

IFCA MAGAZINE

FOOD AND BEYOND

Official Magazine of



INDIAN FEDERATION OF
CULINARY ASSOCIATIONS

Where Chefs and Food Belong

May June-2026



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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

The past two months have been a reminder of the remarkable momentum shaping India's culinary scene. As we moved through May and June, our industry continued to celebrate the country's extraordinary diversity while embracing innovation that respects tradition rather than replacing it.

Across India, chefs, artisans and culinary professionals have placed renewed emphasis on regional cuisines, indigenous ingredients and time-honoured techniques. From forgotten family recipes finding a place on contemporary menus to the growing appreciation for local produce and sustainable sourcing, Indian gastronomy continues to prove that authenticity and creativity can go hand in hand. The arrival of the summer mango season once again inspired chefs to reinterpret one of India's most cherished ingredients, demonstrating how a simple fruit can bridge nostalgia and modern culinary expression.

These months have also reflected India's expanding influence on the global culinary stage. Indian chefs are increasingly representing the nation at international competitions, congresses and collaborative events, while restaurants across the country continue to push standards of excellence in hospitality, craftsmanship and innovation. At the same time, there has been a growing focus on culinary education, mentorship and skill development, ensuring that the next generation of professionals is equipped not only with technical ability but also with an appreciation for our rich culinary heritage.

For the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations, this spirit of collaboration and continuous learning remains at the heart of everything we do. Every competition, workshop, educational initiative and industry partnership strengthens our shared commitment to advancing the profession while preserving the traditions that define Indian cuisine.

As we look ahead to the second half of the year, let us continue to champion excellence, inspire one another and celebrate the flavours, cultures and stories that make Indian gastronomy one of the world's greatest culinary traditions. Together, we will continue to shape a future that honours our past while embracing new possibilities.

Culinary regards,



Dr. Chef Sheraz Nair
Managing Editor
IFCA Magazine



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Rooted Plates 2026 - Celebrating Indigenous Ingredients Through Culinary Craft Rooted in culture. Inspired by biodiversity.

On 12th May 2026, the Telangana Chefs Association, in collaboration with the Telangana Biodiversity Board, proudly organized "Rooted Plates 2026" at the IIHM Hyderabad, Gachibowli Campus to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity.

The event was conducted with the theme "Indigenous Ingredients Through Your Craft", encouraging chefs to explore and showcase the richness of local and traditional ingredients through innovative culinary presentations.



The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from professional chefs, student chefs, and home chefs, bringing together culinary talent from various hotels, colleges, and home kitchens across the city. A total of 30 participants took part in the competition, presenting dishes that highlighted sustainability, biodiversity, and the cultural stories behind every ingredient.

The competition was judged by renowned chefs from leading star hotels and restaurants of the city, who appreciated the creativity, presentation, and thoughtful use of indigenous produce by the participants.



"Rooted Plates 2026" was not just a culinary competition, but a meaningful initiative promoting awareness about biodiversity conservation, sustainable food practices, and the importance of preserving traditional food heritage.

The Telangana Chefs Association extends its sincere gratitude to all chefs, participants, judges, volunteers, and supporting members who contributed to making the event a grand success and a memorable celebration of culture, sustainability, and culinary excellence.

Telangana Chefs Association Participates in Mango Pickle Making Workshop

The Telangana Chefs Association proudly participated in the Mango Pickle Making Workshop, an initiative organized by the Telangana Tourism Department in collaboration with the Association to celebrate the rich culinary heritage and authentic flavors of Telangana.

The event was inaugurated by Hon'ble Tourism Minister of Telangana, Shri Jupally Krishna Rao Garu, along with senior officials from the Tourism Department. The workshop aimed to promote traditional food practices and preserve the timeless recipes deeply rooted in Telangana culture.



Held at Plaza Hotel, the workshop brought together chefs, food enthusiasts, culinary professionals, and home cooks for an engaging and flavorful experience. More than 20 participants attended the workshop, where they learned the traditional method of preparing Telangana's famous mango pickle, popularly known as Avakaya.



The master trainer for the workshop was celebrity chef Sanjay Thumma, who shared valuable insights into traditional techniques, authentic recipes, and the importance of preserving regional culinary traditions. Participants enthusiastically interacted during the live demonstration and gained hands-on experience in crafting homemade Avakaya using age-old methods and indigenous ingredients.

Chefs from the Telangana Chefs Association actively participated in the workshop, showcasing their commitment to preserving Telangana's regional cuisine and promoting traditional culinary knowledge among younger generations and food lovers.

The workshop successfully highlighted the significance of Telangana's food heritage and created a wonderful platform where tradition, culture, and culinary passion came together in celebration.



Bocuse d'Or India: A Historic Milestone in Indian Culinary Excellence

The Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) proudly marked a defining moment in the history of Indian gastronomy with the successful organization of the **inaugural Bocuse d'Or India National Selection 2026**. More than just a competition, this landmark event symbolized India's formal entry into the world's most prestigious culinary championship, creating an unparalleled platform for Indian chefs to compete, innovate, and earn the honour of representing the nation on the global stage.



The inaugural national selection witnessed participation from ten of India's most accomplished chefs, each representing some of the country's finest hospitality establishments. These culinary professionals earned their place through years of dedication, technical expertise, and commitment to excellence. Their participation reflected the remarkable diversity of Indian culinary talent and demonstrated that Indian chefs are prepared to compete confidently on the international stage.



The atmosphere throughout the event was one of inspiration and healthy competition. Every dish presented before the esteemed jury reflected months of preparation, countless hours of practice, and an unwavering pursuit of perfection. Beyond medals and rankings, the event fostered a spirit of camaraderie, knowledge sharing, and professional development, bringing together India's leading chefs, mentors, hospitality educators, and industry experts under one roof.

Widely regarded as the Olympics of Gastronomy, the Bocuse d'Or is the ultimate benchmark of culinary excellence. Established by the legendary French chef Paul Bocuse, the competition celebrates exceptional craftsmanship, creativity, precision, and innovation while showcasing the highest standards of professional cooking. For decades, Bocuse d'Or has inspired generations of chefs worldwide, and its arrival in India represents a significant milestone for the country's rapidly evolving culinary landscape.



Among the distinguished finalists was Chef Arindam Bose, Sous Chef at Megu, The Leela Palace, New Delhi, along with nine other exceptional chefs from renowned luxury hotels and restaurants across India. Each finalist displayed extraordinary culinary skills, artistic presentation, meticulous planning, and remarkable composure under intense competitive conditions. The competition served not only as a test of technical ability but also as a celebration of innovation, sustainability, teamwork, and storytelling through food.



The Indian Federation of Culinary Associations deserves immense appreciation for successfully bringing the Bocuse d'Or movement to India. Through meticulous planning, international standards of execution, and a shared vision for the future, IFCA has created a platform capable of transforming the aspirations of young Indian chefs into global achievements. The support of distinguished advisors, jury members, technical committees, volunteers, and hospitality partners ensured that the competition reflected the prestige and integrity associated with the Bocuse d'Or brand worldwide.



The event also received strong support from industry partners, including Oreen and AH International, whose commitment to promoting culinary excellence reinforces the importance of collaboration between industry and professional associations. Their involvement reflects a shared vision of investing in India's culinary future and providing deserving chefs with opportunities to showcase their talent before the world.



The IFCA fraternity extends its heartfelt congratulations and best wishes as he prepares to compete against some of the world's finest chefs. The success of the inaugural Bocuse d'Or India National Selection marks only the beginning of an exciting journey. The road to Lyon 2027 begins in India. Through dedication, innovation, mentorship, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, Indian chefs are steadily carving their place among the world's culinary elite. The inaugural Bocuse d'Or India National Selection has not only celebrated the country's finest culinary talent but has also ignited a movement that promises to redefine India's presence on the global gastronomic stage.



A special acknowledgement is due to the competition's advisors and mentors whose guidance and expertise played a pivotal role in maintaining international standards while inspiring the next generation of culinary professionals. Their collective experience, mentorship, and commitment to excellence provided invaluable learning opportunities for every participant.



The competition culminated in a memorable victory for Chef Avinash Vaishnav, who emerged as the Winner of the Bocuse d'Or India National Selection 2026. His outstanding performance, technical mastery, creativity, and consistency earned him the honour of representing India at the forthcoming Bocuse d'Or Asia-Pacific Selection. As he embarks on the journey towards the Bocuse d'Or Grand Finale in Lyon, France, he carries with him the aspirations of the entire Indian culinary fraternity.





The Bocuse d'or Indian selection was a great experience in that it gives chefs the platform to bring forth their skills and push themselves towards a unique opportunity.

Personally, representing India from amongst the 1st batch of National Selections in the Bocuse d'or Asia Pacific and potentially beyond represents a massive responsibility and opportunity to showcase the diversity of Indian cuisine's heritage to the world.

-Chef Avinash Vaishnav, Winner, Executive Sous Chef Farmlore, Bengaluru

Hi, I'm Jenish Pala, my journey has taken me through diverse progressive kitchens, to a proud National Finalist at Bocuse d'Or India, being part of this first cohort holds deep significance for me. It represents a moment where Indian chefs are not just participating, but actively preparing to engage with one of the most demanding culinary stages in the world.

The Bocuse d'Or journey is built on precision, discipline, and an uncompromising respect for ingredients and technique. It challenges to refine thinking, push creative boundaries, and execute with absolute clarity under pressure. More than anything, it exposes you to a global benchmark, one that demands consistency, intent, and a strong culinary identity. Being part of the inaugural group of National Finalists brings with it a strong sense of purpose. It is an opportunity to contribute to the foundation of something much larger than an individual journey. This platform sets a direction for Indian chefs to evolve, compete, and represent with greater confidence and preparedness in the years ahead.

For me, this experience has been about growth, perspective, and responsibility. It has shaped the way I approach my craft, more focused, more aware, and more committed to continuously raising my own standards while contributing to the larger narrative of Indian cuisine on the global stage.

Chef Jenish Pala, Chef Consultant, Oliver Brown Chain of Cafes



Being selected as one of the top 10 chefs on the first-ever Bocuse d'Or India National Finalists has been one of the most defining moments of my culinary journey.

Despite the competition being organised at short notice, the passion, professionalism, and commitment displayed by everyone involved made it a truly world-class experience. Competing on this platform challenged my creativity, technical precision, and resilience while allowing me to stand alongside some of India's finest chefs.

More importantly, this marks the beginning of a structured pathway for aspiring Indian chefs to represent our country at the Bocuse d'Or, The Culinary Olympics of the World.

I am grateful to IFCA for creating this historic opportunity and look forward to seeing many more Indian chefs shine on the global stage.

Chef Veeram Sukhwai, Senior Sous Chef, The Oberoi Rajvillas, Jaipur.

AI in University Students' Mess Catering: How Artificial Intelligence Is Transforming Campus Dining

Chef Jeetendra Kale

In today's rapidly evolving hospitality environment, technology is reshaping not only restaurants and hotels but also institutional food service operations. University student mess catering, which serves thousands of meals daily, is undergoing a major shift through the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), smart automation, and data-driven decision-making.

Smart Demand Forecasting to Reduce Food Waste

One of the most critical operational challenges in large university dining facilities is accurately predicting meal consumption. AI-driven systems can analyze historical consumption patterns, student attendance, examination schedules, and seasonal behaviors.

By leveraging these insights, management can optimize production planning, drastically reduce food waste, streamline inventory usage, and tighten cost control.

Digital Ordering and the Contactless Dining Experience

Today's students expect fast, seamless, and convenient dining services. The integration of digital ordering platforms, QR-code-based meal selection, and contactless dining systems significantly reduces peak-hour queues while maximizing operational efficiency.

As a result, the modern campus cafeteria is transforming into a digitally connected service environment centered around speed and convenience.

Smart Queue Management for an Enhanced Student Experience

Peak meal periods inevitably create high-pressure environments in university dining halls.

AI-enabled queue management systems can predict crowd density, regulate traffic flow, and distribute the service load effectively across breakfast, lunch, and dinner shifts.

This leads to shorter wait times, smoother operations, and a vastly improved dining experience for students.

IoT-Based Smart Kitchen Operations

The internet of things (IoT) is bringing unprecedented connectivity to the back-of-house. Connected kitchen equipment now allows for the real-time monitoring of refrigerators, cold storage units, cooking equipment, and automated temperature logs.

Instead of reacting to a sudden breakdown, smart kitchens utilize predictive maintenance schedules to fix equipment before service disruptions occur.

Real-Time Kitchen Analytics and Operational Control

Modern food service operations thrive on actionable data. Real-time dashboards enable management teams to monitor food production levels, stock depletion rates, labor productivity, hygiene compliance, and overall service efficiency at a glance. This data-rich environment fosters agile decision-making and establishes robust operational control.

Elevating Workplace Efficiency for Hospitality Teams

Artificial Intelligence is not replacing food service professionals; rather, it is empowering them.

By automating repetitive administrative tasks and predictable inventory logging, AI frees up valuable time for hospitality staff. This allows teams to redirect their focus toward culinary quality,



Chef Jeetendra Kale with the vision to create awareness about the priceless art of cooking and decorating, aims to present new dimension for masterpiece of food art. He has organize and trained various people about food art, sculpture and also associated with different international and domestic hotels and colleges. Presently associated with Executive Chef at SRM SERVICES MIT ADT UNIVERSITY PUNE & Introducing young students of the new culinary world of food carving and decoration with ice carving, butter carving, fruits & vegetable carving.

rigorous hygiene standards, and direct customer interaction, ultimately delivering a superior dining experience.

The Future of Institutional Hospitality

University mess catering is no longer just about mass meal preparation. It is evolving into a technology-driven ecosystem where AI, automation, and digital intelligence work in tandem to improve both operational margins and student satisfaction.

The future of institutional dining belongs to organizations that successfully marry hospitality excellence with smart technology. Innovation in food service is no longer optional—it is becoming the baseline of modern hospitality management.



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A Journey Across Oceans: Sharing the Soul of Maldivian Cuisine Through India

Chef Mariyam Shiuna

A Gathering of Culinary Minds in New Delhi

In January 2026, I had the distinct honor of representing the Maldives at the "Indian Culture and Cuisine Program – Level 1." This prestigious initiative was organized by the International Indian Centre for Culinary Leadership under the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), and promoted by the Trade Promotion Council of India alongside the landmark "Culinary Heritage Food Summit" in New Delhi.

For me, this journey evolved into far more than standard participation in a culinary event—it became a profoundly meaningful experience of discovery, learning, and reflection. Surrounded by fellow chefs from diverse countries and cultural backgrounds, I witnessed something truly remarkable: food possesses an extraordinary capacity to connect human beings long before words are ever exchanged.

The Voice of a Thousand Islands

As a representative of the Maldives—a nation of a thousand small islands embraced by the expansive Indian Ocean—I have long believed that our cuisine reflects the living story of our people. Although our islands may be modest in geographical size, our culinary heritage embodies generations of wisdom, resilience, and distinct cultural identity. Participating in this summit provided me with a precious opportunity not only to showcase my homeland but also to view my own culinary heritage through a broader, global lens.

Discovering the Wisdom of Indian Gastronomy

Throughout the event, we explored the rich philosophy and foundations of Indian culinary traditions.

Beyond recipes and ingredients, what fascinated me most was discovering how deeply Indian cuisine is intertwined with history, balance, and holistic well-being. I learned that food traditions in India extend far beyond basic nourishment; they serve as vibrant expressions of culture, medicine, spirituality, and lifestyle.

Harmony on the Plate: The Ayurvedic Connection

One of the most memorable discussions focused on Ayurvedic food philosophy and the foundational principle that food should promote harmony within the body. I found it particularly compelling how Indian cuisine carefully balances flavors and ingredients with deliberate purpose and intention. Every spice appeared to carry a significance that went well beyond taste. I came to understand that traditional cooking is not solely about creating flavorful dishes; it is an intimate act of understanding people, nature, and wellness.

Shared Horizons: The Parallels in Island Life

As I listened and observed, I began to recognize striking similarities between Indian culinary philosophy and Maldivian cooking traditions. In the Maldives, our cuisine has always maintained a profound connection to our immediate environment. Island life has shaped our ingredients, techniques, and dietary practices over centuries. For us, the ocean became our pantry, and simplicity emerged as the defining characteristic of our culinary identity.

The Holy Trinity of Maldivian Ingredients

Traditional Maldivian cuisine revolves around three principal ingredients: tuna, coconut, and essential starches



Chef Mariyam Shiuna holds an MSc in International Hospitality Management from Taylor's University, Malaysia, & is the second Maldivian female chef certified as a World Chefs Continental Judge. A former lecturer at the Maldives National University & Villa College, she serves on the Chefs Guild of Maldives' Executive Committee, has judged international competitions across Asia and beyond, & is the only Maldivian trained at Singapore's renowned SATS aviation culinary academy.

* Tuna: This is far more than a source of protein; it represents pride, livelihood, heritage, and generations of seafaring traditions. One of our most valued products is Hiki Mas (dried fish), commonly known as "Maldivian Fish"—a meticulously preserved and smoked tuna product that imparts incredible depth and umami to numerous dishes.

* Coconut: With the coconut palm being our national tree, it holds an equally sacred significance within our culinary culture. Freshly grated coconut, coconut milk, and coconut oil are woven into countless recipes. Growing up on the islands, the rhythmic sight and sound of coconut scraping formed an integral backdrop to daily kitchen life.

* Starches: Simple grains and flatbreads tie these robust coastal flavors together, anchoring our daily meals.

Resilience and Adaptation Across the Atolls

Maldivian cuisine is also beautifully shaped by seasonal variations and regional customs.

From North to South, different islands and atolls often prepare the same foundational dishes in distinctive, localized ways. During monsoon periods when the open sea was rough and fresh tuna was less accessible, our communities developed ingenious methods of smoking, drying, and preserving fish. These practices continue today, serving as a testament to the resourcefulness of our ancestors.



Garudhiya: Comfort and Identity in a Bowl

One dish that truly captures the pure essence of the Maldives is Garudhiya. It is a pristine tuna broth prepared simply with fresh fish, water, and salt, traditionally served alongside rice, fiery chilies, tart lime, and local condiments. Despite its minimalist preparation, Garudhiya holds profound emotional significance for our people. Beyond its inherent health benefits, it represents the very definition of home, comfort, and togetherness.

A Legacy Sustained Across the Waves

Beyond the lecture halls and intense culinary sessions, what remained with me most was the simple exchange of stories among chefs. Every conversation served as a poignant reminder that behind every dish lies a living community, a personal memory, and a history waiting to be shared.



Standing among culinary professionals from around the world, I felt an immense wave of pride in representing the Maldives and its rich culinary heritage. This experience reinforced a core belief: preserving traditional cuisine is not merely about safeguarding static recipes; it is about protecting identity itself.

I returned home carrying not only fresh knowledge and inspiration but also a deeper, renewed appreciation for my own roots. Like the waves that gracefully connect our islands to the wider world, food continues to unite cultures, stories, and people across oceans.

Until we meet again...



Sattu- Bihar's Original Protein Shake-No LPG, No Blender

Chef Ranjan Pandey

Introduction

Sattu is more than just a food in Bihar-It is a story of survival, simplicity and quite resilience ground into roasted gram flour. Long before protein shakes, energy drinks, and "superfoods" became fashionable, Bihar already had its own nutritional powerhouse "SATTU".

History

The history of sattu is deeply woven into the cultural and agricultural history of Bihar and the ancient Magadh region. Long before modern packaged foods and protein supplements existed, sattu served as one of India's earliest forms of convenient, nutritious and travel friendly food.

Benefits of Sattu

High in Nutrition- Rich in Plant protein, fibre, iron, calcium
Good for digestion- High fibre helps improve bowel movement and gut health
Energy Booster- Provides steady, long-lasting energy without sudden spikes

Precautions for consuming Sattu

Avoid excess intake- Sattu should be consumed in ideal quantity it's varies from person to person.
Pregnancy & lactation- Pregnant or breastfeeding women should take medical advice before regular use.

Dishes Made from Sattu

Sattu is incredibly versatile and in Bihar it is used to make everyday meals, drinks, snacks.



I am Cluster Executive Chef at Pride Group Hotels. I have more than 19 years of Experience with various groups. I had the privilege of serving notable figures, including Prime minister Narendra Modi and former President Ram Nath Kovind. I have been featured on TV9 Gujarati's cooking show, "Celebrity Special Five-star Tadka" where I cooked alongside local personalities and celebrities.

Here are the most popular dishes made from Sattu:

Sattu Sharbat [Sattu Drink]
Sattu Paratha
Sattu Litti [For famous litti chokha]
Sattu Roti [Makuni]
Sattu Poori
Sattu Pancake/ Cheela [Modern version]
Sattu Smoothie [Modern health drink]

How Sattu is useful in an LPG Crisis?

Sattu is highly useful during an LPG crisis because it is a No-cooking, ready to eat and highly nutritious food. Being already roasted, it can be consumed instantly by mixing with water, milk or curd without needing gas or stove. It helps reduce dependence on LPG.

Potential

Sattu has strong potential in modern food business because it is high-protein, low cost, plant based. Hotels, Restaurants, Café's & gyms can use it as a "Desi Superfood" ingredient in multiple creative ways

I hope this article on Sattu gave you insight into one of Bihar's most underrated traditional superfoods and its relevance in today's lifestyle.



Sattu is an ancient Indian superfood made by dry-roasting Bengal gram (chana) and grinding it into a fine flour. Native to Bihar and Jharkhand, it is packed with plant-based protein (~20g per 100g), iron, and prebiotic dietary fiber, requiring no cooking before consumption.

Spinach & Sattu Quesadilla

Chef Ranjan Pandey



Ingredients- For the Filling

Sattu-50 gm
Spinach- Blanch & chopped
Onion- 25 gm
Green chilli- 10 gm
Grated ginger-10 gm
Cumin powder-5 gm
Chat masala- 5 gm
Salt to taste

For Assembling

Whole wheat tortilla bread- 02 no
Grated Cheese- 25 gm
Butter- 10 gm
Salsa sauce
Edible flowers for garnish

Method- Prepare the filling

Mix sattu, spinach, chopped onion, chopped green chilli, grated ginger, cumin powder, chat masala & salt. Add some water gradually until mixture becomes slightly moist & crumbly.

Assemble

Place one tortilla on plate, spread the sattu spinach filling evenly. Sprinkle cheese on top and cover with another tortilla.

Cook

Heat a pan and apply butter, cook the quesadilla until golden & crisp.

Serve

Cut it in four pieces and serve hot with salsa sauce, garnish with few edible flowers.

Excellence in Hospitality Must Include Respect

Chef Andrew J Batey

The hospitality community rightly celebrates talent, discipline and creativity. Yet recent allegations involving a prominent New Zealand and internationally regarded chef are a reminder that professional excellence cannot be separated from workplace conduct, accountability and respect.

The chef had built an impressive reputation, refining his skills at renowned restaurants including Martin Berasategui in Spain and Noma in Copenhagen. His work helped showcase and amplify the potential of local ingredients and New Zealand produce through dishes that were inventive, precise and deeply connected to place.

Alongside his restaurant team, he earned significant recognition, internationally and locally, including the NZ Restaurant of the Year award. Guests were offered a world-class dining experience, and the restaurant became associated with creativity, polish and ambition.

That public success, however, has now been overshadowed by serious allegations about behind-the-scenes culture.

According to media reports and accounts from former staff, the chef allegedly engaged in alcohol and substance abuse and repeatedly subjected colleagues to verbal obscenities and, at times, physical aggression.

Allegations from Former Staff

One former waiter alleged that the Executive Chef made repeated sexually explicit comments towards her, prompting her to lodge a formal harassment complaint with human resources.

She said she believed the complaint was not properly addressed.

She said she had worked at the restaurant at age 22 and described the Chef as degrading towards both front-of-house and kitchen staff. She also alleged that he made offensive comments about a colleague's sexuality during a shift.

She was one of three women who spoke to the media about their experiences. One said she had raised a complaint in 2020 about offensive comments and alleged substance use at work.

In a letter to her employer, she requested that the alleged harassment and inappropriate conduct be addressed through proper disciplinary action.

She said she did not receive a response from the human resources manager, either in person or by message.

Accountability Beyond Awards

The alleged conduct by the chef and the reported handling of complaints by restaurant management fell short of the ethical workplace standards expected of any professional environment, particularly one with such a celebrated reputation. In the aftermath, the chef resigned, the restaurant lost major accolades, and the venue closed for renovation and reassessment.

This case has become a warning to the wider hospitality industry in New Zealand and beyond. No level of pressure, ambition or pursuit of awards can justify abusive, discriminatory or lewd behaviour to your fellow workers and colleagues. Excellence in food must be matched by excellence in leadership.



Andrew Batey is a highly accomplished chef and hospitality professional with extensive international experience across Australia, New Zealand, India, England, and Japan. He has successfully led hotel and restaurant openings, mentored hospitality businesses, and delivered exceptional customer experiences through strong leadership, operational expertise, and a hands-on approach to training and service excellence.

A Better Standard for Hospitality

The hospitality industry has changed dramatically over the past two decades, often for the better. But if hospitality professionals and leaders want the industry to remain dynamic and attract creative, energetic employees, they must defend basic decency, respect, and inclusion. Standards of excellence can—and must—be achieved through courteous, professional and inclusive behaviour.

This responsibility applies in New Zealand, India and across the global hospitality profession. The industry is filled with brilliant, innovative, dedicated and passionate young people who deserve safe workplaces and strong role models.

Experienced hospitality professionals have a duty to celebrate the virtues of hospitality while also acknowledging its risks. By educating, mentoring and protecting the next generation, managers can help ensure that talent is developed in a respectful, inclusive environment, free from harm.

Redefining the New Menu Regime: 2026

Chef Aayusha Roy

The hospitality industry is entering a new era where menus are no longer just a list of dishes and prices. Consumers today are asking deeper questions about what they eat, how it is prepared, and whether it aligns with their health needs, values, and lifestyles. As we move through 2026, chefs and food businesses must rethink menu design through a more structured and transparent lens.

Historically, menu development focused primarily on taste, cost, and profitability. While these pillars remain vital, modern diners increasingly make decisions based on dietary requirements, wellness goals, ethical beliefs, and food sensitivities. This shift requires chefs to transition from simply serving food to becoming educators, communicators, and facilitators of informed culinary choices.

A premier example of this shift comes from Dubai's food safety framework. Under its regulations, food establishments must clearly declare 14 major allergens on menus and packaging. Restaurants are also required to employ a certified Person-in-Charge (PIC) responsible for food safety and preventing cross-contamination. This proactive approach demonstrates how transparency and accountability have evolved into operational necessities rather than optional additions.

The Four Pillars of Modern Menu Classification

To simplify menu communication and improve customer understanding, the future menu regime can be categorized into four practical food classifications:

1. Allergens

These are ingredients that can trigger immediate and potentially severe immune reactions. Common allergens include milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish, shellfish, and sesame.

The Chef's Role: Allergen management is no longer confined to the back-of-house. Menus must clearly identify allergens, staff must be trained to communicate risks confidently, and strict cross-contamination controls must be embedded into daily operations.

Best Practice: Implementing a simple, intuitive allergen icon system significantly boosts customer confidence while reducing operational risks.

2. Intolerances

Unlike allergies, intolerances typically affect digestion and comfort rather than triggering life-threatening immune responses. Common examples include lactose intolerance, gluten sensitivity, and adverse reactions to certain food additives.

The Chef's Role: Because guests often confuse allergies with intolerances, service teams face unique communication challenges. Chefs can address this by clearly labeling lactose-free, gluten-free, low-FODMAP, or digestion-friendly options.

Best Practice: Maintaining standardized recipes and rigorous ingredient tracking is critical to ensuring consistency and guest safety.

3. Way of Life

Food has increasingly become an extension of personal identity and lifestyle choices. Vegan, vegetarian, plant-based, keto, paleo, and flexitarian diets are no longer niche trends; they are mainstream consumer segments. These choices are frequently driven by environmental values, ethical beliefs, fitness goals, or cultural preferences.

The Chef's Role: Rather than complicating operations with entirely separate menus, chefs can design adaptable menu structures.



Aayusha Roy is a Bakery and Pastry professional and culinary educator with 8+ years of industry experience and 4+ years in culinary education, specializing in modern pastry arts, chocolate showpieces, and artistic modelling. She's currently Assistant Lecturer – Food Production and Academic Administrator at The Lalit Suri Hospitality School, Faridabad, with prior academic roles at Lovely Professional University and Chitkara University.

Her industry background includes stints at The Oberoi, Taj Fisherman's Cove, and Le Meridien, complemented by a strong competitive record in artistic pastry showpieces and recent recognition with the Nari Ratna Award (2025) for contributions to hospitality education. An active IFCA member, she blends technical pastry expertise with curriculum design and mentorship to develop industry-ready culinary talent.

Best Practice: Build modular dishes that allow customers to easily choose alternative proteins, dairy substitutes, and ingredient swaps without disrupting kitchen efficiency.

4. Dietary Restrictions

This category encompasses religious, cultural, and medically prescribed dietary requirements. Halal, Jain, Kosher, diabetic-friendly, low-sodium, and heart-healthy meals all fall within this classification.

The Chef's Role: As global tourism rebounds and expands, hospitality businesses must recognize that dietary restrictions are often non-negotiable for the traveler.

Making It Practical for Chefs

The challenge for the modern kitchen is not necessarily creating more dishes, but communicating existing offerings more effectively. Future-proof menus should be designed with clear labels, intuitive symbols, QR-based ingredient databases, and robust staff training systems.

A highly practical approach is to audit and classify every menu item according to these four categories, building a straightforward reference guide for both guests and service teams. Leveraging technology—through digital menus, automated ingredient tracking, and allergen-detection software—can seamlessly support this transition.

Will It Impact Sales?

The answer is a resounding yes—and positively.

Customers naturally gravitate toward and trust businesses that provide transparent information. Clear menu communication reduces ordering hesitation, improves table turnover, elevates customer satisfaction, and drives repeat loyalty. It also opens doors to the rapidly growing consumer segments actively seeking allergen-friendly, plant-based, or specialized dietary options.

Most importantly, standardization reduces operational errors, minimizes complaints, and enhances brand credibility. What initially appears to be a compliance exercise ultimately transforms into a powerful competitive advantage.

Driving Industry Change

Looking ahead, Aman Singh Rajput, Mentor of Luma Institute, is currently developing an 'Allergen-Friendly and Inclusive Menu Programme.'

This timely initiative aims to equip chefs with the tools to better understand and implement the increasingly diverse menu landscape. By focusing on practical execution, the programme bridges the gap between hospitality professionals and consumers, making modern menu navigation safer, simpler, and more transparent for everyone.

Conclusion

The future of menu design is not about offering more choices—it is about offering clearer choices. Chefs and restaurateurs who embrace this shift will do more than just protect their guests; they will redefine the very value of hospitality by creating culinary experiences that are transparent, inclusive, and truly future-ready.



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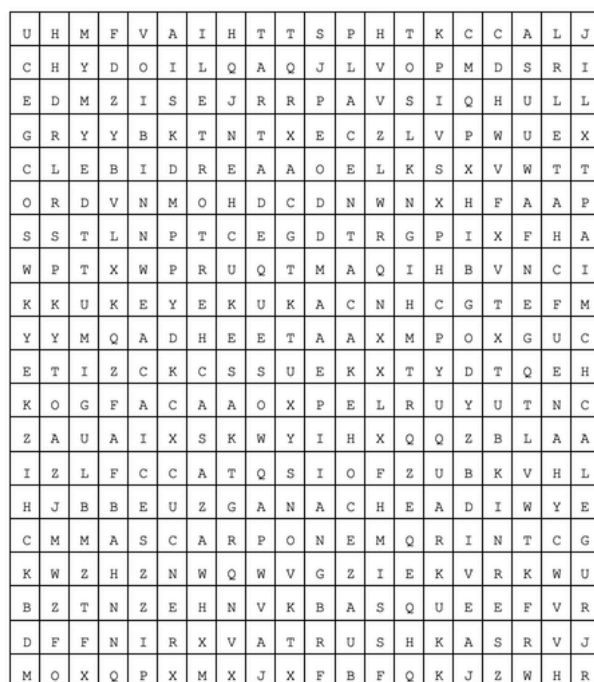
Culinary Capers

An Cheesecake Day - word search



Chef Akshay Krishna

Oriented and passionate Commi III specializing in continental cuisine to enhance culinary skill maintain high food quality standard and grow understructure operations and mentorship.



Find the following words in the puzzle. Words are hidden →, ↓, and ↘.

1. Mascarpone
2. Quark
3. Ricotta
4. Basque
5. Neufchatel

6. Ganache
7. Rugelach
8. Sachertorte
9. Placentacake
10. Vatrushka

11. Sernik
12. Ostkaka
13. Kasekuchen
14. Tartadequeso
15. Chizkeyk

Culinary Capers

Last Month's : Eastern Mithai Maze Crossword - Answers :

W	W	K	S	I	W	O	H	M	I	S	T	I	D	O	I	C	A
R	H	F	A	P	X	P	A	Y	E	S	H	L	V	Z	X	H	L
T	R	V	N	C	A	A	N	P	C	M	O	Q	V	K	M	E	A
H	A	E	D	V	K	T	Z	T	G	I	A	H	Q	X	V	N	D
E	S	K	E	K	D	I	V	D	R	D	R	H	Z	S	W	N	Y
K	A	R	S	Q	N	S	B	O	G	B	K	H	A	J	A	A	K
U	M	E	H	B	H	H	R	A	S	A	G	U	L	L	A	P	E
A	A	L	B	I	U	A	T	S	X	P	W	O	E	J	M	O	N
U	L	X	Y	N	M	P	I	G	L	K	A	K	A	R	A	D	N
L	A	C	K	K	Q	T	Z	A	B	A	X	I	M	Y	M	A	Y
V	I	J	W	E	I	A	R	E	K	C	D	T	I	D	A	W	C
P	I	W	V	E	K	A	N	C	H	A	G	O	L	A	V	V	X

Share a snapshot of your responses on your Instagram story, tag IFCA (@ifcachefsofindia), and seize the opportunity to win thrilling prizes!



The advertisement features a central image of a young woman in a white chef's uniform with a tall white toque, standing with her arms crossed. To her left is a dark blue vertical banner with yellow and white text. At the top right is the IFCA logo, which includes a stylized torch and the text 'INDIAN FEDERATION OF CULINARY ASSOCIATIONS', 'National Member of World Association of Chefs Societies', and 'Recognized by The Ministry of Tourism Government of India'. At the bottom of the banner are two gold award icons with blue text labels. The bottom of the advertisement contains contact information and a website URL.

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