

AUG-SEP '25 VOL. XVII NO. 2 ₹ 100

BAKERY

Business Magazine for Bakery & Confectionery Professionals

REVIEW



Ingredient
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Bakery
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Dairy
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Industry
The Rise of Micro Bakeries

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Editorial



We are delighted to begin this edition with an exclusive look at one of the most awaited events in the Indian Pastry and Bakery world, held last month during the International Hospitality Expo, Greater Noida. This year's showcase was nothing short of spectacular, featuring the 4th edition of the Junior Pastry Indian Cup, the 2nd Masters Bakers Challenge and the inaugural Culinary League. Our detailed coverage brings you behind the scenes of these contests, offering insights into the creativity, skill and passion that define India's vibrant pastry and culinary community.

The cover story in this issue, explores our enduring love for desserts, festive trends and changing attitudes toward health and wellness. From timeless traditions to modern indulgences, sweets have always captivated us.

Our in-depth feature on ingredients explores the comeback of ancient grains like millet, quinoa and buckwheat in modern baking. This trend addresses the growing demand for healthy bakery products while fulfilling customers' dietary and wellness preferences.

In our bakery segment, we spotlight on bruschetta, an iconic starter. From humble beginnings to a rustic, flavourful appetizer, this simple dish continues to captivate taste buds.

The industry story explores the rise of micro-bakeries, highlighting how small, artisanal spaces are redefining baking with quality, community and sustainability.

Complementing the above-mentioned engaging topics, the issue also shares the latest news, updates, new appointments and industry buzz to keep you informed, inspired and connected.

Wishing all our readers a very happy and blessed festive season ahead.

Rajat Taneja

BAKERY

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Junior Pastry Indian Cup (JPIC) 2025

A Stellar Showcase of Culinary Creativity



The keenly awaited 4th Junior Pastry Indian Cup (JPIC) 2025 was a big hit. The event was held from 3-4 August 2025, at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, NCR, India. Hosted by Hammer Group, publishers of Bakery review, JPIC 2025 was presented by Millac from Lakeland Dairies, distributed and imported in India by Euro Foods and powered by Zion International Food Ingredients Pvt. Ltd., a leading manufacturer of premium cake premixes and bakery essentials. The event was a phenomenal showcase of the pastry artistry by some of the country's brightest

young pastry chefs, who blended flavour, precision and creativity into edible art.

The theme of the competition was Music and Melody, inviting participants to interpret rhythm, harmony and emotion through desserts. From jazz-inspired plated creations to showpieces echoing the elegance of classical symphonies and the energy of rock and opera, the teams produced a breathtaking symphony of flavour and artistry. The challenge demanded technical mastery, originality and storytelling – qualities that the young chefs embraced with passion and confidence.

Talent Showcase

The event was more than just a competition – it was a platform for India's young pastry talent to showcase their potential and prepare for the global stage. Across two days, 21 contestants formed into 7 teams representing leading hotels and institutes from Bengaluru, Pune, Kolkata, Delhi, Gurugram and Jaipur. Over six intense rounds, they presented plated desserts, chocolate and sugar showpieces, miniature pastries and elaborate creations that demanded stamina, teamwork and artistic storytelling. Each team was supported

by a mentor chef, adding guidance and professional insight to the young aspirants.

Judge’s Panel

The judging panel consisted of Chef Parvinder Singh Bali, Chef Balendra Singh and Chef Eureka Araujo. The judges brought their expertise, sharp eye for detail and encouragement to the arena, offering feedback that pushed contestants to aim higher.

The presence of sponsors played an essential role in elevating the event. Millac from Lakeland Dairies, through Euro Foods, served as the presenting partner, while Zion International Food Ingredients powered the competition with their extensive support. Ramanjyot Singh, General Manager of Euro Foods, highlighted the significance of such partnerships, stating that Euro Foods was proud to support JPIC as a platform that celebrates talent, fosters innovation and empowers the next generation of pastry chefs. He emphasised that the creativity and dedication witnessed at the competition reflected the evolving patisserie landscape of India, aligning with the company’s commitment to excellence and culinary advancement.

The Winning Team

The presentation ceremony took place on the second day of the competition and was presided over by Ms. Ana Balen Colombo Blanca, Head of the Economic and Commercial Section at the Embassy of Argentina. The gala ceremony was attended by members of the hospitality trade, including pastry and culinary chefs, restaurateurs, hotel consultants, and F&B professionals.

The team of APCA Gurugram emerged as the champions of the competition. The victorious team featured Chef Karanpreet Singh and Chef Khushi Kaushal, mentored by Chef Sehaj Ghuman. Their work stood



out not only for precision but also for how well they captured the essence of the theme, transforming music into flavourful experiences. For the young champions from APCA Gurugram, the victory is both an achievement and a responsibility. “Winning the Junior Pastry Indian Cup 2025 feels like a dream come true. Competing against such incredible talent pushed us to dig deep and create something truly meaningful. The theme 'Music and Melody' inspired us to express emotion through every element on the plate. Representing India on the world stage in Rimini is not just an honour – it is a responsibility we are proud to carry,” they shared. Their words captured the spirit of JPIC – passion, creativity and ambition combined to push the boundaries of pastry.

Awards and Accolades

The winning team APCA Gurugram will represent India in 2026, in an international team competition in Rimini for pastry chefs under 26, with travel and accommodation’s expenditure covered.

JPIC 2025 reinforced its importance as more than a contest. It is a catalyst for raising standards, inspiring innovation and shaping the future of India’s baking and

patisserie industry. By offering a stage that demands creativity, technical skill and emotional expression, it prepares young chefs not just for competition but for leadership roles in the culinary field. The collaboration between organisers, sponsors, jury members and contestants made the event a resounding success, setting a new benchmark for pastry competitions in India.

Sanjay Anand, Director of Hammer Group, expressed pride in what JPIC 2025 achieved. “What we witnessed was nothing short of spectacular. Each creation wasn’t just a dessert - it was a performance, a story, a piece of art. These young chefs proved that pastry in India has moved far beyond decoration; it’s a serious craft that combines precision, emotion and cultural expression. We’re proud to offer this platform to nurture such talent and prepare them for the world stage,” he said. His remarks underlined the vision behind the competition – to nurture emerging chefs and give them a global launch pad.

For the participants, the experience has left a lasting mark, sharpening their skills and expanding their horizons. And for India’s culinary industry, the Junior Pastry India Cup reaffirmed that the future of patisserie is bright, bold and ready to take the world by a storm.



Junior Pastry Indian Cup 2025

Participants

ACADEMY OF PASTRY AND CULINARY ARTS, GURUGRAM



Mentor: Chef Sehaj Ghuman Chef Khushi Kaushal Chef Karanpreet Singh

ECOLE DUCASSE, ISH GURUGRAM CAMPUS



Mentor: Chef Aabhas Jain Chef Tisha Nair Chef Jia Adil Bhamgara

JW MARRIOTT, KOLKATA



Mentor: Chef Manas Kr Das Chef Gungun Saha Chef Akankhya Garabadu

ACADEMY OF PASTRY AND CULINARY ARTS, BENGALURU



Mentor: Chef Pratay Keny Chef Harshit Vashisht Chef Kashish Sharma

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SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNE



Mentor: Chef Rizwan Yargatti Chef Swamini Tupe Chef Zoha Ansari

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Mentor: Chef Gaurav Kokamkar Chef Rudra Pratap Yadav Chef Sahil Omale

Jury



Dr Chef Parvinder Singh Bali
Director
School for European Pastry and Culinary Arts



Chef Eureka Araujo
Creative Director
Sivako



Dr. Balendra Singh
Director
Institute of Bakery & Culinary Arts

Junior Pastry Indian Cup 2025



Junior Pastry Indian Cup 2025



Junior Pastry Indian Cup 2025





Master Bakers Challenge India 2025



2025 Title Winner Chef Siddhesh Undire of ITC Maratha

Master bakers India, 2nd edition was held on 5th August 2025, at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. The event was organised by Hammer Group, publishers of Bakery Review and India International Hospitality Expo (IHE Expo). The event saw the corps d'elite of the Indian baking milieu come together to compete in a live, thrilling competition witnessed by a large audience attending the IHE Expo 2025.

Master Bakers India is dedicated to celebrating and promoting the art of professional baking in India. Through competitions and community events. Master Bakers India aims to support and inspire bakers of all levels, fostering a vibrant and a dynamic baking community.

Chef Siddhesh Undire from ITC Maratha, Mumbai emerged as the winner of the Master Bakers India 2025 Challenge. Chef Siddhesh, a bakery

specialist with experience at India's finest luxury hotels, has mastered buffet layouts, viennoiserie and artisan presentations, from brunch setups to chocolate sculptures. Siddhesh impressed the judges with his exceptional skill, creativity and precision. His winning creations, which included Fougasse, Baguette, Bruschetta, Quiche, Sweet Bread and Savoury Bread showcased his deep understanding of baking techniques

and his innovative approach to flavours and presentation. The 2024 winner Chef Sandeep Kumar of the Claridges Hotel also participated in this competition.

The participants were judged on multiple criteria, including texture and consistency, taste/flavours, presentation and creativity, cleaning/hygiene and buffet presentation. The esteemed panel of judges praised the high standards and creativity displayed by all competitors.

Judges Dr. Chef Parvinder Singh Bali, a distinguished culinary professional with over three decades at Oberoi Hotels, Chef Bali is renowned for his innovative approach to gastronomy and his dedication to mentoring aspiring chefs. He opened his culinary and pastry school named School for European Pastry and Culinary Arts in Gurugram in September 2024.

Chef Gaurav Misra, an Executive Chef at Crowne Plaza, Rohini, with over 25 years of luxury hospitality experience. He has led operations at Hilton Jaipur, The Westin Pushkar, The Ananta Udaipur and Carnival Cruise Lines, specialising in menu innovation, team mentoring and pre-opening setups. He began at Leela Palace Goa. He holds an MBA (PGP) from NIM Jaipur, a Hotel Management diploma from IHMCTAN Ahmedabad; advanced culinary training in France.

Chef Satbir Singh Bakshi, a Corporate Chef de Cuisine who oversees culinary operations at Oberoi hotels in India. He started his career 29 years ago at Le Meridien New Delhi, followed by Grand Hyatt New Delhi, and joined the Oberoi group in 2003. He rose up the ladder and became Executive Chef at The Oberoi Mumbai in 2014. He was closely involved in opening of "Cou Cou by Oberoi" (2021) and "Amadeo by Oberoi" (2023).



First Runner-up Diksha Khandelwal of the IBCA

Chef Mohammed Nauman Qureshi, the head Pastry Chef at Paul Bakery, India since April 2021. Over 15 years at premier patisseries like Theobroma Foods and L'Opéra, he led large-scale production of signature cakes and macarons, ensuring consistent quality and innovation. A HACCP authority, he implemented rigorous safety protocols across multiple kitchens, achieving flawless audit results. As a mentor, he's trained and developed dozens of pastry professionals.

Awards and Accolades

The live event, filled with excitement, learning and entertainment, offered attendees a unique opportunity to witness the artistry and precision of India's top bakers. The competition's objective was not only to identify the best professional baking talent but also to inspire and educate visitors about the art and science of baking.

The participants demonstrated their prowess in creating a variety of baked goods, maintaining high standards of hygiene and presentation, and delivering

exceptional culinary experiences. In addition to the accolades and recognition, Siddhesh Undire, the winner of the competition was awarded a paid trip to Malaysia for three days of training at the Academy of Pastry and Culinary Arts Malaysia, covering airfare, stay and training costs. This prize aims to further enhance his skills and provide international exposure to world-class baking techniques. The first runner-up was Diksha Khandelwal of the Institute of Bakery and Culinary Arts. She was awarded one day of advanced training at the School of European Pastry.

Organisers of Master Bakers India extended their heartfelt congratulations to Siddhesh Undire and all the participants who made this event a grand success. Their hard work, creativity and dedication have set a high standard for future editions of the Master Bakers Challenge. "We are proud to recognise Siddhesh Undire as this year's champion and his dedication to the craft and ability to push the boundaries of traditional baking truly set him apart. We believe his achievements will inspire many aspiring bakers across the country." said Rajat Taneja, organiser of Master Bakers India, 2025, from the Hammer Group.

Participating Chefs

Diksha Khandelwal, Dinesh Kumar, Kanhaiya Lal Rawat, Mohd. Shahnawaz, Sandeep Kumar, Saurav Singh, Siddhesh Undire and Pradum Yadav.



Participants



Chef Siddhesh Undire



Chef Sandeep Kumar



Chef Saurav Singh



Chef Diksha Khandelwal



Chef Kanhaiya Lal Rawat



Chef Pradum Yadav



Chef Mohd. Shahnawaz



Chef Dinesh Kumar

Jury



Dr Chef Parvinder Singh Bali
Director
School for European Pastry
and Culinary Arts



Chef Satbir Singh Bakshi
Corporate Chef
de Cuisine, Oberoi



Chef Mohammed Nauman Quresh
Head Pastry Chef
Paul Bakery India



Chef Gaurav Misra
Corporate Chef
de Cuisine

Master Bakers Challenge India 2025



Master Bakers Challenge India 2025



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No Artificial Colours



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Sponsors



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quality. As a proud supporter of the Battle of Besan at the Culinary League, Agropure aims to spotlight the versatility of besan and inspire chefs to reimagine its potential in modern Indian cuisine.



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kitchen equipment, MOD's design team meticulously plans and designs layouts to optimise space utilisation and facilitate smooth operations. MOD Kitchen Equipment Pvt. Ltd. is dedicated to customer satisfaction and has earned a reputation for excellence. Their commitment to delivering high-quality products, reliable services and innovative solutions has made them a trusted name in the industry. MOD's expertise, strong industry relationships, and customer-centric approach position them as a reliable one-stop solution for all commercial kitchen and catering equipment needs.

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With a legacy of over 100 years, Monin is a global leader in premium syrups, fruit mixes, sauces and beverage solutions. In India, Monin inspires creativity behind the bar and in the kitchen, empowering chefs and mixologists with world-class flavours. We are proud to support platforms that nurture young culinary talent and celebrate innovation.



IBCA

IBCA has become an excellent platform for newbies to learn and master the field of Bakery and Culinary Arts in their sophisticated courses. All courses have a standard curriculum to give students guidance in various methods, processes, preparations and building recipes from scratch. We turn newcomers with little or no experience in Bakery and Culinary Arts into dedicated professionals ready to compete in the demanding world of building their careers. IBCA offers them all the resources they need to advance their amateur careers while receiving professional guidance. Over the years,

IBCA has earned one of the top names as bakery institute in Delhi & culinary institute in Delhi.



Windsor Chocolatier

Windsor Chocolatier has emerged as a pioneer in India's premium chocolate segment, crafting artisanal products from bean to bar. With its roots in Gurugram, the brand has become synonymous with quality, innovation and refined taste. It has served discerning clients across hospitality and events, delivering bespoke chocolate creations that blend tradition with modern craftsmanship.



DKG Sales Private Limited

DKG Sales Private Limited, established in 1987 by Dilip Kumar Gandhi, is a premier Delhi-based manufacturing company catering to the Indian hotel and restaurant industry. Specialising in high-quality cutlery, crockery, glassware and kitchen equipment, DKG meets the unique needs of chefs. Their state-of-the-art facility ensures premium quality, innovation and client-centric solutions, helping chefs create exceptional culinary experiences.



The Butler Hotel Supermarket

Established in 1997 in Delhi, The Butler Hotel Supermarket is a premier supplier of professional bakery and hospitality equipment. Offering tools from Pavoni, Chocolate World and others—from bakeware to buffet ware, chocolate tempering machines, display stands and packaging—it serves top institutions like Taj, Marriott, Oberoi and ITC. A reliable partner for pastry professionals.



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Anupam Industries

Anupam Industries, established in 1995, has become a prominent manufacturer and supplier of premium catering counters and related products. The company prioritises innovation and customer satisfaction, offering a wide array of catering solutions, including stylish buffet tables like the AeroSpace and Chinese Buffet Tables. These products are designed to enhance food presentation while delivering practical functionality for various events.

With a strong commitment to ethical business practices, Anupam Industries ensures transparency in all dealings, fostering robust client relationships. Their catering counters are both aesthetically pleasing and specifically tailored to meet the diverse culinary requirements of caterers and event planners. This dedication to quality and service has positioned Anupam Industries as a trusted partner in the hospitality sector.

Under its own brand, Anupam Royals, the company showcases superior craftsmanship and design, reflecting its commitment to excellence and innovation in the catering industry. The product lineup includes elegant catering counters, a variety of chafing dishes to maintain food warmth, an assortment of crockery including platters and bowls, versatile display stands, comfortable banquet chairs and refined cutlery sets to elevate the dining experience.



India Pastry Cup 2025 Concluded with APCA Bangalore Emerging as The Winning Team

The much-anticipated India Pastry Cup 2025 concluded on an inspiring note, bringing together some of the most talented pastry professionals from across the country. Hosted as a prestigious platform to celebrate skill, artistry and innovation in pastry, the event saw an extraordinary display of creativity through elaborate chocolate and sugar showpieces. The competition welcomed teams from Bangalore and Mumbai. Team One consisted of Chef Pratyay Keny and Chef Ravi Dhuriya and Team Two consisted of Chef Nishant Shetty and Chef Rubani Singh respectively, who collaborated to execute a series of tasks designed to test their precision, creativity and endurance on the competition floor.

The India Pastry Cup serves as a national stage with a dual purpose :

- To discover and encourage pastry talent in India by providing them an international-standard competitive environment.
- To identify and prepare the country's best pastry chefs for representation in global platforms such as the Asian Pastry Cup and the Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie in Lyon, France – widely recognised as the "Pastry World Cup."

Chocolate & Sugar Displays

One of the highlights of the event was the unveiling of towering chocolate and sugar



showpieces – intricate sculptures that showcased the immense creativity and dexterity of the competing teams.

The chocolate displays were a breathtaking combination of structure and story. Teams drew inspiration from themes ranging from sustainability and nature to futuristic visions, transforming cocoa into sculpted art forms that balanced elegance with stability. The sugar showpieces dazzled with vibrant colours, pulled and blown sugar techniques and delicate detailing. Showcasing Indian pastry talent, the event proved that India's pastry chefs can stand shoulder to shoulder with international professionals.

Industry leaders, hotel executives, pastry and culinary educators in attendance witnessed first-hand the rising potential of India's pastry talent pool. A stepping stone to global recognition, the winning team will represent India in upcoming International Asian Pastry Cup competition, carrying

forward the nation's ambition to shine on the global pastry map.

After intense hours of competition and evaluation by an esteemed jury of pastry experts viz. Chef Avijit Ghosh, Chef Nasim Ahamed Delvi and Sanjay Anand -

Contestants, Chef Pratyay Keny and Chef Ravi Dhuriya from APCA Bengaluru were declared the champions of the India Pastry Cup 2025. The team impressed the judges with a towering chocolate showpiece of a flamingo that demonstrated flawless technique, structural ingenuity and artistic storytelling and an exuberant sugar display of fish alongside a pond and lily pads that combines delicate craftsmanship with bold visual impact.



The jury commended team one not only for their technical mastery but also for their strong teamwork, time management and ability to deliver consistently under pressure. Their victory marks a proud moment for the academy and for India's pastry fraternity. As the winning team, APCA Bengaluru will now prepare to represent India at The Asian Pastry Cup 2026, which will be held in Singapore.



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Ammy's Coffee Launches its New Chapter in GK 1, M Block Market

Ammy's Coffee launched its 4th outlet in GK-1 on 13th September 2025, introducing their signature warmth, artisanal coffee and community-first ethos to a neighbourhood known for its timeless charm and urban energy.

Founded by brothers Amar Preet Singh and Anand Singh, Ammy's Coffee has quickly built a reputation for thoughtful hospitality and premium handcrafted offerings. With roots in a family legacy that includes the iconic Giani's, and a successful track record with ventures like The Waffle Co. and Go Fro, the duo brought a powerful mix of culinary creativity and brand-building expertise to the café experience.

"With Ammy's Coffee's launch in GK-1, we're thrilled to bring a new chapter to our 'Beans to Bonds' story. Our aim has always been to create more than just a café, a welcoming community hub where every cup of coffee sparks connection and every visit feels like coming home. This outlet embodies our commitment to quality, creativity and togetherness, and we can't wait to see how it becomes a vibrant part of the neighbourhood's daily rhythm." said Amar Preet Singh and Anand Preet Singh.

Ammy's Coffee is committed to cultivating a vibrant

coffee community in India by delivering international quality and taste in every cup. They offer handcrafted brews,



fresh food and desserts in warm, welcoming spaces designed to foster connection and comfort.

2025 California Walnut Crop Forecasted at 710,000 Tons, Up 18% from Previous Year



The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the official 2025 California Walnut Industry Objective Measurement Report in September. The California walnut production is forecasted at 710,000 tons (644,101 MT), up 18% from 2024's production of 603,000 tons (547,032 MT). The forecast is based on 365,000 bearing acres, down 1% from 2024's estimated bearing acreage of 370,000 acres.

The announcement provided the industry with an objective crop volume estimate. Using scientific methodologies, USDA field staff counted, measured, weighed and evaluated thousands of walnuts from major growing regions in July and August for use in a statistical acreage model to establish the annual walnut crop estimate.

"The estimate of 710,000 tons is in-line with what the industry was projecting," said Robert Verloop, Executive Director and CEO of the California Walnut Board and Commission. "Combined with virtually being sold out of the 2024 crop, the industry is well positioned to start shipping new harvest California walnuts immediately, providing seller and buyer confidence and stable markets."

The California walnut industry foresees a promising season ahead. The California Walnut Board and Commission continue its focus to build long-term demand and increase sales for California walnuts by implementing programs that drive consumers to eat more walnuts, more often, and in more ways.



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The Hazelnut Factory Launches its 15th Outlet in Agra

The Hazelnut Factory, an artisanal sweets and café brand rooted in Lucknow, proudly unveiled its 15th outlet in the heart of Agra on 12th August 2025, inviting guests to experience a unique fusion of artisanal mithai, coffee and cultural heritage. The launch was made even more special by the presence of the Chief Guest, Smt. Hemlata Diwakar, Hon'ble Mayor of Agra Municipal Corporation, who inaugurated the event by cutting the ceremonial ribbon. She was welcomed by Ankit Sahni (Founder & CEO of The Hazelnut Factory) & Badal Sahni (Co-founder & COO of The Hazelnut Factory).

THF's aesthetic inspiration lies in the charm of European cafés, brought to life with a distinctly Indian sensibility. The iconic blue interiors radiate warmth, creating an



inviting space that resonates with the brand's ethos: 'The Joy of Crafting the Best'. Every product at THF reflects this philosophy—whether it's their single-estate coffee sourced from Chikmagalur, the signature artisanal mithai like the trademarked Labon™, or their indulgent pastries that marry global techniques with local flavours. Their Baklava is a re-imagined dessert, rooted with regional flavours and crafted to complement The

Hazelnut Factory's finest coffee blends.

Ankit Sahni, Founder & CEO, The Hazelnut Factory said, "With every new outlet, we aim to deepen our connection with the city's soul. Agra's legacy deserves more than admiration—it deserves participation. Through Contemporary interiors and our cultural campaign, we're inviting people to not just drink coffee, but to experience heritage."

Barry Callebaut Ushers In Third Chocolate Manufacturing Facility in Neemrana, India

Barry Callebaut, the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products, inaugurated its third chocolate manufacturing facility in India. Strategically located in the Ghiloth industrial area of Neemrana, approximately 120 kilometres from Delhi, the 20,000-square-meter greenfield factory is equipped with advanced production lines for chocolate and compound in multiple formats and integrated warehousing.

With this new facility, India has become the Group's largest chocolate-producing market in the Asia Pacific, Middle East, and Africa (AMEA) region. As Indians develop a growing taste for premium chocolate, this facility is designed to serve both international and local



customers, including food manufacturers, bakers and confectioners.

The new factory marks a major milestone in Barry Callebaut's long-term growth journey in India. Over the past five years, the company has invested over INR 500 Crores (CHF 50 million) in India, underlining its confidence in

the country's chocolate market and its commitment to strengthening local manufacturing and customer proximity.

With the opening of this facility, India is now Barry Callebaut's largest chocolate-producing market in the Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa (AMEA) region.

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Taiwan Gears Up for Kaohsiung HORECA & Food Show 2025

The Kaohsiung Int'l Hotel, Restaurant, Baking and Catering Show (KAOHSIUNG HORECA) will be held alongside the Kaohsiung Food Show from 23–26 October 2025 at the Kaohsiung Exhibition Center, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. Recognised as the largest food and hospitality trade show in southern Taiwan, the event is organised by the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) and Chan Chao International Co., Ltd.

Kaohsiung HORECA will spotlight cutting-edge machinery and solutions across a wide range of exhibitor categories. These include hospitality and food service equipment and supplies, advanced machinery, facilities and accessories for hotels, restaurants, bakeries, catering and laundry operations, as well as tea, coffee and related appliances. The event

offers a dynamic platform for industry professionals to network, explore innovative products such as smart machinery and health-focused food solutions.

Beyond the exhibition floor, a comprehensive program of side events will keep attendees engaged throughout the show. Key highlights include the 2025 Taiwan Foods Procurement Day (Kaohsiung), which connects local suppliers with international buyers, along with seminars, celebrity chef cooking demonstrations, live product launches, tasting sessions, food product auctions and exciting lucky draws. These activities combine valuable business insights with interactive, hands-on experiences, adding significant value for all participants.



Poetry by Love & Cheesecake Unveils “Scoops”, at Eros Theatre Building, Mumbai

Poetry by Love & Cheesecake, the visionary brand founded by Ruchyeta Bhatia and Chef Amit Sharma in 2012 invited guests to experience a muse reborn in the heart of Mumbai's Art Deco landmark, the Eros Theatre Building, now home to its latest outlet and the birthplace of an unprecedented dessert revolution: Scoops, the world's first scoopable cheesecake. At a dedicated counter, customers can select from up to three creamy cheesecake bases, which will be freshly scooped, not sliced, to order, just like a gourmet frozen dessert. This creamy portion is then crowned with customisable toppings, allowing each guest to design their own edible masterpiece.

“The Eros Building is one of Mumbai's most iconic cultural landmarks, and



we could not have imagined a better place to launch Poetry's next chapter. With ‘Scoops,’ we're bringing innovation to tradition by giving our customers a

brand-new way to enjoy cheesecakes while staying true to our promise of quality, craft, and obsession with detail,” says Ruchyeta Bhatia. Chef Amit Sharma adds, “Creating a cheesecake that can be scooped while retaining our signature texture and richness was a technical and creative challenge. After months of R&D, we've perfected a format that is creamy, stable and indulgent, while giving customers the joy of customisation. ‘Scoops’ is not just a dessert; it's an experience.” Guests can craft their own combinations from 8 exciting flavours from Avocado, Matcha, Lotus Biscoff, classic New York, Chocolate Brownie and more. This new dessert experience is deeply personalised, inviting patrons to choose their base, select one, two or three scoops, and add up to three complementary toppings, with additional toppings available for those seeking an extra indulgence.

Gordon Ramsay Street Burger Arrives in Delhi

Gordon Ramsay Restaurants Global and Travel Food Services Limited (TFS) unveiled their first restaurant in India, Street Burger at Terminal 1 of the Indra Gandhi International Airport.

The 60-seater restaurant offers a roster featuring gourmet burgers, seasoned fries, and soft drinks from the chef's brand. The bold flavours at Street Burger's Delhi airport outlet not only stand true to the brand but very well represent the Indian customer's palate.



The specially curated menu here features Tandoori Paneer Burger, Butternut Bhaji Burger and the global fan favourite Gordon's Fried Chicken (GFC) Burger. The menu also includes Hotter than Hell Fries, Crisp Vegan Bites, salads, Sticky Toffee Pudding, milkshakes and cocktails.

On this opening, Andy Wenlock, CEO of Gordon Ramsay Restaurants Global, said, “India's passion for its rich culinary heritage makes it a natural home for Street Burger. We are pleased to be partnering with TFS to bring the Gordon Ramsay Restaurants Global experience to India, serving our signature flavours and inspired new dishes at the very gateway to the nation.”

Varun Kapur, Managing Director & CEO, TFS, said this new launch showcases the growing demand for global-quality dining at Indian airports. He added that it combines operational expertise with Gordon Ramsay's culinary excellence.



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GST Slashed to 5%: Bakery Sector Hails Major Relief

In September, 2025 – The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council announced a sweeping reduction in rates for bakery and confectionery products, bringing widespread relief to both industry stakeholders and consumers. Under



the new structure, the GST on cakes, pastries, biscuits and several other baked goods has been slashed from 18 percent to just 5 percent, while pizza bread will now attract no GST at all. Similarly, savoury snacks or expanded products, yeasts and baking powders, which were earlier taxed at 12 percent, will now be levied at the reduced rate of 5 percent.

The decision comes as a direct outcome of persistent lobbying by the Indian Bakers Federation (IBF), which has long argued for a fairer tax system for the sector. Welcoming the move, IBF leaders described it as a step toward creating “a more logical and supportive tax environment” that will not only promote growth and affordability but also ensure long-term sustainability. For consumers, the changes promise immediate benefits as sweet shop and bakery owners have already begun passing on the tax cuts in the form of lower prices. “Items that were previously taxed at 12, 18 or even 40 percent are now down to 5 percent,” said one Delhi-based confectioner, pointing out that the new rates will make everyday treats like cakes, biscuits and dry fruits far more affordable.

Industry experts believe the reduction will stimulate demand, particularly during the upcoming festive season, and give domestic brands a stronger competitive edge against imports. They also note that the shrinking price gap between loose and packaged products could encourage a shift toward more hygienic, packaged goods in the long term. While the sector celebrates this major relief, analysts caution that businesses will need to maintain proper record-keeping, product classification and invoicing to remain compliant and avoid litigation. Even so, the latest reforms mark a significant step in aligning taxation with industry realities and signal the government’s support for small businesses. For the bakery sector, the rate cuts open the door to renewed growth, innovation and a sweeter future.

7th SICA Culinary Olympiad 2025 Held in Chennai

The 7th edition of the South India Chef’s Association (SICA) Culinary Olympiad and Exhibition 2025 took place from September 19-21 at the Chennai Trade Centre, reaffirming its position as South India’s leading celebration of culinary arts. Organised with the support of the India Trade Promotion Organisation and the Tamil Nadu Trade Promotion Organisation, the event brought together more than 3,000 chefs and culinary professionals from across India, alongside international teams from the Maldives, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Australia.

Established in 1998, the South India Chef’s Association (SICA) is a not-for-profit body affiliated with the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS). The association represents culinary professionals across South India, working to elevate culinary standards, encourage young talent and promote the region’s rich gastronomic heritage. SICA has become a recognised platform for chefs to share knowledge, showcase innovation and align with global culinary trends.



The Olympiad featured a wide range of competitions for both professional and apprentice chefs, including live cooking, pastry art, hot plate presentations, cocktail and mocktail contests, and sustainability-focused housekeeping events. Evaluated by a WACS-approved international jury, participants were assessed on creativity, technical skills and presentation. Highlights included the Three-tier Wedding Cake competition, Butter/Margarine Sculpture, Plated Appetizers and the Authentic Indian Regional Cuisine contest, presented in association with Maggi Coconut Milk Powder. Winners received gold medals at a grand awards ceremony held alongside the AAHAR International Food Fair 2025.

Beyond competitions, the event offered skill-enhancement workshops, live demonstrations and networking at the SICA Chefs Lounge. The presence of eminent culinary icons - Padma Shri Dr. D. Damodaran, Chef Sanjeev Kapoor and Chef Sheetharam Prasad - further elevated its prestige.

The resounding success of the SICA Culinary Olympiad 2025 underscored its role as a premier platform for advancing culinary talent, celebrating creativity and strengthening South India’s hospitality industry.

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Sweet Moments... Timeless Traditions

Be it chocolates or cakes, sweets are always a favourite with people of all ages. Sweets have been a weakness with people from primordial days. A fondness for sweets is what endears desserts to the populace. If one looks at it scientifically, one finds that it was probably a fondness for sweets that gave people, in history, the energy and, possibly, saved their lives. Being able to taste sweetness might have helped our ancestors to identify energy rich food, which played a critical part in their survival. This fondness for sweets is what makes desserts an obsession with people. **Ashok Malkani** examines the love for desserts and analyses the modern concept of them being harmful to your health. He also looks at the trends during the festive season.

Sweets are a weakness with several people. When it comes to sweets, the maxim followed by almost everyone is: Never say Never. No wonder desserts are immensely popular with all age groups. As Ernestine Ulmer famously said "Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first."

Desserts today are more than just the finishing touch to a meal—they have become a highlight in themselves, adding a feel-good factor that makes life sweeter and happier. Sweet indulgences stimulate the release of the “happiness hormone,” leaving us more content and satisfied after a meal.

In a way, desserts make you feel relaxed and have a way of lifting the mood. After all stressed is desserts spelled backwards! Almost all agree that a meal is incomplete without a dessert.

With festivals seasons set in motion, hotels and restaurants are reimagining their festive menus by presenting traditional favourites in fresh formats, such as bite-sized portions, sugar-free options or plated desserts that combine Indian flavours with international techniques.

Ganeshram Iyer, Hotel Manager, ibis Styles Mysuru, shares, “Every *mithai* tells a story; from the ghee-laden *laddoo* that marks prosperity to crispy *murukkus* that bring families together over late-night conversations. Diwali thalis brim with richness, featuring sweets like *kaju katli*, *gulab jamun*, *jalebi*, and regional specialties such as *Shankarpali* in Maharashtra, *Mysore Pak* in Karnataka, and *Sohan Papdi* in North India.”

Dinkar Sardesai, Executive Chef, ITC Windsor Bengaluru says, “Festival are celebrated with an abundance of sweets and festive delicacies that symbolise prosperity and joy. Traditional *mithai* such as *laddoos*, *barfis*, *gulab jamun* and *jalebi* take center stage, often prepared at home and shared with friends and family.”

A meal is never truly complete without a dessert, and likewise, a chef’s service feels incomplete if it isn’t served. For guests mindful of their diet, there are plenty of options—ranging from sugar-free to jaggery-based creations—making desserts an inclusive and essential part of the dining experience. Across cultures, ending a meal with a sweet treat has long been a cherished tradition. Today, the influence of social media has added another dimension, as desserts continue to reign supreme as some of the most



Instagrammable and visually appealing food items.

Sangeeta Bhaskaran, Food Consultant, avers, “Desserts have always been an integral part of everyday meals. From their early placement on plantain leaves to taking center stage on 16th-century French dinner tables, desserts have consistently played a role in customs, traditions and in showcasing pomp and grandeur. Before sugar became widely available, honey and jaggery were commonly used to sweeten dishes. Truly, no meal is complete without its share of sweetness.”

History

A meal is considered to be incomplete without a dessert. But it may be mentioned that, according to food historians Deborah Krohn and Yotam Ottolenghi, the present day desserts



Chef Dinkar Sardesai

have existed since the seventeenth century.

But sweets were fed to gods in Mesopotamia and ancient India and other ancient civilizations much before that.

The word dessert originated from the French word *desservir*, which means “to clear the table”. Its first known use was in 1600.

Early Sanskrit text dating back to 550 CE have mentioned the used of “*Sakkara*” for rituals. Even Deities have had favourites, with Lord Ganesha being fond of *Modak*, Lord Hanuman fond of *Laddoos* and Lord Krishna fond of *Kheer*. The mentions of sweets in our culture have been innumerable. Ayurveda texts have shown the association of consuming sweets with maintaining a healthy energy balance in the body.”

Desserts, *Mithai*, Sweets have been mentioned in some of the earliest books known to man. *Charaka Samhita* (Dated around 100BCE to 200 BCE) speaks about the importance of diet and nutrition and also the role of sweets in them. They have been intertwined in our lives to such an extent that one can’t really lay a finger on how the desserts/sweets began in India.”

An expert states, “Sugarcane has been grown in the Indian subcontinent for thousands of years, and the art of refining sugar was invented there 8000 years ago (6000 BCE) by the Indus Valley Civilisation. The English word “sugar”

comes from a Sanskrit word *Sharkara* for the refined sugar, while the word “candy” comes from Sanskrit word *khaanda* for the unrefined sugar— one of the simplest raw forms of sweet. Over its long history, cuisines of the Indian subcontinent developed a diverse array of sweets. Some claim there is no other region in the world where sweets are so varied, so numerous or so invested with meaning as the Indian subcontinent.”

Mithai (sweets) are the confectionery and desserts of the Indian subcontinent. Thousands of dedicated shops in India sell nothing but sweets.”

Sushruta Samhita which is a Sanskrit text on medicine and surgery mentions records about sugar being produced from mahua flowers, barley and honey. Sugar-based foods were also used in temple offerings as *bhoga* or *prasadam* for the deities which, after the prayers, became a holy offering for devotees and visitors to the temple.

The custom of sweets in the Indian subcontinent has been traced to at least 500 BCE when, records suggest, both raw sugar and refined sugar were being produced. By the Gupta dynasty era (300–500 CE), sugar was being made not only from sugar cane, but from other plant sources such as palm with official documents of acknowledging five kinds of sugar.

Sweets were fed to the Gods in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient India and other ancient civilizations. Dried fruits and honey were probably the first sweeteners used in most parts of the world, but the spread of sugarcane around the world was essential to the development of dessert. In certain parts of India, these are called “*Mithai*” or sweets. Sugar and desserts have a long history in India, wherein by about 500 BC, people in India had developed the technology to produce sugar crystals. In the local language, these crystals were called ‘*Khanda*’.

Health Consciousness

Desserts are, at their core, an indulgence. With health consciousness on the rise there seems to be hesitation on the part of diners to partake in this course during



Ganeshram Iyer

the meals. Some are of the belief that deserts should be had before the meals not at the end of the meal. This has added a unique spin to this delicacy.

Would health consciousness decrease demand for desserts?

An expert suggest that taking a few bites of dessert before eating your vegetables helps you absorb vitamins and nutrients better – and that’s a good thing when it comes to your health. The other advantage of eating dessert first is it delays gastric emptying. This causes you to feel fuller quicker – so you’ll eat less.”

“But,” he adds, “It is not so common amongst all yet since they follow tradition of meal with their courses.”

He continues, “As far as health consciousness affecting the consumption of desserts is concerned, sugar is had in different formats at all times. Open a soft drink and you have consumed sugar! It doesn’t take an expert to see that our modern sugar intake is more than it was in our foraging days. And so far, scientists have had a difficult time proving how it affects our health, independent of a diet too high in calories. A review of research conducted over the last five years summarised that a diet of more than 150g of fructose per day reduces insulin sensitivity – and therefore increases the risk of developing health problems like high blood pressure and cholesterol levels. But the researchers also concluded that this occurs most often when high sugar

intake is combined with excess calories, and that the effects on health are “more likely” due to sugar intake increasing the chance of excess calories, not the impact of sugar alone.

“Meanwhile, there is also a growing argument that demonising a single food is dangerous – and causes confusion that risks us cutting out vital foods.”

The expert maintains that sugar and sweets play a role in supporting healthy metabolic activity. Traditionally, meals often begin with a sweet dish, such as *kheer* or *payasam*, served on a plantain leaf before moving on to more savoury items. The sweet taste stimulates the taste buds and activates brain cells to release saliva, while consuming a sweet item first helps promote the flow of digestive secretions.

The consumption of desserts is unlikely to decline, but the form of desserts is evolving. Health-conscious individuals are increasingly opting for natural sweeteners such as stevia, dates and honey, while reducing the use of refined sugar. People are becoming more aware of what they consume and how it affects their overall well-being.

As per Ayurveda, having sweet right at the start of your meal is said to activate the taste buds. Having them right at the end can put off the digestive process. It may cause fermentation and indigestion due to the acidic secretions. This could also trigger gas formation and bloating. To counter these effects, Ayurveda suggests that one must start with something sweet at the outset, followed by something sour and salty in the middle and finally something spicy or astringent. Having spicy food in the end helps douse the *Kapha dosh* (earth), while something sugary at the start takes care of the *Vayu* (wind) imbalance. This Concept has still not caught on fully as the general mindset of Indian eating habit is to have the dessert after the main meal. However, in recent times people have become more mindful about their health and therefore have begun to relook into their eating habits aided through scientific research and also referring to the age old Ayurvedic practices to influence or rather

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redefine their eating habits.”

With people becoming health conscious, the trend of dessert consumption has shifted focus from the refined sugar to more healthy alternatives like honey, palm jaggery, dates, coconut sugar and maple.

Sangeeta is also of a similar view. He says, “Taking a few bites of dessert before eating your vegetables helps you absorb vitamins and nutrients better, and that’s a good thing when it comes to your health. The other advantage of eating dessert first is it delays gastric emptying.”

She continues, “Eating unhealthy ingredients can cause weight gain. Rates of obesity are rising worldwide and added sugar, especially from sugar-sweetened beverages is thought to be one of the main culprits. High-sugar diets have been associated with an increased risk of many diseases and have also been linked to acne, diabetes and heart diseases. Foods high in added sugar quickly spike blood sugar and insulin levels, leading to increased energy. Hence chefs and the dessert industry are more focussed on healthy products that are sweet and enjoyable to eat and yet sugar-free/gluten-free/vegan/low calories, etc. to save the consumer from various diseases.”

Modern Belief

Almost everyone believes that desserts are harmful to health. Read any fitness or health magazine and you are bombarded with facts about why sugar is bad or the only way to live a healthy lifestyle requires cutting out dessert.

But if you have a sweet tooth, like this writer, you would realise that life wouldn’t be the same without desserts. But don’t be dismayed, there is hope for dessert lovers everywhere. Contrary to popular belief, desserts can have certain health benefits.

Sangeeta, reveals, “There are numerous reasons why you should have desserts. They are:

- Desserts like pancakes are good for breakfast. Believe it or not eating desserts for breakfast could also help non-diabetic obese people lower their weight
- Consuming products such as a little bit of dark chocolate everyday can actually help reduce the risk of a stroke in the long run, as well as reduce your blood pressure
- Most importantly, it makes life more enjoyable, as eating desserts immediately puts you in a good mood, which makes your day go better and, in turn, makes you healthy, as it also makes you a happier person and a better human being.”

She maintains, “All foods are to be eaten in moderation. Desserts and sweets provide positive energy to an individual and are associated with the release of happy hormones (Serotonin and oxytocin). A balanced intake leaves you positive, energetic and satiated. Additionally, desserts lower stress. As stress is one of the greatest hidden barriers to good health, desserts would thus add to your overall well-being.”

Trends for 2025

As we enter the final quarter of 2025, India’s dessert scene is witnessing a remarkable evolution. While the nation’s love for sweets remains unwavering, the ways in which they are enjoyed are shifting, driven by a blend of health consciousness, culinary innovation and a renewed celebration of traditional flavours in modern, creative forms.

The current trend is more about showcasing originality with well-established flavours and products. One such flavour that is taking the dessert and bakery industry by storm and has gained much popularity is burnt butter. Apart from this, the other big flavours include those that syndicate traditional sweets along with savoury in order to play with our taste buds. For instance, *ashwagandha* chocolates, chocolate cupcakes with fresh mint buttercream, lemon and rosemary drizzle cake, ginger and turmeric-infused cookies, cinnamon oatmeal ice-cream, green tea frozen yogurt or scones filled with cardamom-infused cream.

Savoury desserts are the next sensation. Sesame macarons, black pepper ice-cream, chocolate chili pies, salted caramel, tabasco lava cake and flavours like guava chilli in ice-creams and popsicles have been appreciated and relished.

Another trend is the emphasis on botanical and floral flavours, which are bridging traditional Indian tastes with global dessert concepts. Rose, hibiscus, saffron and jasmine are being paired with nuts, fruits and chocolates to create sophisticated offerings. Desserts like pistachio-rose financiers, saffron-infused



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panna cottas and hibiscus-flavoured macarons are appearing on menus across luxury hotels, bakeries and patisseries. Herbal notes such as basil, mint and lemongrass are also being explored, adding freshness and a subtle depth to sweets, while spices like cardamom, cinnamon and black pepper are being paired with chocolate and caramel to create complex, multi-layered flavour profiles.

Over the past few years, there has been a growing focus on healthy ingredients and foods that support the immune system, inspiring chefs to create recipes centred around these elements. This shift is also driving a trend toward natural alternatives to refined sugar, with sweeteners like allulose and stevia seeing a sharp rise in usage. Vegan desserts have emerged as a major trend, gaining popularity as more consumers seek plant-based, wholesome, yet indulgent options. With locavores on the rise, seasonal, local and foraged ingredients are taking pride of place in recipes, promoting both sustainability and freshness. Many people are also turning to natural and organic materials to restore balance and wellness in their diets.

The visual appeal of desserts has never been more critical. With social media shaping consumer expectations, desserts are now designed to be as photogenic

as they are delicious. Layered parfaits, deconstructed sweets, edible flowers and innovative plating techniques are becoming standard. Desserts that engage multiple senses, through aroma, texture, colour and presentation, are increasingly sought after. 'Instagrammable' desserts are no longer gimmicks; they are an essential part of the culinary experience, driving both consumer delight and brand visibility.

Artisanal and small-batch desserts are another rising trend in 2025. There is growing appreciation for craftsmanship in the sweet space, with chefs experimenting with slow-cooked jaggery, hand-roasted nuts and carefully sourced ingredients to produce desserts that are as much about texture and presentation as they are about flavour.

Innovative flavour combinations are also on the rise, with bitter and spicy notes being paired with chocolate and other classic bases, providing a refreshing take on age-old concepts. Across the industry, the focus remains on reimagining tradition with creativity, health-consciousness and visual appeal, ensuring desserts are as engaging as they are enjoyable.

Taking into consideration that modern-day consumers are prioritising their well-being, bakery and gourmet industry has been experimenting with wholesome

flavours and ingredients, alongside turning to functional or plant-based foods and twists on classic products to avoid menu fatigue. With consumers keen on replicating restaurant experiences at home, one can expect to witness more wholesome gourmet condiments, cooking sauces and cocktail mixes. For instance, *ashwagandha*, smoked watermelon and maple sauce, sea salt and frozen yogurts.

Age-old ingredients like *Kuttu*, Amaranth, *Nachni* and *Bajra* flour, will double up in usage in the upcoming years. Seaweed and *ashwagandha* are also finding an increased usage in the dessert industry alongside probiotics with gut augmenting properties which have created a space for themselves. Gluten-free options in traditional breads, pastas and gluten-free flours like buckwheat, rice flour, tapioca and almond flour are finding their way into the making of bakery products and desserts. Dairy-free cheese will witness an increase in demand and plant-based proteins will continue to advance in the market. Vegetable-infused wholesome desserts are also taking the industry by storm, for instance, delectable desserts like carrot kheer, beetroot pastry and green peas kheer are savoury trends worth rooting for.

Asian flavours particularly Japanese, lend bakers the prospect to try some unusual flavours, for instance, wholesome bakes like Japanese black vinegar cupcakes filled with yuzu curd or apricot and wasabi muffins are trending. Some new additions that will be seen dominating menus are Japanese mochi, pandan crème Brulee to a matcha Japanese cotton cheesecake.

This trend will peak in subsequent years. Indian sweets inspired desserts like *motichoor ladoo* cake jar, *rasmalai* cake, *barfi* cupcakes, *jalebi* crème brulee, *kala jamun* chocolate truffles, white chocolate parfait, *rabdi* panna cotta, and more will be seen ruling the menu.

This trend is all about taking classic flavours to a new level by adding small twists to recipes to provide something diverse. For instance, in the case of salted caramel, experimenting with various

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savoury takes or twists to the ingredients is an exceptional route to take. Getting experimental with salted caramel could be in the form of an added flavour in a indulgent bakes with a diversified format like a salted caramel brownie pie or salted caramel frangipane pear tart. This ingredient can also be added to bakes with coffee.

In summary, the dessert trends for 2025 in India reflect a dynamic

convergence of tradition, health, innovation and aesthetics. From reinvented classics to plant-based, nutrient-rich creations, from artisanal small-batch confections to visually stunning Instagram-ready desserts, the industry is evolving to meet the modern consumer's demands for taste, wellness and experience. Traditional flavours are no longer confined to conventional forms—they are being celebrated,

experimented with, and presented in ways that resonate with contemporary palates. With these trends, desserts in 2025 are poised to be more than just a meal's finale—they are becoming a holistic experience, combining culture, nutrition and artistry on every plate.

The festive season is witnessing several changes in the cuisine but every festival is going to be a memorably sweet occasion!

Recipes to Make the Festivals Sweet



Amaranth & Jaggery Ladoo

Ingredients

Popped Amaranth	1 cup
Jaggery grated	¾ cup
Ghee	¾ cup
Grated coconut	¾ cup
Mixed nuts chopped	2 tbsp
Raisins	2 tbsp
Cardamom Powder	½ tsp

Method

On a medium flame, heat a pan.

Dry roast a millet until popped.

Cool the dry roast millet.

Grind the millet into a fine powder,

In separate pan, add grated jaggery and 2 tbsp spoons of water.

Heat at a medium flame until jaggery melts.

Strain the above mixture and set aside.

In a mixing bowl, combine the millet powder, grated coconut & cardamom powder.

Take a previous pan that was used for roasting millet and heat ghee, chopped nuts, raisins and fry until it turns golden and raisins puffed in it.

Pour the hot ghee mixture into the millet mixture.

Mix well.

Add the strained melted jaggery in to millet mixture.

Mix thoroughly till well mixed.

Grease your palm with little ghee.

Take a small portion of mixture and shape into round laddoo.

Repeat the same process with rest of the mixture.

Allow the laddoo to completely set cool before serving it.

(Chef Dinkar Sardesai, Executive Chef, ITC Windsor Bengaluru)



Jaggery & Sesame Pannacotta

Ingredients

Fresh cream, milk, organic jaggery, roasted sesame paste, agar-agar.

Method

Heat cream with jaggery, mix with sesame paste, set with agar-agar, chill, and serve with sesame brittle.

Twist: Combines Italian finesse with Indian festive flavours.



Rose & Pistachio Phirni Tart

Ingredients

Phirni base (rice, milk, sugar, rose essence), baked tart shells, pistachio garnish.

Method

Fill phirni into tart shells, chill, garnish with pistachios and rose petals.

Twist: Traditional phirni presented in an elegant French-inspired tart format.

(Ganeshram Iyer, Hotel Manager, Accor Hotels)

Saffron & Almond Quinoa Kheer

Cook quinoa in almond milk until creamy.

Sweeten with jaggery or honey.

Flavour with saffron and cardamom.

Garnish with roasted almonds and pistachios.

Chocolate Ghevar Tart

Use traditional ghevar base as tart shell.

Fill with rich dark chocolate ganache.

Top with candied nuts and rose petals for festive appeal.

(Bhawar Singh Rathord, Executive Chef, WelcomHeritage Cheetagrah Resort & Spa)

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Beyond Refined Flour – Renaissance of Ancient Grains

Baking with specialty flours is trending in commercial ovens

By Gita Hari

Maida or refined flour, derived from wheat, is the core ingredient of breads, cakes and pastries. All-purpose flour, the backbone of bakery items, are partially getting replaced with flours of buckwheat, millets and other older grains. Recent years have witnessed bakers re-introduce a significant variety of flours made from grains into their baking recipes. Speciality flours (millet, nuts, coconut) are making a comeback in modern baking, driven by market demand for healthy bakery products. It is the resurgence of the flours of ancient grains as premium bakers and pastry chefs of hotels are veering from wheat and refined flours to quinoa, emmer and millet flours to create their fancy bakes with

their unique texture and enhanced flavour profile. Millet flours are versatile and can be incorporated in Indian, international cuisines and baking repertoire. They fulfill the dietary requirements, source of high fibre and protein. They also come under evolved and mindful guests' preferences towards eco-conscious products. Substituting maida with specialty flours translates as treading the path to good health as well as decreasing your carbon footprint.

Sustainable Ancient Grains

Grains, since ages, have been the mainstay in baking across cross-cultural boards. Multi-grain flours are considered in breads and other bakes for their sustainability, wellness

quotient and unique taste. Most common specialty flours are produced out of cassava/tapioca, rice, corn, millets, quinoa, amaranth, chickpea, lentils, coconut flour, seeds like flax and sunflower.

There are many grounds to quit or substitute modern wheat for the older grains. To begin with, the latter enhance our overall physical and mental health. Their production is sustainable as they consume less water, some like millets can even grow in arid land and harsh conditions minus pesticides or fertilisers, making them an eco-friendly choice. These grains yield healthier soil for the next generation crops. People nowadays are making a constant effort to consume millet flours more than refined flours as it's

creating gut issues for many. It has become a digestive problem for individuals who are intolerant towards refined flour, refined oil, refined sugar or are lactose intolerant.

Hearty and Tasty

Buckwheat or *kuttu ke atta* is diabetic-friendly and is used in international cuisines too like pancakes, bread, kodo millet flour pizza base and other baked goods. "Incorporating their flours in bakery is commercially viable too, in keeping with the current trend of health-conscious guests' demands for innovative and healthy flavours. Gluten-free breads are a part of our buffet breakfast. Buckwheat with its rustic flavour is used in tarts and cookies in the dessert section and in-room amenities," reveals Tarique Herekar – Director of Food & Beverages – Novotel Pune Nagar Road.

Use of emmer (*khapli* wheat), millets and buckwheat have recreated a growing curiosity among millennial's mindful eaters about their natural, nutrient-dense, low gluten and glycemic index properties, besides sustainable farming methods. These flours



Tarique Herekar

are packed with nutrition. Apart from being a rich source of protein to build muscles and bones, they also contain the energy-storing ability of organic compounds called lipids. Tarique further adds, "Incorporating fibre-rich flours of traditional grains in breads and other bakery products aids digestion. Their protein-dense options appeal to fitness freaks. We

witness amplified consumer interest in our gluten-free baked items due to their health benefits."

Though millet flours are way heavier than refined flours, they are easy on the gut. The texture and heaviness keep us fuller for a longer period. Mumbai-based award-winning and a highly successful bakery chef Swsheta Mutreja Aggarwal, Founder & Chef - Kookie Cake Crumble, observes, "Refined flour has no flavour or texture. I combine a few millet flours with coconut flour as well as almond flour. By doing so, the flavours get enhanced. They can be paired with hot beverages like a cup of coffee and a slice of gluten free orange & dark chocolate teacake. One can enjoy a cold beverage too if the tea cake is yummy and moist.

Baking with specialty flours or traditional grains requires some expertise but once mastered, exceptional outcome is the reward." Usually mix millet flours are combined with almond flour. A mixture of finger millet and almond flour with organic jaggery creates magic.

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Swheta Mutreja Aggarwal

Challenges

Combining the dough smoothly is a task. With weaker or no gluten, putting together a baked product can get challenging while using naturally gluten-free ingredients like flours of coconut, almond, buckwheat and lentils. It is not easy to get the fluffy, porous and soft-like-sponge consistency of refined flour.

The texture of these gluten-free flours is sandy, tough and dense. They bring in flavour (sweet, earthy or nutty) but due to lack of elasticity and binding properties, entail diverse methods than all-purpose flour. Binders, to replicate wheat flour's elasticity, like xanthan gum or psyllium fiber powder (additives which provide

proper texture and keep the baked items from crumbling) are used.

Swheta who does not use any additives for binding, mentions, "As an eggless brand, it has taken us a very long time to create recipes which are healthy as well as easy on the gut. Through trial and error, we have perfected chocolate cake made with mixed millet flours. These cakes tend to get a slightly darker shade on top after baking. Since all our desserts are eggless, we use yoghurt as a binder." The more colour, texture and taste, the better.

Bakers often experiment substituting a small quantity of the refined flour in cookies muffins or pancake recipes, further upping the ratio in future bakes till the balance of texture and taste is achieved. According to Tarique, "Pastry chefs at Novotel Pune usually integrate contrasting gluten-free starches and flours for those perfect bakes as millets do get a bit crumbly which can be avoided by baking them slightly less."

Balancing Flavours

Refined flour has always been a neutral canvas, but millets and alternative flours bring strong personalities. *Ragi* (finger millet) has a nutty, earthy depth, *Jowar* (sorghum) offers a mild sweetness and light texture, *Bajra* (pearl millet) gives a rustic, robust flavour; while Foxtail millet lends a delicate nuttiness. "The key is not to mask these flavours but to pair them



Chef Ganesh Karche

thoughtfully. For instance, ragi works beautifully with dark chocolate or jaggery, while foxtail millet pairs well with fruits like mango or berries. Since each millet behaves differently in baking, we often blend them with lighter flours to balance structure while letting their unique taste shine," elaborates Chef Ganesh Karche, the proficient Pastry Chef of Double Tree by Hilton Pune-Chinchwad.

Pairing with Beverages

These grains also influence how we pair bakes with drinks. According to Chef Ganesh the ideal pairings are, "A *ragi* tart with coconut mousse complements a robust South Indian filter coffee or earthy matcha. *Bajra*-based cookies with their hearty flavour go well with *masala chai*. *Jowar* tea cakes, being lighter, pair beautifully with pour-over coffee or green tea. And foxtail millet desserts, with their mild nuttiness, work well with jasmine tea or even sparkling cold brews. The choice of millet decides the drink; we just match the flavours to create a balanced experience."

As more professional bakers and star-rated hotels sniff out alternatives to maida/refined flour, the renaissance of heritage grains in commercial kitchens as an appetising and superfood alternative gains momentum. Whatever the reason – health, ethical or the pure joy of exploring new palate - these traditional grains with their significant contribution hold out a novel lead on baking. ■



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L'Opéra Expands Its French Legacy with Le Café at The Chanakya

By Sharmila Chand



L'Opéra introduces Le Café, an outstanding outfit nestled within Le Gourmet at The Chanakya, New Delhi.

Blending everyday indulgence with the charm of Parisian cafés, Le Café is a meticulously curated space where guests can slow down, savour and immerse themselves in an elevated French dining experience.

Rooted in L'Opéra's commitment to authenticity and craft, the café brings a new layer of warmth, finesse and versatility to the brand's presence in the capital.

From the scent of freshly baked baguettes to the rustle of flaky croissants, the café was envisioned as a pause in the day, a sensory escape where French finesse becomes an effortless ritual.

The location is both intuitive and inspired. Whether you're shopping for the finest cheeses and charcuterie or pausing for a quick pastry break, Le Café adapts seamlessly equally suited to lingering sit-downs and refined takeaways.

While it reflects L'Opéra's signature aesthetic and dedication to excellence, Le Café introduces a fresh layer of versatility to the brand's portfolio. It offers everything from hearty breakfasts and classic French soups to curated desserts and hand-rolled pastas. A true celebration of culinaire, each dish is made fresh at the outlet infused with technique, artistry and premium ingredients.

Laurent Samandari, Founder & Managing Director of L'Opéra, says, "With Le Café, we wanted to create a space which reminds you of the quiet pleasures of French living. It's our way of bringing a little Paris to your daily life."

In an exclusive conversation with Bakery Review, he talks about his journey, the concept of Le Café, the brand L'Opéra, future plans and more

While adapting to local tastes is crucial, maintaining the brand's core identity is non-negotiable. How do you achieve that balance?

Laurent Samandari:

Since its inception, L'Opéra's core aim has been to bring authentic French pâtisserie and boulangerie to India. We hold product quality and operational excellence as sacrosanct. While we remain observant of evolving Indian preferences, we integrate only those changes that do not dilute our Parisian identity. Our décor, raw materials, recipes and even our presentation are deeply rooted in French tradition. It's about offering a genuine French experience in every aspect—without compromise.

What truly sets Le Café apart—what are its core distinguishing factors?

Le Café by L'Opéra serves as a culinary destination within Le Gourmet by Le

Marché, bringing to life the vision of a holistic gourmet experience. It offers an elevated take on the traditional French café, blending elegance with authenticity.

Unlike our regular L'Opéra outlets, Le Café presents a distinct offering – featuring a specially curated menu with artisanal pastries, handcrafted breads and freshly rolled pasta. Guests can also enjoy



a live salad and sandwich counter, adding an interactive, made-to-order element to the dining experience.

What next? Where are you opening your next café?

We're excited about several upcoming openings, including locations at Silverglades, Gurgaon, Worldmark 4, Aerocity and DLF Avenue, Saket. Each new outlet is selected to reflect the refined positioning of the brand.

What kind of challenges have you faced in launching your brand?

Our journey was defined by the challenge of introducing authentic French products to a market largely unfamiliar with them. From sourcing high-quality ingredients and training staff to uphold rigorous French standards, to educating customers without compromising the brand's integrity—each step required

careful effort. One of the most persistent challenges has been adapting to India's climate. When working with products that rely heavily on chocolate, cream and other dairy components, logistics become central to maintaining quality and consistency.

How has your journey been in this industry?

It has been both rewarding and humbling. From a single outlet to a nationally recognised brand, it's been a journey of passion, perseverance and continuous learning. The Indian market is dynamic and diverse and building trust with our clientele has been our greatest achievement. We're grateful to our team and patrons who have believed in our vision.

What is the USP of your brand and F&B ventures?

Our uncompromising commitment to authenticity and quality. We don't adapt French recipes to Indian palates—we introduce true French flavours, educating the market while maintaining our standards.



Our outlets aren't cafés—they're cultural spaces that embody the elegance, warmth and culinary finesse of France.

How has L'Opéra evolved from a quintessential restaurant to a celebrated chain?

The evolution has been organic. What

started as a family passion project grew because of our consistent focus on quality, design and service. Our state-of-the-art production centre, premium locations, media presence and customer loyalty helped L'Opéra transform into a celebrated name. It's now a symbol of refined taste and cosmopolitan culture.



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Melting Moments, A Gelato Story

Gelato is more than a frozen dessert; it is a living expression of Italian heritage, carrying within its creamy folds the artistry of centuries. Each scoop tells a tale of innovation and devotion, of a culture that takes pride in transforming simple ingredients into an experience that lingers on the palate and in memory.

By Nikita Madan

The roots of gelato reach back to ancient times, when the snow and ice from the mountains were transformed into frozen delicacies reserved for the nobility. These pioneering moments firmly established Italy as the cradle of this exquisite dessert.

Gelato vs Ice-Cream

Gelato is different from ice cream not only in flavour but also in its very composition and craft. Its signature character lies in its smooth, almost velvety mouthfeel and the depth of flavour that bursts forth with every spoonful. According to Naineni Hanumanth Rao, Founder of Roast CCx, "Gelato uses more milk and less cream, incorporates minimal

air and is served slightly warmer than ice cream. This makes it denser, silkier and allows flavours to shine. At ROAST,



Naineni Hanumanth Rao

we craft small batches and fresh with slow churning to create a truly premium, indulgent experience."

The preparation of gelato, however, is not just a matter of following a recipe, it is both science and art. The science lies in the precise calculation of proportions, ensuring that milk proteins, sugars and fats are balanced to create the perfect texture, neither too icy nor too heavy. The art emerges in the hands of the gelatiere, who selects only the finest raw materials like fresh milk, natural sugars, ripe fruits, roasted nuts or pure chocolate. Rao stated that, "We craft our gelato with authentic, world-class ingredients. The base is made using the renowned Babbi gelato mix from Italy, chocolate is Felchlin

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Flavour Profile

Classics such as hazelnut, pistachio, chocolate and stracciatella are deeply rooted in Italy’s gastronomic heritage. Nut-based varieties like pistachio or hazelnut showcases the richness of regional produce while chocolate gelato, with its indulgent intensity and stracciatella, with delicate shards of chocolate folded into a creamy vanilla base, highlights the artistry of texture and tastes that defines the tradition. These flavours are not merely recipes; they are cultural touchstones, passed down through generations.

When asked about the popular flavours

that his customers enjoyed, Rao replied, “Our crowd favourite is the rich Pistachio and Raspberry Cheesecake, closely followed by our viral Kunafa Gelato - a Middle Eastern-inspired signature. We craft a rotating menu of nearly 20 gelato flavours, with seasonal specials such as luscious Mango and refreshing Strawberry, along with other chef-driven limited editions that keep the experience fresh and exciting year round.”

Gelato in India

India, with its deep-rooted culinary heritage and a young, cosmopolitan consumer base, is emerging as a highly promising market for artisanal gelato. Recent research on the confectionery sector reinforces this trend: the Indian industrial ice cream market was valued at USD 3.12 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow at an impressive CAGR of 13.5% through 2029.

While large chains and street vendors continue to dominate, there is a rising demand for premium artisanal gelato that delivers a more authentic and personalised experience. This shift creates exciting opportunities for dedicated gelato boutiques as well as for restaurants, cafés and food chains looking to diversify their offerings with high-quality gelato, especially in major metropolitan hubs and popular tourist destinations.

With the market currently in a phase of rapid expansion, and a warm climate



prevailing across much of the country for most of the year, gelato is uniquely positioned as a highly desirable product for Indian consumers. Gelatos’s appeal is further enhanced by its lower fat content, sugar and calorie content as compared to the standard industrial ice creams, making it a healthier choice during hot, scorching summer months.

With rising health awareness in urban India, gelato has the potential to capture a niche yet growing market, even at a slightly higher price than conventional ice creams. The bakery and confectionery sector could embrace gelato more proactively, incorporating it into their offerings as both a premium product and a novel experience. Creative marketing, particularly through social media, can be highly effective in reaching the target audience, as prospective gelato consumers in India are likely to be digitally savvy and active online.

Conclusion

Gelato holds a special place both in Italian life and global imagination. In films like Roman Holiday and Eat Pray Love, it symbolises indulgence, romance and that Italian charm. Rooted in tradition yet open to innovation, gelato has grown from a local craft into a worldwide sensation, bridging cultures through a shared love of flavour. In Italy, however, it remains much more than a dessert, it is a daily ritual. Found in every neighbourhood gelateria, a cone or cup often accompanies the passeggiata, turning a simple treat into a moment of community, connection and joy. ■



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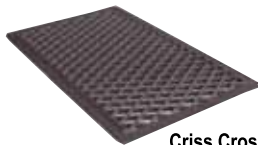
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Simply Bruschetta

By Nikita Madan

Bruschetta's been kicking around forever—like, your grandma's grandma probably made it. Honestly, it's the OG Italian starter. Its stupid simple, looks gorgeous with basically zero effort, and tastes like a little vacation. Slap whatever label you want on it: appetiser, fancy meal opener, antipasto or lunch when you're feeling lazy on a hot day. But let's get real—bruschetta's totally slept on. Out of the entire Italian palate people rave about, this one deserves way more hype.

A slab of crusty bread, still warm from the grill, piled high with ripe tomatoes, briny olives and a generous scatter of fresh herbs. This is bruschetta—Italy's ingenious answer to salvaging day-old bread with bold, rustic flavour. Uncomplicated yet undeniably satisfying, it began as a clever solution and evolved into a beloved staple. The name itself traces back to *bruscare*, a Roman dialect term meaning “to roast over coals”—a nod to its old-world roots and the elemental simplicity of fire, bread and the bounty of the land.

There's this story—probably half true, half romanticised—that back in the day,

during the olive harvest in Tuscany, folks would grab yesterday's bread, char it up, rub it with a raw garlic clove and pour on the very first olive oil of the season. A little celebration snack, and of course, nobody eats bruschetta without a glass of wine, because...well, it's Italy.



Apparently, even the ancient Romans had their own version—some inscription, talks about ‘*clustrum*’ (roasted bread) paired with sweet honey wine at the Saturnalia party. Started as peasant food, made out of necessity, and now it's this iconic Italian starter. Not bad for what's basically a fancy toast. Chef Ankit Saini, the Executive Pastry Chef at The Lodhi, mentioned, “I mostly use raw garlic rub on warm bread. It gives a strong, nice flavour. Sometimes I use garlic confit for a soft and mild taste, especially in creative versions. I don't skip garlic in savoury bruschetta—it adds a lot of taste.” According to Chef Manoj

Kumar, Executive Chef at Taj Chandigarh, "The perfect bruschetta starts with great bread crispy on the outside and soft inside. Fresh toppings like juicy tomatoes, quality olive oil and just the right amount of garlic brings it all together. Simplicity and freshness make it shine."



Regional Diversities

In Tuscany, the stripped-down version is called 'fettunta' which is basically just bread, garlic and the freshest olive oil you can get your hands on. Nothing fancy, but honestly, it's a total vibe, especially when it's olive harvest season. That's when the farmers break it out to try the first press of the year.

Other parts of Italy aren't exactly slacking, either. In Abruzzo, they go wild and slap on some spicy 'ventricina' sausage. And in Rome, you might hear it called 'cappone' or just, you know, fettunta again—because Italians love to keep you guessing. There's even some old-school Italian poetry singing the praises of garlic and oil, treating it like some


magical potion that could turn you into a workhorse for the whole day. People there don't see bruschetta as some dainty little starter—it's been real-deal fuel (and a bit of a badge of honour) for folks living the rural life since forever. Chef Ankit Saini stated, "Bruschetta's 'peasant food' roots remind me to keep it simple, use good ingredients and respect every part of the dish—even in a modern kitchen."

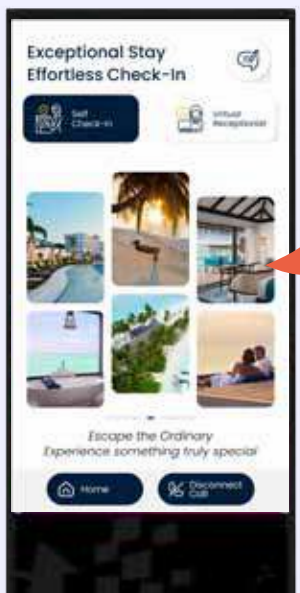
Choice of Bread

Picking the right bread is very important

or else you risk your bruschetta turning all to mush. The old-school folks swear by those rugged country loaves that use durum wheat, which is tough enough to stand up to a hot grill and a waterfall of olive oil. Italians, of course, stick to their beloved pagnotta, this rustic, round hunk of peasant bread that's basically made for bruschetta or Tuscan bread or, in some cases, filone. Meanwhile, outside Italy, people are grabbing whatever's handy—baguettes, ciabatta, sourdough, focaccia, whole wheat bread, you name it.

But the bottom line is that the bread's got to have some bite to it. It should be able to withstand grilling or broiling till it's golden, a little crunchy around the edges, but still soft and chewy in the centre. You want that contrast—crisp shell, pillowy core. When asked about his go-to bread, Chef Ankit Saini replied, "My go-to bread is sourdough or a good baguette. They have a strong crust and soft inside, which gives a nice crunch when toasted. Sourdough also has a deep flavour that goes well with both savoury and sweet


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Chef Ankit Saini

toppings. It holds the toppings well and doesn't get soggy easily, which makes it perfect for bruschetta." Meanwhile, Chef Manoj Kumar stated, "I prefer a rustic sourdough or a crusty baguette. They toast well, hold toppings without getting soggy and have great flavour."

Creative Toppings

A classic Italian bruschetta is all about the tomatoes, basil and garlic. Super fresh, super simple—can't hate it. But the world has taken a simple dish like bruschetta by storm and has created variations that do not even pretend to be Italian at that point. Like for example, Chef Ankit Saini stated, "I always start with the original idea—toasted bread, garlic and olive oil. That keeps it authentic. Then I add my creativity through the toppings. Sometimes I use fruits, nuts or cream to make a sweet version. Other times I try different flavours from around the world. As a pastry chef, I love making sweet bruschettas using things like spiced fruits, whipped cream cheese, nuts, coconut or mango. I also like to try savoury versions with ingredients like hummus, Asian pickles or Indian chutneys."

Chef Manoj Kumar mentioned, "I love the classic version, but I also enjoy playing with global flavours like using roasted peppers, hummus or even Asian-style toppings. It keeps things interesting. In summer, I love using fresh tomatoes, basil and burrata. In winter, I go for roasted mushrooms, caramelised onions or even sweet potatoes with herbs. Once I used

mango, chili and feta. It was a bold combo, but the sweet, spicy and salty flavours actually worked really well together. My signature bruschetta recipe starts with grilled sourdough, a garlic rub, a layer of whipped ricotta, cherry tomatoes confit, basil oil and a pinch of sea salt. The textures and flavours really pop."

You'll see some chef somewhere piling on spiced beef, black beans, pico and queso fresco for a full-on Mexican twist or a Greek remix consisting of olive tapenade, a heap of feta, maybe some artichoke hearts, onions and big glugs of olive oil—a Mediterranean picnic on toast. Or some would add some Middle Eastern flavours like za'atar, roasted red peppers, cucumbers, creamy labneh and pistachios for the crunch.

California and New York are doing their own thing, like it's a contest. You'll see burrata with snap peas, sweet corn or whatever's in season, or with broad beans, radishes, mint and chili. Or they'll go sweet: cherries, ricotta, prosciutto, that whole "I'm fancy, look at my summer toast" mood. And the gourmet crowd is on a whole different level with truffle oil, roasted parsnip, peach, gorgonzola cheese, asparagus, strawberry, giardiniera, shrimp, figs etc. It is safe to say that bruschetta has officially become this global flavour playground.

Modern Bruschetta

Bruschetta was once just a humble snack that you'd find at some dusty Italian farmhouse and is now everywhere. You can spot it hanging out at your



Chef Manoj Kumar

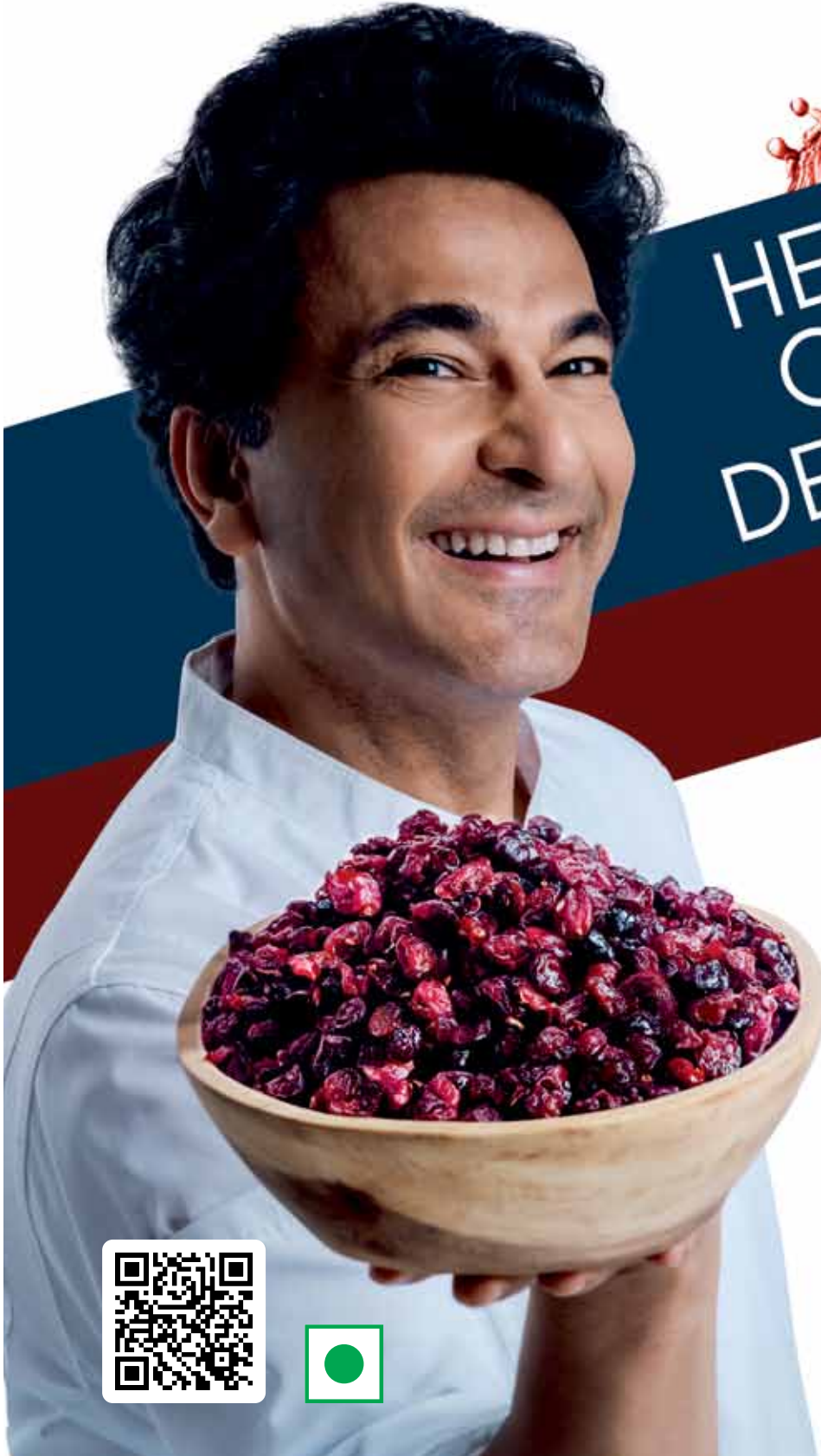
neighbourhood wine bar or even making an appearance on those "fancy" restaurant menus. It's all about simplicity; the toasted bread is just simply a blank canvas, just begging for whatever art you can create. Traditionalists swear by tomatoes and basil, but people are getting wild with it these days—goat cheese, tapenade, maybe even a drizzle of truffle oil if you want to get gourmet. According to Chef Ankit, "People really enjoy creative toasts now—both savoury and sweet. They like fresh toppings, a nice presentation and new flavours. Even in desserts, bruschetta-style ideas with fruits or cream are getting a great response. As a pastry chef, one of the most different toppings I used was caramelised banana with salted chocolate ganache and crushed hazelnuts on sweet brioche. It was a dessert-style bruschetta, and yes—it worked really well!"

When asked if he had a chance to create a dessert bruschetta, what would be on it, Chef Manoj replied, "I'd go with toasted brioche, mascarpone, honey-roasted figs, crushed pistachios and a drizzle of dark chocolate. Simple, sweet and satisfying."

Bruschetta isn't just living its best life at the entrée table; it's all up in the snack aisle too. Some brands have basically turned it into chips—oven-baked, fancy flavours like tomato-olive or mushroom-cream. And don't get started on those jarred spreads. Tomato-basil, artichoke—every gourmet shop's got them, just waiting for you to pretend you're hosting a Mediterranean soirée. ■



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The Rise of Micro Bakeries

Why Small is the New Smart

By Sachin Wilfred A J

Take a walk down the lane in 2025, you'll see a quiet baking revolution unfolding before you. Usually tucked in neighbourhoods and tucked into cosy corners of bustling cities, small yet vibrant spaces are redefining how bakeries operate. Small spaces, beautiful ambience, compact menu, quality focused, artisanal touch, freshly baked, limited hours, feels like home and a friendly baker. Well !! This is slowly becoming one of the successful bakery business models after the pandemic. Consumers have started valuing not just what they eat but where it comes from, who makes it and the story behind them.

The Essence of Small-Scale Baking- Diving a little deeper, Micro bakeries are simple cafés or bakeries making business from freshly baked goods in an

intentionally designed small set-up. These micro bakeries are usually owner/chef operated with a small group of bakers and employees. They focus on bakery



products like sourdough loaves, classic viennoiserie's, gourmet cookies and a few signature desserts all produced in smaller batches. Though this concept regained attention after the pandemic era, micro bakeries have now become durable, profitable and moreover sustainable as a business model. They choose craftsmanship over convenience, handmade over mass production and building community over anonymity. This article explores why starting small is the new smart for bakers and aspiring entrepreneurs, unpacking the truths behind its operations. So, if you're a culinary student, a baking professional, an educator or just a baking enthusiast, this is your time to be aware of this slow transition to making successful brands and contributing to this new micro bakery movement.

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The Reality of Traditional Café's-

Café's generally face higher costs like rentals, machinery, inventory, skilled staff, ingredients and packaging. In an attempt to meet every demand of their diverse customer base, many of these traditional café's try to offer the world on a single table. A wide menu ranging from breads, desserts, savouries and beverages to fusion experiments that stretch their operations thin. While this may look very impressive to consumers at a glance, in reality it often makes the brand struggle to sustain and the only thing that keeps the entrepreneur in you alive is the passion and inner strength. Scaling up the business becomes an immediate need for these brands for image building and taking their brand a little further to other parts of the city. This becomes a complete challenge for the owners and surely not an enjoyable one too. Whereas, micro bakeries completely flip this scene. Instead of stretching themselves to please everyone, they embrace the philosophy of doing less but doing it better.

Building Stronger Foundations – Micro Bakeries are much more compact in operations, their focus on menu selection and community driven approach which makes them leaner, more resilient and sustainable. They come with a lower risk and a smarter capital. Many such brands start usually from a home or a garage, ideally a humble beginning with lesser rents, flexible leases and lower regulations which can truly be a burden later. Looking closer at the traditional café's machinery requirements, they come with big investments and higher maintenance whereas micro bakeries come with an idea of a compact oven, a mixer, a decent size working table, an ideal proofer, a few tools and basic requirements which should be good enough to launch production at a fraction of the cost of a full-line bakery. As for the ingredients instead of finding something exotic from the shelf, getting more local is the best fit for micro bakeries. For example, using the local flour, seasonal produce, artisan local chocolate, limited menu's, simpler purchasing, ethical sourcing, lesser spoilage and a commitment to more



"According to me, micro-bakeries are transforming the way people experience baked products."

Latha Sivakumar- Academy Head at Latha's School of Baking and Cake Art and owner at Latha's Bake House Coimbatore

sustainable practices. This approach gives owners of such micro bakeries a great mileage while they start helping them to run longer in the race. They get more time to achieve a product analysing the market at its pace building a loyal base before committing to expansion.

The Practical Edge of Micro Bakeries-

Going further into the advantages of small micro bakeries are numerous in number and much more practical. Especially in terms of optimising flow and precision



"As a food consultant, I see a micro bakery vital for the baking landscape."

Tom Thomas, Chef Consultant, Dubai

the products baked are made with more attention to quality and what we call as batch discipline. Focusing on product quality becomes the cream for a successful business; in a micro bakery, this becomes very natural for the entrepreneur. The tasks assigned to the team and the SOP's in the kitchen are streamlined with definite outcomes. The next being brand clarity and storytelling, the consumers become more loyal and closer with such micro bakeries, the visibility of micro bakers are more organic and builds a personal trust with such customers.

We always cook the best for known people and especially our families, that's exactly the same concept with such micro bakeries. They primarily ensure product and taste quality is never compromised because these consumers become as close as their extended family. When the relationship between the consumer and the owner becomes so strong, then results and numbers required for a business just become very organic and less stressful. Pre-orders, weekly drops, pop-ups, farmer's market, learning workshops, neighbourhood delivery and weekend rituals are a win-win for both. Certain practices like reusable bread bags, pastry boxes, cookie tins, neighbourhood drop points are an added form of personalised premium services offered in a humble style. Also, community embeddedness in terms of partnerships with local vendors, farmers make these micro bakeries more rooted and real.

Small Doesn't Mean Stagnant-

'Small' is a smarter sustainable growth strategy to test your brand. Fine tuning your products according to the market's demand especially your neighbourhoods before taking the next big step to your brand, this strategy gives you the gift of time in which you can analyse and find the best fit to your business model and take lesser risks financially. Rather than one large flagship brand, expect clusters of tiny micro bakery pods, each serving a neighbourhood in different happening places across the city. Thinking 'Distributed Bakery' instead of 'Big Box Bakery'. 'Small' buys more time to perfect a dough, to bond with its customers at pick up, to adjust a



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“Since the owner is also the chef, even if staff are unavailable, the business can still run smoothly.”

Madhura Loganathan, Chef & Founder at Le Petit Four Kannadi Bungalow, Pondicherry

recipe, to personalise some sugar free or gluten free for elders at the neighbourhood making the bakery run longer and stronger. ‘Smart’ is the discipline to cap production, to pre-sell intelligently, to collaborate locally and to grow organically especially when the systems are ready just like many successful brands have multiplied after sustenance through learning.

Micro Bakeries, A Winning Strategy, Not a Compromise- On the whole, micro bakeries aren’t the consolation prize for those who can’t open big, but truly a smarter winning strategy for a market that’s redesigning food through craft, sustainability and community engagement. By staying intentionally small, these micro bakers achieve what larger operations often struggle to maintain like spotless quality, organic connection with their customers and resilient economics. If you’re considering a micro bakery, start with one perfect product and a tiny audience you can serve flawlessly. Customers today crave more than bread or cake, they seek a story, a face and a purpose behind what they consume. Share the story behind your ingredients, techniques and some processes. Build a rhythm, which your life can truly sustain. It’s about finding joy in the craft rather than drowning in scale. The rest-long lines at the door, neighbourhood waitlists,

celebrities visiting, media coverage and above all, the creation of a brand that people deeply trust, tends to follow naturally. That’s the beauty of the Micro bakery movement: success is not forced or fast, it is earned organically, loaf by loaf, piece by piece, customer by customer & story by story.

POV – ‘The Standpoint’

‘Smaller Kitchens, Bigger Impact’ – What Does the Rise of Micro Bakeries Mean to You?

An Academician’s Point of View-

“According to me, micro-bakeries are transforming the way people experience baked products, especially in cosmopolitan cities where well-travelled food lovers are seeking authenticity over standard products. This shift reflects the growing demand for artisan baking and we’re proud to prepare our students to lead this change. As more youngsters embrace baking as a profession, the future promises not only unique products but also a vibrant work culture built on creativity, sustainability and empowerment” – as told by Latha Sivakumar- Academy Head at Latha’s School of Baking and Cake Art and owner at Latha’s Bake House, Coimbatore.

A Food Consultant’s Point of View- “As a food consultant, I see a micro bakery vital for the baking landscape. Most of them provide high quality products, cater to niche clients and demands, creating a local food system. Although there are challenges, scalability and meeting production demands sometimes leads to burnouts as most of them are single owner run businesses. As the trend is growing, the competition is also growing which might lead to market saturation. Hence businesses that can navigate these challenges are well versed for long term successful and sustainable growth”- as told by Tom Thomas, Chef Consultant, Dubai.

A Chef’s Point of View- “In my opinion, the micro bakeries and its rise will have a certain impact in communities where they are, as they offer fresh produce to customers within a certain limit. It will also create a good ecosystem where other businesses can thrive by supplying the micro bakeries. But starting micro



“In my opinion, the micro bakeries and their rise will have a certain impact in communities.”

Mani, Chef & Chocolatier- Éntisi, Mumbai

bakeries alone won’t guarantee success and many failed to do so as the operator or owner really needs to have a well trained team to maintain quality and its consistency” – as told by Mani, Chef & Chocolatier- Éntisi, Mumbai.

An Entrepreneur’s Point of View- “My opinion is that micro bakeries and micro businesses are the new way forward. They are successful, resourceful and chef owned, which ensures consistent quality and a truly hands on approach. Since the owner is also the chef, even if staff are unavailable, the business can still run smoothly. This model reduces dependency on external manpower, keeps operations efficient, and allows for greater control over the craft.” says Madhura Loganathan, Chef & Founder at Le Petit Four Kannadi Bungalow, Pondicherry.



The author is an Assistant Professor, Department of Hotel Management, Christ University, Bangalore.

“The goal is always a balance: a pastry should be beautiful to look at, delightful to taste and memorable to experience.”



Chef Amit Kumar, Culinary Head, L'Opéra, India

By Nikita Madan

With over 19 years of experience in bakery, pastry and continental cuisine, Chef Amit Kumar has been shaping L'Opéra India's French identity since 2010. Before joining L'Opéra, he honed his craft at renowned establishments such as Hotel Park Plaza, MANRE (Sobo Hospitality), Nirula's, Open Oven and the India Habitat Centre. Trained in Switzerland, France, Italy and Thailand, Chef Amit specialises in French breads, modern patisserie and luxury desserts. His work has been recognised with multiple awards and high-profile events, including serving desserts at the pre-wedding celebrations of Anant Ambani. Alongside his culinary achievements, he is dedicated to mentoring young chefs and conducting professional demos at leading hospitality institutes.

What inspired you to pursue a career in pastry arts, and how did your journey lead you to L'Opéra?

From a very young age, I was fascinated by the art of baking—the precision, creativity and joy it brings to the people. The patisserie world has always inspired me because it combines both science and artistry, allowing me to express creativity while maintaining discipline and technique. Over the years, I honed my skills through hands-on experience in professional kitchens, constantly learning and perfecting both classic and modern techniques.

My journey eventually led me to L'Opéra because of its reputation for authenticity and excellence in French patisserie. The brand's commitment to quality, tradition and innovation aligned perfectly with my own values as a pastry professional.

Looking back, what was your first memorable creation as a pastry chef?

My first memorable creation was a simple lemon tart—a crisp, buttery shell filled with a silky, bright lemon curd. It taught me balance: texture, temper and how a single bite can tell a story.

What has been your most rewarding experience as a pastry chef?

The most rewarding experience for me has been mentoring young bakers and watching them grow with confidence. Creating pastries is fulfilling, but guiding someone to discover their own creativity and passion in the craft is truly special. I still remember the first time one of my trainees presented a dessert that was entirely their own idea—that moment of pride and shared achievement is more satisfying than any award or recognition.

Which product or pastry at L'Opéra holds a special place for you, and why?

Among all the creations at L'Opéra, the Mille-Feuille is closest to my heart. It may look simple, but it demands incredible patience and precision—every layer of puff pastry must be perfectly golden, every sheet of cream is smooth and balanced. To me, it represents the spirit of French patisserie: elegance, discipline and harmony of textures. Each time I see a guest savour it slowly, I'm reminded of why I fell in love with this craft.

What is your creative process when developing a new pastry or dessert?

For me, the creative process begins with an idea or inspiration—it could come from a flavour memory, a seasonal

ingredient or even a guest's feedback. I start by sketching the concept, then testing combinations of texture, flavour and presentation.

If you could only bake one pastry for the rest of your life, what would it be?

If I had to choose just one pastry, it would be the croissant. For me, it embodies the heart of French baking—precision, patience and passion. From the delicate lamination of the dough to the golden, flaky rise in the oven, every step is a balance of technique and artistry. No matter how many times I make it, the moment I hear that crisp crackle when someone takes the first bite reminds me why I became a patisserie chef in the first place.

What is your ultimate dream in the culinary world?

My ultimate dream is to establish a space where tradition and innovation meet—a patisserie and bakery school and atelier that not only celebrates authentic French techniques but also nurtures the next generation of chefs. For me, success isn't just about perfecting a recipe; it's about sharing knowledge, inspiring creativity and ensuring that the art of pastry continues to evolve and touch lives around the world.

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A well-crafted banneton supports hydration, strengthens gluten development and preserves the delicate balance of fermentation. More than functional, it shapes dough into consistent forms and creates the flour-lined ridges that have become hallmarks of artisanal bread. From small boules to elongated bâtards, baskets provide bakers with both control and creative freedom.

Equally important are the tools that accompany the proofing process. Dough scrapers streamline handling and division, reducing waste while maintaining precision. Danish dough whisks are trusted for efficiently blending starters and high-hydration doughs. Lames bring finesse to scoring, turning simple cuts into expressive crust patterns. Silicone spatulas, with long design, mix sourdough starters effectively, while serrated knives ensure clean slices without compressing the crumb. Each tool is a quiet partner in the pursuit of professional excellence.

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Indicators for thermostat, express heat and service

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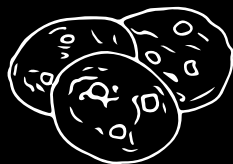


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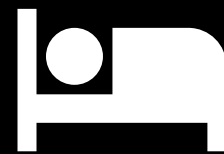
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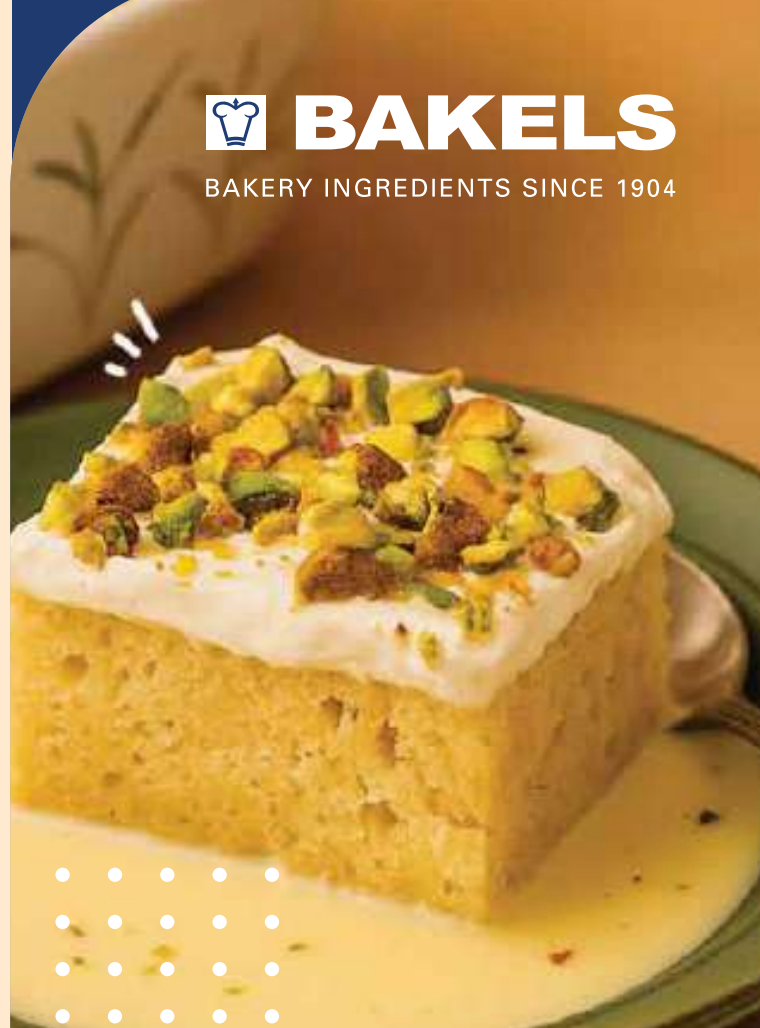
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