

IFCA MAGAZINE

FOOD AND BEYOND

Official Magazine of



INDIAN FEDERATION OF
CULINARY ASSOCIATIONS

Where Chefs and Food Belong

FEBRUARY MARCH 2026



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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

With the arrival of the year 2026, this edition marks a new chapter in the evolution of food in terms of how tradition and innovation now work together to create the future of food, rather than oppose one another.

Throughout this issue, a consistent theme of cultural continuity unites us all, from documenting the regional cuisines such as Uttarakhand's Flavours of Devbhoomi to making visible the culinary identity of North-East India. There is a visible and concerted effort to keep alive the essence of who we are culturally. Conversely, we discuss worldwide trends, as well as issues like the growth of plant-based eating and functional beverages; thereby illustrating how food in India is changing due to a changing society without sacrificing what makes it great.

This edition highlights the aforementioned trend of chefs taking on increasing levels of responsibility outside of their kitchens. Chefs are now involved in many ways, in policy dialogues about India's potential to be the world's food basket; in international summits regarding food; and through meaningful corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Chefs are also increasingly acting as custodians of culture, innovators and leaders within their communities.

As we continue on our journey, education and mentorship remain a key part of our focus. With the ongoing success of IFCA's assessment and training programmes, and continued global collaboration, our responsibility to mentor the next generation of chefs continues to grow. As these programmes create new skills for participants, they also foster discipline and pride and create a greater appreciation for the philosophy of Indian food.

Indian cuisine is continuing to gain recognition on international platforms and there is an increasing number of regional narratives that provide insight into how traditional dishes are being reinterpreted. This indicates a phase shift in the perception of Indian cuisine from an abstract concept to the full appreciation of its deep richness and diversity.

This edition of the magazine is therefore more than just a collection of articles; it represents our current state as an industry and indicates where we are headed. It is a collection of articles that support tradition, support innovation, and guide progress through purpose.

Please take the time to read these stories, to reflect on your own culinary journey, and to keep contributing to a community that is helping India find its place on the international culinary map.

Culinary regards,



Dr. Chef Sheraz Nair
Managing Editor
IFCA Magazine



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“Flavours of North East” Successfully Showcases Culinary Heritage in Guwahati

The Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA) successfully organised “Flavours of North East”, a two-day flagship culinary event held on 30 and 31 January 2026 at the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre, Guwahati, as part of the 5th North-East HoReCa Expo. The event celebrated the rich culinary heritage, indigenous ingredients and diverse food culture of India’s North-Eastern states.

The programme commenced on Day One with an auspicious lamp-lighting ceremony led by Chef Manjit Singh Gill, Chef Sudhakar Rao, Chef Abhiru Biswas, Chef Ranganath Mukherjee, Chef Joel Basumatari, Chef Atul Lahkar and Chef Faruk Ahmed, marking the formal inauguration of the event. This was followed by a felicitation ceremony honouring eminent chefs and distinguished culinary professionals.



The first competitive round, titled “North East Platter”, then began, with participants presenting authentic regional cuisines that highlighted the diversity and depth of North-Eastern gastronomy. Live judging was conducted alongside the competition, ensuring transparency and professional standards.

The day also featured live culinary demonstrations, including a Nagaland cuisine presentation by Chef Joel Basumatari (powered by Lee Kum Kee) and a Manipuri cuisine demonstration by Chef Pradip from Manipur (powered by Nestlé). Following the completion of the judging process, results were announced and prizes were distributed. A media interaction session concluded the day, during which participating chefs shared insights into North-East cuisine, its cultural significance, and the importance of achieving greater national and global recognition.

Day Two began with an early morning visit to the Kamakhya Devi Temple, attended by EICA members and guest chefs. The second day of competitions subsequently commenced, featuring a Cake Decoration Competition that witnessed enthusiastic participation and impressive creative presentations. Judging was conducted with the same professional rigour as the previous day.

A panel discussion organised by Food Tech North East, attended by Chef Abhiru Biswas, focused on culinary innovation, regional ingredients and the future of North-Eastern cuisine. The day concluded with a culinary visit and lunch at Chef Atul Lahkar’s restaurant, offering participants and chefs an authentic Assamese dining experience.

The event received strong institutional support from NIPS Institute of Hotel Management and IAM – Institute of Hotel Management, Guwahati. Their involvement significantly enhanced the academic and professional value of the programme.

“Flavours of North East” concluded on a highly successful note, reaffirming EICA’s commitment to promoting regional cuisine, nurturing young talent and strengthening collaboration between industry, educational institutions and culinary professionals.

Sharing Warmth Beyond the Kitchen: EICA's New Year CSR Initiative

The Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA) began the year 2026 with a heartfelt initiative that reflected the true spirit of hospitality — sharing food, care and compassion with those who need it most.

On 24 January 2026, EICA organised a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity at Save the Orphans, Kolkata, marking its first social initiative of the year. The programme brought together chefs, volunteers and children under one roof, reinforcing the belief that food has the power to unite, comfort and uplift.



The initiative was graciously led by Chef Debjeet Majumdar, Chef Krishnendu Hazra, Chef Priyanka Bhattacharya Banerjee, Chef Arnab Maschatak and Chef Jayanti Ghosh, whose presence and participation added warmth and sincerity to the occasion. The chefs personally interacted with the children, served meals and spent meaningful time engaging with them, making the experience memorable beyond simply sharing lunch.

Rather than being a formal event, the gathering was filled with genuine smiles, laughter and heartfelt conversations. The chefs ensured that the meal was prepared and served with care, reflecting the values of dignity, respect and love that lie at the heart of the culinary profession. For the children, it was not just a meal, but a moment of joy and attention — something that left a lasting impression.

Speaking about the initiative, EICA members expressed that such activities remind chefs of their responsibilities beyond professional kitchens. “As culinary professionals, we nurture people through food. Giving back to society is an essential part of our journey,” shared one of the participating members.

This CSR activity reaffirmed EICA's commitment to social responsibility and community engagement. By beginning the year with service, the association set a strong example for the culinary fraternity — proving that the true essence of hospitality lies not only in excellence on the plate, but also in empathy from the heart.

EICA plans to continue such initiatives across Eastern India, strengthening the bond between chefs and communities while spreading positivity, nourishment and hope.



“Flavor of Devbhoomi Unveiled at Lok Bhavan: A Celebration of Culinary Heritage and Culture”

The eagerly anticipated culinary anthology, “Flavor of Devbhoomi,” was proudly launched at Lok Bhavan amid a vibrant celebration of culture. This exceptional book transcends a mere recipe collection; it acts as a living documentary of Uttarakhand’s spirit—encapsulating the heart of its traditional kitchens, rich cultural heritage, and deeply ingrained life philosophy.

The book skillfully highlights the importance of traditional grains and spices like Mandua (finger millet), Jhangora (barnyard millet), and Zakhia by showcasing Uttarakhand’s legacy through its native ingredients. These ingredients, which are renowned for their remarkable flavor, nutritional value, and therapeutic qualities, are a reflection of the knowledge of traditional Himalayan cooking techniques that have supported centuries.



In modern time, “Flavor of Devbhoomi” represents a significant effort to preserve and promote these traditional culinary customs. In addition to recording recipes, it tells tales of health, sustainability, and harmony with the environment—values that are fundamental to Uttarakhand’s culinary legacy.

The presence of Lt Gen Gurmit Singh added great significance to the occasion, lending encouragement to this noble effort of cultural preservation. His participation highlighted the importance of safeguarding regional traditions and promoting them on wider platforms.

Under the auspices of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations, the Chefs Association of Uttarakhand has presented this exceptional piece, further demonstrating IFCA’s dedication to honoring India’s rich culinary legacy.

“Flavor of Devbhoomi” is not just a book—it is a tribute to the land, its people, and its timeless flavors, inspiring future generations to cherish and carry forward this invaluable legacy.

India's Vision to Become the World's Food Basket

Under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, India is steadily progressing toward the goal of becoming the world's food basket. Hon'ble Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Shri Chirag Paswan Ji, emphasised that the government's vision is to ensure that at least one Indian food product reaches every dining table across the globe.

This vision took meaningful shape during the two-day Chintan Shivir held on 19–20 January at Hotel Marriott, Udaipur, Rajasthan. The conclave brought together policymakers, representatives from various state governments, industry leaders, and experts to deliberate on strengthening India's food processing and culinary ecosystem. Key discussions focused on progressive policy frameworks, innovation, quality standards, value addition, farmer empowerment, and positioning Indian food products competitively on the global stage.



The food processing sector plays a pivotal role in enhancing farmers' incomes, generating employment, and driving sustainable economic growth. The government's continued emphasis on expanding processing capacity, strengthening quality assurance, and enhancing global outreach reflects a strong commitment to establishing Indian food products as trusted, globally recognised brands.

A Platform for Collaboration and Culinary Leadership

It was an honour to be part of this prestigious Chintan Shivir, which served as a valuable platform for meaningful dialogue on the future of India's food processing and culinary landscape. The sessions facilitated insightful exchanges on innovation, policy direction, and global best practices that will shape the next phase of growth for the sector.



It was a privilege to meet Hon'ble Union Minister Shri Chirag Paswan Ji and witness firsthand the government's focused and forward-looking vision of transforming India into a global food basket. I am sincerely grateful to the IFCA President, respected Chef Manjit Gill Ji, for the opportunity and recognition to attend and represent the culinary fraternity.

I am proud to have attended under the leadership of Royal Rajasthan Chef Society President, Chef Vimal Dhar, along with fellow chefs—Chef Kislay Kumar, Dr Chef Sangeeta Dhar, Chef Devendra Kumar, and Chef Love Mathur. Such collaborative platforms play a vital role in aligning policymakers, industry stakeholders, and culinary professionals toward shared goals of sustainability, innovation, and excellence. The interactions and exchange of ideas with dignitaries from various ministries across India made this an enriching experience.



3rd Quarterly IFCA Assessment Successfully Commences at ITI Kaushal College, Ranchi

The 3rd Quarterly IFCA Assessment for Batch 9 and Batch 10 at the Department of Culinary Arts, ITI Kaushal College, Ranchi, successfully commenced today in an atmosphere of discipline, enthusiasm, and professional excellence.

The assessment is being conducted in collaboration with the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), the apex body representing culinary professionals across India. This continued partnership reflects a shared commitment to empowering underprivileged girls through structured skill-based education, fostering professional confidence, and creating sustainable career opportunities within the hospitality industry.



A distinguished panel of culinary experts was deputed by IFCA to evaluate the students. The panel included Dr Chef Manjit Singh Gill, Chef Sudhir Sibal, Chef Kasi Viswanath, Chef Abhiru Biswas, Chef Ram Chander, Chef Tarun Panjwani, Chef Sudhakar N Rao and Chef Rajesh Nair. Their extensive industry experience and academic leadership ensure that the evaluation adheres to both national and global culinary standards.

Batch 9 underwent a comprehensive and industry-oriented assessment designed to replicate real-time professional kitchen environments. The evaluation focused on key parameters such as technical proficiency, mise en place discipline, hygiene and sanitation standards, time management, presentation and plating aesthetics, and flavor balance.



As part of the practical examination, students showcased their skills across various specializations, including Indian Cuisine (Curry Section), Indian Cuisine (Halwai – Indian Sweets), Indian Cuisine (Tandoor Section), South Indian Breakfast, Continental Cuisine, and Bakery and Confectionery.

The students displayed remarkable confidence, creativity, and professionalism, reflecting the high standards of training imparted at ITI Kaushal College, Ranchi.

The assessment marks another significant step in nurturing future culinary professionals and strengthening inclusive growth within the hospitality sector.



PHDCCI's National Young Chef Competition: South Zone Showcase of Culinary Excellence

In a spectacular celebration of up-and-coming culinary talent from Southern India, the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) successfully hosted the South Zone round of the National Young Chef Competition (NYCC) at the Faculty of Hotel Management & Culinary Arts, Dr M.G.R. Educational & Research Institute, Chennai.

The competition showcased NYCC's national theme, "Celebrating Indian Culinary Heritage: Blending Tradition with Innovation," and was organised in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), and the Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC). The platform encouraged young chefs to use contemporary methods to reimagine traditional Indian flavours while maintaining a connection to local culinary identities.



The South Zone round demonstrated the breadth of expertise in hospitality education throughout Southern India, according to Sulagna Ghosh, Secretary of PHDCCI. She reaffirmed NYCC's function as a growing national movement that promotes links between youth, business, and education. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism and Culture, Government of India, will be the Chief Guest at the NYCC Grand Finale, which is set for January 19, 2026, at The Institute of Hotel Management Pusa, New Delhi.



Over the course of six months, NYCC travelled the country in four zonal rounds—North, East, West, and South—bringing students from top hospitality schools together for fierce competitions. Seven institutes participated in a live culinary competition in Chennai's South Zone round, showcasing their technical proficiency, inventiveness, and creativity. Teams from the Asian Christian Culinary & Agricultural Science Institute in Hosur, the Culinary Academy of India in Hyderabad, and IHM in Hyderabad won a fierce competition and will represent the South Zone at the Grand Finale in New Delhi. Hyderabad's IHM Shri Shakti took second place. Distinguished industry professionals made up the competition jury, which was presided over by Certified World Chefs Judge Anil Grover. They praised competitors for their solid foundations and creative interpretation of Indian food. Renowned Indian celebrity chef K. Damodharan, well known as Chef Damu, commended the young cooks' genuineness and inventiveness.



SICA Culinary Olympiad 2025 Sets New Benchmarks for India’s Culinary Excellence

The 7th edition of SICA Culinary Olympiad 2025, held in Chennai, marked a historic milestone as India’s first WACS-approved National Culinary Competition, setting new standards for professional excellence, innovation, and global engagement. Organized by the South Indian Chefs Association (SICA) under the aegis of World Association of Chefs’ Societies (WACS), the event was judged by an esteemed WACS-approved international jury, ensuring global benchmarking and credibility.



The Olympiad featured an extensive range of live culinary challenges for senior chefs, apprentice chefs, students, and professionals from culinary institutes, hotels, bars, and hospitality institutions. Unique attractions included exclusive cocktail and mocktail competitions, live dessert challenges, and newly introduced categories such as Dabra Coffee competition, adding fresh excitement to the event. A distinctive highlight was the inclusion of two hands-on Housekeeping competition categories, focusing on sustainability in the hospitality industry, reinforcing the event’s commitment to responsible practices. Live competitions in two-course Asian and Western cooking and dessert challenges were conducted at IHM Chennai on 11th and 12th September 2025.

With participation from over 3,000 chefs, including four international teams from Maldives, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and Australia, and representation from regional associations across India, the Olympiad truly achieved Pan-India and global stature. The presence of celebrity chefs such as Sanjeev Kapoor, Padma Shri Dr. Chef Damodaran, Sanjay Thumma, and others added prestige.

The event concluded with a Grand Award Ceremony, honouring gold medalists, senior chefs, international jury members, and sponsors, reaffirming IFCA and SICA’s leadership in shaping the future of Indian gastronomy.



World Heritage Cuisine Summit 2026 Conducted Successfully as per Schedule at Indus Food Expo

The World Heritage Cuisine Summit 2026, organised by the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) in collaboration with the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI), was successfully conducted on 9 January 2026 at the Indus Food Expo, adhering meticulously to the pre-planned schedule and programme framework. The Hon. Chief Guest, Shri Chirag Paswan, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, Government of India, and other notable national and international dignitaries arrived at the start of the day-long summit after a formal registration and welcoming session. The timely execution of the inaugural event, which included the customary lamp lighting, created a respectable and culturally significant atmosphere for the summit.



The IFCA presidency and guests from other countries attended the afternoon program, which included talks on The Great Indian Culinary Atlas, the Indian Cuisine Project, and the official launch of a major culinary publication. Chefs, historians, and culinary experts participated actively and thoughtfully in the scheduled panel discussions on the Evolution of Indian Heritage Cuisine and the Global Arc of Taste of Heritage Cuisines.

In addition, the summit featured exhibits of cultural cuisine, keynote talks on food history and diversity, well-organized seminars by famous chefs, and networking tea breaks that promoted deep connections amongst attendees. Every program section flowed naturally, demonstrating careful preparation and efficient time management.

The meeting was successfully closed with a World Heritage Address and a formal vote of appreciation. The summit's goal of honoring culinary history and promoting international cooperation was strengthened by the well-executed program schedule, excellent content, and worldwide participation.

The World Heritage Cuisine Summit 2026 stood as a testament to IFCA and TPCI's organisational excellence, demonstrating that large-scale international culinary events can be executed with precision, professionalism, and cultural depth.



Insightful speeches by prominent international culinary leaders, such as Chef Manjit Gill, President of IFCA; Chef Willment Leong, Asia Continental Director of Worldchefs; Chef Uwe Micheel, Assistant Vice President, Worldchefs; and Mr. Tomasi Tuabuna, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Government of Fiji, followed the opening session's welcome remarks by Shri Mohit Singla, Chairman, TPCI. In his keynote speech, the Chief Guest emphasized the significance of culinary history for international trade, diplomacy, and cultural identity. Every session went according to plan, and the technical teams, speakers, and organizers coordinated flawlessly.

A guided tour of the Indus Food Expo display halls allowed dignitaries and delegates to engage with both domestic and foreign industry stakeholders as part of the seamless post-inauguration activities. The well planned lunch arrangements and prompt reassembly for the technical presentations that followed lunch came next.



Indian Culture & Cuisine Program (Level 1) Successfully Organised at IHM Pusa

The Indian Culture & Cuisine Program – Level 1, a flagship initiative of the International Indian Centre for Culinary Leadership (IICCL), was successfully organised at IHM Pusa, New Delhi, from January 3 to January 7, 2026. The five-day immersive programme brought together select international chefs for an enriching journey into India’s rich culinary heritage and cultural philosophy.



Speaking about the project, Chef Manjit Gill, President of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), emphasised that knowing an entire civilisation through its cuisine is just as important as mastering techniques. Additionally, the program provided a forum for culinary diplomacy, encouraging cross-cultural interaction, leadership discussions, and international cooperation. Participants gained access to a global network of chefs and culinary innovators after completing the program and receiving certification from IICCL as Culinary Ambassadors of India.

By showcasing how food can serve as a universal language of harmony, connection, and cross-cultural understanding, the Indian Culture & Cuisine Program confirmed India's position as a global culinary leader.



The program, which was created as a worldwide culinary leadership effort, offered a profound cultural and leadership experience in addition to technical training. Participants investigated the core of Indian cuisine as a living legacy, which is based on the harmony of the six tastes that characterise Indian food philosophy, balance, sustainability, and wellness. The program included workshops on Ayurveda and holistic well-being, regional culinary demonstrations, spice and ingredient trails, and masterclasses by famous chefs. Participants gained a deeper understanding of Indian customs and beliefs through cultural immersion activities, which included trips to famous sites, including the Indian Museum, Akshardham Temple, and Gurudwara Bangla Sahib.



Indian International Rice Summit 2026 Showcases Global Culinary Excellence with GI-Tagged Rice of Chhattisgarh at Maira Resort, Raipur

After a successful conclusion, the Indian International Rice Summit (IIRS) 2026, which took place at the Maira Resort in Raipur, emerged as a historic platform honouring India's rich rice diversity, potential for international trade, and culinary innovation. Through lively debates, in-person demonstrations, and commercial exchanges, the summit brought together policymakers, foreign delegations, exporters, dealers, and culinary experts. The involvement of IFCA Chef Anshuman Sharma, who represented the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), was one of the summit's main highlights.



Traders, exporters, buyers, promoters, and international delegates showed a great deal of interest in the IFCA Pavilion and Live Cooking Stage, which furthered the chefs' growing role as important representatives for agri-trade, value addition, and international branding of Indian produce. The summit was further honoured by the visit of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh and the Chairman of APEDA, who visited the IFCA Pavilion and Live Cooking Stage. Both dignitaries appreciated Chef Anshuman Sharma's innovative approach and encouraged his efforts, emphasising that the use of local produce to create international dishes is a powerful tool to strengthen exports and enhance India's position in the global rice market. On the concluding day, traders, buyers, exporters, and promoters expressed high satisfaction with the culinary showcases and business engagements. Many congratulated Chef Anshuman Sharma and IFCA for their impactful contribution and encouraged continued efforts toward promoting GI-tagged Indian rice varieties in international markets. The Indian International Rice Summit 2026 successfully reinforced its core vision: "Grown in India, for the World."



Dr Chef Manjit Gill, President of the IFCA, is currently working closely with Chef Anshuman, who started his culinary career in Melbourne, Australia. He is also known for his dedication to using foreign cuisine to promote regional Indian goods. Chef Anshuman presented exotic rice recipes inspired by Timor, Chad, Cameroon, South Africa, Cuba, and Thailand during immersive, hands-on culinary demonstrations at the IFCA Live Cooking Stage. Interestingly, only locally obtained components and GI-tagged rice varieties from Chhattisgarh were used in the preparation of all recipes. His presentations established new standards for international culinary applications by showcasing Chhattisgarh rice's outstanding quality, adaptability, and export readiness.



From Millets to Mocktails: Nourishing India's Healthier Food Future

Chef Sushil Multani

India's food revolution is transforming traditional dishes such as chaat, biryani and bar snacks into nutrient-rich options that fuel the body, support mental clarity, and sustain both the planet and its farmers. This shift merges ancient wisdom with innovative solutions, prioritising well-being over empty calories. Since Covid, health-conscious eating has surged.

Indians now scrutinise food labels for hidden sugars, processed additives, and hygiene concerns, opting instead for nutrient-dense foods that energise without weighing them down. Cold-pressed oils, air-fried snacks and fibre-rich meals promote stable blood sugar, gut health, and sustained energy — key to feeling vibrant, not merely full. This transition helps combat lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and obesity, with wellness rooted firmly in balanced nutrition.

Leading this movement are millets — the super grains reclaiming centre stage. Following the UN's 2023 International Year of Millets, India — the world's largest producer, accounting for nearly 40% of global output — has elevated these climate-resilient crops. Once dismissed as "poor man's food", millets such as ragi, jowar and bajra offer numerous benefits: high fibre for digestive health, quality protein for muscle repair, magnesium for stress relief, and a low glycaemic index to maintain steady energy and mood. They are naturally gluten-free, rich in antioxidants, and require minimal water, making them ideal for sustainable well-being.

Chefs are innovating nutritiously: millet pasta for gut-friendly carbohydrates, millet upma for breakfast satiety,

millet risotto for indulgent yet light dinners, and even pastries designed to curb cravings without sugar spikes. Decades of agricultural improvements demonstrate that millets efficiently nourish both farmers' livelihoods and consumers' health.

Plant-based foods are further amplifying this wellness wave, moving beyond fleeting trends. India's plant-based meat market is projected to reach nearly \$400 million by 2025. Meanwhile, dairy alternatives such as almond and oat milks are growing even faster, offering lactose-free sources of calcium, vitamins and protein to support bone health and immunity. Rooted in India's long-standing vegetarian heritage, these alternatives are not Western imitations but thoughtful reinterpretations: jackfruit seekh kebabs that replicate the texture of meat, lentil kheema rich in plant protein, and textured protein tikkas enhanced with omega-3s from algae blends.

For flexitarians, replacing non-vegetarian meals twice weekly may offer anti-inflammatory benefits, support cholesterol reduction and ease digestion, while still preserving beloved flavours. Studies associate plant-based diets with reduced inflammation, improved sleep quality and increased longevity — all essential components of modern well-being.

Prioritising farm-to-fork practices minimises nutrient loss caused by long-haul transportation, ensuring peak vitamin retention in ingredients such as Konkan seafood, Northeast millets, Kumaon greens and Malabar spices. Urban markets and direct-to-farm deliveries provide fresher produce rich in phytonutrients that support immunity and vitality.



Chef Sushil Multani is Gold medallist from The Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development (OCLD). With over 20 years of experience he is currently working as a Chef consultant and Culinary director with Food Square India and also runs his own venture - Saulo Foods.

Chefs craft narratives around these ingredients, while home cooks adapt menus to local mandi produce — for example, gondhoraj lemons, prized for their intense aroma and vitamin C content, which can elevate antioxidant-rich sorbets and refreshing dishes.

Beverages, too, are evolving to support hydration and holistic balance. Zero-alcohol mocktails, kombucha, sparkling teas and regional ferments (including Kerala-inspired toddy alternatives) provide probiotics for gut health, electrolytes for recovery and adaptogens from Indian botanicals for stress support — without sugar crashes. The addition of spices such as turmeric (valued for curcumin's anti-inflammatory properties) or tulsī (renowned for immune support) transforms drinks into functional beverages that both hydrate and heal.

India's evolving culinary landscape reconnects us to heritage through the revival of millets and regional produce while simultaneously embracing global innovation. For home cooks, professionals and enthusiasts alike, it is wise to question sourcing, nutritional value and environmental impact.

Your next meal can nourish both body and soul, honour farmers, and reduce your ecological footprint. That is India's nourishing food story — an invitation to embrace well-being with intention.

Latest Food Trends and Innovation: A Global Perspective

Chef Rakesh Kumar

Today's food landscape is no longer defined by taste alone—it is driven by purpose, storytelling, sustainability, and experience.

1. Experience-Driven Dining

Modern diners seek more than a meal; they seek an emotion. Interactive chef tables, open kitchens, curated tasting menus, and destination-led dining concepts are redefining restaurants as experiential platforms. Food is increasingly becoming a medium for storytelling—reflecting local culture, seasonal narratives, and the chef's philosophy.



2. Hyper-Local & Sustainable Sourcing

Sustainability has evolved from a trend to an expectation. Farm-to-table has now become farm-to-fork transparency. Guests want to know where their food comes from, who grows it, and how it impacts the planet. Hyper-local sourcing, zero-waste kitchens, fermentation, and nose-to-tail cooking are no longer niche—they are benchmarks for responsible luxury.

3. Wellness-Led Cuisine

Wellness is shaping menus globally. Functional foods, plant-forward menus, gut-friendly ingredients, ancient grains, and clean-label cooking are influencing both luxury resorts and urban dining formats.

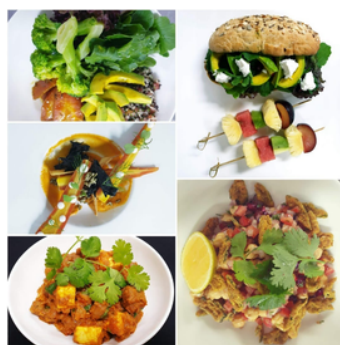
Innovation lies in making healthy food indulgent—without compromise on flavor or presentation.

4. Cultural Revival with a Modern Lens

One of the most exciting trends is the reinvention of traditional and indigenous cuisines. Chefs are revisiting forgotten recipes, regional techniques, and heirloom ingredients—presented through a contemporary lens. Authenticity paired with modern execution resonates strongly with globally well-traveled guests.

5. Technology Meets the Kitchen

Technology is quietly transforming food operations—from AI-driven menu engineering and demand forecasting to smart kitchens and digital guest feedback loops. Innovation today is not just on the plate but also behind the scenes, improving consistency, profitability, and personalization.



6. Rise of Casual Luxury & Smart QSR

The lines between fine dining and casual formats are blurring. Guests want high-quality ingredients, bold flavors, and refined presentation—delivered in relaxed, accessible environments.



21 years of experience across global hospitality markets, I have had the privilege of working with some of the world's most respected luxury and lifestyle hotel brands, including Aman, Six Senses, Alila, The Oberoi Group, Taj Hotels, and Marriott International. This journey across continents, cultures, and cuisines has offered a front-row seat to the rapid evolution of food trends and culinary innovation shaping the future of hospitality.

This shift has opened massive opportunities for scalable, brand-led food concepts with strong identity and operational efficiency.



Closing thoughts:

Food innovation is no longer about being trendy—it is about being relevant. The future belongs to brands and leaders who balance creativity with consciousness, heritage with innovation, and experience with execution.

As hospitality continues to evolve, food will remain its most powerful connector—bringing people, cultures, and ideas together at the table.

Sharing experiences from a recent visit to India within the Culinary Heritage Program

Chef Chanh Than

Member, The Saigon Professional Chefs Association.

My recent visit to India, within the framework of the Culinary Heritage Program jointly organised by IFCA and Indus Food 2026, was a truly special journey. It left a deep impression on all the participants and me, bringing profound emotions, valuable experiences and unforgettable lessons about culture, people and the core values of traditional cuisine.

From the very first days of setting foot in India, we clearly felt the diversity, vibrancy and rich historical depth of this remarkable country. India is not only the cradle of ancient civilisations, but also a meeting point of hundreds of ethnicities, religions and customs — especially diverse culinary traditions. Each region and every city our delegation visited possessed a unique identity, vividly expressed through flavours, cooking techniques and culinary philosophies closely connected to the spiritual life of local communities.

Throughout the programme, we had the opportunity to participate in specialised seminars, attend the international food exhibition Indus Food 2026, and engage in direct exchanges with Indian chefs, culinary experts and professional associations. Through these experiences, I came to realise that Indian cuisine is not merely the art of cooking, but a harmonious fusion of Ayurveda, religion, climate and a philosophy of balanced living between humans and nature. The use of spices is not only to enhance flavour, but also to heal, nourish and regulate the body — an approach that offers meaningful insights for culinary professionals around the world to reflect upon and learn from.

Another deeply impressive aspect was the strong respect for culinary heritage. Indian people preserve traditional recipes as they would preserve family memories and national identity. Many dishes are passed down through generations, not through written records, but through memory, hands and the heart of the cook. This strongly reminded me of Vietnamese cuisine, where humble dishes also carry profound cultural depth and the stories of villages, families and history.

Beyond its professional value, this journey was also an opportunity to broaden perspectives, strengthen international connections and build friendships among culinary professionals. The warm hospitality, openness and generosity of IFCA and the organising partners made us feel respected and connected, despite coming from different cultural backgrounds. Conversations over shared meals, handshakes, smiles, heartfelt stories, joyful moments on the bus and authentic experiences in local markets all helped dissolve geographical and cultural distances.

At the end of the journey, what remained was not only knowledge, images or experiences, but inspiration — inspiration to pursue our profession with greater integrity and depth; to re-examine the culinary heritage of our own homeland; and to nurture the aspiration of bringing local cuisine to the world through understanding, respect and meaningful creativity.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to IFCA, the Organising Committee of Indus Food 2026,



and everyone who contributed to creating such a meaningful, professional and valuable programme. This visit to India will certainly remain a memorable milestone in my journey of learning and development in the fields of culinary arts and cultural heritage. I truly hope to have more opportunities to return and experience this beautiful country many times in the future.



The Saigon Professional Chefs Guild (SPC) is a premier culinary organization based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It acts as a central hub for professional development, culinary competition, and the advancement of Vietnamese cuisine.

Cuisine Crossing the Borders

Chef Sakasudha Kumar

Introduction

In an era where the globe has become a small village due to technological advancements, accessible travel, and growing interdependency between nations, the Indian diaspora has also grown significantly. As a result, demand for Indian cuisine and restaurants has risen worldwide. The typical Indian preference for having Indian food daily has further fueled this spread.

Indian food is now gaining international prominence, while international cuisines are also influencing Indian palates, thanks to social media encouraging people to explore beyond regular Indian food. With healthy gluten-free options, complex flavors, unique techniques like tandoor and slow cooking, and strong nutritional value, Indian cuisine has inspired chefs globally. It is now attracting food connoisseurs and impressing even Michelin-starred critics. Thus, the cuisine is not only crossing geographical borders but also achieving higher culinary standards.

Historical Relevance

This cross-border exchange is not new. Historical records show how inventions, invasions, and trade routes have created paradigm shifts in our cuisine. Religious movements in ancient times transformed a largely non-vegetarian society into one that embraced vegetarianism. Later, invasions from Western Asia, the Middle East, and Europe during medieval times introduced ingredients such as tomatoes, potatoes, and chillies—now staples in daily cooking.

Indian cuisine has evolved through these cultural shifts, resulting in the diverse food landscape we see today.

Changing Phase and Face of Indian Cuisine Across Borders

Internationally, Indian restaurants were once perceived as budget options catering mainly to the Indian diaspora, serving curry-rice bowls and tandoori kebabs. However, chefs like Himanshu Saini (Tresind Studio, Dubai), Manjunath Mural (Cali Chili, Singapore), Vijaya Kumar (SEMMA, New York), Gaggan Anand, Garima Arora (GAA, Bangkok), Atul Kochhar (Tamarind & Benares, London), Sriram Aylur (Quilon, London), Sujan Sarkar (Indienne, Chicago), and others like Vineet Bhatia and Vikas Khanna have represented Indian cuisine on the global stage—earning Michelin stars and making history. Even though the Michelin Guide is not yet in India, Indian chefs have proven that the cuisine meets internationally accepted standards.

Global Scenario

India's tourism sector is booming and contributing significantly to the economy. Key stats for 2023-24:

- GDP Contribution: ₹15.73 lakh crore, 5.22% of India's total economy
- Total Tourism GDP: ₹20.9 trillion (~US\$ 249 billion) in 2024
- International Visitor Spending: ₹3.1 trillion (~US\$ 36 billion) in 2024, a record high
- Foreign Exchange Earnings: US\$ 35.0 billion in 2024
- Employment: 46.5 million jobs, 9.1% of India's employment in 2024, expected to reach 64 million by 2035

The sector is projected to contribute ₹22 trillion to GDP in 2025 and ₹43.25 trillion by 2034. India now ranks 39th in the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024.



Saka Sudha Kumar is a veteran in India's tourism and hospitality industry with 38 years of distinguished service, rising from Assistant Lecturer to Principal I/c at IHM Hyderabad. He has trained numerous chefs, hoteliers, and entrepreneurs and also served as Principal at NITHM and Joint Director (Cuisine Consultant) for Andhra Pradesh Tourism. Widely recognized for his long-running "Ruchi-Abhiruchi" column in Eenadu.

Role of Governing bodies

Today, the Ministry of Tourism recognizes food experiences as a key tourism product. However, compared with global culinary tourism leaders such as Japan, Korea, and China—countries with dedicated cuisine tourism policies—India's approach is still developing. The government promotes culinary tourism through broader programs like Swadesh Darshan and thematic tourism circuits, which encourage food trails, cooking demonstrations, food festivals, and immersive gastronomic experiences.

State governments are also active. Programs such as "One District One Cuisine" highlight regional specialties and strengthen destination branding. Cities like Lucknow and Hyderabad have gained international attention for their food heritage. Popular dishes such as Tangdi Kebab, Lucknowi Biryani, Nihari, and Makhan Malai attract both domestic and international tourists. Chef Manjit Gill (IFCA) and other chefs' associations across India are steering the future of Indian cuisine.

Hyderabad received UNESCO recognition as a Creative City of Gastronomy in 2019.

Suggestions & Conclusion

India has made promising strides but still has significant room for strategic expansion. During my tenure with Andhra Pradesh State Tourism, focused initiatives were undertaken to promote regional cuisine domestically and internationally.

Key achievements included securing the GI tag for Bandar Laddu, identifying signature dishes for major destinations, instituting awards for authentic cuisine, and organizing chef competitions.

Flagship programs such as “Our State, Our Taste” helped identify Chepala Pulusu (fish curry) as a signature dish through district-level competitions. Food festivals, culinary publications, and promotional materials further strengthened destination marketing through cuisine.

India can draw valuable lessons from global leaders by adopting long-term, policy-driven culinary tourism strategies. Each state should integrate local cuisine into destination branding, develop sustainable food tourism circuits, and promote indigenous gastronomy as a core pillar of tourism growth.



Selected as signature dish of A.P



Bandar Laddu –from the city of machilipatnam A.P

Forgotten Ingredients but Unforgotten Wisdom.

Gowdesh S Patil



Modern kitchens are filled with imported grains, microgreens, infused oils, and terms like 'artisanal' and 'heritage'. Yet, in the quieter parts of our food history, some ingredients once shaped everyday cooking. They were not exotic; they were practical, local, seasonal — and intelligent in their use. Take kodo millet and little millet.

Long before quinoa became fashionable, these grains were staples in dryland regions. They required little water, thrived in challenging soils, and sustained generations. Their texture is subtle and slightly nutty, offering a satisfying mouthfeel. Today, as conversations around climate resilience and sustainable agriculture continue to grow, millets are not forgotten but are necessary.

Now consider amaranth leaves, often regarded as simple greens. These leaves are impressively nutritious, grow well across varied climates, and cook with ease. Lightly sautéed with garlic or incorporated into dough, they bring both earthiness and depth. What once seemed humble is now recognised as nutrient-rich and adaptable.

Then there is kokum. While often associated with coastal dishes, its culinary applications extend far beyond traditional curries. Its natural tartness adds complexity without overwhelming a dish.

It can enrich robust gravies, brighten broths, and even elevate desserts and drinks. Unlike synthetic acids, kokum integrates gently, enhancing rather than dominating.

Another ingredient nearing obscurity is stone flower (kalpasi). Used sparingly in certain regional spice blends, it offers a mysterious, smoky undertone.

It does not assert itself like cinnamon or cardamom; its appeal lies in its subtlety. When lightly toasted, it releases a fragrance that deepens slow-cooked dishes in ways difficult to replicate with modern substitutes.

Fermented rice water, once routine in rural households, also deserves renewed attention. Left to ferment overnight, it develops probiotics and a gentle tang. Served chilled or incorporated into batters, it reflects an intuitive understanding of food preservation and gut health long before such concepts became mainstream.

What makes these ingredients significant is not merely nostalgia, but relevance. Many require fewer resources, support local biodiversity, and align naturally with sustainable food systems. They also favour slower cooking techniques: soaking, roasting, fermenting, and grinding by hand.

These methods develop flavour gradually rather than instantly. As chefs and culinary professionals, there is strength in revisiting these elements.

This is not about copying tradition unthinkingly, but about reinterpreting it with intention and respect.

Gowdesh S. Patil is a Hotel Management graduate from International Institute of Hotel Management, having completed his studies in 2000. He went on to spend a decade with the Taj Group of Hotels, where he progressed to the position of Food & Beverage Manager. For the past 15 years, he has been independently managing his restaurants as well as a Hotel Management Institute, overseeing both operational and academic aspects of the business.

Imagine millet risotto in place of arborio, kokum reductions instead of vinegar-heavy sauces, and kalpasi-infused broths presented with contemporary plating. When treated thoughtfully, forgotten ingredients do not appear outdated; they feel rediscovered.

Reviving them also supports local farmers and preserves regional knowledge. Food intertwines memory, ecology, and economy.

Each ingredient carries its own geography — patterns of rainfall, soil conditions, migration histories, and preservation techniques. In an industry constantly searching for 'the next trend', perhaps the most innovative step is to look back with purpose.

Forgotten ingredients are not relics; they are quiet blueprints for a future that values sustainability, flavour, and cultural continuity. Sometimes, the most progressive pantry is the one we already possess.

India: A Journey of Hospitality, Humanity, and Memory

Chef Christophe Prud'homme

Travel often promises discovery, but some journeys go further — they stay with you, quietly reshaping the way you see people, food, and yourself. My recent trip to India was one of those rare experiences.

From the very first moments, India did not welcome us as visitors, but as guests. Doors opened naturally, smiles came without hesitation, and conversations began without barriers. There was an immediate sense of openness — a generosity of spirit that did not feel performed, but deeply rooted in everyday life. Hospitality here is not a gesture; it is a mindset.

Throughout the journey, we encountered people who gave without counting. Time, knowledge, food, stories, laughter — everything was shared freely. Whether with chefs, producers, students, artisans, or families, the same warmth appeared again and again. Figures such as Chef Manjit, whose guidance and generosity shaped the rhythm of our days, and Mr Kamal and Mr Sanjay, whose commitment and presence were constant, embodied this spirit of giving. Their approach reflected something much larger than individual roles — a collective culture of care and openness.

What was equally striking was the level of engagement from institutions and leadership. Ministers were not distant observers; they were present, curious, and involved, demonstrating a genuine commitment to the future of food and collaboration. The presence of Mr Jitin Prasada, Minister for Commerce, alongside other governmental representatives, sent a clear message: hospitality, education, and food culture are national priorities, carried forward with pride and responsibility.

What touched me most, however, was the kindness — calm and humble, never loud or staged. People listened attentively, spoke with intention, and welcomed difference with curiosity rather than judgement. In kitchens, classrooms, markets, and homes, we were invited not only to observe, but to participate. Knowledge was shared generously, without hierarchy, and learning happened naturally — through doing, tasting, questioning, and simply being together.

Food, of course, was at the heart of everything. Yet beyond flavours and techniques, food in India carries memory, logic, and respect. Every preparation tells a story — of climate, belief, balance, and intelligence passed down through generations. Ancient practices continue quietly in modern kitchens, not as nostalgia, but as living knowledge. Tradition here evolves without losing its soul.

One of the strongest lessons of this journey was witnessing how simplicity and depth coexist. The most meaningful dishes were often the most modest: a lentil, a grain, a vegetable — transformed through patience, restraint, and understanding. It was a powerful reminder that true cuisine is not about excess, but about intention.

Beyond the professional inspiration, what remains most vivid are the human moments: the laughter shared at the end of long days, the spontaneous singing, the stories told late into the night. We arrived on a Friday as strangers, uncertain of what awaited us. By the following Saturday, leaving felt unexpectedly difficult. That bittersweet feeling said everything.

Our journey included a visit to the Taj Mahal. Standing in silence along the Yamuna River,



Serves as the Managing Director of Gourmet Consultancy LLC and is the Délégué Général for the Middle East of Maîtres Cuisiniers de France. A distinguished member of the Académie Culinaire de France, he also represents Normandie as its Ambassador. In 2024, he was honoured with the title of Chevalier of the Ordre du Mérite Agricole in recognition of his outstanding contributions to gastronomy and the culinary arts.

surrounded by history and stillness, I felt the weight of time and continuity. India carries its past with dignity, and that depth is present everywhere — in its monuments, its food, and its people.

This trip was not simply professional development or culinary exploration. It was a reminder of why we cook, why we share, and why hospitality matters. It reconnected me to the essential values of our craft: generosity, respect, transmission, and humanity.

India did not simply offer experiences; it offered perspective. And like all meaningful journeys, it did not end when the plane took off. It continues — in memory, in inspiration, and in the desire to return, to learn more, and to keep sharing.

Some places you visit. Others, you carry with you. India is firmly the latter.



Brand CAI
Estd. 1996

Scaling Sustainability in the Kitchen: From Theory to the Line

Aman Singh Rajput



Aman Singh Rajput is a sustainability consultant, educator, and founder of FourA Hospitality, working at the intersection of hospitality operations, sustainability integration, and curriculum development. With a Master's in International Business from Griffith College, Ireland, and certifications in sustainability management and reporting, Aman focuses on making sustainability practical, measurable, and accessible across industries. His work spans kitchen operations consulting, sustainable tourism research and academic collaborations with institutions in India and Ireland.

Sustainability in hospitality is no longer just a buzzword found in corporate ESG reports or high-level consulting mandates. With global sustainable investments exceeding USD 35 trillion, the industry is at a turning point. We've moved past the "why" and are now staring directly at the "how."

While awareness is at an all-time high, practical implementation remains the biggest hurdle. In the kitchen, we don't need more theoretical models; we need versatile, implementable solutions that respect our ticket sizes and operational realities.

The Operational Reality: Energy, Water, and Waste. As chefs, our impact is concentrated in three high-intensity areas:

- Energy: Kitchen gas, refrigeration, HVAC, and lighting.
- Water: Cleaning, prep, and high-volume laundry.
- Waste: Management of food scraps, packaging, and rigorous segregation.

The kitchen is the heartbeat of a property's environmental footprint. To manage this, we have to look at Scope 1 emissions—the direct results of our ingredients and cooking methods.

Lessons from the "Future of Foods Summit"

At the recent summit hosted by the Luma Institute and Animal Save India, we explored a "farm-to-fork" perspective using Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). The data is eye-opening: up to 60% of a dish's emissions occur before the ingredients even reach our loading docks.

During our "Menu Transformation" workshop, we challenged participants to take high-emission menus and

reduce their carbon footprint without sacrificing business viability. We used a simplified 1–5 Carbon Intensity Rating:

- 1 (Green): Low impact/Safe.
- 5 (Red): High impact/Needs intervention.

We applied this logic across different operational scales—from QSR (₹200 ticket) to Fine Dining (₹2000 ticket)—proving that sustainability doesn't have to break the bank or the brand identity. It's about smart swaps and efficient techniques.

"Sustainability doesn't require a 100% start; it starts with the mini-steps you maintain consistently." — Meenu Nageshwaran, Founder of Earth Collective.

The 4-A Framework for Chefs:

To move beyond symbolic gestures, we are advocating for a simple, operational framework to integrate into your daily prep and service:

Awareness: Audit your current baseline. Where are you today?

Authenticity: Identify your genuine pain points—is it food waste, or an inefficient broiler?

Accessibility: Execute an action plan that your team can actually follow during a rush.

Alignment: Measure the progress. Use the data to refine your menu.



Sustainability in hospitality must begin with understanding the real challenges chefs face on the ground — not just systems, but people. Chefs often work in high-pressure environments — 40–45°C kitchens, long 8–10 hour shifts, resource constraints, and a constant demand for consistency. However, when we talk about sustainability, we are also able to implement solutions such as energy-efficient equipment (induction, combi ovens), improved ventilation systems, and smarter batch cooking.

While also considering food waste challenges, we can establish simple systems that help chefs perform better, portion control and menu engineering, and repurposing surplus. waste tracking (Receiving → Mise en Place → Production → Leftovers)

While working as chefs, our energy, waste, and water systems can be improved together, which strengthens the overall kitchen environment and sustains the chef's workflow — as highlighted by Chef Vivek Vimal

Moving Forward as Narhari Gupta, Programme Director at Luma Institute, noted, the goal is to take this localized approach nationwide. Sustainability in hospitality isn't about restriction; it's about clarity.

By simplifying the science into actionable kitchen metrics, we can protect our planet while protecting our profits. Sustainability creates value not just for the business,

but for the entire ecosystem from local suppliers to communities and guests. When we talk about operational transformation the shared-value system makes the main driver to have measurable long term impacts.



Traditional Food and Ingredients of Ukraine, their Cultural and Historical Significance

Chef Anna Radchenko

PhD, Associate Professor, State Biotechnological University, Ukraine

In the contemporary globalised world, cuisine frequently serves as the initial point of contact with a country's culture, history, and traditions. The Ukrainian gastronomic tradition, shaped over centuries by agriculture, animal husbandry, and interactions with neighbouring cultures, reflects the nation's resilience and profound connection to nature. Ukrainian cuisine is grounded in ingredients of both plant and animal origin, with an emphasis on high-quality components that ensured a comparatively high standard of nutrition, even for ordinary inhabitants.

This article examines key traditional ingredients, including cereals, honey, fermented products, dairy, and borscht, elucidating their cultural and historical significance based on ethnographic and scholarly research. Cereal crops—such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, and millet—have constituted the foundation of Ukrainian cuisine since ancient times. Ukraine, long recognised as the “breadbasket of Europe,” cultivated grains on fertile chernozem soils covering two-thirds of its territory, enabling substantial grain exports across Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. Bread symbolised family happiness and served as an indispensable element of rituals. Before the widespread adoption of potatoes in the 19th century, cereals dominated the diet, giving rise to diverse baked goods such as palianytsia, pampushky, and bublik. Bread not only nourished but also permeated language, as evidenced by numerous idioms and proverbs that highlight its central position in everyday life.

Porridges rank among the oldest dishes accompanying Ukrainians throughout their ethnogenesis. Initially, grains were roasted, ground, and consumed moistened;

later, people mastered the preparation of porridges from buckwheat, millet, barley, or corn.

These could be liquid or thick and were often enriched with lard, oil, or milk. Chronologically, porridges preceded flour-based products and provided the basis for various dishes. Kisil, referenced as early as 997 CE, was prepared from oat grains with bread and boasts a millennium-long history. Regional variations bore different names and were supplemented with meat, fish, or vegetables.

Honey, as a natural sweetener, possesses a millennia-old history in Ukraine, where beekeeping flourished from pre-Christian times. Bees were regarded as “God's little flies,” mediators between the earthly and heavenly realms, while honey constituted an obligatory ritual food at memorial meals and family ceremonies. It was consumed fresh, dissolved (by pouring boiling water over combs to separate it from wax), or incorporated into beverages. Honey featured prominently in festive baking enriched with nuts and spices. From the mid-19th century onward, sugar beet cultivation diversified the sweet profile, introducing candies, preserves, and pastila as mass-produced products. Honey symbolised abundance and health, and its harvest served as tribute during princely eras.

The temperate climate, characterised by harsh winters, necessitated advanced preservation techniques: drying, fermentation, salting, and smoking. Pickled vegetables (cabbage, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplants) remain favoured, exhibiting regional diversity—such as fermented watermelon in the south or cabbage with cranberries in the north.



Kvass, a fermented product, was used in dishes and beverages, including rye and beet varieties. Beet kvass formed the foundation of borscht, although its use declined in the 20th century. Salt, extracted from the 12th century onward in brine-boiling facilities, was essential for solonyna (salted meat or fat) and fish, facilitating trade and long-term storage.

Milk and its derivatives—sour cream, cheese, ryazhanka, and soured milk—occupy a prominent place owing to pastoral traditions. Fresh cow's milk was rarely consumed; instead, it was slow-baked in the oven to extend its preservation. Soured milk arose through natural fermentation and served as the base for homemade cheese used in varenyky or pies. Sheep's milk yielded bryndza and vurdza, prevalent in sheep-herding regions. Whey was utilised for bread or pancakes. Dairy consumption was restricted during fasting periods, emphasising religious observance while providing essential protein in peasant diets.

Borscht, inscribed on Ukraine's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage and recognised by UNESCO in 2022 on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, stands as an iconic dish. It combines up to 20 ingredients, with beetroot as the dominant component, and may be prepared with meat-based or vegetarian broths. Variations include green borscht (with sorrel) and cold borscht. Borscht embodies agriculture (centred on beets) and fermentation (via kvass).

Traditional Ukrainian ingredients not only sustained the nation's physical survival but also profoundly shaped its cultural identity, mirroring centuries-old historical processes, religious beliefs, social structures, and environmental adaptation. Ukrainian cuisine exemplifies how gastronomic heritage transforms into a powerful bridge between past and present, fostering intercultural dialogue, diplomatic engagement, and human connection across diverse spheres.

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the organisers of the World Culinary Heritage Conference 2026 under the auspices of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations. This experience provides a unique opportunity to gain deeper insight into India's multifaceted culinary heritage—one of the world's oldest and most diverse—and to comprehend universal mechanisms for preserving and transmitting gastronomic traditions in a globalised context.

The knowledge acquired, particularly regarding approaches to safeguarding local ingredients, culinary rituals, and the integration of heritage into contemporary education and tourism, will be systematically incorporated into the curricula of Ukrainian higher education institutions. This will strengthen the emphasis on comparative analysis of national culinary traditions and their role in fostering sustainable cultural development.



(Above) Traditional Ukrainian Meal.
(Below) A bottle of "Kvass".



Thecha: A Fiery Expression of Maharashtra's Culinary Soul

Ms. Rajanee Kumari

In the diverse world of Indian condiments, Thecha holds a special place. It is not elaborate, nor is it delicately balanced in the way many modern sauces aim to be. Instead, Thecha is bold, direct, and deeply rooted in the soil of Maharashtra. This rustic chutney, made primarily from chillies and garlic, reflects the spirit of the land and the people who prepare it.

The origins of Thecha lie in rural Maharashtra—particularly in regions such as Kolhapur, Satara, and parts of Marathwada. It was never created for luxury dining tables. Rather, it emerged from necessity. Farmers needed food that was quick to prepare, easy to carry, and strong enough in flavour to accompany simple staples like jowar or bajra bhakri. A piece of flatbread, a raw onion, and a spoonful of Thecha formed a complete meal—nutritious, affordable, and energising.

What makes Thecha unique is its method of preparation. Traditionally, it is crushed in a stone mortar and pestle, known locally as a khalbatta. The ingredients are not blended into a smooth paste; instead, they are coarsely pounded. This technique preserves texture and intensifies flavour. The uneven crush releases the oils of the chillies and garlic slowly, creating bursts of heat in every bite. The result is a chutney that feels alive and vibrant.

Though the ingredient list is short, Thecha is far from uniform. Its diversity reflects Maharashtra's varied geography and local tastes.

The most common version is Hirvi Thecha, made with fresh green chillies, garlic, salt, and groundnut oil. Sometimes roasted peanuts are added for texture and mild sweetness. This version is sharp, bright, and intensely spicy—perfect with rustic millet breads.

Another popular variation is Lal Thecha, prepared using dried red chillies. These are often roasted before being crushed, giving the chutney a smoky depth along with its heat. In Kolhapur, this version is especially famous for its fiery character.

Shengdana Thecha, or peanut Thecha, incorporates a generous amount of roasted peanuts. The nuts soften the intensity of the chillies and add a pleasant earthiness. This variation pairs beautifully with simple dal and steamed rice.

In tribal communities and smaller villages, seasonal ingredients such as fresh turmeric, curry leaves, or raw mango may be included. Each household adapts the recipe according to availability and preference. There is no rigid formula—only tradition guided by taste.

In recent years, Thecha has moved beyond its rural roots. Urban restaurants and chefs have embraced it as a symbol of regional pride. It appears as a spread in sandwiches, a marinade for grilled vegetables, or even as an accompaniment to global dishes. While these adaptations are creative, the essence of Thecha remains tied to its rustic preparation and fresh ingredients.



Ms. Rajanee Kumari is a Virar-based home baker and emerging confectionery chef, as well as a food blogger. Through her culinary creations and community initiatives, she spreads joy among underprivileged children, using food as a medium of warmth and connection.

More than a condiment, Thecha is a memory for many Maharashtrians. It recalls stone courtyards, shared meals, and the rhythm of village life. It represents resilience, simplicity, and a deep respect for local produce. In a world increasingly drawn to refined sauces and packaged flavours, Thecha stands unapologetically authentic. It reminds us that great taste does not depend on complexity. Sometimes, it requires only chillies, garlic, and the strength of tradition.

In one spoonful of Thecha, one tastes not just heat—but history, culture, and the enduring spirit of Maharashtra.



A Culinary Homecoming: Discovering India Through Its Food

Chef Rexmond Chua

Last January 3, 2026, I had the honor of participating in the Indian Culture and Cuisine Program in New Delhi, sponsored by the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) and the Trade Promotion Council of India. For me, the journey felt like a homecoming. Back in 2004, at the very start of my culinary career, my first assignment was in the Indian and Malay Banquet Kitchen of the Grand Hyatt Singapore. What was meant to be a two-month rotation turned into a recurring post throughout my years with Hyatt. I found myself drawn deeper into the flavors, techniques, and philosophy behind Indian and Malay cuisine. More than twenty years later, I was finally stepping onto the soil of the country whose food helped shape me as a chef.

Indian cuisine has long carried an air of mystery. To some, it seems intimidating, complex, even overwhelming. Yet few can resist its deeply layered flavors and vibrant textures. During our four-day immersion, my fellow delegates and I received an intensive introduction to the foundations of Indian cooking under the guidance of Chef Manjit Singh Gill, President of the IFCA, and Chef Kamal Pant Kant, Principal of the historic Institute of Hotel Management, Catering, and Nutrition (IHM) in Pusa, New Delhi.

Beyond the endless parade of dishes from across the subcontinent, we gained something more meaningful: an understanding of the philosophy that makes Indian cuisine not just food, but a way of life.

The Ayurvedic Philosophy: Food as Medicine

"Food is medicine" is not a trend in India — it is a culinary principle that dates back over 5,000 years.

Indian cooking is deeply rooted in Ayurveda, a system that emphasizes balance, digestion, and harmony within the body.

Meals are designed around the balance of six essential tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, astringent, and pungent. Achieving this harmony is believed to support both physical health and mental clarity.

We were also introduced to the Satvik philosophy, which categorizes food into three types:

- Satvik food — pure, balanced dishes believed to promote calmness and clarity
- Rajasic food — stimulating, high-energy food suited for active individuals
- Tamasic food — heavy foods said to cause sluggishness and dullness of the mind.

Chef Gil emphasized that spices in Indian cuisine are not used generously by accident — they are used intentionally. Each spice has properties that affect digestion, circulation, and overall well-being. Quantities are adjusted with purpose, creating dishes that are as functional as they are flavorful.

The results are multisensory: aromatic gravies rich enough to stand on their own, slow-cooked meats that are surprisingly easy to digest, protein-packed pulses that sustain without meat, and milky sweets that bring balance and closure to a meal.

Indian cuisine cannot be summarized in a single definition. It is vast, nuanced, and deeply regional — a culinary universe still largely unexplored by the wider world.



Chef Rexmond Chua graduated from at-sunrice Global Chef Academy in Singapore in 2006. Since then, he has worked in several establishments like the Grand Hyatt and Michelangelo's Restaurant in Singapore, Dusit Thani Manila, Sulo Riviera Hotel in Quezon City, and was Corporate Chef for Technolux Equipment and Supply Corporation. He was also a Chef Instructor at De La Salle-College of St. Benilde and is now teaching at Lyceum of the Philippines University, Manila. Aside from this, Chef Rex is the chef/owner of 101 Hawker Food House in Makati City, Philippines, a restaurant serving affordable Singaporean and Asian inspired hawker food fare since 2010.

IndusFood 2026: India's Global Food Vision

Following our immersion, we attended IndusFood 2026, held from January 8–10 at the India Exposition Mart in Greater Noida. The scale of the event was staggering: over 2,000 brands and businesses filled a 125,000-square-meter exhibition space, showcasing products, innovations, and technologies from India and beyond. Seminars, panel discussions, cooking demonstrations, and tastings ran throughout the halls, creating an atmosphere that felt like a global summit for the future of food.

India's ambitions were clear. With a culinary heritage stretching back thousands of years and rapidly advancing food technology, the country is positioning itself to become the "food bowl of the world."

The Honorable Shri Chirag Paswan, Minister for Food Processing Industries, invited international partners to grow and process food in India, pledging strong government support for global collaboration.

The proof of this progress was on our plates. We sampled freeze-dried chutneys and gravies that tasted as though they had just come off a home kitchen stove — a striking example of how tradition and technology are converging.

More Than a Trip

For chefs and food lovers alike, a journey to India is not simply culinary tourism — it is education, inspiration, and perspective.

Our visit concluded with a side trip to the Taj Mahal. Standing along the Yamuna River, surrounded by silence and grandeur, it was impossible not to reflect on the depth of history that shapes this country — and its cuisine.

In that vast, open space, one can almost imagine the ancient kitchens where the foundations of Indian food were first laid.

For me, this trip was more than professional development. It was a full-circle moment — a return to the roots of a cuisine that quietly guided the course of my career.

And like Indian food itself, it left me wanting to learn more.



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Innovation in the Indian Spirits Industry: Using craft, technology, and sustainability to give old traditions new life

Deepak Bisht

Introduction

The spirits industry in India, historically controlled by established brands and volume-driven production, is undergoing a significant transformation. The Indian market was predominantly comprised of molasses-based spirits and price-sensitive consumers. Currently, there is a significant emphasis on premiumization, artisanal distillation, sustainability, and digital interaction. As companies adjust to evolving consumer demands, global quality standards, and sustainable production techniques, innovation has emerged as the cornerstone of growth. As the globe evolves, craft distilleries such as Himmaleh Spirits Distillery exemplify the fusion of local culture and innovative concepts to create distinctive Indian spirits.

The Indian Spirits Market: From Affordable to Expensive

India ranks among the highest consumers of alcohol, with the spirits category constituting the largest segment. Historically, the industry prioritised accessibility, uniformity in flavour, and cost-effectiveness. Over the past decade, urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, exposure to global drinking culture, and evolving lifestyle preferences have significantly influenced consumer shopping behaviours.

Today's Indian buyer wants:

More quality than quantity.

Authentic ingredients and narratives on their origins.

Premium packaging and brand engagement.

Products that is beneficial for both health and the environment.

This alteration has facilitated the expansion of distilleries emphasising innovation, particularly among the artisan and luxury sectors.

Product Innovation: Changing the Way Indian Spirits Are Made

Product innovation represents a significant transformation in India's spirits business. Distillers are producing more than the conventional IMFL (Indian Made Foreign Liquor). They are producing craft gins, fruit brandies, botanical spirits, premium whiskies, and ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages.

Some important trends in new product development include:

- Use of fresh, locally sourced produce
- Exploration of spirits not derived from molasses
- Production in extremely limited quantities (small-batch)
- Barrel finishing using local oak, wine, and sherry casks
- Ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails catering to younger consumers

Process Innovation: Combining Craft with Technology

In the Indian spirits industry, contemporary innovation encompasses not only tastes but also the enhancement of processes and the implementation of new technologies. Even modest craft producers are now employing sophisticated fermentation control systems, sensor-driven monitoring, and energy-efficient distillation apparatus.

Some new process trends are:

Fermentation at a regulated temperature to maintain taste consistency.

Hybrid distillation systems employing both copper pot stills and contemporary automation.

Micro-batch production for experimental liquors.



A hospitality professional with 12 years of industry experience, he has been associated with leading hospitality brands such as Marriott International, The Lalit, and Royal Orchid Hotels. For the past two years, he has been working with Himmaleh Spirits as Business Development Manager – Uttarakhand, where he has been instrumental in driving business growth and expanding the brand's footprint in the region.

Enhanced filtering and maturation methodologies.

Sustainability as a Key Innovation Strategy

Sustainability is now imperative; it has evolved into a strategic necessity for the Indian spirits industry. Water scarcity, energy use, waste management, and carbon emissions are critical concerns, particularly for distilleries operating in environmentally sensitive regions.

Some important new ideas for sustainability are:

Harvesting rainwater and repurposing water.

Utilisation of biomass and renewable energy sources.

Utilisation of by-products (waste grain as animal feed or compost).

Lightweight glass containers that are recyclable.

Acquiring goods from local farmers in a sustainable manner.

Experiential Innovation: The Rise of Destination Distilleries

In India, alcohol consumption is progressively linked to lifestyle and experience. The contemporary spirits consumer is keen to understand the contents of the bottle.

This has resulted in the expansion of experiential innovation, as distilleries function not solely as manufacturing entities but also as centres for tourist and brand engagement.

Distillery tours now include:

- Guided tours and tastings
- Cocktail workshops and gastronomic feasts with food pairings
- Autumnal harvest festivals
- Master seminars for hospitality professionals that impart knowledge.

Digital Innovation and Marketing in India

India has numerous regulations on the marketing of spirits, complicating conventional promotional efforts. This limitation has engendered innovative concepts in digital and content-centric domains. Brand communication relies on social media, narrative construction, collaboration with influencers, and experiential events.

The main goals of modern Indian spirits marketing are:

- Story-driven branding
- Concise video content
- Virtual tastings and product launches
- Community-oriented brand development
- Traceability and narrative with QR codes

Business Model Innovation: Beyond Conventional Distribution

Traditional liquor delivery in India is complex and heavily controlled. However, innovative brands are now embracing hybrid growth strategies:

- Hospitality-first placement in upscale hotels and cocktail bars
- Boutique retail partnerships
- Selective state expansion rather than nationwide volume push
- Limited collector editions for brand positioning

Challenges to Innovation in the Indian Spirits Industry

Even though it has a lot of potential for expansion, India's spirits industry faces certain challenges when it comes to innovation:

- High taxes and state-wise regulatory complexity
- Long processes for getting licenses and following the rules
- Limitations of infrastructure and cold storage
- Lack of consumer education in cities that aren't in the urban area
- Cost pressures in making things that are good for the environment

The Future of New Ideas in Indian Spirits

The Indian spirits business will change in the future because of:

- More movement towards the premium and super-premium segments
- More people want low-ABV and wellness-related products.
- The rise of Indian handmade spirits that are made for export
- Bringing together technology in production and supply chains
- More focus on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) norms.

India has a lot of different plants and animals, a strong agricultural basis, and a young market for drinks. This makes it a great place for inventive artisan spirits to thrive. Local distilleries that are based in local ecosystems will be very important in shaping this future.

Conclusion

Today, the Indian spirits business is coming up with a lot of fresh ideas that go beyond just new flavours. It includes ethical corporate practices, advanced technology, digital storytelling, immersive branding, and sustainable production. The change from cheap, mass-produced spirits to high-end, terroir-driven craft products shows how the Indian consumer's needs have changed



Canada and its Cuisine

Chef Rosalyn Ediger

The cuisine of any country or region is culturally shaped over time. That cuisine is based on available ingredients, skills, and material wares, historical significance, and maintained by shared memory and stories. Canada is no different. Early settlers brought their own ingredients and techniques, and as they learned to survive in the “wild west,” their knowledge combined with the deep wisdom of the original inhabitants of Canada, the First Nations people.

Canada's large geography contains a diverse number of climates, topography, natural resources, and wild ingredients. Add to that a multicultural society of diverse peoples and cultures, and you'll understand why Canada has a truly unique and hard-to-distinguish culinary footprint.

The west coast of Canada is known for amazing seafood from the Pacific Ocean, which has deep roots in foods inspired by Asian immigrants. The prairie provinces have fertile lands for grains and seeds, as well as large mammals like bison and cows. Settlers to the prairies originally came from a mosaic culture of largely Eastern European descendants coming from similar lands.

Northern Canada's primal landscape and weather have a very short growing season, and locals rely on game and the bounty of the Arctic Ocean, besides what is now flown in. Central Canada has the highest population density and welcomes diverse new Canadians, creating innovative dishes as they assimilate to their new home.

French Canada has, as you might guess, a significant French influence in its local fare and is famous for hearty and rich foods like meats, cheeses, and baked goods. The bounty of French cuisine is further juxtaposed by humble dishes with origins fueled by economic hardship.

Finally, Atlantic Canada is known for East-coast seafood like lobster and cod, homestyle cooking, and gracious hospitality.

Canada is also home to diverse wild and foraged foods, including feathered and furred game, nodding onions, ramps, nettles, fiddleheads, mushrooms, and berries. These come and go with the seasons, and our knowledge of them began with Indigenous teachings, wisdom, and culture.

Examples of traditional Indigenous cooking methods include bentwood box cooking and smoking and drying. A widely known Indigenous food is pemmican, which is dried berries and meat pounded and bound with rendered fat. For a modern comparison, you might consider it the ultimate protein bar (of sorts).

Some widely known modern Canadian dishes include poutine (French fries topped with fresh cheese curds and rich gravy), Nanaimo bars (chocolate and coconut layered dessert bar), ginger beef (Chinese-Canadian chop-suey style dish with sweet and tangy glaze served over steamed rice), or tourtière (baked meat pie).

Canadian cuisine is truly made up of creoles; how different groups mix to create new cultures and new cuisines.



Chef Rosalyn Ediger is a Culinary Arts Instructor at SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology) where she brings her international experience to students and young chefs. Her expertise is in culinary diplomacy: using food as a tool to communicate and build cultural bridges with the intent on strengthening relationships.

For example, Indian-style mango lassi became blueberry lassi, since mangoes do not grow here but blueberries are in abundance.



The combination of Indigenous history, climate, natural ingredients, and a constant stream of newcomers creates an ongoing re-invention of what Canadian cuisine is. These factors, bound together by tradition, resilience, and creativity, are what make Canada's food culture truly incredible.

Venison Tartare

Chef Roneilyn Asis

A young Canadian chef, Roneilyn Asis, shares one of her favorite dishes, venison tartare, from her work as Chef de Partie at Earl Grey Resort and Casino, where they specialize in Indigenous cuisine from the prairies.

The dish includes venison meatball, bone marrow, cranberry jus, grainy mustard, capers, burnt sage aioli, pickled haskap berry, bannock crisp, and venison shavings. It balances textures and flavors while connecting us to the land.

Ingredients:

- Venison meatball
- Bone marrow
- Cranberry jus
- Grainy mustard
- Capers
- Burnt sage aioli
- Pickled haskap berry
- Bannock crisp
- Freeze-dried venison shavings

Roneilyn: "This dish is a personal favorite because it beautifully captures the essence of Canadian Indigenous cuisine while offering a complex harmony of flavors and textures. Each component has been carefully considered, particularly in how they all connect with one another. The venison meatball is a comforting, tender contrast to the venison tartare. The tartare, rich and raw, offers an authentic connection to the land.

"Since venison is lean and gamey, it's cut finely to maintain a smooth mouthfeel and avoid chewiness. It also requires a touch of acid, like sherry vinegar or lemon juice, to balance its richness, and finely minced shallots rather than onions to prevent overpowering the meat.

As venison lacks significant fat, we've added bone marrow to lend a luxurious depth that contrasts beautifully with the tartness of the cranberry jus and pickled haskap berries.

"Haskap berries thrive in wild forests and meadows, contributing to a 'wild terroir' pairing that perfectly complements the lean, rich venison with their sweet-tart punch. Sage, which is native to many regions where deer roam, is incorporated into a burnt sage aioli, adding a smoky, earthy note that ties the dish together. The bannock crisp has a satisfying crunch, and the final touch is the grated freeze-dried venison, which elevates the presentation.

"What I love most is how each component reflects the diverse, vibrant ecosystems of Canada, blending traditional ingredients with modern techniques in a way that feels both nostalgic and innovative."



Chef Roneilyn's energy is what enables her to shine in the kitchen—embracing the natural beauty and pairings of foods, and to connect with all of her fellow cooks and chefs while honouring her filipina roots. She graduated from Southern Alberta Institute of Technology's Culinary Arts Program in 2024. During her time there, she continuously took part in various activities and events outside of classes, all helping to cultivate her passion for cooking. Among her strengths in the kitchen are organization and communication which allow her to maintain high standards and surpass guest expectations. She is currently working as Chef de Partie in events at Calgary's Grey Eagle Resort and Casino where her curiosity about Canada's food culture allows her to continuously learn about Treaty 7 Indigenous foods and customs.



“From Psychology to the Plate: A Journey Rooted in Purpose.”

Exclusive Interview with Chef Poonam Dedhia

You pursued an MA in Counselling Psychology before stepping into the culinary world. What led you to follow your passion for cooking?

Since childhood, I have watched my late mother prepare and experiment with a variety of dishes at home. Both she and my late naani were true chatoras—genuine food lovers who valued food for its taste, texture, and appearance, with everything made from scratch.

As a child, I was always in the kitchen with my mother—observing her cooking skills, accompanying her to the market, and exploring ingredients. All of this gradually inspired me to pursue the culinary field.

Over time, cooking became my passion, a realization that became clear during my college years while I was pursuing my studies.

Interestingly, psychology and the culinary arts align closely, enabling a deeper understanding of human behaviour and experiences. Drawing from my observations, including six years of intense struggle, I would like to highlight three key insights.

Healing through food: Psychology is about emotional well-being, and cooking is often "culinary therapy." Both involve nurturing people and providing comfort.

The Science of Chemistry: Psychology studies the brain's chemistry; cooking is all about the literal chemistry of ingredients.

Sensory Connection: Both fields require being deeply "in the moment" and attuned to the senses.

Why do you feel preserving regional cuisines is important in today's modern food landscape?

In a world where globalization often leads to a "standardized" taste (where you can find the same pizza, burger, pasta or noodles-based dishes in almost any city), pursuing regional cuisines is an act of preserving cultural identity and biodiversity.

Here is why focusing on regionality is so vital in today's food landscape.

Preservation of Cultural Identity:

Food is a living history book. Every regional dish contains clues about a community's past - migration patterns, trade history, and religious influences. When we lose a regional recipe, we lose a piece of that "story." In a modern world, regional food acts as an anchor to one's roots.

Sustainability and "Zero-Mile"

Eating: Regional cuisines are inherently sustainable. They were developed based on what grew naturally in the local soil and climate.

Seasonal Eating: Regional recipes traditionally use ingredients at their peak, meaning more nutrients and less carbon footprint from long-distance shipping.

Biodiversity: Promoting regional food encourages farmers to grow indigenous crops rather than just mass-market GMO crops.

"Food as Medicine:"

Most regional traditions are built on functional nutrition. For example:

Cooling vs. Heating: Coastal cuisines (Gujarat, Maharashtra, South India) often use coconut and kokum to cool the body, while mountain regions use fats and warming spices to combat the cold.

Probiotics: Regional fermented foods (like Idada in Gujarat or Kanji-Vada in Kutch) were "Hut Health" staples long before the term became a modern health trend.



Chef Poonam Dedhia, a Mumbai-based culinary professional, has built a successful business since 2012, translating her passion into a dynamic career that spans television appearances and large-scale cooking events. Over the years, she has curated wedding experiences, bespoke lunches, and Gujarati food festivals at leading venues across India, collaborating with renowned hospitality brands such as Radisson Hotels, ITC Hotels, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, and Ambuja Neotia Group.

Economic Empowerment:

By championing regional cuisines, we support local ecosystems. It shifts the economic power from large food corporations back to local farmers, artisans, and small-scale producers. It also fuels culinary tourism, giving people a reason to visit and support lesser-known parts of the country.

As a freelance chef, what has been the most rewarding part of your culinary journey?

- The Intimacy of Small Settings
- Full Creative Autonomy
- Being Part of "Milestone" Moments
- The "Culinary Educator" Role

Being recognised among the top hospitality icons is a significant honour. What does this achievement mean to you?

Validation of a "Non-Traditional"

Path: For someone who started in counseling and moved to food, being an "icon" proves that following your passion late in the game is worth the risk.

A Platform for Change: These awards give a chef the power to advocate for things we like, preserving regional cuisines, better mental health in kitchens, or sustainable sourcing.

Legacy: It's a way of honoring the people who taught me (like my late mother) by bringing that heritage to a global stage.

What advice would you give to professionals who want to shift careers and follow their passion?

Shifting careers is a blend of emotional intelligence and strategic planning. Leverage Your "Transferable" Skills: You aren't starting from zero; you are starting from experience.

Build a "Runway," Not Just a Leap
Passion is the engine, but stability is the fuel.

Seek "Micro-Validations"
Instead of waiting for a "Highest Category" award to feel successful, look for small wins early on.

·Become a competitor for your ownself; don't chase others neither don't compare yourself self with others.

Chefs Quick Picks

Spice you can't live without?

Ans. Cumin

Comfort dish that feels like home?

Ans. Betha Vaghar na Daal-Bhaat

Region that inspires you the most?

Ans. Kutch

Flavour you relate to your personality?

Ans. Chili

Dish you cook when short on time?

Ans. The Classic Kathiyawadi Khichdi - One Pot Meal



(Left) Complete Culinary Canvas of Gujarat, from fluffy rotis to Tangy dal and "Farsans".
(Right) Chef Poonam in "Kutch to Kathiyawadi 2.0 held at Radisson Blu Faridabad.

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

PATISHAPTA
CHENNAPODA
KANCHAGOLA
RASAGULLA
RASAMALAI
LADYKENNY

MISTIDOI
SANDESH
PAYESH
THEKUA
KAKARA
KHAJA

Culinary Capers

**Congratulations to our
January editions Crossword
Winner : Chef Pawan
Ailawadi**



Last Month's : January Crossword - Answers :

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