

HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Apr-May 2025 • Volume XXII Number 4 ₹ 100

Business Review

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Business

Rising Market for Cutlery

Feature

Regional Cuisine Defining Culinary Landscape

Food

The Sattvic Spin on Food

Technology

Vendor Management Goes Digital

Changing Dining Trends



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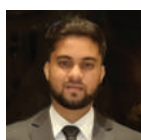


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There's no better way to begin this issue than by honouring and congratulating a true culinary legend, Chef K. Damodharan, whose Padma Shri recognition has stirred pride in kitchens across India. As we celebrate this milestone, our issue explores how food trends are evolving, driven by changing consumer preferences, global influences, and a growing emphasis on health, sustainability, and innovation.

Our cover story delves into how globalization is transforming the culinary world, expanding palates and reshaping food choices. From evolving food production to rising demand for regional and global cuisines, we explore the trends redefining the dining experience. The growing art of food and drink pairing and the vital role of ambience is a key involvement in the F&B success, is also discussed in the cover story.

Cutlery plays a vital role in the food business, enhancing presentation and elevating the dining experience while reflecting a brand's identity. Our business story highlights the growing demand for distinctive table setups, with hotels seeking unique designs and suppliers innovating to meet evolving consumer tastes and aesthetic preferences.

Our feature story explores how regional cuisine is redefining the Indian culinary landscape. Chefs and industry experts share how authentic local flavours, heirloom recipes, and indigenous ingredients are being thoughtfully integrated into mainstream menus, celebrating India's rich food heritage while offering guests a deeper, more meaningful dining experience.

The growing interest in sattvic cuisine also deserves attention under the Food Section, this mindful approach goes beyond vegetarianism, omitting onions, garlic, and hot spices that are otherwise fundamental to most professional kitchens.

Besides the above-mentioned engaging and relevant topics, our News, Events, and Reports section also offers a wealth of insightful updates and industry developments to keep you informed and connected.

Rajat Taneja

Food & Beverage

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Contents

APRIL-MAY 2025



COVER STORY	24
Changing Dining Trends	
BUSINESS	34
Rising Market for Cutlery	
FEATURE	42
Regional Cuisine Defining Culinary Landscape	
FOOD	50
The Sattvic Spin on Food	
TECHNOLOGY	54
Vendor Management Goes Digital	

DEPARTMENTS	
Event	04
News	06
Appointments	20
Report	22
Profile	46
Restaurant	48
Chef Voice	56
Product Preview	58
Interview	60

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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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 Indian 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.

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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Le Creuset Celebrates 100 Years of Culinary Excellence

Since its founding in 1925 in Fresnoy-le-Grand, France, Le Creuset has become a cherished kitchen staple across the globe. Beloved for its design prowess, peerless style, and sterling performance, Le Creuset is now honoured to celebrate a century of excellence and a longstanding legacy of forging culinary traditions – in the kitchen, at the dining table, and beyond.



Hewn from cast-iron and crafted by skilled artisans, Le Creuset has become a celebrated culinary heirloom that helps nurture deep personal connections through the shared joy of food – meal after meal, year after year, generation after generation.

In honour of its 100th anniversary, Le Creuset is embarking on a global celebration of rich culinary traditions past and present, all while looking ahead to the future and paying homage to the brand's heritage of excellence. Le Creuset is proud to share key initiatives launching in 2025 to commemorate its centennial year:

Stories of Inspired Tradition: Le Creuset's global celebration begins with an inspiring video featuring esteemed chefs, tastemakers, and brand enthusiasts all of whom come together to honour the role Le Creuset has played in their lives and traditions.

An Icon, Reimagined: In keeping with its decades-long, industry-leading innovation and forward-thinking design, Le Creuset is excited to unveil its latest advancement in colourful cookware: Flamme Dorée. Translated to “golden flame,” the limited-edition, centenary colourway celebrates Flame, the brand's iconic original hue, now coated with light-catching minerals and an innovative third layer of enamel coating for a stunning golden shimmer finish.

Serving Traditions: To celebrate its 100th anniversary, Le Creuset will embark on a culinary journey bringing people together in cities around the world to share meals that celebrate unique culinary traditions. The events will offer guests a one-of-a-kind culinary experience, honouring memories created around the table and designed to stir all the senses.

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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MB Chicken Makes Grand Entry into India



Canada's iconic fried chicken brand, MB Chicken, officially entered the Indian market with the inauguration of its first flagship outlet in Sector 35C, Chandigarh. The launch event attracted prominent names from the culinary and hospitality sectors, marking a significant moment for the city's F&B scene.

Known for its high-quality fried chicken, including the legendary Big Mary® sandwich and hand-cut taters, MB Chicken aims to recreate its Canadian success on Indian soil. The brand's menu for India also features a dedicated vegetarian selection crafted specifically to suit local palates.

The store was inaugurated by Gregory F. Roberts, Owner and CEO of MBI Brands, who shared his ambitious vision for MB Chicken's India journey. He underscored the brand's commitment to delivering excellence while respecting regional tastes and food preferences.

"Our presence in India starts with Chandigarh, but this is just the beginning. We are committed to scaling rapidly while ensuring consistent quality," Roberts said.

An exclusive chef tasting session was held during the event, where celebrated chefs and food professionals sampled the brand's core offerings. The response from the industry was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees praising the food quality and the brand's thoughtful localization.



Following the Chandigarh debut, MB Chicken plans to expand to Gurugram (NCR), Doraha, and Jalandhar in Punjab. The initial rollout includes around ten corporate-owned outlets, after which the brand intends to adopt a franchise-driven model for its broader expansion across the country.

Key company representatives present at the launch included MB Chicken India COO Sanjeev Ghatak, MBI Brands VP – International Dillon Powell, MB Chicken India VP Gautam Kamra, and Ankita Mane, GM – Marketing India.

With strong leadership, a clear expansion roadmap, and a differentiated menu offering, MB Chicken is poised to become a major player in India's QSR segment, delivering Canadian comfort food with a localized twist.

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IFCA Partners Uttarakhand in Culinary and Cultural Renaissance

In a groundbreaking move to preserve culinary heritage and promote social empowerment, the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) has joined hands with the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh, for a transformative initiative that celebrates the region's rich food traditions.

This collaboration was set into motion during a high-level two-day delegation visit to Dehradun, where IFCA representatives were granted a special audience with the Governor at Raj Bhawan. The Governor, known for his progressive vision, outlined three strategic projects aimed at marrying gastronomy with cultural identity and social development—placing IFCA at the helm of execution.

Documenting a Living Culinary Legacy

One of the delegation's core assignments is the creation of a coffee table book documenting the culinary landscape of Uttarakhand. IFCA has been entrusted with curating and publishing this book within nine months, drawing upon its vast network of chefs, culinary historians, and regional experts.

The book will feature authentic recipes, heirloom ingredients, and vanishing techniques unique to Garhwal and Kumaon. Personal narratives from native chefs and food artisans will lend a human dimension, while cultural anecdotes will provide context to dishes rooted in festivals, rituals, and local legends.

This project is not simply archival. It is a call to preserve food as a living heritage. "Through this publication, we aim to immortalise the culinary soul of Uttarakhand," said an IFCA spokesperson. The launch event is set to take place at Raj Bhawan, with participation from dignitaries, institutions, and culinary leaders from across India.

A National Conference on Food and Spirituality

The Governor, in collaboration with IFCA, has also proposed a One-Day National Conference on "Food, Spirituality, and Culture", to be held at Raj Bhawan in the coming months. This unique event is expected to attract chefs, scholars, wellness practitioners, and policy thinkers for a day of knowledge exchange and culinary introspection.

IFCA will facilitate the conference structure, which will include panel discussions, live demonstrations, and regional showcases.



From exploring sacred food practices to showcasing healing diets and fermentation techniques, the event promises to bring Uttarakhand's ancient wisdom to a modern audience.

Importantly, this conference is not just ceremonial. It aims to pave the way for institutional collaborations, policy frameworks, and academic research that integrate food with wellness, tourism, and sustainability. IFCA's leadership in such forums reinforces its commitment to elevating the culinary arts beyond the plate.

Empowering Women Through Skill and Enterprise

A third, deeply impactful strand of the initiative focuses on women's empowerment through culinary skill development. The Governor has asked IFCA to work with existing Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Uttarakhand to assess their current operations and design structured training programs in food processing and entrepreneurship.

IFCA's training modules will cover basic culinary skills, hygiene standards, small business management, and certification pathways. The goal is to integrate these women-led enterprises into formal markets, enabling financial independence and social mobility.

This effort draws from global best practices in community-based development, and IFCA's involvement lends both credibility and reach. The program is as much about economic empowerment as it is about dignity and self-worth.

A Culinary Trail of Discovery

The delegation's visit also included

a heritage food trail in Mussoorie, where IFCA members met with a local chef whose family once served in the royal kitchen of the King of Tehri Garhwal. This encounter uncovered lost recipes, indigenous grains, and forgotten cooking methods that had survived only through oral transmission.

Among the highlights were dishes prepared using stone slabs and copper pots, spice blends roasted with ancient precision, and rare ingredients like jhangora and wild mountain herbs. These recipes are slated for inclusion in the culinary book, serving as living testaments to Uttarakhand's gastronomic wealth.

IFCA's involvement in this movement is significant. Not only is the federation facilitating these major projects, but it is also acting as a custodian of regional culinary identities. By working directly with communities, chefs, and institutions, IFCA is ensuring that tradition does not vanish under the pressure of modern standardisation.

This partnership with Uttarakhand reflects IFCA's broader mission: to empower through food, preserve through documentation, and innovate through collaboration.

The initiative welcomes input from across the culinary world. IFCA, on behalf of the Governor's office, is calling upon regional chefs, home cooks, cultural researchers, and food writers—especially those with roots in Uttarakhand—to contribute stories, recipes, and knowledge.

This collaboration between IFCA and the Governor of Uttarakhand marks a turning point in how we view regional cuisine—not just as sustenance or craft, but as identity, heritage, and a tool for empowerment.

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NRAI Hosts 4th Food Delivery Summit 2025

The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) the voice of the Indian restaurant industry hosted the 4th edition of the NRAI Food Delivery Summit 2025 recently at Le Meridien, New Delhi. With the theme “Delivering Fresh Ideas to Fuel Your Food Business”, the summit brought together over 2000+ key stakeholders from across India’s food delivery ecosystem for a day packed with insights, networking, and future-forward thinking.

The summit was inaugurated with a lamp lighting ceremony by Bansuri Swaraj, Hon’ble Member of Parliament. The event was further graced by the presence of Shehzad Poonawalla, National Spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party, as distinguished Guests of Honour.

The summit that served as a platform for collaboration and ideation brought together top voices from the restaurant industry, cloud kitchen operators, aggregators, delivery partners, and tech entrepreneurs. The evolving consumer landscape, rising demand for hyper-efficiency, and the urgent need for sustainable delivery models were among the topics discussed.

Delivering the opening address, Sagar Daryani, President, NRAI, remarked, “The Indian food delivery landscape is undergoing a massive transformation, driven by shifting consumer behaviour and rapid technological adoption. The NRAI Food Delivery Summit is an important platform for aligning all stakeholders, from restaurateurs to tech enablers, around a common vision. To unlock long-term growth, we must now prioritize collaboration, innovation, and standardization. It’s not just about reaching customers faster,



but also doing so responsibly, transparently, and in a sustainable manner.”

He further added, “We are honoured to lead this important industry dialogue and grateful to all stakeholders who participated. Together, we are creating a food service ecosystem that is not only forward-thinking, but also driven by innovation, efficiency, and responsibility. This summit is a significant step toward creating a more unified and progressive food delivery landscape in India.”

The summit featured a dynamic line-up of sessions designed to spark innovation in the food delivery space. A major highlight was the official launch of Coca-Cola Foodmarks 2.0, an initiative that celebrates India’s most iconic culinary destinations.

Zomato Plastic-Free Future Packathon Honors Top Startups

Zomato, India's food ordering and delivery platform, in collaboration with Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, concluded the second edition of the Zomato Plastic-Free Future Packathon, held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The event brought together key stakeholders such as Shri Sanjiv, Joint Secretary, Startup India, DPIIT, 35+ startups, ~50 restaurant partners and investors to discover and celebrate sustainable packaging solutions by startups, for the delivery and dine-in industry.

The Packathon event recognized winners from the top 10 ready-to-scale and prototype-stage startups that presented their innovations aimed at reducing plastic waste. The winners were chosen from a pool of 128 applicants spanning 21 states, of which 47 startups were either fully or partially led by women entrepreneurs. Beyond the competition, the day offered a platform for 40+ startups to showcase their solutions, highlighting the diverse talent within the sector. The event also featured discussions and investor insights relevant to the advancement of sustainable packaging.

Additionally, the event included the Zomato Plastic-Free Future Packaging Awards, recognizing players in the restaurant industry. These awards acknowledged the efforts of 24 National and Regional restaurant brands that have adopted more sustainable packaging alternatives while maintaining customer experience.



Speaking at the event, Anjali Ravi Kumar, Chief Sustainability Officer, Eternal, said, "At Zomato, we are committed to building a sustainable food ordering and delivery ecosystem, including identifying and promoting innovators working on sustainable alternatives to plastic packaging for food delivery. Since restaurants choose and procure their own packaging, the Zomato Plastic-Free Future Packathon has become a unique platform connecting innovators, restaurants and investors."

Shri Sanjiv, Joint Secretary, Startup India, DPIIT, the Guest of Honour at the event, said, "As a result of concerted efforts under the Startup India initiative, we now have DPIIT-recognized startups across 55 diverse industries. We are actively working to support startups in sunrise sectors such as climate, sustainability, green technologies and allied sectors.

The Zomato Plastic-Free Future Program has recognized over 200 restaurant brands, with 7,500+ restaurants making active efforts to use less plastic packaging. These restaurants are in over 400+ cities and enjoy a special tag of 'low plastic packaging' on the Zomato app. To further reduce the environmental impact of restaurant packaging, Zomato also runs a voluntary plastic waste recycling initiative of 100% plastic-neutral deliveries. Under this initiative, the company recycles plastic waste equal to the amount restaurants use to pack their orders. Since FY23, Zomato has recycled 45,000 MT of plastic waste.

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PHDCCI Workshop on Healthier Food Reformulations

PHDCCI in collaboration with IQAC- Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences (BCAS) organised a Hands on Workshop on Healthier Food Reformulations at the PHD House, New Delhi. Siraj Husain, Former Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries was the Chief Guest for the occasion. Dr. Ranjeet Mehta, CEO and Secretary General, PHDCCI , Prof. Avneesh Mittal, Principal, BCAS, Prof. Eram Rao, coordinator- IQAC BCAS were also amongst the dignitaries during the gathering.

Celebrity Chef Ajay Chopra conducted the Master class and shared his innovative ways for reducing the sodium content in the food. He stated, “As a chef, I’m always looking for ways to elevate everyday dishes without compromising their taste or authenticity. Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is one such ingredient that adds an umami kick, making a dish truly memorable. In my demonstration of Indori Poha, just a pinch of MSG brings the flavors together in perfect harmony, adding a deeper, more satisfying taste. It’s time we embrace MSG in our kitchens—not just in restaurants, but at home too. It’s a brilliant way to make simple food truly shine.”

During his address, Dr. Ranjeet Mehta, CEO and Secretary General, stated, “Through this initiative, we aim to create greater awareness, build capacity, and encourage the food industry to adopt responsible practices.”

As we explore innovative approaches to reformulate food products for better health and taste, the role of umami is becoming increasingly important. Monosodium glutamate (MSG), a well-researched umami seasoning, offers a unique



advantage—it contains only one-third the sodium as compared to table salt and enables meaningful sodium reduction without compromising on flavour. Having researched this for over three decades, I’ve tested MSG across a wide range of Indian dishes—from sambhar and chutneys to pulao and curries. In our sensory evaluations, we found that incorporating MSG allowed for up to a 40% decrease in sodium content, with no loss in taste or acceptability. MSG blends effortlessly with Indian spices, making everyday meals more enjoyable. When used in optimum quantity, it serves as an effective and safe tool to support healthier eating.” Dr. Jamuna Prakash, Food Consultant and Former Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Mysore.

Scotch Gets Cheaper: India Cuts Import Duty

The India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), signed earlier this month, has stirred a varied response within India’s alcoholic beverages (Alcobev) sector. While the deal is seen as a breakthrough for tariff reforms and international trade, industry stakeholders remain divided on its long-term implications, and competitive balance.

A key highlight of the agreement is the reduction of import duty on Whisky & Gin from 150% to 75%, falling to 40% by the 10th year of the deal. The reduction in duties is likely to make scotch liquor more accessible to Indian consumers, potentially intensifying competition for domestic brands in the premium and luxury segments. While UK exporters and Indian importers have welcomed the move as a significant step toward making premium international spirits more accessible to Indian consumers, some domestic producers are wary of increased competition in the high-end spirits segment.

Industry observers note that this tariff cut is expected to boost the availability of quality global alcobev brands in India at more competitive prices, potentially reshaping consumer preferences and encouraging premiumisation in the market.

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), representing domestic alcobev producers, has

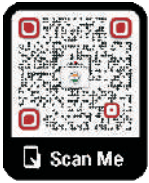
voiced concerns over the India-UK FTA’s implications for the local industry. The association cautioned that if similar duty reduction structures are adopted in ongoing trade negotiations with countries like the US and EU, it could pose significant challenges for Indian manufacturers. According to CIABC, while the agreement with the UK may benefit consumers and international players, extending such concessions broadly could disrupt the competitive balance and adversely impact the growth and stability of the domestic sector.

However, the International Spirits and Wines Association of India (ISWAI), representing global liquor companies, welcomed the move, calling it a "win-win"

for both nations. The association highlighted that the duty reduction offers a significant strategic advantage, while also creating an environment conducive to greater investment and market growth in India’s premium spirits segment.

As the Indian market continues to evolve with a growing appetite for premium and craft spirits, such agreement offers both opportunities and challenges that will shape the future of the Indian Alcobev industry.





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ITDC Appoints Mugdha Sinha as New Managing Director



The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a PSU under the Ministry of Tourism, has appointed Mugdha Sinha, IAS (1999 batch, Rajasthan cadre), as its new Managing Director. A seasoned bureaucrat with the rank of Additional Secretary, Sinha brings over 20 years of administrative experience and policy leadership to ITDC's helm.

Her previous tenure as Director General of Tourism at the Ministry of Tourism saw her spearhead key national initiatives, particularly in innovation and data-driven tourism

policy. She also held a pivotal role in the Ministry of Culture, leading the GLAM division, where she integrated heritage promotion with tourism development.

She will now lead and oversee all ITDC verticals, including The Ashok Group of Hotels, Ashok Events, Ashok Travels & Tours, the Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management (AIH&TM), duty-free operations, catering services, and engineering consultancy.

Commenting on her appointment, Sinha said, "It is a privilege to join ITDC. My focus will be on modernising operations, enhancing the tourism and hospitality experience, and building a globally competitive brand rooted in India's rich cultural heritage."

Her leadership signals a forward-looking phase for ITDC, with renewed emphasis on operational excellence and global positioning—developments hospitality professionals will watch closely.

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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Anuj Soin



Radisson Blu Hotel, New Delhi Paschim Vihar has appointed Anuj Soin, as the new General Manager. With over 18 years of extensive experience, Anuj steps into his new role with a strong commitment to elevating the guest experience and driving operational excellence.

He has worked with some of the most iconic names in Indian hospitality—starting with Taj Hotels, Marriott International, and The Leela Kempinski Gurgaon, before spending six successful years with the Radisson Hotel Group.

From iconic names like Taj Hotels, Marriott International, and The Leela Kempinski Gurgaon to six successful years within the Radisson Hotel Group, his career is a journey of consistent dedication, people-focused leadership, and a keen understanding of what defines great hospitality in today's dynamic world.

He is known for his intuitive leadership style, one that blends strategic acumen with empathy, and his ability to build teams that deliver not just service, but soulful experiences.

His appointment comes at a pivotal time as the hotel looks to strengthen its positioning in West Delhi's competitive hospitality landscape, while deepening connections with both corporate and leisure travellers.

Anuj Chaudhry



Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort has announced the appointment of Anuj Chaudhry as its new General Manager. With nearly two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, Anuj brings a wealth of strategic insight to the role and brings a proven track record of operational excellence, people-first leadership, and a guest-

centric approach.

Anuj began his career at Taj Krishna, Hyderabad, gaining expertise in luxury guest services. He has since led key hotels across Accor, including Grand Mercure and ibis brands in South India, managing over 400 keys in leadership roles.

In his new role, Anuj will spearhead the resort's strategic direction, enhance guest experiences, and lead the team into its next phase of growth.

Throughout his journey, he has been known for his results-driven leadership, empowering teams, and delivering elevated guest experiences. His strategic acumen, paired with an unwavering passion for hospitality, positions him perfectly to lead Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort into its next phase of growth.

Chef Avinash Naha



W Goa announced the appointment of Avinash Naha as its new Executive Chef, ushering in a bold new era of culinary creativity, conscious cooking, and Indian heritage reimaged.

With a globe-spanning career and a passion for pushing boundaries, Avinash is already turning up the heat, transforming W Goa's kitchens into stages

for immersive storytelling and radical reinvention. Having led culinary innovation across renowned international brands like IHG, IHCL, and The Ritz-Carlton.

His return to Marriott International marks a full-circle moment, reigniting his commitment to crafting unforgettable experiences that fuse local soul with global sophistication. W Goa's guests can now expect immersive culinary narratives: ancient grains reinterpreted as modern luxury, from Goan fishermen, and meals that not only nourish the body but stir the soul, said a hotel release.

Under Naha's leadership, W Goa is embracing a new definition of luxury, one that is rooted, real, and responsible. From root-to-stem practices and regenerative coffee sourcing to a zero-waste mindset, the kitchen is now a playground for purpose-driven innovation.

Chef Anal Uniyal



Fairmont Jaipur has announced the appointment of Chef Anal Uniyal as its new Director of Culinary. With more than 20 years of experience, Chef Uniyal brings extensive expertise in crafting exceptional culinary journeys.

A seasoned professional, he has built a distinguished career curating refined and memorable

dining experiences at many of India's most prestigious luxury destinations. His culinary expertise spans Indian and Western traditions, complemented by a deep knowledge of Pan-Asian cuisines and regional Indian flavours.

Throughout his career, Uniyal has led the culinary teams at several distinguished properties, including The Oberoi Udaivilas, Umaid Bhawan Palace, Taj Exotica Resort & Spa in the Andamans, and Vivanta by Taj, Hyderabad. His résumé features successful hotel pre-openings, high-profile events such as the G20 curtain-raiser in the Andamans, and the privilege of hosting the President of India alongside other eminent dignitaries.

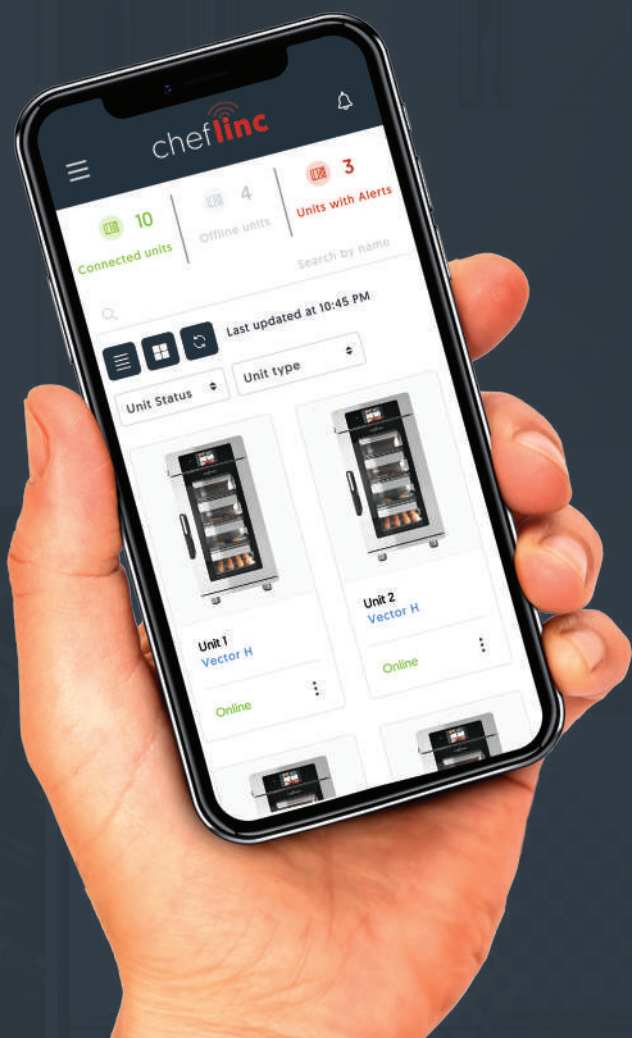
The management expressed confidence in the new culinary leader, citing his impressive credentials and leadership style as being well-aligned with the property's commitment to delivering exceptional dining experiences.

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Spirulina-Based Smoked Salmon Goes Commercial

SimpliiGood, which is owned by AlgaeCore Technologies, Ltd., is advancing to commercial production of its 100% plant-based smoked-salmon analog composed of highly nutritious spirulina microalgae.

Backed by US\$4M in new funding, fresh EU regulatory clearance, and with pilots underway in Europe and Israel, the company is now bringing one of the most sustainable proteins to the mainstream market—reimagined as the world's favorite fish.

From pilot to full production

With the launch of its full-scale industrial manufacturing line, the company has transitioned to commercial output of its texturized fresh spirulina branded Simplii Texture. This enables the company to ramp up production of its breakthrough ingredient to hundreds of tons per year, allowing them to confidently meet an anticipated wave of demand for its novel smoked salmon analog.

AlgaeCore began as a cultivator and enricher of fresh, high-value food- and supplement-grade spirulina for B2B and B2C product makers, food service, and retailers. The company expanded into the food-tech arena giving its raw material an added role as a texturizer. Its proprietary platform can transform fresh spirulina into a range of fish alternatives that are naturally rich in protein, sustainable, and boast an excellent nutritional profile.

"No complex and expensive equipment, such as 3D printers or extrusion equipment are required to craft our texturized protein," explains Baruch Dach, CTO and co-founder of AlgaeCore. "Our fresh, undried spirulina and a few natural ingredients are combined and passed through a machine that resembles a pasta roller to produce our spirulina-based smoked salmon in a simple process."

AlgaeCore's state-of-the-art commercial facility is already primed to produce dozens of tons of texturized spirulina over the next few months. Each 1kg of Simplii Texture can be transformed into 3-4kg of its plant-based clean-label smoked salmon delicacy.

Two Technologies in One

At the heart of AlgaeCore's innovation are



dual IP-protected technologies that enable the creation of its salmon analog. The first is a decolorization tech that separates the green chlorophyll component from the spirulina. Rich in antioxidants and micronutrients, this high value sidestream is redirected into supplements or as a natural food colorant. The salmon replica's pale pink hue is expressed through the remaining carotenoid pigment naturally present in spirulina.

SimpliiGood's second texturizing technology consolidates the remaining mass into a high-moisture texturized vegetable protein. The result is a silky, yet fibrous structure of the analog presenting the same natural glossy finish as smoked salmon. The finished product offers consumers the same sensory experience of biting into real smoked salmon, with full nutrition plus a welcome, spirulina boost.

The salmon-like creation offers a concentrated natural source of whole protein (up to 70%) and nutrients, including iron and beta-carotene. The spirulina content can be tailored to meet the client's preferences, comprising anywhere from 40% to 100% of the end product. Other ingredients include rice flour, tapioca, oil, and spices.

AlgaeCore's solution can seamlessly plug into even the most traditional production lines. This makes it easy for food manufacturers to branch into alternative protein production, or to reformulate existing product lines with

a nutritious spirulina upgrade. Simplii Texture is also appealing to fish product manufacturers seeking opportunities to diversify into plant-based alternatives. There is currently a global drive to ease the mounting strain on marine populations due to overfishing.

Regulatory Green light for Simplii Texture

"With overfishing of salmon at a crisis point, our spirulina-based smoked salmon analog is ready for commercial roll-out," states Lior Shalev, AlgaeCore CEO and co-founder. "Our creation embodies the same look, mouthfeel, and great flavor as real salmon. It is already receiving outstanding reviews and traction, demonstrating genuine market share potential. Simplii Texture has gained regulatory approval in Europe as a non-novel ingredient and completed the pilot phase. Production is up to scale the ingredient is currently in the process of securing US-FDA approval."

Simplii Texture is currently in pilot trials with a number of food manufacturers in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, and Israel. The company projects the first spirulina smoked salmon creations under private label brands will hit the retail shelves within the next six months.

Sun energized spirulina

Powered by natural sunlight, AlgaeCore cultivates its spirulina in ponds housed in greenhouses situated in the southern desert region of Israel. More than 98% of the water used in the process is recycled. Spirulina also thrives on carbon, rendering it one of the most climate-friendly crops. It grows rapidly and in abundance with a harvest every 24 hours.

In 2023, AlgaeCore partnered with the Haifa Group to optimize its ready-to-use nutrient mixtures for commercial spirulina cultivation. This collaboration is proving to be instrumental in reducing spirulina costs and fortifying AlgaeCore's supply chain. The start-up has raised more than US\$19M in seed funds, with key investment coming from NFX, plus a recent US\$4M innovation grant from the Israel Innovation Authority.



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Changing Dining Trends

Change is a continuous ongoing phenomenon. It's a part of life. The only thing that does not change is the diners' desire to have something different; something innovatively delicious and scrumptious! John D Rockefeller had said, "Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." And, indeed, the desire of diners for something prodigious is something that makes the chefs experiment with dishes which would be delectable and look stunningly attractive. Ashok Malkani, in this second and conclusive part of the forthcoming food trends discusses about the diners' preference for new regional as well as global cuisine and also, to dine at a place that has an aura of unforgettable ambience.

Changing food trends are a constant phenomenon. Several broad, cultural factors are relentlessly changing food trends. Increased globalization has broadened the customers' palates, making them more adventurous and conscious not only about factors like flavour and sumptuous taste, but also about health and sustainability. Some of the changing trends have also strengthened innovations in technologies which have reshaped not only food production methods but also food consumption patterns.

The palette, in even the local restaurants, has exciting new flavours from around the world at the other end of your fork. Today, there is demand for regional dishes as well as global cuisine. So, what are the regional dishes that would create a splash and which would be the preferred global cuisine in the near future?

Pradip Kumar Pani, Executive Chef, Grand Mercure Mysore, states, "As far as regional cuisine is concerned, Mysore cuisine, with health-conscious trends, would continue to be popular for some time to come."

Speaking about global cuisine he avers, "It is shifting towards 'Conscious Cuisine,' a gastronomical approach that prioritizes fresh, high-quality ingredients paired with balanced flavours."

Dinesh Rana, Executive Chef, Novotel Goa Panjim declares, "The Himalayan belt, with its rich biodiversity, is poised to introduce a refreshing twist to the culinary landscape, redefining palates with its unique flavours and indigenous ingredients."

He continues, "Over the next few years, diners are expected to gravitate towards a diverse array of global cuisines, with Japanese and Spanish fare which emphasize on fresh, unprocessed ingredients, appealing to health-conscious consumers."

Gurpreet Singh Sodhi, Director of Food and Beverage, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore affirms "Regional Indian cuisine is witnessing a renaissance. Diners are increasingly exploring forgotten grains and heirloom recipes. At Araana Restaurant in our Hotel, we are highlighting local culinary heritage. Satvik cuisine and temple food concepts are also gaining traction for their purity and simplicity.



Vijay Pandey

As far as international cuisine is concerned, Japanese cuisine is gaining popularity. At Sheraton Indore, we're introducing Middle Eastern delights at our weekend buffets. Another rising trend is Korean cuisine."

Vijay Pandey, Corporate Chef at Rebel Foods, Mumbai states, the regional cuisine which would be preferred over the next few years would comprise of millets and millet-based recipes, aligning with the growing demand for wholesome, nutrient-dense foods. Regional specialties are gaining the spotlight for their authentic flavours and health benefits."

He adds, "With evolving palates and increasing global exposure, diners are embracing a diverse mix of international cuisines that offer both bold flavours and health benefits. Asian delights continue to captivate Indian taste buds. Mediterranean staples are gaining popularity for their protein-packed, nutrient-dense appeal. Russian classics provide a comforting balance of subtle heat, mild spices, and moderate oil usage. The rise of plant-based innovations has introduced unique



Dinesh Rana

sweet-and-spicy pairings and inventive desserts. This global gastronomic shift is fueled by growing health consciousness, increased awareness of ingredients, global travel exposure, and the influence of social media."

Kazim Mehdi, Director of Food & Beverage, Four Seasons Hotel, Bengaluru, states "Several regional, as well as global dishes, having health benefits are proving popular. Mediterranean cuisine, known for fresh ingredients, olive oil, and dishes like Greek souvlaki and Italian burrata continues to appeal to health-conscious consumers."

Varad Kotnala, Executive Sous Chef, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, avers. "For the Indian palate, several global cuisines have found strong resonance due to their familiar flavour profiles. Italian and Mexican cuisines are particularly popular as they share common ingredients with Indian cooking. Nepali cuisine also finds favour for similar reasons. Thai cuisine has emerged as another strong contender. The success of these cuisines in India can be attributed to their use of ingredients that align with local taste preferences while offering distinct culinary experiences."

Tenzin Phuntsok, Executive Chef, Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall, believes, "Dishes from North East, which use fresh ingredients with natural flavours are likely to be set a trend."

He adds, "Indian cuisine is poised to make a significant impact on the global dining scene. With its rich tapestry of regional flavors and a vibrant array of spices, as also growing interest in plant-based eating and holistic wellness, Indian cuisine is becoming an increasingly popular choice among diners."

Sukesh Krishnan, Executive Chef, Gateway Bekal, Kerala, disclosed, "In India there will be spotlight on northeastern cuisine from Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram etc. Nostalgic regional food is going to be a trend setter. A North Indian cuisine restaurant like Loya is celebrating the authenticity of time-honoured cooking techniques. As far as global cuisines are concerned, South East Asian cuisine is gaining momentum now a days. Southeast Asian cuisine is a blend of tradition and external influence. This cuisine is symphony of aromatic curries, fragrant spices, vibrant



Pradip Kumar Pani

herbs and emphasis is more on fresh ingredients.”

Transformative Changes

Presently, besides experiencing delectable mouth-watering and appetising dishes, sustainability has become a trend with the diners as well as the dining places. The F&B industry is witnessing several changes. It is one of the leading industries as far as sustainability is concerned. The culinary landscape is undergoing transformative changes – from environmental landscape to innovative ingredients – to satiate the diners’ desire for exotic flavours, et al.

Varad Kotnala declares, “Sustainability has become a key focus in the hospitality industry. F&B outlets are moving towards using seasonal ingredients, and reducing carbon footprints by switching to greener energy sources. These efforts reflect a growing commitment to environmental responsibility, with outlets seeking to contribute positively to sustainability while meeting the increasing consumer demand for eco-conscious practices.”

He adds, “There is also a trend towards local sourcing of ingredients. In future, food will increasingly become more plant-based. Many restaurants are already having menus featuring around 40% locally sourced meats and 70% vegetables. The growing demand for sustainable, plant-based options aligns with this trend, offering both health and environmental benefits.”

Dinesh Rana states, “The future of India’s F&B industry will strongly lean toward locally sourced ingredients and plant-based foods, driven by health, sustainability, and economic factors. By sourcing ingredients from nearby farms and producers,

restaurants can offer fresher dishes while reducing the environmental impact of long-distance transportation. Plant-based foods are becoming increasingly mainstream due to their health benefits and lower environmental footprint.”

Tenzin Phuntsok says, “Sustainability is gaining significant importance in the F&B industry. Today’s consumers, particularly the younger generations, are increasingly environmentally conscious and demand that businesses prioritize sustainability. In addition, embracing farm-to-table initiatives, leveraging seasonal ingredients, minimizing food waste, and opting for energy-efficient kitchen equipment can further reinforce a commitment to a more sustainable future.”

He adds, “The growing consumer preference for plant-based cuisine is anticipated to inspire a wave of innovative, plant-centric culinary creations.”

Sukesh Krishnan avers, “Some sustainable practises like: Minimizing food wastage, Support for procuring local food sources, and Moving away from single use plastic & switching to compostable or reusable packaging, are being implemented in hotels.”

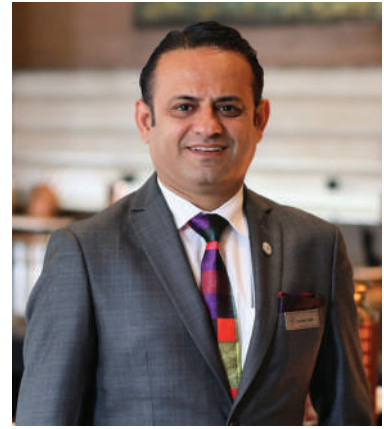
He adds, “The demand for locally sourced ingredients is increasing and this will not only support the farmers but will help the dishes to be fresh and sustainable. Post-pandemic, wellness has become a priority for the travellers.”

Pradip Kumar Pani elaborates, “Diners today have become more environmentally conscious than ever. For restaurants, sustainability is no longer a trend but a priority. Key sustainable practices being adopted by them are:

- Local & Seasonal Sourcing



Varad Kotnala



Gurpreet Singh Sodhi

- Zero-Waste Cooking
- Eco-Friendly Packaging
- Sustainable Menus

The Indian culinary industry is seeing a gradual shift towards local sourcing of ingredients and plant-based diets which are mainly driven by increased awareness on health and sustainability. Traditional and plant-based foods are gaining mainstream popularity.”

Gurpreet Singh Sodhi affirms, “Sustainability is at the core of Sheraton Indore’s F&B philosophy. Key sustainable practices include:

- Farm-to-table sourcing
- Zero-waste kitchens
- Plastic-free initiatives
- Solar-powered cooking stations.

These practices align with Marriott’s Serve 360 sustainability goals, ensuring ethical sourcing, minimal waste, and eco-conscious dining. Local sourcing is a key sustainability initiative at our property.”

He adds, “At Saffron, we are modernizing classic recipes with plant-based alternatives, such as:

- Vegan Almond “Paneer” Tikka instead of dairy-based paneer.
- Jackfruit Tandoori mimicking meaty textures.
- Millet & Sprouts Biryani, a healthier alternative to rice biryanis.

At Infuse, our pastry chefs are innovating with dairy-free and gluten-free desserts using nut milks, jaggery, and cold-pressed oils.”

Vijay Pandey affirms, “With ongoing global climate changes, sustainability is no longer just an option but a necessity for future generations. The food and beverage industry must integrate sustainable



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practices at every level—from sourcing ingredients and cooking methods to waste disposal and restaurant ambiance. As consumers become more conscious of their carbon footprint, it is the collective responsibility of businesses and individuals alike to embrace sustainability as a way of life.”

He continues, “Local sourcing enhances freshness by minimizing logistics and reducing multiple touchpoints, ensuring that consumers enjoy seasonal cuisine packed with essential vitamins and minerals year-round. The growing preference for plant-based foods reflects a conscious shift towards healthier and more sustainable choices. However, the long-term impact of this trend remains uncertain, given that nearly half of India’s population already follows a vegetarian diet. While plant-based alternatives continue to gain traction, traditional food habits and cultural influences will play a significant role in shaping future consumption patterns.”

Kazim Mehdi opines, “Sustainability is becoming a key focus for F&B outlets as consumers demand eco-friendly dining options. Restaurants and hotels are adopting sustainable practices such as local sourcing to reduce carbon footprints, using seasonal and plant-based ingredients, and implementing zero-waste cooking by utilizing every part of an ingredient. We, at Four Seasons Hotel, Bengaluru, have a zero waste cocktail which is made by recycling all the peels and garnishes. Our KOT paper is recycled and converted into coasters.”

He continues, “As far as sourcing of food is concerned, there will be a stronger focus on local sourcing and plant-based ingredients in India’s food industry, driven by several key factors.”

Food and Drinks Pairing

Food and drink pairing is an essential element today. It can elevate the entire culinary experience of the diner. Finding a perfect match may sound like a daunting task but it is essential to enhance the diners’ gastronomic experience. Whether it’s pairing alcoholic drinks or non-alcoholic drinks the art of pairing elevates the dining experience to new heights.

Sukesh Krishnan says, “Fermented drink and food pairing will be a trend in coming years.”

Varad Kotnala believes, “Food and drink pairings will continue to evolve in the future. Green tea, oolong, or chai may become more popular when paired with savory dishes like sushi, dimsum, or spiced roasted vegetables. Cold brews and espresso are likely to complement desserts with deep, rich flavors. Plant-based milks such as oat or almond milk could find their way into savory dishes, pairing well with spicy curries or chili.”

Dinesh Rana avers, “Future food and drink pairings will emphasize health, flavour, and sustainability. Kombucha, with its

tangy, fizzy profile, will pair well with salads, sushi, and spicy dishes. Fermented foods like kimchi and sauerkraut will complement savory meals, enhancing umami flavours. The farm-to-fork movement will promote seasonal ingredients paired with craft beers, small-batch wines, and cold-pressed juices. Himalayan cuisine, known for its bold spices, will be paired with herbal teas like rhododendron and chamomile, aligning with the growing focus on natural and wholesome dining.”

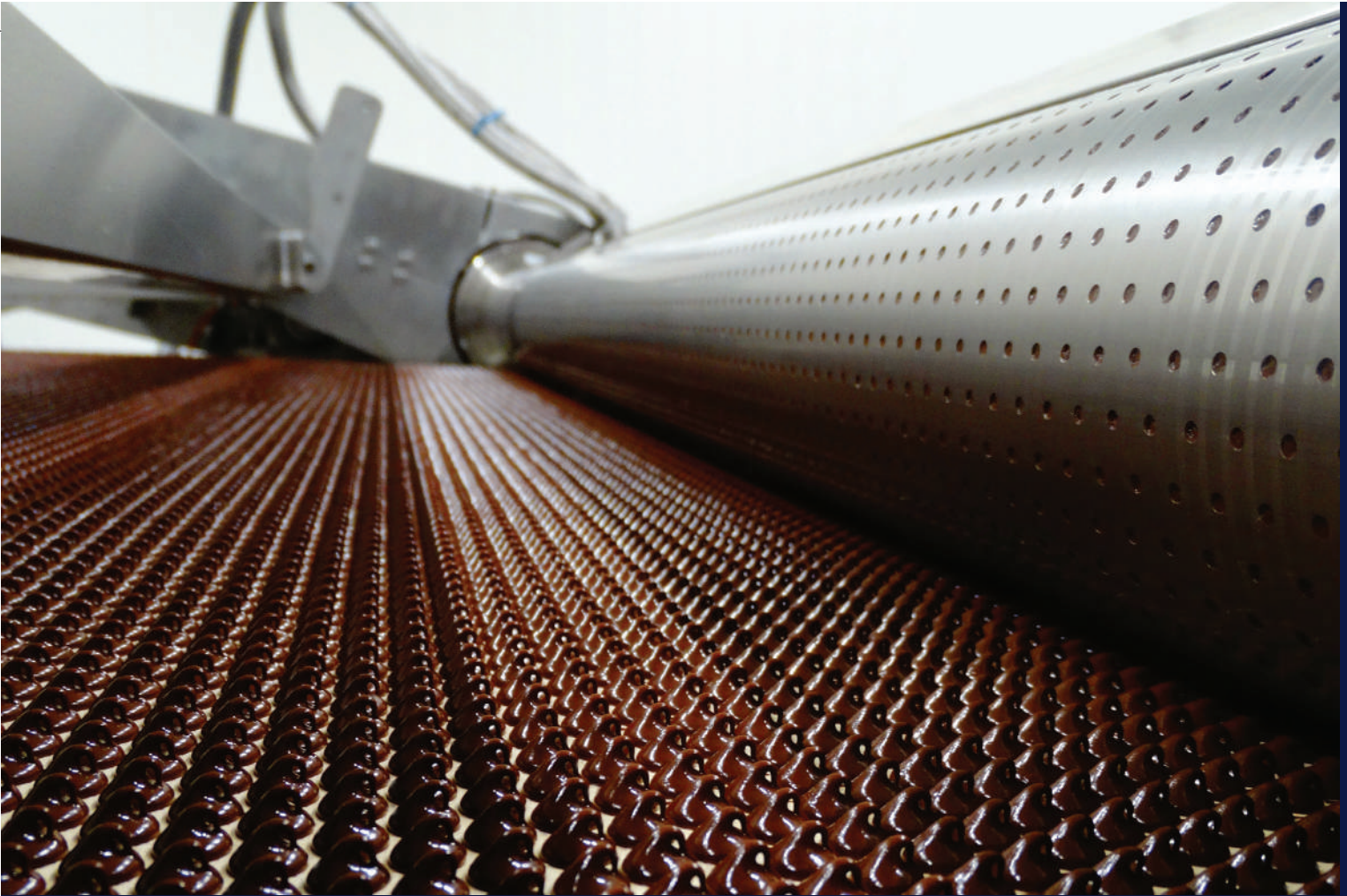
Tenzin Phuntsok states, “In the culinary world, innovative food and drink pairings continuously captivate connoisseurs, and I foresee two combinations gaining prominence. First, the exquisite union of bold teas, such as chai or matcha, with spicy cuisine offers an intriguing balance of heat and flavor, creating a remarkable gustatory experience. Second, the sophisticated pairing of craft beer with artisanal cheese showcases an elegant dance between the hoppy character of the beer and the luscious creaminess of fine cheeses, resulting in a harmonious and delightful symphony of tastes.”

Kazim Mehdi opines, “Emerging food and drink pairing trends focus on bold flavors, health-conscious choices, and innovative combinations that enhance the dining experience. Cocktail and food pairings are becoming more curated, with signature drinks infused with local ingredients like saffron or kokum complementing regional dishes. Tea and fine dining are gaining popularity, as artisanal teas such as oolong and matcha replace wine in pairings to highlight delicate flavors.”

Pradip Kumar Pani, declares, “Combining foods and drinks thoughtfully can make meals more delicious and healthier. Probiotic and fermented drinks play a crucial role in gut health and digestion. Kombucha’s acidity enhances digestion when paired with grilled paneer and sprout salad, while buttermilk complements bajra roti and vegetable curry by cooling the system and aiding digestion. Infused and alkaline waters further elevate wellness dining by detoxifying the body and refreshing the palate. Lemon-cucumber-mint water pairs well with grilled fish and broken wheat salad, offering hydration and balance. Aloe vera and basil water provide a soothing



Kazim Mehdi



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Suresh Krishnan

contrast to steamed dumplings and light soups, while coconut water's natural electrolytes make it an ideal companion to fresh fruit and chia pudding, ensuring hydration and sustained energy."

Gurpreet Singh Sodhi, affirms, "Pairing regional, handcrafted beverages with gourmet dishes is a growing trend. At Sheraton Indore, we are innovating with unique pairings like:

Bajra & Spinach Kebabs with Turmeric & Moringa Tea

Stuffed Kundru (Ivy Gourd) Kofta with Kokum Sherbet

Jaggery & Coconut Pudding with Aged Tulsi Kombucha.

Roasted Makhana Chaat with Saffron-infused Almond Thandai

Tea pairing is another emerging trend—where handcrafted herbal infusions complement traditional Indian delicacies."

Vijay Pandey informs, "The combination would be of Sweet and Spicy. Eg: Boba Tea

& spicy ramen/fried chicken/ Pasta and Herbal teas with plant-based protein bars."

Ambience

While the menu and the culinary sensitivity, savouriness and flavour play an important role in the success of a restaurant, ambience is crucial in F&B outlets as it impacts the customer significantly. In the competitive landscape of hospitality industry, being witnessed today, ambience of a restaurant plays an important part in the success of an F&B outlet.

Dinesh Rana declares, "Today, diners are increasingly seeking a complete and memorable experience rather than just a meal. Due to this, restaurants are elevating their ambience, service, and food presentation, creating multi-sensory, immersive dining environments that leave a lasting impression. In terms of décor, restaurants are focusing on unique and visually striking interiors that reflect their theme and cuisine. Elements such as mood lighting, curated music, open kitchens, and interactive design features help create a distinct atmosphere. Natural elements like indoor plants, earthy textures, and sustainable materials are also becoming popular. Additionally, personalized touches, such as customized seating arrangements and themed decor, enhance the overall dining experience."

He adds, "Presentation also plays a crucial role, with chefs using innovative plating techniques that transform food into visual art."



Tenzin Phuntsok

Pradip Kumar Pani avers, "Contemporary diners look beyond the food. They are in search of immersive experiences. Restaurants, in today's world, are evolving with themed décor, storytelling menus, and interactive elements that enhance the engagement."

He elaborates, "I may expound further on each of these thus:

Ambience & Storytelling: Concept-based interiors, such as a "Royal Mysore Experience" with palace-style décor and traditional music transports guests into unique culinary worlds

Interactive & Live Cooking: From having open kitchens, to quick dosa counters to live tandoor stations and flambé desserts are what creates anticipation to indulge the dishes..

Innovative Presentation: Like serving food on banana leaves, stone slabs or even wooden boards..

Sustainable & Nature-Inspired Décor: We, at Grand Mercure Mysore, strive to have eco-friendly decor that supports local artisans.

Community & Social Dining

Gurpreet Singh Sodhi says, "Dining today is about immersive experiences, storytelling, and personalization. At Sheraton Indore, we are curating experiential dining that engages all five senses. For instance:

- At Saffron, our "Heritage Thali Experience" is served in handcrafted silverware, accompanied by live folk music and storytelling about the origins of each dish.

- At Infuse, guests can personalize their vegan and millet-based desserts at our live counter, watching the plating artistry unfold.

- Our "immersive dining nights" feature



Pic courtesy: Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, Mahabalipuram



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projection-mapped tables, where guests can visually experience the journey of ingredients from farm to plate.

By 2030, expect AI-powered menus that adapt to guest preferences, holographic storytelling of recipes, and sensorial dining spaces with curated soundscapes and aroma-driven plating techniques.”

Vijay Pandey declares, “Diners today seek a seamless and aesthetically pleasing dining experience that blends convenience with ambiance. Features such as online table allotment, digital tablet or QR code-based ordering, and visually engaging menu descriptions with images or video clips enhance engagement while minimizing interruptions.”

Kazim Mehdi affirms, “many diners today prioritize a memorable experience over

just the food itself. This shift is driven by social media, where visually stunning and immersive dining experiences gain more attention.”

Varad Kotnala maintains, “Diners are increasingly focusing on having a memorable experience rather than just the food. The décor plays a key role in this, as it sets the tone and enhances the dining experience. Restaurants are investing more in creating immersive environments, focusing on unique décor, uniforms, and interactive dining experiences to engage guests.”

Tenzin Phuntsok states, “Discerning diners are progressively gravitating towards experiences that transcend the mere act of dining. This burgeoning trend is fuelled by a deep-rooted yearning for social sharing, distinctive encounters, and profound

emotional connections. Consequently, we can anticipate a multitude of refined transformations in both décor and food service in the near future.”

Sukesh Krishnan is of the view, “Diners will be more focussed on experiential dining. Experiential dining is a culinary concept that provide diners with a unique and unforgettable memories. Atmosphere and ambience will play a major part in dining. Presentation of the food is also key during dining and plating can transform a basic plate into something special.”

Conclusion

Various significant changes are expected in the near future on trends, in several aspects of dining to cater to the changing demands of the diners.

Trendy Dining Recipes

The Siesta Smoothie

Ingredients (700ml serving)

Green apple, cored	1
Cucumber	1
Fresh mint sprigs	4
Kale	4 small leaves
Spinach (or other greens like lettuce)	1 handful
Juice of 1 lemon	

Method:

Use a juicer to process the apple first, then add the mint, kale, spinach, and finally the cucumber.

Pour the juice into individual bottles or glasses and enjoy right away.

This light and refreshing green juice is ideal for an afternoon pick-me-up, providing a natural boost without excess sugar.

(Pradip Kumar Pani, Executive Chef, Grand Mercure Mysore)

Vegan Gulkand & Almond Mousse

(A plant-based take on a classic Indian-flavored dessert)

Ingredients:

Almond milk	1 cup
Cashew paste	½ cup
Gulkand (rose petal preserve)	2 tbsp
Agar-agar (vegan setting agent)	1 tbsp
Coconut sugar	¼ cup
Cardamom powder	½ tsp
Crushed pistachios (for garnish)	1 tbsp

Method:

Heat almond milk and cashew paste in a pan on low flame. Add gulkand, coconut sugar, and cardamom powder. Stir in agar-agar and mix well.

Pour into serving cups and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Garnish with crushed pistachios before serving.

This plant-based dessert is dairy-free, refined sugar-free, and rich in antioxidants, aligning with 2025’s focus on mindful indulgence.

(Gurpreet Singh Sodhi, Director of F&B, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore)

Jackfruit & Mushroom Tacos (Plant-Based & Sustainable)

Ingredients:

Young Jackfruit, shredded	2 cups
Mushrooms, finely chopped	1 cup
Olive oil	1 tbsp
Smoked Paprika	1 tsp
Ccumin	1 tsp
Chili powder	1/2 tsp
Garlic powder	1/2 tsp
Soy sauce	1 tbsp
BBQ sauce	1/2 cup
Small Tortillas	
Pickled onions, avocado, and fresh cilantro for garnish	

Instructions:

Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat, add jackfruit and mushrooms, and sauté for 5 minutes.

Add smoked paprika, cumin, chili powder, garlic powder, and soy sauce, cooking until flavors meld.

Stir in BBQ sauce and cook for another 3–5 minutes.

Serve in warm tortillas, garnished with pickled onions, avocado, and cilantro.

(Kazim Mehdi, Director of F&B, Four Seasons Hotel, Bengaluru)



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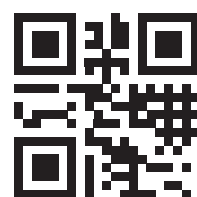
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Demand for cutlery has been growing over the years. It has been boosted by the growing number of F&B outlets including QSRs, takeaway services, food delivery platforms and the expansion of catering and event services. According to Redseer Strategy Consultants, India's food service market valued at \$80 billion in 2024, is projected to grow at a 10-11% CAGR, reaching \$144-\$152 billion by 2030. The type of cutlery has also been experiencing an increase in its range—from stainless steel (known for its durability and cost-effectiveness) to electroplated nickel silver (for a touch of elegance) to silver and even disposable options (like plastics, bamboo or recycled glass) and, more recently, to edible cutlery. **Ashok Malkani** discusses various aspect of the cutlery market which, due to the government's strict policies on single use plastics is, aided by creative designs that blend sustainability with fashion, undergoing a transitional phase rendering green cutlery both functional and fashionable.

Cutlery, in Indian F&B outlets enhances the dining experience and adds to the overall ambience. Cutlery caters to the diverse guest experience. A seemingly mundane aspect of dining, cutlery plays a significant role in the success of a restaurant. In India, most of the people eat with their hands but in hotels they prefer to eat with fancy cutlery. One is tempted to ask why do people prefer to use cutlery while dining in restaurants? Does cutlery enhance the dining experience in an F&B outlet? How?

Shravan Reddy, Director of Food and Beverage, Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park, states, "Cutlery serves a fundamental role in dining by facilitating a hygienic, efficient, and comfortable way to enjoy a variety of foods. While eating with hands is a cherished

tradition in India, especially for certain dishes, cutlery is a practical necessity in public dining settings. It enhances the dining experience in F&B outlets by offering sophistication, improving convenience, and ensuring proper etiquette, especially for formal or international cuisines. At our hotel, we ensure that the cutlery used is ergonomically designed for comfort and contributes to an elevated dining atmosphere."

Yogesh Pansare, Food and Beverage Director, Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, avers, "Cutlery plays a vital role in enhancing hygiene, convenience and the sophistication of the dining experience. In India, in formal dining settings, guests often prefer the comfort and cleanliness that cutlery provides. It supports portion control, proper handling of food & aligns with global dining

standards, thereby elevating the overall guest experience."

Debaditya Chaudhury, Managing Director of Chowman, Co-owner of Oudh 1590 & Chapter 2, is more elaborate. He declares, "While Indians, truly appreciate eating with hands at home, when it comes to dining in an F&B outlet, especially the ones serving cuisines like Chinese, cutlery plays an important role."

He emphasised, "Cutlery is necessary not just for maintaining hygiene, but also for helping our guests enjoy dishes the way they are meant to be experienced—like picking up delicate dimsums with chopsticks, or twirling noodles easily with a fork, or just slurping soup out of a deep rounded spoon. At Chowman, while we always focus on great flavors first, we also want the dining experience to be of world class and so thoughtfully placed cutlery

is a part of our intent to give you world class service."

Vijay Pande, Corporate Head Chef, Rebel Foods, states, "Cutlery plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall dining experience by enabling the consumption of a wide variety of dishes—particularly those like soups, salads, and desserts that simply cannot be eaten with hands. Global exposure through travel, social media, and changing cultural norms have all contributed to increased usage of cutlery. One may say that cutlery has become a symbol of hospitality and attention to detail."

He adds, "The selection of cutlery in an F&B outlet depends on both function and aesthetics. Cafés may require a limited set of items, QSRs typically opt for disposable versions, while fine dining establishments often offer a full range of cutlery tailored to each course of the meal."

Raman Grover –Managing Director–Soft Sensation P. Ltd. avers that there has been an increasing demand for cutlery from the hospitality sector. "But" he adds, "From a suppliers' perspectives, I may mention that India has undergone significant shifts post-pandemic, impacting both the volume of orders



Vicky Khurana

and the specific product expectations. One of the key changes I have noticed has been a significant shift in product expectations, with a much stronger emphasis on hygiene, safety, and sustainability alongside the traditional considerations of durability, aesthetics, and cost. The hospitality industry in India is now more cautious, more environmentally conscious in some segments, and acutely aware of the need for stringent hygiene practices."

Vicky Khurana - Director, Venus Industries, declares, "Post-pandemic, demand from

the industry has rebounded strongly, with a noticeable shift in both volume and product expectations. Hotels and banquets are placing larger orders as events and tourism surge back. However, buyers now prioritize durability, hygiene, and multifunctionality more than ever. There's also a growing preference for contemporary designs and premium finishes that reflect global standards."

Adish Jain- CEO of FNS International Ltd., says "Demand for cutlery has risen post pandemic due to an increase in the number of hotels and restaurants. This is expected to rise in the next 5 years, as the hospitality industry flourishes. There will thus be an increase business for everyone. But pricing and servicing of the client would play an imperative role for a cutlery vendor."

Satiating the Rising Demand

The demand for cutlery has been rising at a steady pace. According to 6Wresearch the Indian cutlery market which is valued at approximately \$ 3.1 billion is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.2% over the next five years. The cutlery market is a significant and growing sector and one of the

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reasons contributing to this is the expanding food and beverage industry. The increasing number of restaurants, especially quick service restaurants (QSRs) is a major driver for cutlery demand. If a new entrepreneur in the cutlery field wants to make a success he/she must be aware of several aspects of the F&B sector like: What are the different cutleries, glassware, and chinaware that we use in food and beverage service? And How many types of cutlery are used in an f&b outlet?

Adish Jain, disclosed, "With the hospitality industry growing at a healthy pace, the cutlery sector is witnessing tremendous evolution across both budget and High-end hotels. As competition intensifies, hotels want to have a unique setup for their table and banquets. Therefore, they are constantly seeking designs that help them stand out. PVD-coated cutlery is very much in fashion."

He adds, "From a supplier's perspective, I would say that the demand for cutlery in the hospitality industry has increased post pandemic, in line with the industry growth. However, there has been a significant shift in purchasers' pricing policies. From the vendor point of view, I would say that client servicing has become one of the most important factors that requires continuous attention."

He continues, "Today, price and durability have become critical. But still, design element is the one factor that plays the most important role."

Sanjay Dewan, Managing Director of Andymanhart Verpaco who has been in the imported cutlery business over the last 3 decades, states, "Over the past few years, we've seen a noticeable shift in how hotels and restaurants across India approach cutlery selection—driven by evolving consumer expectations, design sensibilities, and operational considerations. Today, aesthetic appeal and brand of cutlery has become increasingly important. Clients now seek cutlery that complements their brand identity and enhances the overall dining experience. There's been a clear move toward modern, minimalistic designs—often with matt or brushed finishes."

He adds, "In terms of materials, while stainless steel remains the industry standard, due to its durability and low maintenance, we're seeing growing interest in premium



Adish Jain

finishes like titanium PVD (a physical vapor deposition where a layer of metal is deposited onto the cutlery). There is also demand in black, gold, or copper finish, which offer both visual distinction and a sense of luxury to the customer. Among the primary factors the hospitality industry considers are:

- Durability
- Aesthetics
- Ergonomics
- Pricing
- Stock Availability and Continuity of Pattern.

He continues, "There are also subtle yet notable regional differences across the country. For instance, luxury hotels in metro cities often opt for imported brand that reflect international trends. Boutique resorts prefer artisanal or rustic-style cutlery. Business hotels in tier 2 cities tend to prioritize functionality and durability."

He avers, "In short, cutlery has become a curated component of the dining experience. With hospitality clients blending form and function like never before, we as suppliers, we are continually innovating to meet these evolving expectations."



Sanjay Dewan

Vicky Khurana, declares, "Over the past few years, hotels and restaurants in India have shifted towards premium, minimalist cutlery designs that reflect modern aesthetics and international trends. There is a growing preference for 304-grade stainless steel due to its durability, corrosion resistance, and elegant finish. Thicker cutlery, particularly in 4mm and 5mm, is favored for its luxurious feel and balance. Matte, satin, and dual-finish options have gained popularity over traditional glossy styles. Customization and branding on cutlery are also in demand."

He adds, "Hospitality clients in India consider several key factors when selecting cutlery. Durability is paramount in high-traffic hotels and restaurants. Aesthetics also play a critical role, as elegant and well-designed cutlery enhances table presentation and guest experience. Pricing is another vital consideration. Additionally, factors like ease of maintenance, availability of matching collections, and timely supply influence purchasing decisions."

He continues, "We've observed notable regional differences in cutlery preferences among hospitality clients across India."

Raman Grover, affirms "Preferences of hotels and restaurants in India regarding cutlery have evolved significantly, influenced by a growing emphasis on sustainability, aesthetics, hygiene, and the overall dining experience. Breakdown of the key trends are:

Design: Which, at present, is veering towards minimalistic elegance. Modern design increasingly focuses on comfortable grips, balanced handles, and thoughtful curves to enhance the user experience. Bespoke crockery and tableware, including cutlery with embossed logos or unique designs that reflect the restaurant's brand, are gaining popularity for a personalized touch.

Material: Stainless steel remains the preferred material due to its durability, hygiene, and relatively easy maintenance..

Finish: Mirror-polished stainless steel due to its durability and matte and brushed finishes, which are more resistant to fingerprints and smudges have gained popularity."

Yogesh Pansare informs, "Food and beverage service employs a range of cutlery, including appetizer forks, soup spoons, fish knives, dessert forks and steak knives, each chosen to complement the menu and plating style."

He adds, "F&B outlet typically uses 8–12

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types of cutlery depending on the menu and service format.”

Vijay Pande disclosed, “There is a wide array of cutlery used in F&B outlets, including starter knives and forks, soup spoons, dessert cutlery, fish forks, and steak knives.”

Debaditya Chaudhury disclosed, “At Chowman, every detail from the food to the table setting is carefully curated to offer a complete and memorable dining experience. When it comes to food and beverage service, we use a variety of cutlery, glassware, and chinaware, all chosen to complement the style and flavors of our cuisine.”

He adds, “As far as types of cutlery are concerned, at Chowman, we understand that dining is an experience made up of many small details and cutlery is one of them. In a typical F&B outlet like ours, there are several types of cutlery used to suit different courses and styles of food. Each type of cutlery is designed to make eating more comfortable, clean, and enjoyable for our guests.”

Shravan Reddy states, “Our F&B outlet, at Hilton, uses a variety of cutlery, including knives, forks, spoons, dessert spoons, and specialized tools like tongs or lobster crackers. Glassware ranges from wine glasses to tumblers, champagne flutes, and cocktail glasses, each selected for specific beverages. As for chinaware, we use plates, bowls, serving platters, soup cups, and even unique serving pieces to align with the theme of the meal and presentation.”

He adds, “The number of cutlery types used in our outlet can vary depending on the menu and style of dining. Typically, it ranges from 10 to 12 different types.”

Usage & Types of Cutlery

Cutlery is civilization, wrote Chilean poet Pablo Nerula, underlining the profound connection between culture and tools used for consuming food. Cutlery is considered to be a reflection of our heritage and values. As far as F&B is concerned cutlery contributes to the visual appeal and presentation of meals. Polished and different types of cutlery enhances the overall dining experience and creates an atmosphere of elegance and sophistication. One may ask what are the different materials used for cutlery and how different types of cutlery add to pleasure of consumption of different dishes?

Shravan Reddy avers, “The number of cutlery types used in our outlet, at Hilton



Raman Grover

and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park, can vary depending on the menu and style of dining. Typically, it ranges from 10 to 12 different types, including knives, forks, spoons, dessert spoons, soup spoons, salad forks, fish knives, and specialized items like steak knives or butter knives.”

Speaking about the different types of materials used for making cutlery, he states “Traditionally, cutlery was made from stainless steel, which remains the most common choice even now. However, with increasing sustainability awareness, biodegradable materials, bamboo, and even recycled materials are being preferred by several high-end and eco-conscious outlets. At our hotel, we pride ourselves on using biodegradable cutlery for takeaway and meal box orders to minimize our environmental impact.”

Yogesh Pansare states, “F&B outlet typically uses 8–12 types of cutlery depending on the menu and service format. Each dish has a unique texture and preparation method that calls for specific cutlery to enhance the ease of consumption and maintain the dish’s integrity.”

He adds, “As far as cutlery material is concerned, traditional materials include stainless steel and silver-plated cutlery. However, with growing emphasis on sustainability, establishments are exploring bamboo, wood, biodegradable plastics and plant-based composites.”

Debaditya Chaudhury declares, “At Chowman, we understand that dining is an experience made up of many small details and cutlery is one of them. In a typical F&B outlet like ours, there are several types of cutlery used to suit different courses and styles of food. Some of them are:

- Dinner Forks and Spoons
- Soup Spoons
- Dessert Spoons

- Chopsticks.

Each type of cutlery has a purpose – designed to make eating more comfortable, clean, and enjoyable for our guests.”

He adds, “Each piece is designed to suit the texture, style, and way a dish is traditionally eaten”

He continues, “As far as cutlery material is concerned I would like to state that traditionally, it has been made from a few classic materials like:

- Stainless Steel.
- Wood or Bamboo.
- Ceramic or Porcelain.

Today, with rising awareness about sustainability, there is a growing shift in the F&B industry toward more eco-friendly materials. Depending on the grade of the outlet, we see:

- Mid-range and premium outlets like Chowman sticking to stainless steel for durability but adding bamboo or wooden elements to reduce plastic use.
- Quick-service and casual outlets shifting towards biodegradable.
- Luxury dining spaces experimenting with recycled metals or reusable designer cutlery.

At Chowman, we always try to balance the best guest experience with responsibility toward the environment, and are constantly exploring smarter, greener choices where possible.”

Vijay Pande Informs, “There is a wide array of cutlery used in F&B outlets, including starter knives and forks, soup spoons, dessert cutlery, fish forks, and steak knives. The use of different types ensures that each dish is consumed the way it was intended, with the right balance of ease, hygiene, and elegance.”

Adish Jain avers, “In today’s environment, value for money has become the mantra for choosing the design. With hotels now coming into B and C towns, price has become very critical. And yes, durability also plays an important role, and it cuts the operational cost. But still, design element is the one factor that plays the most important role.”

He adds, “Customization is the most important factor, which is now coming up very strongly. Logo or some design engraving is very much in fashion now.”

Now Edible Cutlery!

The material used for cutlery has gone beyond imagination. With increasing awareness of sustainability, there is necessity of different

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"Source : Euromonitor Intl; Home and Garden, 2025 edition; GBN retail sales value terms; 2024 data."

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types of material for cutlery. Economy is the watchword! And the materials introduced are beyond belief! There is an increasing use of edible cutlery. The market for edible cutlery in India reached \$1.55 million in 2024. Looking forward, IMARC Group expects the market to reach \$ 3.48 million by 2033, exhibiting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.70% during 2025-2033. Rising environmental concerns, government regulations on single-use plastics, growing consumer awareness about sustainability, increasing demand for biodegradable alternatives, innovations in food-grade materials, expansion of the hospitality sector, and corporate initiatives for eco-friendly packaging are expanding the India edible cutlery market share.

Debaditya Chaudhury disclosed, "Quick Service Restaurants and home delivery outlets do use cutlery, though the type and material may differ from dine-in outlets. The cutlery used is often designed for easy handling, disposal, and sometimes, minimal maintenance. A few of our QSRs and home delivery outlets use materials like

- Bamboo or Wooden Cutlery
- Paper-based Cutlery.

He adds, "At Chowman, while we focus on premium dine-in experiences, we also keep an eye on the rising trend of eco-friendly and sustainable options in our home delivery services. The need for sustainable cutlery material has also undergone unimaginable changes like edible cutlery. This is typically made from flour, rice, and other natural grains. These cutlery items can be consumed after the meal, or they can be composted if not eaten. While the concept is still relatively new and experimental, some eco-conscious restaurants, food festivals, and specialty outlets have started embracing edible cutlery to offer a unique experience and reduce environmental impact.

Materials for edible cutlery often include:

- Rice flour or wheat flour
- Millets
- Cornstarch or seaweed.

Shravan Reddy states, "QSRs and home delivery outlets often use disposable cutlery. The material used typically includes biodegradable plastics or bamboo. In response to growing concerns about environmental sustainability, many outlets are now moving away from single-use plastic and opting for more eco-friendly alternatives."

He adds, "Edible cutlery is a growing trend, especially in eco-conscious establishments. Some progressive restaurants and cafes are introducing edible spoons, forks, and knives made from ingredients like rice, wheat, or even corn."

Yogesh Pansare too is of a similar view. He says, "Among the QSRs and delivery services outlets the trend is moving from single-use plastic to biodegradable and compostable options such as wooden, cornstarch-based or sugarcane fiber alternatives."

Vijay Pande declares, "QSRs and delivery outlets often include disposable cutlery with orders. These are typically made of biodegradable materials."

He avers, "Some brands have even adopted edible cutlery made from baked dough, offering a sustainable and novel experience. It also serves as a powerful



brand recall tool and extends the restaurant's ambiance to the customer's home.:

He adds, "Examples of edible cutlery among eco-conscious outlets include:

- Bread bowls for soups and stews
- Tortilla baskets for salads
- Chocolate cups or baskets for desserts
- Baked forks and spoons made from multigrain dough
- Coconut shells for beverages or soup

These alternatives not only reduce waste but also contribute to the overall culinary story."

Demand & Future for Cutlery

The role of cutlery, in the world of culinary delights, extends beyond practicality. It's an art form enhancing the flavors, textures and overall dining experience. Each cutlery item – from precision of knives to elegance of spoon – helps in elevating the enjoyment of each dish. The rise in cutlery market is thus expected to grow at a CAGR of 5.13%

between 2024 and 2029 between 2025-2033 to reach \$ 866.57 Million by 2033

One may ask: How has the cutlery market grown over the years, and the factors driving its growth? An entrepreneur planning to enter this segment would also like to know its future.

Debaditya Chaudhury declares, "The demand for cutlery has steadily increased over time, driven by factors like urbanization, higher disposable incomes, and changing dining habits."

He adds, "The demand for cutlery is driven by several key factors like:

- Changing Dining Habits
- Urbanization & Higher Disposable Incomes
- Health and Hygiene Awareness
- Influence of International Cuisines
- Innovation in Materials.

These factors are shaping the evolving cutlery market. Looking ahead, the demand for cutlery is expected to continue rising, especially with the growing preference for sustainable products"

Vijay Pande avers, "The demand for cutlery has significantly grown in India, driven by the expansion of the hospitality industry, increased preference for dining out, and the surge of QSRs and home delivery services.

Yogesh Pansare affirms "The demand for cutlery in India has grown in parallel with the expansion of the organized F&B sector."

He adds, "Market predictions suggest continued growth with a shift towards innovative and eco-friendly materials dominating future trends

Shravan Reddy informs, "The demand for cutlery has increased over the year. In India, the market for high-quality, eco-friendly cutlery is expanding as more consumers and businesses prioritize sustainability."

He predicts, "As the foodservice industry continues to evolve, particularly with the rise in takeaway, online food delivery, and sustainable dining practices, the demand for quality and eco-friendly cutlery will keep increasing. In the near future, we expect to see a significant shift toward sustainable materials."

Conclusion

The cutlery market is on an upswing and provides a glittering opportunity for entrepreneurs seeking to enter a growing segment of the hospitality industry. ■



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Moplah Cuisine

Regional Cuisine Defining Culinary Landscape

By Sharmila Chand

'Regional Cuisine' is a defining trend in the Indian culinary landscape. It is heartening to see how persistently the food industry is embracing the shift, offering guests a true taste of culture and heritage. Chefs today are championing indigenous ingredients and age-old techniques to create dishes rooted in authenticity. There is a conscious effort towards showcasing the depth and richness of India's local food traditions. Whether through researching heirloom recipes, sourcing indigenous ingredients, and collaborating with local artisans and home cooks, the aim is to thoughtfully integrate regional elements into the larger culinary narrative of a restaurant or hotel.

Here chefs and industry professionals share their opinion on how significant is the trend, very well being integrated in mainstream menus.

Regional Cuisine Is Re-Defining Indian Dining Scenario

Chef Rajesh Wadhwa, Executive Chef,

LOYA Taj West End Bengaluru

"Regional cuisine is the new mainstream, a return to our roots and a recognition of India's vast and diverse culinary heritage



"After four decades in the hospitality industry, I believe chefs are more than creators, we are custodians of culture and at LOYA, every dish is a tribute to that timeless legacy"

Chef Rajesh Wadhwa, Executive Chef, LOYA Taj West End Bengaluru

that extends far beyond the familiar. At LOYA, Taj West End Bengaluru we go beyond serving food; we honour generations-old traditions by deeply exploring regional India, sourcing authentic recipes, techniques, and ingredients through immersive, on-ground research. Our menu is a celebration of forgotten flavours and cultural narratives, from the Northern subcontinent thoughtfully brought to life by those who embody these traditions."

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

"Regional cuisine has become one of the most defining trends in India's evolving culinary landscape. Where once the focus was on fusion and visual appeal, today's emphasis is shifting toward authenticity and meaningful storytelling. This is not simply a passing phase but a deeper conscious return to roots that values food for its cultural and historical relevance.

At The Fern Hotels & Resorts, this approach is central to our hospitality.

Guests are increasingly curious about the origins of their food, its traditional methods of preparation and the cultural narratives behind it. This growing awareness signifies a transition from presentation-driven dining to food that tells a story and connects people to communities. Contemporary diners, especially urban and well-travelled individuals, desire food that is rooted in history and representative of its people. As chefs, we are embracing indigenous ingredients, forgotten recipes and local techniques that capture the essence of place and tradition. Our food festivals such as 'States on the Streets' and 'Regimental Zaika' showcase this philosophy through dishes like Dal Bati Churma from Rajasthan, Bhutte ka Kees from Madhya Pradesh and Mati Mahor from the Northeast."

Ho Chi Ming, Executive Chef, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

"Regional cuisine is surely in the spotlight right now, and for good reason. More and more chefs are going back to their roots, bringing local ingredients and traditional flavours into their kitchens. It is not just about revisiting familiar tastes from childhood, but also about being mindful of sustainability and supporting local farmers and producers."

Prashant Bhausahaeb Raut, Sous Chef, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel

"Regional cuisine is gaining significant attention in the culinary world. It offers a rich, diverse culinary experience that highlights the unique flavors, techniques, and stories from different parts of the country. In Maharashtra, for instance, the vast and vibrant culinary traditions from different regions offer exceptional dining experiences. We see popular regional flavors like Kolhapuri (Tamada Pandhra Rassa), Saujit (Kada Masala), Kokani (Malvani Fish Curry), Puneri (Misal), Mumbai (Vada Pav), Satara (Pitla Bhakri), and Kandeshri (Vangyacha Bharta) making their mark. Each of these dishes tells the story of its region, culture, and history, and by integrating these into contemporary dining experiences, chefs are not just offering food, but a sense of connection to the roots and heritage of India's diverse culinary landscape."



"We collaborate with authentic local chefs who are native to the region whose cuisine we are showcasing. These chefs bring deep-rooted knowledge, family recipes, and traditional techniques, ensuring authenticity in every dish; their expertise helps preserve the integrity and cultural significance of the cuisine"

Amit Sharma, Executive Chef, Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks

Chef Sukesh, Executive Chef, Gateway Bekal

"Regional cuisine is not just a trend; it's a persistent effort. Chefs today are championing indigenous ingredients and age-old techniques to create dishes rooted in authenticity. India's diverse food traditions offer an unparalleled canvas for meaningful, inspired cooking."



"Integrating regional cuisine into a menu is a powerful way to showcase cultural authenticity, celebrate local heritage, and offer guests a truly immersive dining experience"

Chef Savio Fernandes, Beach House, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Goa

Amit Sharma, Executive Chef, Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks

"Regional cuisine is undeniably one of the most significant culinary trends today, and chefs are increasingly embracing it as a core part of their cooking philosophy. For many years, the food served at hotels, particularly in the premium and luxury segments; tended to follow a uniform pattern, with menus offering the same North Indian staples and global dishes across cities. This led to a sense of culinary monotony, where the diversity of Indian cuisine was often underrepresented. The growing focus on regional cuisine is a much-needed shift. By showcasing regional dishes, chefs are able to offer guests a more meaningful and culturally rooted dining experience."

Chef Christopher Almeida, Sous Chef, The Market, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore

"Regional cuisine isn't just a fleeting trend, it's a powerful movement that's reshaping the culinary landscape and reconnecting us with our roots. It's more than just showcasing local dishes; it's about celebrating heritage, preserving traditions, and telling stories through food. We are seeing chefs unearth forgotten recipes, reinterpreting them with contemporary flair while staying true to their essence. And it's a trend that's here to stay."

Chef Rakesh Jadhav, Executive Sous Chef, DoubleTree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad

"The resurgence of regional cuisine is a powerful movement that's reshaping Indian dining today. Guests are no longer just eating—they're exploring cultures. As chefs, we're embracing our roots, bringing forth the richness of local cuisines."

Chef Savio Fernandes, Beach House, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, Goa

"I am seeing a shift from generic global fare to region based culinary story. So it is no more a prawn dish what guests want, now it is specifically 'Prawn Caldin' from Goa or 'Prawn Malai Curry' from Bengal. At the same time, we as chefs are trying to elevate regional dishes by adding a creative twist to keep the diner curious."



"By intertwining cultural narratives, regional ingredients, and traditional techniques, the dining experience becomes a curated exploration of India's rich culinary landscape – one that's as educational as it is flavorful"

Chef Christopher Almeida, Sous Chef, The Market, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore

Regional Cuisine Integration in Mainstream Menu

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

"At The Fern Hotels & Resorts, integrating regional cuisine is not a seasonal initiative but a continuous principle that shapes our culinary ethos. We view food as a cultural medium that links guests to the rich diversity of India's communities, landscapes and traditions. This integration takes form through thoughtfully designed food festivals, rotating menus, collaborations with guest chefs and concept-driven specialty restaurants. Our 'States on the Streets' food festival is a strong example of this approach. Spanning 34 properties, the festival celebrated Indian street food in its original essence. Dishes like Karnataka's Churumuri and Uttar Pradesh's Ram Ladoo were prepared using traditional techniques and ingredients, preserving authenticity without unnecessary reinvention. Similarly, the 'Regimental Zaika' food festival celebrated the culinary history of India's military regiments. Dishes were accompanied by stories that explored the heritage and

community life of the regiments."

Ho Chi Ming, Executive Chef, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

"When it comes to integrating regional cuisine into our menus, we follow a thoughtful 60 to 40 approach. Around 60 percent of the dishes are rooted in comfort food, the kind that most guests are familiar with or can easily relate to. The remaining 40 percent is dedicated to regional dishes that reflect the personal experiences and backgrounds of our chefs. These are often recipes they grew up with or dishes that are specific to the region they come from. One of the ways we bring these regional flavours to life is by involving our team. Since our kitchen has chefs from different parts of the country, we regularly organise weekend dinners where each chef gets a chance to showcase something special from their own region. It makes the experience more authentic and adds a personal touch.

We have also collaborated with regional home chefs for food festivals. Their deep knowledge of traditional cooking brings a whole new layer to the menu and gives our guests something truly memorable."



"An authentic regional food fest should be immersive, respectful, and rooted in truth. When culinary authenticity meets storytelling, community participation, and environmental detail, it creates a powerful, memorable experience that goes far beyond the plate, it becomes a cultural dialogue"

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



"The emphasis is on honest authentic regional flavours, ancestral recipes, and ingredients that tell stories of land and tradition—this is what truly resonates with diners today"

Chef Rakesh Jadhav, Executive Sous Chef, DoubleTree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad

Chef Sukesh, Executive Chef, Gateway Bekal

"At Gateway Bekal, we celebrate India's rich culinary diversity through a thoughtfully curated local fare menu that honors the regional traditions. Our focus lies in presenting authentic dishes that guests may not encounter in their everyday dining experiences, such as the elaborate Kerala Sadhya or the nuanced Moplah cuisine of North Kerala. Every plate becomes a cultural narrative, an invitation to explore and appreciate the culinary heritage of India."

Chef Rajesh Wadhwa, Executive Chef, LOYA, Taj West End Bengaluru

"At LOYA, our menu is an ode to the rich and nuanced culinary traditions of the North from foothills of Himalayas to Himachal, Punjab, and Uttarakhand. The true authenticity isn't something you can replicate from books, it must be lived, felt, and respectfully reinterpreted. Rather than follow a predefined path, we chose to explore with openness. At LOYA, our culinary team journeyed deep into the heart of the northern hills, learning from artisans, and uncovering techniques shaped by generations. These immersive experiences revealed not just ingredients, but the soul of each dish—its origins, its context, and the tools that bring it to life. This research forms the essence of



"Whether it is using an ingredient they grew up with or showcasing a dish from their hometown, chefs are finding creative ways to tell their stories through food. It is a meaningful way to stay connected to their culture and give back to the communities that shaped their journey"

**Ho Chi Ming, Executive Chef
Renaissance Bengaluru Race
Course Hotel**

.....
our menu: a thoughtful curation that honours tradition, where every dish is a refined expression of the land it comes from. To bring this philosophy to life, we've gone to great lengths to source region-specific ingredients from handcrafted new badi in Punjab to the elusive Lakhori chilli of Kangra Valley, overcoming logistical hurdles to honour each dish's provenance. Every element of our menu is a reflection of our commitment to preserving culinary legacies, crafting each plate with care and purpose."

**Amit Sharma, Executive Chef, Hilton
Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks**

"There are several ways to integrate regional cuisine into a menu, but one of the most effective approaches we've found is through curated pop-up events that spotlight a specific regional cuisine. We typically host these pop-ups for 7 to 10 days, during which we collaborate with a guest chef who is a specialist in that particular culinary tradition—someone who understands the history, ingredients, and techniques firsthand. For example, we recently hosted a Chettinad food festival in collaboration with a home chef from Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. Events like

these not only allow guests to experience authentic, lesser-known regional flavours, but they also serve as an invaluable learning opportunity for our in-house culinary team, who work closely with the visiting chefs throughout the duration of the pop-up.

Post-event, we assess guest feedback and identify which dishes resonated the most. Based on this, we thoughtfully incorporate select items into our regular à la carte or buffet offerings—ensuring the regional influence remains a permanent part of our menu, rather than a one-off experience. This approach allows us to introduce regional cuisine in an authentic, sustainable, and guest-driven manner."

Tips To Organise Regional Food Fest

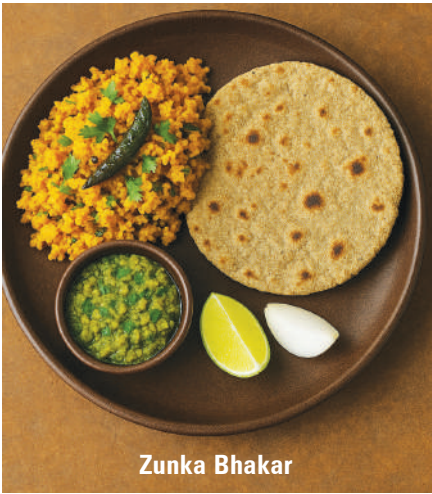
**Chef Rajesh Wadhwa, Executive Chef,
LOYA, Taj West End Bengaluru**

Here are 4 key guidelines we follow:
Authenticity
At Loya, we believe regional cuisine must be represented in its truest form undiluted, unapologetic, and rooted in tradition. Recipes shouldn't be altered to fit mainstream palates; it's the original flavours, techniques, and spirit that make them special.

Starting with Exploration
Our culinary research involved sending
.....



"At Sheraton Pune, we place a strong emphasis on showcasing the best of Maharashtrian regional cuisine by regularly collaborating with regional home chefs where they can showcase their traditional family recipes. It's all about bringing the region's soul to the plate."
**Prashant Bhausahaeb Raut, Sous
Chef, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund
Garden Hotel**



teams into regions without a fixed brief allowing space for authentic discovery. This immersive approach helped us understand the cultural context behind each dish, from cooking methods to the vessels used, ensuring our menu honours the origin, not just the taste.

Sourcing With Care, Cook With Integrity
True regional food depends on indigenous ingredients and traditional tools. From rare spices to handcrafted elements, sourcing directly from the region is often logistically challenging but essential. The use of correct vessels and techniques is non-negotiable when aiming for true authenticity.

Building the Right Team
Regional cuisine is best brought to life by those who live and breathe it. We ensure a thoughtful mix of talent from different regions - chefs, servers, and storytellers who understand the nuances and take pride in representing their heritage. Their presence brings soul to both the kitchen and the table.

To Conclude
There is no doubt that Regional Cuisine' is reshaping India's culinary scenario. It's not a fleeting trend but a celebration of our rich heritage and heirloom recipes. It is a win - win situation for chefs as diners have embraced the trend and looking for more distinctive experiences. There is a strong belief in the boundless potential of India's culinary heritage. Hence, Ingredients and techniques indigenous to specific regional diversities are taking centre stage. While chefs are busy exploring traditional wholesome recipes, the local home chefs are narrating a story, bringing a delightful slice of home kitchen. ■

Delivering Excellence in Foodservice Equipment

Alto-Shaam's President, Lucy McQuillan, CFSP, is a distinguished industry leader with nearly three decades of experience in foodservice equipment manufacturing. Throughout her career, Lucy has demonstrated a relentless commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction.

As President, Lucy leads and guides the company's operations to ensure it meets its customer-centric goals. Through her leadership, she is strongly committed to ensuring the delivery of unparalleled customer experiences. Her strategic insights, business acumen, and passion for innovation continue to support Alto-Shaam's growth and success.

Lucy's dedication to the industry extends beyond Alto-Shaam with active involvement in shaping the future of the foodservice equipment sector. During her recent visit to India for the AAHAR 2025 exhibition, Lucy McQuillan shared Alto-Shaam's vision and growth plans for the Indian market with Rajat Taneja.

How could you describe your journey in the foodservice equipment industry, so far?

My journey in the foodservice equipment industry has been both fulfilling and transformative. Over the past 30 years, I have been fortunate to benefit from the guidance of inspiring role models and mentors who have shaped my leadership style. Notably, Steve Maahs, our CEO, and board member Bill Strenglis have provided invaluable insights that have influenced my approach as a leader. Transitioning from Chief Commercial Officer to President has underscored the importance of collaboration and adaptability across a global company like Alto-Shaam, both of which are essential in this ever-evolving sector. I remain committed to fostering a culture of excellence and customer-centricity throughout our organisation.

Could you share some of your global business initiatives and how they have contributed to the Alto Shaam's growth?

Throughout my tenure at Alto-Shaam, I have spearheaded several global business initiatives that have significantly influenced our growth trajectory. Maintaining a pioneering mentality has enabled us to drive innovation through key milestones, such as the introduction of Structured Air Technology® technology and the multi-cook oven category. Some of the key initiatives I have spearheaded included enhancing customer engagement, have expansion into new markets, including manufacturing in India and aligning with our commitment to providing the highest quality equipment. These endeavours have bolstered Alto-Shaam's growth



and enhanced our reputation as a global leader in the industry.

Can you share about Alto Shaam's manufacturing infrastructure in India?

Alto-Shaam has made significant investments in establishing a robust manufacturing infrastructure in India, which is crucial for our growth strategy in the region. Local manufacturing capability allows us to respond swiftly to customer needs in India and surrounding regions. We are proud to be producing Cook & Hold ovens and a select range of holding products in India—the very products that our company invented and became founded on more than 70 years ago. As we continue expanding partnerships and better serving India customers, as well as those around the world, our employees in India are committed to Alto-Shaam's global quality standards and perform strongly to these standards.

What is the USP or the key feature of your Make in India equipment?

Alto-Shaam relentlessly pursues what's next with an appetite for quality

and excellence. Our Cook & Hold and holding products feature patented Halo Heat® technology. They are the lifeblood of Alto-Shaam, and were invented by our Founder Jerry Maahs. Jerry was a foodservice operator who had a need to keep food hot at the highest quality. Our technology helps hold food longer and reduce waste, which drives operational efficiency. When it comes to our Cook & Hold ovens, customers receive better food quality and higher yields thanks to gentle, radiant low-temperature cooking. With user-friendly features, our equipment is designed intuitively.

What strategies is Alto-Shaam implementing to strengthen its presence in India and the region?

To strengthen our presence in India and the broader region, Alto-Shaam is implementing a multifaceted strategy that includes deepening market penetration through local partnerships and enhancing our service and support capabilities. We are particularly focused on nurturing the next generation of leaders and empowering global leaders within our organisation, as evidenced by our investment in new team members in India and the region, as well as promotion of several key global team members. We have also added culinary focus with the addition of a test kitchen and local sales and service support in India.

We are committed to developing tailored solutions that address the specific needs of Indian foodservice operators. By combining innovation with local engagement and a strong commitment to leadership development, we aim to be a trusted culinary partner for our valued customers in India.



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Maruchi is more than a restaurant, it's an experience, a destination where culinary cultures converge and storytelling unfolds on every plate. Here, the bold vibrancy of Pan-Asian flavors seamlessly blends with the precision and performance of Japanese teppanyaki, creating a dining journey that is as theatrical as it is tasteful. Set against a backdrop of stunning vistas, the ambiance exudes refined elegance and quiet anticipation. From the moment you arrive, Maruchi draws you into a world where every detail—from the plating to the panoramic view, contributes to an unforgettable gastronomic spectacle.

Design & Décor

The décor is a harmonious blend of modern chic and traditional Asian aesthetics, with warm, inviting lighting, natural wood accents, and delicate touches that speak of both sophistication and comfort. The air is filled with the tantalizing aromas of exotic spices, fresh seafood, and sizzling meats, a prelude

to the culinary journey that awaits. Maruchi's Pan-Asian offerings stand as a testament to the rich and diverse culinary heritage of the continent.

Culinary Feast

Here, you can embark on a gastronomic adventure that spans the fragrant curries of Thailand, the fiery stir-fries of China, the aromatic noodle dishes of Vietnam, and the delicate flavors of Malaysia. Each dish is a culinary masterpiece, crafted with the freshest ingredients, authentic spices, and a



passion for culinary excellence. The chefs at Maruchi are true artisans, skilled in the art of balancing sweet, sour, salty, and spicy notes to deliver dishes that are both richly complex and perfectly harmonious.

But Maruchi is not just a Pan-Asian delight; it is also a haven for lovers of Japanese cuisine. The sushi bar, a sleek and stylish focal point, showcases the freshest catches of the day, transformed into exquisite works of art by the deft hands of the skilled sushi chefs. From classic nigiri and sashimi to innovative and artfully crafted rolls, each piece is a celebration of the purity and simplicity of Japanese flavors. The emphasis is on quality, freshness, and precision, ensuring that every bite is a moment of pure culinary bliss.

Teppanyaki Spectacle

And then there is the teppanyaki, where dining transforms into theatre. Here, the chefs are not just cooks but performers, entertaining guests with their dazzling knife



skills, their playful banter, and their mastery of the sizzling grill.

The teppanyaki table, strategically placed for optimal viewing, serves as stage for a captivating display of culinary artistry. The clatter of knives, the sizzle of the grill, the flames that leap into the air, it is a spectacle that engages all the senses. But Maruchi takes the teppanyaki experience to an even higher level with its *omakase* teppanyaki. *Omakase*, meaning "I'll leave it to you" in Japanese, is a dining style where

the chef takes complete control of the menu, creating a personalized and unforgettable culinary journey for the guest.

At Maruchi, *omakase* teppanyaki blends the thrill of the teppanyaki performance with the exquisite surprise of a curated tasting menu. Picture sitting at the teppanyaki table, the chef's skilled hands dancing across the hot surface. But instead of ordering from a menu, you have placed your trust in the chef, allowing them to guide you through a selection of their most inspired creations.

Each course is a revelation, a carefully crafted dish that showcases the chef's creativity, their mastery of technique, and their passion for the finest ingredients. Perhaps you begin with a delicate amuse-bouche, a tantalizing hint of the flavors to come. Then, the chef might present a selection of the freshest sashimi, each piece a jewel-like creation, followed by a series of expertly grilled dishes, each one perfectly cooked and seasoned to elevate the senses.

The *omakase* experience is a journey of discovery, a chance to explore new flavors and textures, and to witness the chef's artistry first hand. And as you savor each bite, you are treated to another layer of sensory delight: the breathtaking view.

Lush Serenity

Maruchi's location offers a stunning panorama, overlooking a lush, verdant golf course. The rolling greens, the manicured

fairways, and the serene water features create a tranquil and picturesque backdrop, a feast for the eyes that complements the feast for the palate. The natural light that floods the restaurant during the day, and the soft, romantic glow at night, add to the ambiance, creating an atmosphere of relaxed elegance and refined beauty.

Maruchi is more than just a place to dine, it's a place to celebrate, to connect, and to create lasting memories. It's the perfect setting for a special occasion, a romantic dinner, a business meeting, or simply a gathering of friends who appreciate fine food and exceptional experiences. It's a place where the flavors of Asia come alive, where the artistry of Japanese cuisine is celebrated, and where the thrill of teppanyaki meets the tranquility of a stunning view. It is, in essence, a culinary masterpiece, a destination that leaves you longing to return.



Chef Vaibhav Soni - Brand Chef

The chef

Chef Vaibhav Soni, an accomplished culinary professional with over 16 years of experience in hospitality and R&D, is an OCLD alumnus who began his journey with The Oberoi Group. He has worked with Michelin-starred chefs in London and held key roles in Bangkok and India, consistently driving culinary innovation and excellence.

He says, "Each dish I create is a reflection of time, rooted in the rhythm of the seasons, shaped by local harvests, and inspired by the ever-evolving language of food. I embrace modern trends and mindful nutrition, yet I weave in memories, heritage, and a sense of nostalgia, so every menu not only nourishes, but tells a story that bridges past and present."

The Passionate Founder



Shubham Agarwal, a 3rd generation hotelier has hospitality ingrained in his blood, his grandfather started the iconic hotel alka in Connaught Place and he looks to continue his grandfathers legacy forward- having started maruchi after graduating from Les Roches, Switzerland.



Whether a personal preference or a viable prospect, sattvic food is the latest buzzword in the fnb sector

By Gita Hari



Beans Poriyal

Understanding the Types of Food According to Ayurveda

Sattvic originates from Sanskrit word 'sattva' which means pure essence. Ingesting such food nourishes the body, mind and soul. It promotes physical strength, mental health, longevity and reduces chronic

Sattvic food is not to be confused with Jain food though concept-wise both are pure vegetarian, to the exclusion of onion and garlic. Jainism is more to do with compassion and non-violence. Sattvic tenet stresses on a harmonious balance of body,

mind and soul with an ailment-free health. Jains don't include honey, certain fruits and vegetables, or cheese in their diet.

Pure, wholesome meals using organic and seasonal fruits and vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, honey and milk are also part of saatvic foods. Basically, this kind of diet lays emphasis on mindful consumption, low on spices, freshly cooked, and thoughtfully prepared. "Sattvic food is a high fibre, low-fat vegetarian diet loaded with antioxidants, minerals and vitamins. Attributed as a yogic diet, millennials or digital natives are gravitating towards the sattvic way of life," says Chef Hemwant Rautela, an expert in this kind of cuisine, known to set up sattvic kitchens with a gourmet touch, across the country.

Post COVID Realisation

Post pandemic, food made with immunity-boosting ingredients are scouted by diners. Corporate Chef Samta, who oversees the culinary management of well-known hospitality establishments like Leisure Hotels, perceives an upsurge in the drift towards sattvic food. Social media is teeming with home cooks and chefs



"It is not necessary to exercise portion control, but simply eat right and sattvic food adapts to global techniques effortlessly"

**Chef Hemwant Rautela,
Consultant Chef**

who adapt ancient Ayurvedic methods to contemporary recipes. As people put health before anything else, master chefs are incorporating sattvic cuisine as part of their progressive menu. Some chefs have adopted veganism in their sattvic menus. Freshly cooked food with the right

ingredients promotes balance and harmony.

Mumbai-based home-chef Malini Iyer who runs Malini's Health Kitchen, specialises in nutritious Tambrahm cooking. She laments, "Unfortunately, we find promotions of sattvic food only during festivals and fasting months. Else it is side-stepped for zesty, spicy and global nosh or street food which leans heavily on gut-acid-generating spices. Tambrahm food has always been nourishing and simple – fresh, pure ingredients enhance the spiritual feel – home-cooked meals which we have relished all our life." She creates a wholesome dabba which bursts with local greens, vegetables and flavours of immunity-boosting herbs and spices.

For those who wish to make their own healthful recipes in the confines of their homes, satvicmovement.org is an online community that conducts workshops on this culinary practice.

Restaurant Trends

Post pandemic, sattvic diet previously adapted by yogis of yore and those on a spiritual quest, gets a nomenclature as 'sattvic cuisine'. It has witnessed a surge



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amidst global cuisines in popularity as more people swing to healthy eating habits. Of late, premium restaurants adopt international culinary techniques to serve sattvic dishes with a flourish. Regional dishes from India, or Continental, Oriental, Mexican and the rest have all undergone culinary facelifts. Be it risotto/sandwich/pasta/dumplings/spring rolls, quesadillas they are presented glamorously as they get lapped up by young adults, with elan.

During festivals of Navaratri or Dusshera or when people fast to detox, restaurants of premium hotels are known to hold sattvic food pop-ups. The magic of simple ingredients being customised, packaged as healthy lifestyle fad with aesthetic presentations in the degustation menu does not fail to impress health freaks and spiritual seekers alike. Some of the popular speciality saatvik eateries are Sattvam located in Bangalore, Sattvik in Delhi and Naivedhya Restaurant in Nashik. Even The Indian Railways joined the bandwagon to start serving saatvic food on its trains en route to religious destinations.

Recently, restaurants have added a new flavour to satiate the expansive vegetarian palate. Ganga Lahari, Haridwar by Leisure Hotels, serves only vegetarian food. It has taken sattvic food a notch up with Haridwar's regional flora and can be seen in various aspects of their menu at Annapurna Restaurant and the rooftop restaurant aptly named The Patio. For the devout guests on a spiritual visit to this holy city, Chef Hardev Rawat of Ganga Lahari curates a wholesome sattvic thali which consists of Pahadi lemon coriander soup, Himalayan chulhey se (flavoursome gravies minus onion, garlic), mild bichoo ka saag, pulao, jhangore ki kheer (barnyard millet), Amritsari gur aate ka sheera, with a tall glass of lassi. Corporate Chef Samta



Ragi-base Pizza



“Make sensible choices like sattvic food, as ingesting good food is feeding your mind good things”

Chef Hardev Rawat, Ganga Lahari, Haridwar

.....
avars, “People mistakenly feel only zesty spices lend to deliciousness of a dish. Tasty meals can be created with minimum masalas minus onion or garlic. Original taste can be retained by adding a dash of jeera-coriander powder, ajwain (caraway seeds), fennel, fresh ginger, asafoetida, herbs like curry leaves, fresh coriander.”

Restaurants such as Naivedhya at Viveda Wellness Retreat in the holy city of Nashik boasts of perennial sattvic menu. The menu here promises to dedicate and offer Indian and international cuisines with a sattvic twist. The sell-out dishes, with visually vibrant presentations, include green peas soup, black rice kheer, boiled peanut chaat-carrot, raisin-corn and cucumber, quinoa pulao, sattvic dumplings, spring rolls and more. GM Ramesh Goswami of Divine Resort & Spa, in the yoga capital of the world Rishikesh, says, “The notion that sattvic food is bland and insipid has changed. You can create mouthwatering and tempting dishes with a plethora of unique textures, seasonings and flavours. Also increasing health awareness and growing compassion towards animal wellbeing has spawned a generation of non-vegetarian to vegetarian converts.”

Strategic Business Approach

When a trend emerges and shows up its viable side, the prospect of hitting

the bull's eye on the revenue chart is high. From the sales and profit angle of restaurants, just being healthy does not suffice to be a crowd-pleaser. The present social media obsessed generation is driven by innovation, presentation and taste. And amazingly, sattvic food ticks all the boxes. The versatility of being effortlessly adaptable to world cuisines make it an attractive opportunity and business beneficial.

To set up a sattvic restaurant, location is a crucial issue. Restaurateurs in major metropolitan cities can take the risk due to their cosmopolitan population, but the consumption patterns of tier 2 and tier 3 cities have to be considered before setting up. For instance, even in top-tier states like Kerala which is predominantly a meat-eating state while West Bengal is mostly pescatarian, sattvic eateries will not prove to be profitable. With the exception of brahmin hamlets and Ayurvedic retreats in Kerala, which adhere to Vedic philosophies and food habits, very few vegetarians can be found. Sattvic food serving eateries are abundant in holy cities like Varanasi, Haridwar, Vrindavan, Ayodhya, Palitana in



Black Rice Kheer

Gujarat, Puri in Odisha and some others.

There are plenty of wholesome and organic veg food options. Needless of giving up on taste or lifestyle, the present generation is evolving to understand the beneficial influence on sustainability and ecological impact. They are making a conscious and deliberate endeavour to absorb sattvic practices. As the food story which upholds sattvic tenets unravels its glorious and nutritious aspect, Indian chefs plug away to showcase the healthiest Indian cuisine to the world and introduce international techniques to us! ■

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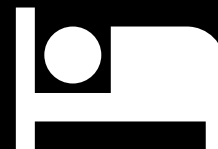
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Vendor Management Goes Digital: How Indian F&B Businesses Are Rethinking Procurement

Hammer Bureau

The back-end of a restaurant operation is often invisible to diners, but it's where some of the most mission-critical decisions are made. In India's rapidly evolving food and beverage (F&B) landscape, one area undergoing a quiet but powerful transformation is vendor management. Once dominated by handwritten ledgers, and fragmented communication, procurement is finally entering the digital age. And it's not a matter of luxury anymore - it's about survival.

In an industry where profit margins can swing with the cost of onions or the delay of a dairy delivery, streamlining procurement has become non-negotiable. For decades, restaurant managers juggled multiple vendors for meats, grains, vegetable & fresh supplies, packaging, bar supplies, and cleaning materials, often placing orders manually, following up by phone, and reconciling deliveries by memory. The result? Inconsistencies in pricing, delivery errors, wasted stock, and a complete lack of visibility into purchasing patterns. But in the post-COVID era, as restaurants tighten costs and scale more aggressively, this chaotic approach no longer holds.

Enter the new generation of digital procurement platforms - tools purpose-built to bring clarity, control, and cost-efficiency to vendor operations. Platforms like Zomato Hyperpure, Udaan Horeca, Peppo, and several rising startups have begun offering Indian restaurants a centralized way to order, track, and manage supplies. These systems allow purchase managers to browse real-time inventory, compare vendor prices, reorder frequently purchased items with one click, and even receive consolidated invoices - eliminating the mess of scattered bills and follow-ups. For multi-outlet chains, this is a game changer.

What sets these platforms apart is their ability to integrate deeply into existing operations. Many restaurants now sync their



procurement software with inventory and POS (Point-of-Sale) systems. This means as soon as a dish is sold, the system can deduct the ingredients used and alert the manager if stock levels dip below a set threshold. It even allows for automated purchase orders based on predictive sales patterns. For brands running cloud kitchens or central commissaries, this real-time visibility ensures that ingredients are dispatched only when needed, reducing spoilage and improving shelf life.

Technology is also helping restaurant owners and managers maintain tighter control over vendor performance. Through digital dashboards, they can rate suppliers on delivery punctuality, product quality, adherence to food safety standards, and resolution of issues. Over time, this builds accountability and provides data-driven leverage when renegotiating contracts or choosing between vendors. In an industry where a late delivery or a poor batch of ingredients can ruin the day's service, this



kind of oversight is invaluable.

Moreover, digitizing vendor management simplifies compliance - especially with FSSAI regulations becoming stricter. These platforms can store batch numbers, expiry dates, vendor licenses, and even generate automated hygiene and sourcing reports - reducing the audit stress many restaurants face during inspections.

Several Indian F&B brands have already embraced this shift. Rebel Foods, which runs a massive network of cloud kitchens across India, uses proprietary software to coordinate procurement across cities and brands. Biryani Blues and Impresario Handmade Restaurants (which operates Social and Smoke House Deli) have streamlined their sourcing using vendor tech, seeing measurable gains like reduced food cost variance and improved order accuracy. These early adopters are proving that digitized procurement doesn't just improve operations - it impacts the bottom line.

Looking ahead, the next wave of innovation is being driven by AI. Emerging solutions are enabling predictive procurement - where systems forecast what ingredients will be needed based on historical sales, weather trends (which affect produce supply), and even festival calendars. Smart systems can flag price hikes before they occur, allowing bulk purchasing or menu adjustments in advance. Procurement is no longer reactive - it's becoming strategic.

For Indian F&B operators, digital vendor management is not just a tech upgrade - it's a mindset shift. It's about reclaiming control over one of the most leak-prone areas of the business. As competition intensifies and input costs fluctuate, those who master their backend with tech will move faster, operate leaner, and stay ahead. The message is clear: manual procurement is dead. The future is digital, and it's already being written - one smart purchase order at a time.



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A Passionate Culinary Artist!



**Chef Ranjeet Singh Yadav,
Executive Chef,
Courtyard by Marriott Ranchi**

By Sharmila Chand

With over a decade of rich experience in the luxury hospitality industry, Chef Ranjeet Singh brings with him a vibrant blend of creativity, expertise and a bold vision for gastronomic excellence. As Executive Chef of Courtyard by Marriott Ranchi, he is all set to elevate Ranchi's culinary scene to exciting new heights.

A specialist in pre-openings and culinary innovation, Chef Ranjeet has left an indelible mark across some of the country's top hospitality brands including JW Marriott Goa, W Goa, Radisson Gwalior and Courtyard by Marriott Gorakhpur. His appointment signals a new chapter for Courtyard by Marriott Ranchi, where the focus is on crafting exceptional dining experiences that are rooted in authenticity and elevated by contemporary finesse.

Renowned for his mastery of Modern European and Indian cuisine, Chef Ranjeet's menus are an experience in themselves—balanced, flavourful and artistically presented. With a keen eye for detail and an intuitive understanding of guest preferences, he curates dishes that are not just meals but stories on a plate. From menu engineering and cost control to food safety and team leadership, his dynamic approach is both holistic and forward-thinking.

Chef Ranjeet's culinary journey began at IHM Gwalior, where he graduated at the top of his class—laying a strong academic and technical foundation that continues to shape his professional excellence.

During the pandemic, he also stepped up to serve over 10,000 people—a testament to his deeply rooted sense of hospitality and service.

Beyond hotel kitchens, Chef Ranjeet has demonstrated his entrepreneurial flair by co-founding Erica Café and Erica Agro Tech, both of which reflect his passion for sustainable practices and high-quality, locally sourced ingredients.

At Courtyard by Marriott Ranchi, Chef Ranjeet will lead the culinary narrative—infusing the hotel's F&B offerings with bold flavours, inventive presentations and thoughtfully curated experiences. Whether it's the hotel's all-day dining, bespoke catering events, or the soon-to-be signature dishes, guests can expect a symphony of taste that surprises and delights.

"My food philosophy is simple—cook with heart, respect ingredients, and constantly innovate," shares Chef Ranjeet.

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

How do you define yourself?

I am a creator of experiences. For me, food is a medium to bring joy, connect people, and leave a lasting impression. It's more than just sustenance—it's an experience, and I'm driven by the desire to create memorable moments for every guest through my dishes.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

My cooking philosophy revolves around using the freshest, locally sourced ingredients to create dishes that are innovative yet rooted in tradition. I believe food should not only taste great but also tell a story and connect people emotionally.

What is your area of expertise?

I specialize in modern European and Indian cuisines. My strength lies in combining traditional flavors with contemporary techniques and presentation, creating a balance that's both respectful of heritage and excitingly new.

Had you not been a chef, then what?

If I weren't a chef, I'd probably still be in the hospitality industry—maybe in management. I've always been drawn to this field, and I believe my leadership skills would've served me well there too.

What is your source of inspiration?

Gordon Ramsay has always inspired me with his precision, discipline, and unwavering pursuit of excellence. Sanjeev Kapoor, on the other hand, showed me how Indian cuisine could be celebrated globally. Both have had a profound impact on my journey.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

One of the most fulfilling moments was when a menu I designed at JW Marriott Goa was featured in a prestigious culinary magazine. That recognition validated my hard work and vision as a chef.

How has the journey been so far?

It's been a journey filled with both challenges and triumphs. Each kitchen,

each team, and every service has taught me something new. I'm grateful for every step, as it has shaped me into the chef I am today.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

A good chef needs a mix of creativity, precision, time management, and leadership. But above all, you need a deep understanding of flavors and an unbreakable passion for cooking.

How do you de-stress yourself? What do you like to do in your ME time?

When I get time for myself, I love diving into culinary books, experimenting with new ideas in the kitchen, or simply spending time with my family—that's my true recharge.

Favourite ingredient? Why?

Saffron. It has a magical aroma and depth of flavor that can transform both sweet and savory dishes. It adds a touch of luxury and warmth.

Favourite cuisine?

Modern European. I admire its focus on technique, simplicity, and elegant presentation.

Favourite spice?

Cumin is a staple for me. It has a warm, earthy profile that can elevate countless dishes, from simple dals to complex sauces.

Favourite equipment?

My chef's knife. It's an extension of my hand—precision, efficiency, and consistency all depend on it.

Favourite restaurant/food joint anywhere in the world. There's a small bistro in Paris I adore. It serves authentic French food in an unpretentious, intimate setting. The flavors are classic and comforting, yet always beautifully executed.

Your favourite diner (the kind of guest you like to feed)?

I love serving guests who truly appreciate the art of food—those who are open to new experiences and flavors.

Your favourite culinary destination?

France, without a doubt. Its culinary legacy is rich, diverse, and has influenced chefs around the world. It's a dream destination for any serious cook.

The best compliment you have received?

A guest at JW Marriott Goa once said to me, "Your food tells a story." That stayed with me. That's exactly what I strive for.

What is your philosophy of work?

My work philosophy is rooted in teamwork, constant learning, and an unyielding pursuit of excellence. A great kitchen runs on respect, discipline, and passion.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

Patience is key. Resilience is vital. And no matter how hectic it gets, staying calm and composed is what keeps the kitchen moving smoothly.

Last meal on earth—what would you choose?

A traditional Indian thali. It's a celebration of diversity—textures, colors, and flavors—all on one plate. A beautiful way to say goodbye.

Ten years from now?

I see myself running a culinary academy, mentoring the next generation of chefs and sharing everything I've learned over the years.

What are your future plans?

I want to keep innovating, pushing boundaries, and eventually open my own restaurant that reflects my journey—blending Indian soul with European finesse.

Best career advice to aspiring chefs?

Stay curious. Work tirelessly. And never stop learning. The kitchen is where creativity meets discipline—and there's always something new to master.

Please define yourself as a chef?

I am a creator of experiences. For me, food is a medium to bring joy, connect people, and leave a lasting impression.

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"I thrive on crafting exceptional experiences through relentless pursuit of excellence "

Sujit Kumar Giri, Food and Beverage Manager, Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield



With over 15 years of extensive experience in the hospitality industry, Sujit Kumar Giri is a seasoned professional known for his operational expertise, strategic leadership, and commitment to service excellence. His career spans some of the most prestigious hospitality brands, where he has consistently driven innovation and elevated guest experiences through meticulous planning and execution.

As the newly appointed Food & Beverage Manager at Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield, Sujit is set to lead the F&B operations, curating exceptional dining experiences and implementing industry-leading standards. His expertise in guest engagement, team leadership, and strategic planning will play a pivotal role in shaping the hotel's culinary landscape.

With a deep understanding of evolving industry trends and a passion for excellence, Sujit continues to drive innovation and elevate hospitality standards, making him a valuable asset to Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield.

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

What is the USP of your F&B outlets ?

Our F&B outlets are defined by a strong commitment to excellence, offering a unique blend of visually stunning presentations, exceptional hospitality, and high-engagement events.

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

As an F&B Head, the most rewarding part of the role is the ability to craft exceptional dining experiences.

Leading passionate teams, fostering creativity, and curating innovative menus allow for continuous evolution in the culinary space. Optimizing operations ensures seamless service, while creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere enhances guest satisfaction. Ultimately, seeing delighted customers, a thriving business, and a team that takes pride in their work makes the journey truly fulfilling.

What are the key trends you are showcasing and focusing on in your F&B spaces?

In our F&B spaces, we are showcasing key trends that elevate the dining experience while staying ahead of industry shifts. Our focus includes visually striking, Instagram-worthy presentations and immersive dining experiences that captivate guests. Sustainability and the use of locally sourced ingredients remain at the core of our offerings, ensuring freshness and authenticity. We continuously innovate

our menus to keep them dynamic and exciting.

What works the best to retain a good F&B team, according to you?

Retaining a strong F&B team requires a combination of leadership, support, and a positive work environment. Effective leadership sets the foundation, while competitive pay and clear growth opportunities keep team members motivated.

How has your journey been in hospitality so far?

My journey in hospitality has been a dynamic and rewarding experience, driven by creativity, leadership, and a deep commitment to guest satisfaction. It has been about constantly innovating, building and mentoring strong teams, and curating unforgettable dining experiences that leave a lasting impact.

What are your dreams to be fulfilled?

My ultimate goal is to create a globally recognized dining brand that sets new benchmarks in culinary excellence and guest experience. I aspire to inspire and mentor teams, fostering a culture of innovation. I also aim to redefine hospitality by blending tradition with modernity, creating immersive and unforgettable dining experiences.

What is your working philosophy?

My working philosophy is built on

the foundation of passionate leadership, continuous innovation, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. I believe in fostering a culture of teamwork, where collaboration and creativity drive success. Guest satisfaction remains at the core of everything I do, ensuring every experience is memorable. Ultimately, my approach is to inspire, lead by example, and create a dynamic environment where both teams and guests thrive.

Anything else you would like to say?

I would like to emphasize the importance of sustainability in the hospitality industry. True sustainability begins with mindful sourcing, minimizing waste, and adopting eco-friendly packaging solutions. Prioritizing energy efficiency, supporting local communities, and educating teams on sustainable practices are essential steps toward creating a lasting environmental impact. By integrating these principles into daily operations, we can drive meaningful change and contribute to a more responsible and sustainable future for the industry.

Lastly, how do you define yourself?

I define myself as a passionate and visionary leader, driven by innovation, creativity, and a commitment to excellence. Adaptable and guest-focused, I thrive on crafting exceptional experiences while inspiring and empowering teams.

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