

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coffee beans having fruity flavor with a slight taste of citrus and chocolate.

Looking at all the coffee beans produced in the country one says that the major seeds produced are Robusta is the most common variety however it is Arabica which commands a higher price in the market.

This is primarily due to differences in quality, cultivation requirements, and global demand. Arabica is known for its smooth, mild flavor with subtle acidity and aromatic complexity, making it more desirable for premium and specialty coffee blends. In contrast, Robusta has a stronger, bitterer taste and higher caffeine content, which is often preferred for instant coffee or espresso blends but is considered less refined. Arabica plants are more delicate, requiring specific altitude, temperature, and care, which makes cultivation costlier and yields lower compared to the hardier Robusta plant. This combination of higher cultivation costs and strong demand, both globally and among quality-conscious Indian consumers, pushes Arabica prices higher. Moreover, India produces a larger volume of Robusta, especially in states like Karnataka and Kerala, contributing to its relatively

lower market price due to greater supply.

Health Benefits

With increasing popularity of coffee, particularly among the younger generation, there is concern about health problems. There is belief that caffeine can cause health problems. But it can do so only if it is taken in excess. Limited amount of caffeine (contained in 2-5 cups of coffee per day) can, in fact, be beneficial. Consumption of limited amount of coffee is linked to various health benefits, including potentially reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and even improved longevity.

Several recent researches suggest that coffee offers a host of potential health benefits. An analysis of nearly 220 studies on coffee, published in the BMJ as early as 2017, found that coffee drinkers may enjoy more overall health benefits than people who don't drink coffee. The analysis found that during the study period, coffee drinkers were 17% less likely to die early from any cause, 19% less likely to die of heart disease and 18% less likely to develop cancer than those who don't drink coffee.

A number of studies have suggested that consuming caffeine can reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. A study published in the American Academy of Neurology showed that a daily dose of caffeine equivalent found in two eight-ounce cups of black coffee can help to control the involuntary movements of people who already have the disease. (You'd have to drink nearly eight cups of brewed black tea to get the same amount of caffeine.)

Some studies suggest that caffeine may help improve cognitive function and memory.

Coffee has also been associated with improved insulin sensitivity, which can help regulate blood sugar levels and lower the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Studies have also found that coffee consumption may be linked to a reduced risk of liver disease.

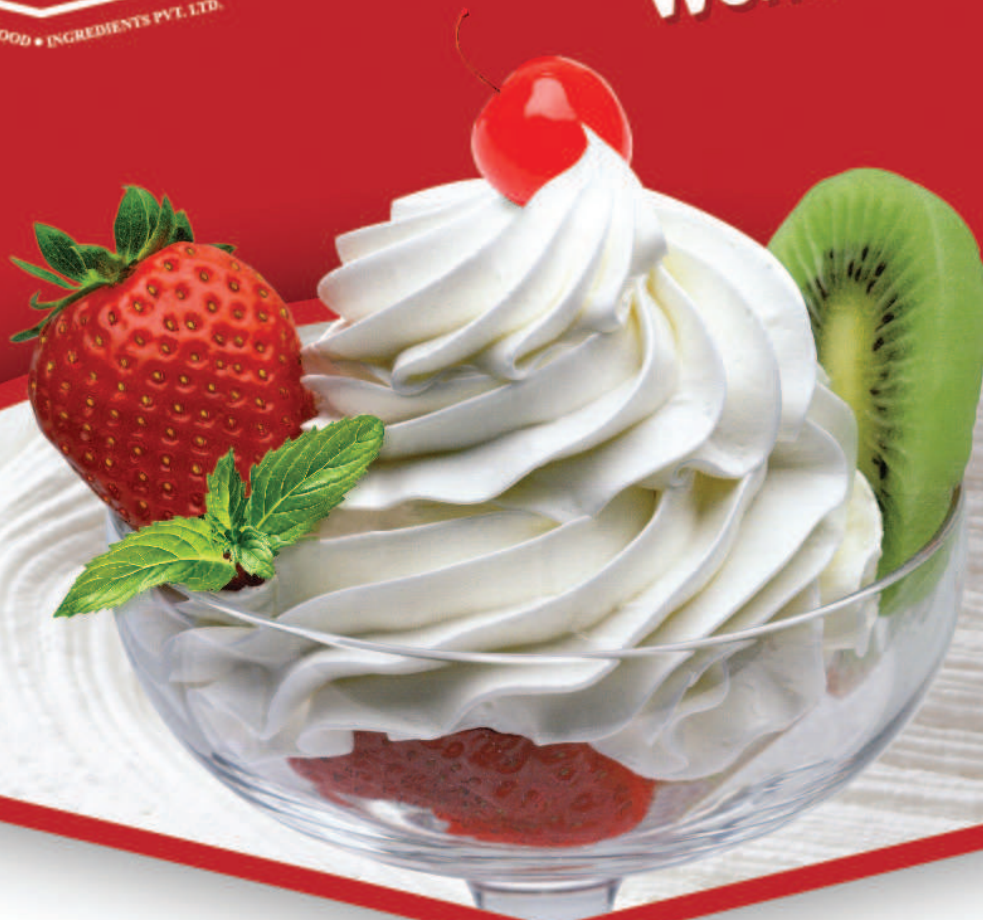
Some studies suggest that coffee may have a protective effect against certain cancers, including those of the mouth, throat, and digestive system.

Research indicates that coffee consumption may be associated with lower

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rates of depression.

Some studies suggest that coffee may help to protect against melanoma, a type of skin cancer.

Technology & Automation

As in all other industries, technology and automation equipment has stepped to aid in the progress of the industry. In the case of coffee, these two segments of science have attempted to make this beverage more enticing and deliciously exciting.

Technology has enabled coffee to become popular from the bean stage onwards. Technology significantly enhances coffee bean growth by enabling precise monitoring of growing conditions, optimizing resource usage, and improving overall production efficiency. With the aid of technology, including GPS technology, drones, and sensors the farmer is able to data on soil, weather, and crop health, allowing for data-driven decisions on irrigation, fertilization, and pest control.

Technology allows for precise monitoring of temperature, humidity, and soil conditions, optimizing growing conditions for healthier plants. It also helps farmers in reducing water wastage and reducing fertilizer consumption. Automation in harvesting and processing can reduce labor costs and improve efficiency.

Other technologies which aid the farmers are Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence and Ultrasonic Processing.

But technology is not just helping the farmers get better crops of coffee beans but it is helping the progress of the entire industry.

For this there is need for specialised equipment. Cafes and coffee shops



have thus to use these equipment's to satiate the customers' on both the fronts: taste and service. Equipment is crucial for coffee shops as it enables them to prepare and serve quality coffee efficiently and consistently, while also supporting other aspects of their business, like food preparation and storage. It is essential to buy the equipment for efficient operations. A well-equipped coffee setup typically includes a range of tools, from espresso machines and grinders to milk frothers, brewing scales, and precision tampers. These specialized machines and accessories help baristas maintain consistency, improve speed, and deliver a premium coffee experience with every cup.

Some of the specialised equipment's that are essential are:

Espresso Machine: The heart of any coffee shop, used to brew rich, concentrated espresso shots. Available in manual, semi-automatic, and fully automatic models.

Coffee grinder: This would enable you to serve freshest coffee possible. Investing in the right grinder can make all the difference in the flavor profiles and the aroma of your coffee or espresso.

Milk Frother or Steam Wand: This is a must for creating velvety, creamy milk for lattes, cappuccinos, and other espresso-based drinks. You must choose a steam wand that integrates seamlessly with your espresso machine.

French Press: Used for serving individual or small group orders, offering customers a unique brewing experience. It is perfect for crafting rich, full-bodied coffee. It works by steeping coarse coffee grounds in hot water and then pressing them through a mesh filter.

Cold Brew Coffee Maker: The demand for this has surged due to increased demand for this beverage which is smooth and less acidic. These devices are designed to steep coffee grounds in cold water for extended periods, usually between 12 and 24 hours.

Pitcher Rinser: This ensures that even during peak hours the milk frothing pitchers are cleaned quickly and efficiently between uses.

Automatic drip coffee makers: A standard black coffee will account for a good portion of your store's sales thus this is an essential item.

Refrigeration Unit: For storing milk, cream, and perishable ingredients safely and within easy reach of the barista station.

Water boiler: This is necessary for consistent water supply which is important for making Americanos. Using a water boiler not only helps relieve your espresso machine for hot water, relieving for other purposes.

Batch brewer: This is necessary for brewing large quantities of coffee at once, when needed. It is ideal for busy period. It enhances your coffee shop's ability to serve large volumes quickly.

POS system and website: A POS system not only rings up your sales but it can also help you keep track of your inventory, monitor your business's analytics and profits.

Conclusion

Coffee in India has evolved from an urban niche beverage to a nationwide phenomenon, particularly popular among Millennials and Gen Z. This rising trend is now clearly visible even in tier II and tier III cities, signaling a vibrant and expanding coffee culture across the country. With continuous advancements in cultivation, technology, and consumer experience, the future of the Indian coffee industry looks both promising and dynamic. ■



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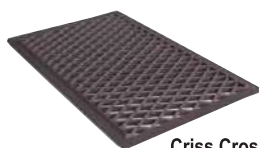
Grill Tray



Griddle Tray



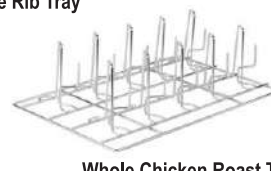
Spare Rib Tray



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Tandoori Skewers



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S.S Idli Tray



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The Business of Baking

Bakery products have always been popular. From cakes and cookies to buns and bread. Special occasions have always been celebrated with cakes. And breads have been a staple food for breakfast and even, at times, for lunch or dinner. The market for bakery products has always been rising. According to IMARC the Indian bakery market reached \$ 13.8 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach \$31.5 billion by 2033, exhibiting a growth rate of 9.12% during 2025-2033. The increasing demand for bakery products, especially after the pandemic, is making several enterprisers plan on venturing into bakery business. **Ashok Malkani** views the various aspects of bakery business and delves on some of the traits for making the business a successful venture.

Bakery products continue to win hearts across demographics, driven by evolving tastes and growing consumer demand. From indulgent treats like cakes, cookies, and pastries that cater to those with a sweet tooth, to artisan breads handcrafted using traditional techniques, the diversity of offerings is expanding rapidly.

Artisan breads, in particular, have carved a niche for themselves in the market. Their unique flavors and textures, developed through time-honored methods, are increasingly drawing health-conscious consumers seeking wholesome alternatives.

While bakery products have always enjoyed popularity, the pandemic brought a shift in perception, positioning them as viable, sometimes even healthy, food choices. This trend has persisted, with consumers continuing to embrace bakery items as part of their everyday diets. With innovation and tradition walking hand in hand, the bakery business is rising as a dynamic and adaptable player in the



evolving food landscape.

Feasibility study for bakery business in India states that Indian bakery segment is poised for a significant growth. The surge can be attributed to the rising disposable income, D2C (direct to customers) platforms, increase in growth of e-commerce and the consumers' preference for packaged goods.

The result is the bakery market is, driven by factors like urbanization and changing consumer preferences, experiencing a significant growth. It is projected to reach \$31.5 billion by 2033, with a CAGR of 19.12% between 2025 and 2033.

The market, which was valued at \$12.6 billion in 2023, is expected to reach \$

29.4 billion by 2032, growing at a CAGR of 9.9%. As per Statista, the market is projected to reach 268.10 billion kg in volume by 2029. Average per capita consumption is anticipated to be 161.8 kg in 2025.

The steady rise in demand and promising growth projections have attracted many entrepreneurs to venture into the bakery business. However, it is essential to recognize that entering this industry requires more than just enthusiasm. Prospective business owners must navigate a landscape of regulatory compliance, licensing norms, food safety standards, and operational complexities.

Beyond adhering to rules and regulations, understanding the nuances of supply chains, sourcing quality ingredients, and managing skilled labor are equally crucial. Moreover, maintaining cost-efficiency and optimizing operational economies are critical to ensuring long-term profitability. Sustaining these efficiencies consistently is a key challenge that can make or break a bakery venture.



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Business Models

The initial investment required to start a bakery largely depends on two key factors: the location of the venture and the type of bakery model you want to set up. Broadly, bakeries can operate under three formats, retail, wholesale, or a combination of both.

Each format comes with its own investment needs, infrastructure requirements, and operational challenges. Choosing the right model depends on the entrepreneur's vision, target market, and available resources.

Entering the bakery business in India typically requires an initial investment starting from ₹5 lakhs, with no fixed upper limit.

A home-based bakery can generally be launched with an investment of ₹5–10 lakhs, making it a suitable option for small-scale entrepreneurs or those looking to start modestly. In contrast, setting up a commercial bakery, equipped with professional-grade infrastructure, and staff, may require minimum ₹25 lakhs or more.

Key factors influencing investment include the size of the establishment, the variety of products offered, and whether the business follows a retail, wholesale, or hybrid model.

Pricing Strategy

To achieve profitability, one has to price the product at a competitive price. This can make or break you in a short span of time. The cost of ingredients and the quality of the product is one of the main considerations that one has to contemplate on. Superior ingredients used in the production of cakes or pastries should reflect on the prices of



Raminder Pal Singh Bakshi

those products. You must also be aware of the price list of other local bakeries. Higher prices than local bakeries would discourage customers from venturing into your bakery.

Davinder Nagpal, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Total Bakery Solutions avers, "The ideal food cost percentage typically ranges between 25% to 35% of revenue. To manage price volatility, consider strategies such as supplier diversification, sustainable and alternative ingredient sourcing, financial hedging and long-term contracts, and improving cost efficiency through process optimization. Additionally, regularly track inventory, reduce food waste, adjust menu prices strategically, and negotiate better terms with suppliers."

Raminder Pal Singh Bakshi, Bakery & Culinary Consultant & Start-up Specialist stresses, "In a bakery business, the ingredient cost typically accounts for 25% to 35% of monthly revenue. This is often referred to as Cost of Goods Sold (COGS). Thus the price tag would vary according to the ingredients used in the

product."

He explains thus:

What percentage of revenue goes into ingredient costs monthly, and how to manage price volatility?

Managing Ingredient Price Volatility

Here are some practical strategies you can use to protect your margins:

- Vendor Contracts & Price Locks
- Weekly Price Monitoring
- Standardized Recipes & Portion Control

- Recipe Engineering
- Inventory Management
- Menu Engineering

It is generally believed that that Baking margins depend on the type of products that are sold by the bakery, but normally most of the bakeries in India are successful in achieving the margin ranging between 20-40 per cent.

Profit Margins

There are several products in a bakery and each of them have a different market. It is, therefore, advisable to stock up your shelves with both: necessary everyday foods, and those extra foods that people sometimes like to pamper themselves with. The most important thing that needs to be remembered is that shelves must be lined with various products. Diversity should be your watchword.

The diverse items available on the shelves should be:

Bread and biscuits: These are products that you can count on seeing in every customer's food list, every day.

Cakes and pastries: are a few examples of chance products where one may generate more revenues.

Specialty items: Such as gluten-free, vegan, or sugar-free maybe other items on the lists of those looking for healthier diets.

So how does one price a product like a croissant or a cake slice?

Davinder Nagpal disclosed, "To price items like a croissant or cake slice, bakeries typically use a cost-plus pricing formula: Selling Price = (Total Cost per Unit × Markup Percentage). Total cost includes ingredients, labour, packaging, and overheads. A common markup is 2.5x to 3x the cost, ensuring profitability

Key Factors That Affect Ingredient Cost %

Factor	Impact on Cost
Type of bakery (artisan vs. commercial)	Artisan uses higher-quality, costlier inputs
Product mix (bread vs. pastries vs. cakes)	Cakes and filled items have higher ingredient costs
Locality & rent (indirectly)	Impacts how tight you run margins
Portion & recipe control	Critical for managing wastage
Price volatility (flour, butter, eggs)	Direct impact on COGS unless well-hedged

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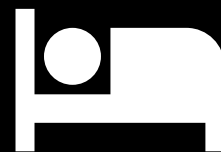
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while staying competitive and aligned with market demand.”

Pricing Strategy

To run a bakery profitably it is essential to have proper pricing policy. Improper pricing can make or break your business in a short span of time. For running the business profitably a proper pricing policy is essential.

Without proper pricing you can break the business within a short time. To be successful one has to keep the following in mind. They are:

Cost of ingredients: You have to keep of cost of ingredients in mind while coming to the selling price. Superior ingredients used in the production of cakes or pastries should reflect on the prices of those products.

Competition: You should be aware of the price list of other local bakeries. Your prices have to compete with those of the neighbouring ones otherwise they will gain the upper hand.

Audience: To the superior customers, prices for artisanal or gourmet products are considered reasonable while the rest of the customer base will expect low prices.

Affecting Economies

To earn profitability in the industry one must also ensure to economise on the production front. Effective ways of doing this is to focus on reducing waste, optimizing ingredient usage, and



Davinder Nagpal

managing costs effectively.

Raminder Pal Singh Bakshi avers that there are several cost processes that one can make to improve the profit margins. He states, “Improving profit margins in a bakery isn’t just about cutting costs, it’s about strategic investments and tight process control. Here are the top cost-saving processes or investments that give strong ROI:

Invest in a Dough Sheeter or Planetary Mixer: It saves labor, improves consistency, and reduces wastage. This helps in increasing daily output without increasing labor. The ROI is usually recouped within 6–12 months for mid-sized operations

Batch Production + Blast Chiller (or Freezing): Their usage enables in extending the shelf life of croissants/pastries/cakes without compromising on quality. They reduce daily prep time, improving planning and prevent losses due to spoilage or short shelf life.

Optimize Ingredient Sourcing & Storage: This can be achieved by buying in bulk items like flour, sugar, butter. You could store them properly in airtight bins or cold rooms. Buying in bulk will enable you to negotiate for long term rates or partner with wholesalers.

Standardize Recipes and Portion Sizes: This can be achieved by (a) Using digital weighing scales for accuracy (b) Implementing SOPs to ensure each croissant, cake slice, or tart is uniform (c) Avoiding over-portioning, which quietly kills profit

Use a Food Costing + Inventory

Management System: Even a simple Excel tracker or POS-linked software helps in tracking daily usage and alerting on ingredient cost spikes. This flags high wastage items.

Focus on High-Margin Products: Promote Cookies, dry cakes, tea cakes, and cold desserts which often have 50–70% gross margins. Promote these through combos, displays, or festive packs. You can use low-cost decorative upgrades (e.g., chocolate drizzle, edible glitter) to increase perceived value.

Davinder Nagpal declares, “Investing in automation, such as dough mixers, portioning machines, or point-of-sale systems, can significantly reduce labour costs and improve consistency, boosting profit margins. Additionally, implementing inventory management software helps minimize waste and over-ordering. Energy-efficient equipment and streamlining production processes also lead to long-term savings and higher operational efficiency.

Skilled Workforce

The success of a bakery hinges heavily on the quality and skill of its workforce. Hiring trained and experienced personnel is not just a preference, it’s a necessity. With growing consumer demand for high-quality, aesthetically appealing products, the role of skilled bakers has become increasingly crucial.

Trained bakers are better equipped to execute complex recipes, maintain consistency in taste and texture, and ensure that products meet both visual and culinary expectations. Moreover, experienced staff are more likely to adhere to proper food safety and hygiene protocols, which are vital in maintaining customer trust and regulatory compliance.

Investing in skilled labour is, therefore, a foundational pillar of any successful bakery business.

Today, artisan baking is experiencing a renewed interest, driven by consumer demand for quality, authenticity, and craftsmanship. In contrast to mass-produced baked goods, artisan baking emphasizes traditional methods, natural ingredients, and small-batch production.



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Hiring trained manpower offers several significant advantages that directly impact the quality, efficiency, and reputation of a bakery. Some of the key reasons include:

Quality and Consistency: Their ability can help them accurately measure ingredients, master different baking techniques, and ensure that the final product meets the bakery's standards for quality and consistency.

Production Efficiency: Skilled labour is able to streamline baking process and minimise waste leading to higher productivity. They are also able to follow and adhere to safety procedures.

Customer satisfaction and business growth: Trained bakers can contribute to the overall success of the bakery by providing exceptional customer service, answering questions and satisfying customer's queries.

It is, therefore, necessary to hire and maintain skilled manpower.

Managing Skilled Bakery Staff

Davinder Nagpal declares, "One of the biggest challenges in managing skilled bakery staff today is retaining experienced talent while balancing labour costs and workplace expectations.

- **Labour Shortage & Turnover:** Many experienced bakers have left due to burnout, low wages, or lack of growth. Younger workers prefer roles with better work-life balance.

- **Wage Pressures:** Skilled staff expect competitive pay, but small bakeries often can't match what larger employers offer.

- **Training Needs:** Artisan baking skills take time to develop, and new hires often lack hands-on experience.

- **Workplace Culture:** Today's staff value not just fair pay, but also inclusive, supportive work environments.

- **Automation vs. Craft:** There's tension between boosting efficiency and preserving traditional baking methods that skilled staff value."

Raminder Pal Singh Bakshi, elaborates, "The biggest challenges in managing skilled bakery staff are:

High Attrition Rates: Skilled bakers often leave for small salary hikes, better shifts, or to start their own ventures.

The problem is: Rehiring = retraining = inconsistency & added cost

Skill Dependency: A few key team members usually know how to make complex items (croissants, mousse cakes, etc.). If one of them leaves the product quality may suffer.

Lack of SOP: Even experienced staff often deviate from standard Operating Procedure in the recipe of technique 'based on instinct' killing consistency, especially in multi-outlet bakeries.

Demanding Working Hours: The early morning hours, physical labor, heat, repetitive work, burnout risk often lead to many young workers preferring to work as delivery boys in cafes.

Limited Upskilling Opportunities: With no structured growth or creative challenges, some staff members get



bored making the same few products and move on.

Expansion Opportunities

Many bakery owners aspire to expand by opening multiple branches, but this growth requires careful planning and consideration. Key factors include identifying the right locations that offer good foot fall and target customer demographics, optimizing operations to maintain consistent quality and efficiency across outlets, and exploring franchising models to accelerate growth.

It is important to remember that expanding to multiple locations often involves significant upfront expenses. Maintaining adequate cash flow is crucial to sustain operations during this period. Experts recommend adopting a prudent

financial strategy, balancing investment with realistic projections to ensure long-term stability and success.

The appetite for baked goods is strong but one has to remember growth comes with its own challenges. Many bakery owners struggle with limited space, rising ingredient costs, maintaining consistency, managing labor, or simply getting the word out to more customers.

Davinder Nagpal states, "If a baker wants to expand from one store to multiple locations, the key financial advice is to create a detailed cash flow forecast to cover all new expenses. Ensure each store can sustain operating costs without relying heavily on loans. Keep a close eye on profit margins per product to confirm the expansion is viable. Build a financial buffer of 3-6 months' expenses to handle unexpected challenges. Prioritize efficient inventory and supplier management to maintain steady cash flow."

Raminder Pal Singh Bakshi states, "My advice to bakers planning to expand from one story to two or more is:

Avoid Duplication of Equipment & Labor: Instead of buying ovens, mixers, and chillers for every outlet, centralize baking and send semi-finished/frozen items to stores. This way you would save lakhs in CapEx per outlet.

Maintain Quality Consistency: Central production means every croissant or cake slice is made to the same SOP. This prevents brand dilution as you grow

Faster Scalability: With a base kitchen, setting up new stores is plug-and-play (just finishing, heating, display, and sales).

All these would be cash flow friendly as it will result in Lower setup cost leading to lower breakeven and less pressure on early sales at new locations."

Conclusion

The Indian bakery market is growing at a speedy rate driven by urbanisation, rising incomes, and changing consumer preferences but for all those desirous of venturing into bakery business it is advisable to enter the bakery business but only after one has taken several meticulous precautions like planning, market research. ■

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Hot Trends in Wedding Cakes!

By Sharmila Chand



One of the most significant trends in the bakery industry is the rise of elaborate wedding cakes to mark memorable celebrations. From a classic white look, the cake has evolved into an intricate art form, positioned as a masterpiece transforming the dessert table into a work of culinary art. Pastry chefs have taken their bakery skills to new heights with innovation and grandeur, presenting a new avatar called 'Wedding Couture Cakes'.

Let's look at the key trends that include Wedding Cakes as a reflection of Personal Stories, Floral Designs, Vintage Themes, Offbeat Ingredients and Modern Techniques.

Unique Art Work With Floral Designs

A popular vintage trend, 'floral art' creates a beautiful synergy between natural beauty and artistic elegance. The flowers on these cakes are intricately arranged.

Bakery chefs pick and choose real or sugar-paste flowers which are preserved to create stunning, ethereal designs. Soft petals, delicate hues, and intricate designs create a mesmerising sense of vintage romance. The sophisticated look is completed with the pairing of pressed

flowers with pretty laces, ribbons or green stems. Ideal for outdoors, beach or Bohemian weddings, these cakes usher in the natural beauty to make the day special.

Ashutosh Bisht, Executive Sous Chef, Holiday Inn New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida

"Among all the styles we offer, floral design cakes have emerged as our most popular choice. These cakes often feature a single-tone or pastel color palette that acts as a perfect canvas for the floral artistry. Whether using roses or peonies, the combination of fresh florals and minimalist tones creates a timeless, romantic aesthetic that complements a garden, beach, or rustic-themed wedding. More and more couples are choosing to enhance the visual appeal of their wedding cakes with natural, fresh flowers rather than traditional sugary decorations. This shift reflects a growing preference for elegance, simplicity, and authenticity."



Chef Ashutosh Bisht

Vintage Cakes Exude Classic Elegance

Step back in time and revive traditional techniques, incorporating intricate piping, delicate lace, hand painted and ornate details. An ode to traditional Victorian and Art Deco style, it is one trend that stays away from swaying towards modern trends.

How best to incorporate the nostalgic charm? Think luxurious fabrics, antique brooches, and sober finishes as they synergise beautifully. Complete the concept with classic flavours like vanilla, caramel, and classic red velvet. Perfect for rustic or historic venue weddings, vintage cakes evoke timeless romance and sophistication. Crafted with minute detailing, these masterpieces transport you to a bygone era, making the wedding celebration truly unforgettable.

Reshma Bhosale, Pastry Chef, The Orchid Hotel Mumbai

“Hand-Painted cakes are gaining popularity for their artistic and one-of-a-kind appeal. Whether its watercolour



Chef Reshma Bhosale

florals, abstract brushstrokes, or detailed illustrations, these cakes double as stunning visual displays.”

Bespoke Glamorous Cakes

Ashutosh Bisht, Executive Sous Chef, Holiday Inn New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida

Did You Know?

It is said the wedding cake ceremony has been a tradition for millennia: its roots trace back to ancient Rome, where grooms would break a barley cake over their bride’s head to officialize their union. Thousands of years later, Queen Victoria served a royal icing cake to her bridal party for her marriage to Prince Albert—setting the precedent of the classic all-white style.

“Glamorous cakes - a trend that’s all about grandeur and detailing. These cakes often feature sophisticated fondant work embellished with metallic accents like edible gold or silver leaves, pearl dust, and metallic splashes. Textures such as marble fondant, hand-painted elements, and intricate lace patterns elevate the look. Ideal for high-end or formal weddings, these statement cakes serve as both a dessert and a centerpiece,

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leaving a lasting impression on guests.

One of the most striking trends we are seeing in our wedding cakes is the use of gold dust and edible silver or gold foil (commonly known as warak). These shimmering elements add an instant sense of luxury, elegance, and celebration."

Reshma Bhosale, Pastry Chef, The Orchid Hotel Mumbai

"Traditional Indian Motifs lend an elegant luxe look. Indian wedding cakes are increasingly incorporating traditional motifs such as henna-inspired patterns, intricate embroidery reminiscent of Kanjeevaram sarees, and elements from Indian architecture like the Taj Mahal. These designs are often enhanced with edible gold or silver foil to add a touch of luxury."

Mini Wedding Cakes - Suitable For Intimate Wedding Celebrations

Ashutosh Bisht, Executive Sous Chef, Holiday Inn New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida

"The charm of mini wedding cakes is unmatched. Instead of one large cake, couples are opting for smaller, individual cakes - to be served to each guest. This allows for more variety in flavors and personalized designs. Also, this trend brings a thoughtful and modern twist to the traditional cake-cutting moment, especially suitable for intimate gatherings with close family and friends."

Top Trends in Wedding Cakes at a Glance!

Funny Bride and Groom Fondant Cakes

How about letting the wedding cakes create some fun too? Funny fondant cakes are popular and trendy as they break the monotony very well. The couples are loving to add a pinch of humour in their wedding celebrations with funny themes and whimsical designs. Showcasing groom's passion for golf to the bride's obsession for shoes or jewellery, such cakes amp up the light - heartedness bringing joy and smiles, setting the tone for a joy-filled celebration that the couple and guests will cherish forever.

Extra large in Unique Shapes

Think everything from large format to asymmetrical shapes. Sometimes as tall as the couple, making a popular statement.

Embellished With Pretty Elements

Beautiful ribbons, laces, colorful piles of fruits, flickering candles and shimmering meringue accents enhancing the visual impact.

HD Personalised Photo Cakes

When it comes to personalised cakes, nothing beats the photo cake options. Couples are loving to bring their love story to life with stunning HD Photo Cakes. Choose your favourite images and let the modern technology print vibrant, high-definition images onto edible paper or icing, creating a truly unique wedding statement cake. One can choose from various shapes, sizes, and designs to fit the wedding theme. Don't compromise on the flavour. With flawless image resolution and precise colour matching, HD photo cakes are almost too beautiful to eat.

Color Coordinated Theme

Couples are opting to coordinate their outfit color and designs with their wedding cakes. Think: juicy pinks, oranges, and rich traditional red and electric blues. Ranging from traditional floral motifs to intricate designs that mirror the bride's lehenga, these cakes weave a stunning color palette. This trend includes integrating cultural elements, intricate decorations, and wedding ensemble together to create a masterpiece cake.

Bespoke Wedding Cakes

Couples are opting for bespoke cakes that tell their story through their favourite flavours, colours, or designs. It is a reflection of their personalities or relationship journeys.

Innovative flavours with a refreshing twist!

From the classic vanilla and chocolate, the trend has moved on to exciting flavours like matcha, yuzu, and lavender. With decadent combinations like dark chocolate and sea salt, salted caramel, saffron and passion fruit, the spotlight is on unique pairings to create innovative taste, texture and flavours.

To Conclude

Wedding cakes are an intrinsic part of wedding celebrations. They are not simply an item at the dessert table but a reflection of couples' personality, lifestyle and thought process. Whether they opt

for classical style or be adventurous in introducing new concepts, the fact remains that the wedding cannot be completed without indulgence in a unique themed cake that will be a lifelong memory to be cherished. ■



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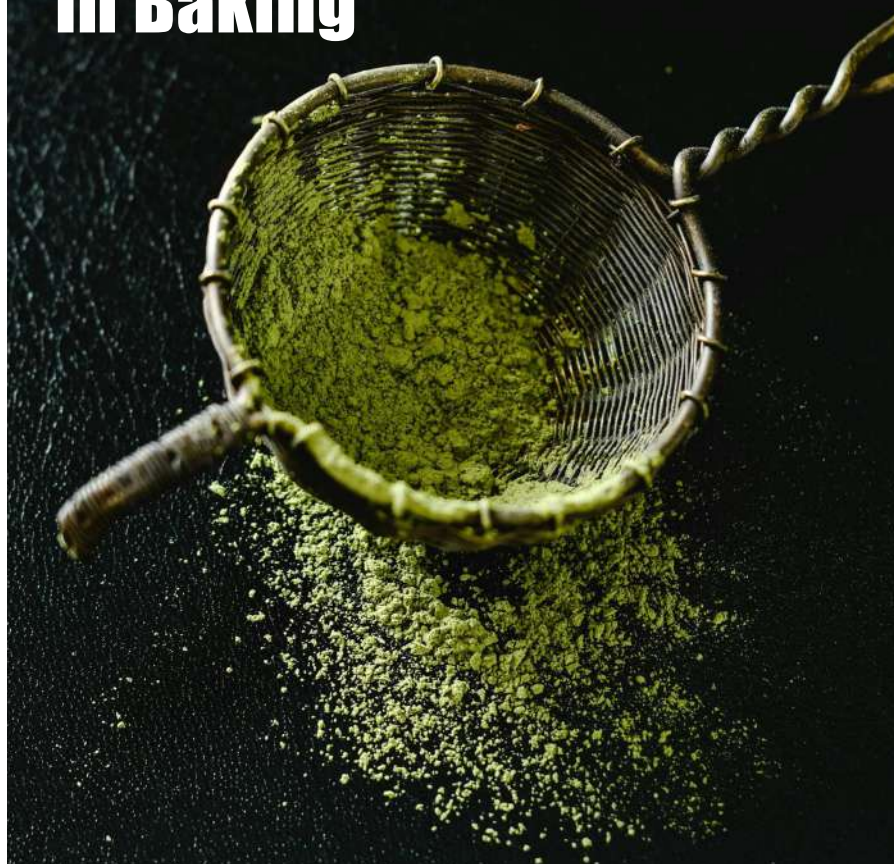
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Matcha

A Green Tea Revolution in Baking



By Nikita Madan

Making matcha tea in Japan is a custom steeped in elegance, precision and centuries of silent respect. Every action in the quiet silence of a tea room is purposeful: the slow pour of hot water, the measured scoop of bright green powder, the rhythmic whisking with a bamboo chasen that gives the emerald liquid life.

Matcha is a finely ground, shade-grown green tea powder that has been enjoyed for centuries in Japan and is only now becoming widely known in the West. But unlike ordinary green tea, in which the leaves are infused and then discarded, matcha is powdered, allowing you to consume the leaves as

well, and as a result, all of the nutrients they contain.

A culinary-grade matcha – ground for cooking and baking – offers the best balance of value and quality, imparting deep colour and flavour without being overly dusty. It mixes effortlessly into batters, doughs or spreads, and its substantial powdered form makes it simple to stir into liquids or sift with dry ingredients.

A Brief History: From China to Japanese Tea Ceremony

Matcha's origins can be traced back to medieval China, where green tea powder was developed into a refined beverage during

the Song Dynasty. Over time, powdered tea's appeal declined in China, but it persevered in other countries.

Zen Buddhist priests who had studied in China brought matcha to Japan in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. The monk Eisai introduced tea seeds to Kamakura, Japan, in 1191. Master practitioners such as Murata Jukō and Sen no Rikyū refined the chanoyu (tea ceremony) with a wabi-sabi aesthetic of simplicity, while elite Zen monks and the samurai class practiced elaborate tea gatherings.

Matcha changed from being a temple specialty to becoming a popular flavour over time, initially in Japan and then globally. According to Chef Ankit Saini, Executive Pastry Chef at The Lodhi, New Delhi, matcha brings a strong cultural story with it. It connects guests to Japanese traditions and mindfulness.

The Matcha Boom: Why the Green Tea Powder Is So Popular Today

From New York to Tokyo, matcha has become a popular flavour in the last ten years after once being a specialty tea shop ingredient in Japan. This boom is driven by multiple factors:

Health and Wellness: Matcha has drawn interest from consumers due to its high nutrient and antioxidant content. It is rich in L-theanine, vitamins, minerals and EGCG, a potent catechin. According to nutrition experts, matcha's caffeine and L-theanine



combination can increase focus without making you jittery. It is frequently promoted as a clean-energy substitute for coffee or as a natural "superfood."

Flavour and Culinary Trendiness: Chefs and bakers are experimenting with matcha in snacks and sweets as demand for strong, international flavours rises. Chef Ankit maintains, "Matcha has added a



Strawberry Cremeux and Matcha Jelly

modern and healthy touch to my menu. It shows that we follow global trends while offering unique flavours. Guests love its vibrant look and light, refreshing taste, which fits perfectly with our style at The Lodhi.”

Visual Appeal and Social Media: Matcha’s vivid green

hue looks striking on camera. Matcha drinks and desserts are particularly popular on Instagram, Pinterest and TikTok. The hashtag #matcha has millions of posts, and influencers frequently share pastel-coloured matcha lattes, bright-green cakes, or smoothie bowls.

Cultural Curiosity: According to Chef Hemant Aswal, Executive Pastry Chef at Andaz Delhi, “Visually, our matcha items are styled to stand out—greens, whites, neutrals. Narratively, we talk about our sourcing and why we chose matcha. Culturally, we always credit its Japanese origins and traditions. Respect matters. When people ask questions about where it comes from or how it’s made, we get to tell stories beyond just food. That’s the magic—it’s a doorway into culture, rituals and mindfulness.”

Market Growth: The data speaks for itself. Market reports state that the global matcha market was valued at billions of dollars in 2023 and is expected to grow at a robust rate (a 7–8% CAGR is cited by Grand View Research). Green tea exports from Japan have increased, with matcha and other powdered tea accounting for roughly 60% of total export value

This broad interest has solidified matcha as a popular bakery and café flavour, with new product launches almost every season. Chef Hemant, shares, “People come in saying, “I heard you make this insane matcha latte?” I think it’s a combo of health buzz, Instagram-worthy visuals, and the fact that we actually respect the ingredient. We don’t just toss it into things to be trendy.”

Using Matcha in Baking: Flavour, Colour and Function

Professional bakers value matcha mainly for its flavour and colour. When asked to describe matcha’s flavour profile, Chef Saini replied, “Matcha has a smooth, earthy taste with a slight bitterness and a hint of sweetness. It’s rich, fresh, and feels calming—like green tea but more intense and creamier.”

Chef Hemant adds, “Imagine green tea, but bolder. It’s grassy, a bit creamy, slightly bitter—but in a sexy, grown-up way. It’s not sweet by itself, so when you pair it with the right things, it pops.”

This implies that matcha, like chocolate or coffee, can enhance the flavours of cakes or cookies. When asked, he further added, “I usually use high-quality culinary-grade matcha for baking and beverages because it has a strong flavour and holds up well in



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recipes. For special desserts where matcha is the star, I prefer a custom blend with a smoother finish and brighter colour.”

In reality, bakers discover that “matcha is very fine and can easily clump together,” necessitating cautious handling. Chef Hemant also mentions, “Sift it first. I’m begging you. Nothing ruins a matcha latte like tiny green clumps floating on top. Also, don’t just follow a matcha recipe—understand what the ingredient is doing in the dish.

Use fresh matcha (not the one that’s been sitting in your pantry for a year), bake at lower temperatures, and don’t over mix. Also, a little lemon juice helps preserve the colour. Pro tip: store matcha in the fridge in an airtight container.

One of the common mistakes people make when they use matcha is they think more matcha = more flavour. Nope. Too much and it turns bitter and dull. Also, using old or low-quality matcha kills the colour and the taste. This isn’t baking soda—it has a personality.”

He also adds, “It absorbs liquids fast and can affect texture. So I usually reduce other dry ingredients slightly, or add a splash more liquid. I also lower the oven temp a bit to protect the colour.”

When asked how he found the sweet spot for flavour and colour, he replied, “Trial and error, mostly. Matcha is sensitive, too much and it tastes like spinach. Too little and it’s just green-coloured dessert. I usually start with 1-2 teaspoons per 100g of dry ingredients, and adjust based on the fat and sugar content of the recipe.”

The chefs agree that, “Matcha pairs wonderfully with white chocolate, citrus (like yuzu or lemon), berries, coconut, raspberry, black sesame and nuts like almonds or pistachios. Matcha also works well in savoury items like cheese bread and crackers.”

A lot of bakers dust-finished products that add extra matcha to make them “pop” in terms of colour and flavour. Additionally, matcha melts well in glazes and frostings.

Chef Hemant adds, “Our matcha white chocolate tart has this buttery almond crust, velvety matcha ganache and just a hint of yuzu zest. We blind-bake the crust, whisk a creamy white chocolate ganache base and then stir in sifted matcha. After that, it chills for 4 hours to set properly. Finish it with a brush of edible gold dust. Because, drama.”



“About five years ago. One of my regulars brought me a tin from Japan and said, You have to make something with this. Challenge accepted. And that’s where the obsession started.”

**Chef Hemant Aswal,
Executive Pastry Chef, Andaz Delhi**

Meanwhile Chef Ankit describes his signature matcha dish, “My signature matcha dessert is a Matcha and Yuzu Entremet. It has matcha flavour with yuzu, white chocolate. It’s light, refreshing and beautifully balanced in flavour. I start by baking a soft matcha sponge as the base. Then I prepare a tangy yuzu Cremeux and set it in a ring. Next, I



“I started using matcha around 2015. I was drawn to its bright green colour and unique taste.”

**Chef Ankit Saini, Executive Pastry
Chef, The Lodhi, New Delhi**

make a light white chocolate mousse and layer it with the sponge and Cremeux inside a mould. Once it’s set, I glaze the Entremet with a matcha glaze and finish it with white chocolate decor or edible flowers.”

The variety of baked goods that use matcha demonstrates its adaptability. Matcha chiffon cakes, matcha-flavoured wagashi (such as mochi or taiyaki), and sponge cakes with sweet red bean filling are examples of traditional Japanese foods. It has also been adopted by bakeries in the West, where matcha muffins, cookies and croissants are now popular.

Practical Insights for Bakers

Working with matcha actually encourages both creativity and accuracy. It’s crucial to use fresh matcha powder because matcha can lose its potency over time.

When asked, Chef Ankit replied, “I store matcha in an airtight container away from light and heat to keep it fresh. While baking, I avoid high temperatures and long baking times, as too much heat can dull the colour.”

The secret is to experiment. Matcha can be added to batter along with another tea ingredient (e.g. Earl Grey shortbread with a touch of matcha) or used to infuse liquids first to enhance flavour. He also added, “I’d love to create a matcha and tropical fruit soufflé. It’s a delicate dessert that needs perfect timing and technique, so I’m working on mastering it to get the right balance of lightness and flavour.”

While Hemant Aswal commented, “I would like to make a matcha tiramisu layered with hojicha-soaked ladyfingers. Haven’t nailed the texture yet—matcha doesn’t always play nice with mascarpone. But it’s on my culinary bucket list.”

Future

Matcha has transcended novelty status to become a premium, adaptable ingredient that appeals to both large-scale producers and artisanal bakers as global palates continue to change. Matcha will be incorporated into a wider range of products in the future, such as matcha sourdoughs, frozen desserts like matcha gelato, cakes, savoury-sweet combinations like matcha-cheddar biscuits and laminated pastries like matcha croissants and cruffins. ■

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By Harsha Masand

In India's beverage economy, pricing is no longer a decision made at the tail-end of production, it is the cornerstone of strategy, the pulse of perception, and often the first brief issued to a concept before the beans are roasted or the teapots even warm.

The number on the price tag, especially for a cup of coffee or tea, must carry more than transactional value; it must communicate aspiration, accessibility, and above all, relevance. At a time when consumer behavior is as dynamic as the beverage menus it scans, pricing has evolved into both art and architecture—constructing bridges between what the customer wants to believe they're buying and what the business actually needs to sell.

It isn't simply about margins anymore; it's about meaning. And in a fragmented, fiercely competitive market where QSRs,

boutique cafés, and homegrown tea bars coexist with digital-first cloud kitchens and heritage beverage brands, pricing has become a masterstroke of business psychology. What may look like an arbitrary number on a menu is in fact a deeply

considered decision—one that absorbs supply chain realities, audience intent, market benchmarks, seasonal surges, concept formats, and operational scalability before being signed off by finance or branding. And yet, pricing cannot stand in isolation. It is tethered to how consumers think, react, and evolve.

Strategic Foundations

"Pricing is based on consumer behavior to spend with respect to competitors, which are growing rapidly day by day. As far as tea and coffee are concerned, small-ticket items encourage impulse buying. Customers usually spend less time while buying low-priced products," shares Anand Gautam of Wagh Bakri Tea, capturing the psychological threshold that has come to define the pricing sweet spot.

This is where the customer feels indulgent but not irresponsible, where



the perceived cost-benefit ratio skews emotionally in favor of the brand. Consumers today may consciously reduce discretionary spending, but they still seek micro moments of comfort—little luxuries that carry social and sensory validation without guilt.

That accessible price zone, particularly in beverages, plays into this behavioral insight. It lets people say yes quickly. It allows the mid-income urban demographic to feel pampered without stepping into indulgence. It welcomes college students, young professionals, and work-from-café entrepreneurs with a sip-sized invitation. And most crucially, it initiates trial. That first drink at a comfortable price is often the doorway to brand habit and menu exploration. Pricing here doesn't act as a barrier, it's a gateway. The operational trick is to deliver experience and value without compromising bottom-line viability, and that's where menu engineering, backend optimization, and precise SKU creation enter the fray.

This volume-centric strategy is being further supported by loyalty programs that reward high-frequency transactions and create psychological stickiness. An affordable product may not generate margin on day one, but when it's part of a broader consumer journey, backed by digital tracking, targeted coupons, and refer-and-earn mechanics, it becomes a powerful tool for retention. And in the café business, retention is more valuable than reach.

Coffee Premium

But while tea has historically embraced this pricing psychology with ease, coffee remains a more complex proposition—both in perception and procurement. "Coffee has always been an expensive proposition in the minds of the customer," says Saurabh Sitaram, Co-founder of First Coffee. "For example, if you look at tea, there's a pricing ceiling. But coffee—you don't get like that. The perceived value of coffee has always been higher. Sourcing coffee is definitely not cheaper. Most of the distribution is available in metropolitan cities." Coffee carries a cultural aura that allows for price elasticity in a way tea does not. While both drinks are caffeinated companions



As far as tea and coffee are concerned—small-ticket items encourage impulse buying.

Anand Gautam
Sr. General Manager,
Wagh Bakri Tea

in India's daily routine, coffee has been positioned, and accepted, as a lifestyle choice, especially among millennial and Gen Z cohorts. Customers are not just paying for caffeine; they are buying into the story, the origin of the bean, the roast profile, the brewing ritual, the barista interaction. It is why the same customer



To determine the price point for a new beverage product, we consider production costs, desired profit margins, competitor pricing, and perceived customer value.

Chef Bobby Patel
Founder and F&B Consultant
Thyme & Whisk & Mad Doh

who resists a premium-priced tea may willingly pay more for a cold brew, and do so regularly.

However, the backend cost stack justifies this divide. Coffee sourcing is often estate-specific and involves quality control, long-distance logistics, and freshness-sensitive distribution, all of which disproportionately affect smaller markets. Unlike metros where consumption ensures stocking efficiency, tier 2 and 3 towns rarely offer the same leverage. Coffee brands must factor in transport premiums, storage infrastructure, and even cold chain extensions when scaling. It is here that price needs to hold both aspiration and arithmetic, and this is often where brands use their metro volumes to subsidize experiments in emerging markets.

For beverage brands, the key challenge is to create viable products at this price point without sacrificing quality or operational efficiency. This has given rise to a new form of product development, menu engineering that prioritizes SKUs with scalable appeal, optimized ingredient profiles, and limited preparation complexity. Behind the scenes, R&D teams are rethinking how to batch-produce cold brews, select flavor-enhancing additives that offer premium sensory cues at a lower cost, and limit ingredient wastage through modular formats. The beverage is not just a cheaper version of a flagship drink, it is a standalone product with its own functional and emotional proposition.

Operational Realities

The arithmetic doesn't stop at raw materials. It deepens with format decisions, labor skillsets, real estate models, and even climatic influence.

"There is a lot of variety in Coffee beans, some can cost up to a few thousand rupees per kg. This becomes a specialized thing and sourcing metropolitan becomes easier as the consumption is higher, so the stockists will stock more," explains Sanjay Roy, F&B Consultant, Prapti Hospitality Management Services. "The cost is much higher in smaller cities. Many supporting flavors are not readily available in tier 2–3 which makes it more challenging. The logistics cost also goes high for specialty

coffee, and with low demand, you're not getting the best of the prices either.

"However, the real estate cost compensates in the tier 2-3, but in metropolitan they are significantly higher. Similarly, skilled labor price would be much higher in metros compared to small cities. India is a very diverse country and is quite weather struck so in winters coffee and tea work well."

"It really depends upon where you are opening, beverages only may not fetch significant revenue unless coupled with food menu. Your per person coverage would be more in a beverage+food menu. Ultimately, it all depends on what is your concept and target audience, then you work backwards with financials. If you want to upscale, then you need a lot of funding."

"This is where the price of a drink cannot be seen in isolation, it must be modeled in tandem with what the drink is surrounded by. Is it part of a café with a full food menu? Is it a kiosk where beverages alone need to recover rent, staff, utilities, and aggregator commissions? Is the customer walking in for a drink, or are they staying for an hour with a sandwich and salad?"

"These decisions dictate whether pricing becomes restrictive or regenerative. In metros, the overhead stack often forces coffee-led outlets to develop food-forward menus purely to increase the average ticket size and justify spatial economics. In smaller towns, where rentals may be cheaper but sourcing is more expensive, the challenge flips, how do you deliver value without slashing margin?"

Here, concept clarity becomes king. Price isn't just about what the drink is worth, it's about what role it plays in the business model.

Price Perception

Cafés are increasingly becoming social utilities, places to work, date, catch up, or recharge. In this context, a budget-friendly beverage is not a discount, it's a gesture. A well-made drink served with a handwritten name, or a cheerful barista interaction, or a sustainable cup sleeve, can deliver more brand love than a artisanal variant in a sterile setting.

The war, in that sense, is not just over



It depends upon where you are opening but only beverages may not fetch as much as revenue as a coupled with food menu.

Sanjay Roy
Consultant, Prapti Hospitality
Management Services

price, but over perceived care.

This intersection of price and concept is where financial planning meets consumer empathy. It's not enough to run numbers in isolation anymore. Brands need to forecast pricing with the customer's worldview in mind.

"To determine the price point for a new beverage product, we consider production costs, desired profit margins, competitor pricing, and perceived customer value. We



Coffee has always been an expensive proposition in the minds of the customer.

Saurabh Sitaram
Co-Founder, First Coffee

also factor in market positioning, whether the beverage is premium or budget-friendly, and adjust for seasonal demand and promotional strategies," shares Chef Bobby Patel, Founder and F&B Consultant of Thyme & Whisk & Mad Doh. "This holistic approach ensures our pricing aligns with both business objectives and customer expectations."

This is a balancing act few get right. Too high, and you lose footfall; too low, and you cannibalize your brand value. To hold price with grace, you need operational foresight: modular recipes, flexible sourcing options, strategic bundling, and menu agility.

Seasonal demand, climate shifts, and even national mood (festivals, exams, IPL seasons) influence what people are willing to pay and when. Brands that bake these variables into their pricing model tend to last longer, because they're not just selling drinks—they're solving occasions.

Ultimately, the price of a beverage in India today is no longer a number on a menu



board. It is a marker of experience design, a test of backend strategy, and a whisper of the brand's philosophy. In this landscape, the most successful beverage brands are those that understand the nuance behind consumer behavior, those that know how to charge not for the product, but for the moment it creates. And as consumers grow savvier, more discerning, and more digitally influenced, pricing will need to remain both sensitive and strategic. Because in a market as fast-moving and culturally diverse as India, the real cost of a drink is not just in beans or tea leaves, it's in the brand's ability to make the customer feel they've spent wisely. ■



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Antarctica Equipment Introduces FPG Inline Barista – Smart Milk Storage for Smarter Cafés

Antarctica Equipment has launched the FPG Inline Barista, a purpose-built milk storage cabinet designed to streamline café workflows and enhance barista comfort. With India's café sector expanding rapidly, the Inline Barista delivers ergonomic and operational efficiency in one compact unit.

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multiple 5L or 10L milk containers—perfect for high-volume service. A pull-out drawer allows instant visual inventory checks and effortless access.

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"I am always eager to learn, grow, and keep myself updated with the latest market trends"

Akash Deep, Pastry Chef, Novotel Goa Panjim



A seasoned hospitality professional with a Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality and Tourism, chef Akash Deep is passionate about learning and keeping pace with market trends.

Amongst his several working roles, his stint in Dubai gave him international exposure and an opportunity to work alongside chefs from various nationalities, cultivating a deep admiration for the culinary art of blending flavors, textures, and presentation to create exceptional desserts. This experience fueled his passion for innovation in flavor profiles and recipe development.

Akash specializes in creating desserts inspired by seasonal fruits, locally sourced berries, and high-quality ingredients. His approach emphasizes natural colors, textures, and freshness, which he skillfully integrates into his entremets and cakes.

After spending a decade in Dubai, Akash recently returned to Goa to bring a wealth of expertise at Novotel Goa Panjim by Accor.

A passionate explorer, Akash enjoys immersing himself in the vibrant culture of Goa and understanding the nuances of local cuisine.

In an exclusive interview, he talks about his work philosophy and more....

By Sharmila Chand

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

With the growing emphasis on health consciousness, consumers are increasingly opting for healthier bakery options such as whole-grain bread, gluten-free cakes, sugar-free desserts, and vegan treats. Artisanal bakeries are experiencing a surge in popularity across India, as pastry chefs experiment with innovative flavors and unique ingredients. Simultaneously, the Indian bakery industry is undergoing a transformation toward sustainability by adopting eco-friendly packaging and incorporating environmentally conscious ingredients.

What is your working philosophy?

I respect the tradition of classic pastry method which allows me to play with innovative flavors, texture, pairing of different ingredients to create new dessert. I prefer to work with quality seasonal ingredients to elevate the flavors.

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

As a Pastry Chef, maintaining a good health quotient is crucial. I prefer to use natural sweeteners in our recipes like honey, maple syrup, dates and coconut sugar instead of refined sugars and balance between taste, texture, and nutritional value.

Your favorite tool?

It's very hard to choose one tool. I would say Pastry Knife is ideal for cutting dough into uniform pieces, strips, or shapes, trim

excess dough, shape pastry edges, and create decorative borders.

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

- Maintaining Consistency and Quality- Ensuring that every baked good meets the highest standards of quality, texture, and flavour can be a significant challenge.
- Managing Time and Workflow- Bakery Chefs often work under tight deadlines, managing multiple orders, and coordinating with other kitchen staff. This can be stressful, especially during peak periods or when dealing with last-minute orders.
- Staying Creative and Adapting to Trends- The bakery industry is constantly evolving, with new trends, ingredients, and techniques emerging regularly. Bakery chefs must stay up-to-date with these developments, experimenting with new recipes and ingredients while maintaining traditional techniques and flavours. This requires a balance between creativity, innovation, and consistency.

What do you like about your job?

Being a Pastry chef has given me the privilege to play with ingredients for creating sweet and savoury treats that bring joy to others. A bonus here would be having the opportunity to try new ingredients, techniques, and recipes, pushing the boundaries of pastry-making which has brought me satisfaction and fulfilment.

What is your strength as a bakery chef?

Creating unique, delicious, and visually

appealing baked goods that showcase my creativity. Coordinating multiple tasks, managing deadlines, and mentoring & training team members to improve skills, knowledge, and productivity.

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

One of my favorite ingredients in pastry is Callebaut Chocolate. What I love most about chocolate is its versatility—it allows you to bring your ideas and creativity to life. From crafting stunning showpieces and sculptures to plating intricate desserts and designing unique chocolate garnishes, it offers endless possibilities. Chocolate not only pairs beautifully with a wide range of flavors but also elevates the taste and adds immense value to baked goods, making it an essential ingredient in creating truly exceptional desserts.

Your favorite bakery item which you like to prepare the most and why?

I love to make Croissants. The layers of butter in the dough and the precise technique of folding gives me a lot of joy. There is nothing more delicious than freshly baked, flaky, buttery croissants which brings a smile to my diner.

What are your dreams?

Opening my own bakery and academy, creating a cozy, inviting space where customers can indulge in my delicious creations. Sharing knowledge and skills with aspiring pastry chef, inspiring the next generation.

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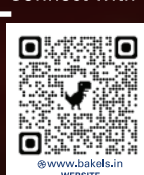


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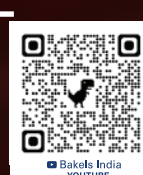
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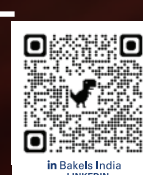
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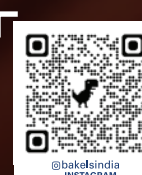
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