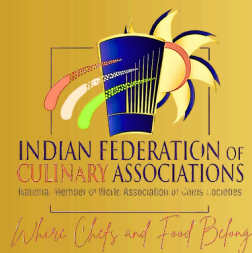


IFCA MAGAZINE

August 2025

FOOD AND BEYOND

Official Magazine of

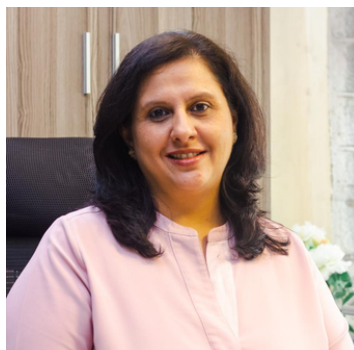


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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to address you through this issue of IFCA Magazine. Our industry stands at a fascinating crossroads, where the passion of chefs, educators, and professionals continues to push the boundaries of culinary excellence.

On this occasion, we also pay tribute to Dr. Chef Soundarajan Palaniappan on his birth anniversary, honouring his immense contributions to the culinary world.

In recent months, we have witnessed workshops and competitions that have not only brought our community closer but also highlighted the immense potential that lies in collaboration. The spirit of sharing knowledge, whether through competitions, workshops, or cultural exchanges, reminds us that food is far more than sustenance, it is a powerful connector across generations and geographies.

At IFCA, our mission has always been to nurture talent and to provide a platform where chefs and food professionals can grow, learn, and inspire one another. This issue showcases and celebrates such initiatives that continue to raise the standards of our craft.

I encourage you all to actively engage, to contribute your ideas, and to take pride in being part of this extraordinary journey. Together, we can continue to build a community that is both forward-looking and deeply rooted in the rich heritage of food and hospitality.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to excellence and to the values that define us.

Culinary regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheraz Nair', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Chef Sheraz Nair
Managing Editor
IFCA Magazine

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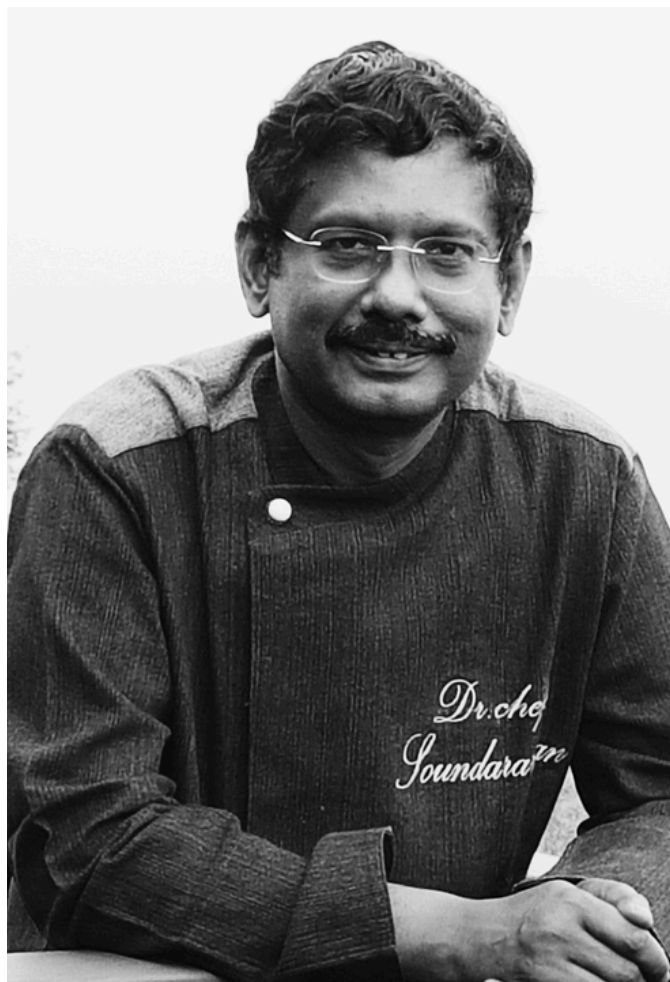
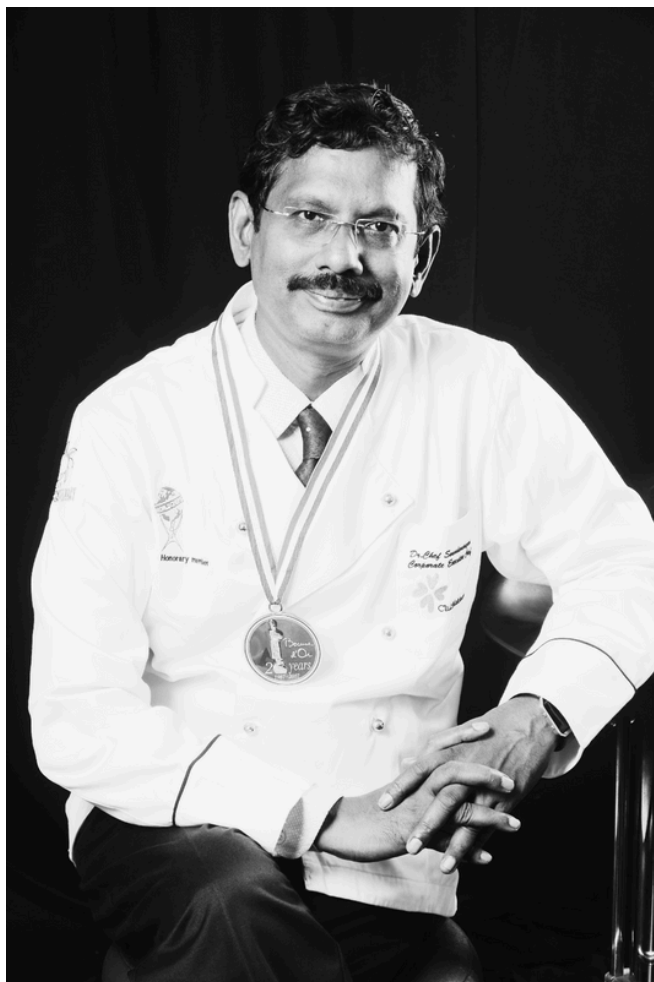
Global Food Trends



Chef Devendra

Food processing

“A Legacy of flavour and passion” Remembering Late Dr. Chef Soundarajan Palaniappan on his birth anniversary, by Chef Vijaya Baskaran



As I reflect on the life and legacy of my dear friend, mentor, and colleague, the late Dr. Chef Soundarajan Palaniappan, on his birth anniversary, I am filled with a mix of sadness and gratitude. I'm proud to have shared a bond with him that began during our time at the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Chennai, where he was my senior and mentor.

A Bond that Lasted a Lifetime

Even as a student, Chef Soundarajan stood out for his exceptional leadership skills and vision. He was the driving force behind many of the college's food-related festivities, meticulously planning menus and spearheading events like the signature festival "Catafete." His ability to coordinate with teachers, fellow students, and partners was truly exemplary. Our professional paths continued to align after graduation, and he remained a shining star in the industry.



A Visionary Leader

Chef Soundararajan's professional journey was marked by his initiative and organizational skills. He initiated and organized successful food festivals wherever he was posted, significantly contributing to the sales and reputation of those establishments. His ability to secure the support of executive chefs for various food promotions was a testament to his dedication and leadership.

Nurturing a Culinary Community

One of Chef Soundararajan's most enduring legacies is the creation and development of influential organizations like the South India Chefs Association (SICA) and the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA).

Along with Chef Manjit Singh Gill, he planted the seeds for these organizations, and we are now reaping the fruits of their labor. I have fond memories of working alongside him at various IFCA events, and it's our collective duty to nurture the network he created.

A Lasting Impact

Chef Soundararajan's vision continues to inspire how we engage with young chefs and improve culinary standards. His legacy is evident in the support IFCA extends to institutions like Kaushal College in Ranchi, where young girls are being trained. His calm demeanor and composure under pressure were qualities I deeply admired, and his life was a testament to his unwavering passion and vision for the culinary community.

Carrying Forward His Legacy

As we remember Chef Soundararajan on his birth anniversary, I urge everyone to carry forward his legacy of flavor and passion. Let us build upon the associations he created and continue to elevate the profession. His contributions will always be remembered, and his impact will be felt for generations to come.



Thank you, Chef Soundararajan, for being an inspiration and a guiding light in the culinary world.

Warm regards,

Chef Vijaya Baskaran V

General Secretary, Indian Federation of Culinary Associations
 Founder & Director, Chef Olam Food Ingredients Co
 Co-Founder, Everything Recycles Pvt Ltd
 Co-Founder, ISAW Foundation

SICA Concluded Pastry Art & Hot Plate Presentation Workshop 2025 in Chennai

The South Indian Culinary Association (SICA) successfully concluded its Pastry Art & Hot Plate Presentation Workshop 2025 in Chennai, Bangalore, and Kochin, drawing strong participation from culinary professionals, pastry enthusiasts, and hospitality students across India. The Chennai edition was held on 13th August 2025, from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, at the prestigious Hotel The Residency Towers.

The one-day workshop combined creativity, technique, and innovation, offering attendees an engaging learning experience. Participants had the opportunity to witness live demonstrations by renowned chefs and pastry masters, who showcased advanced methods in modern pastry design, plated desserts, and hot plate presentation. Sessions included intricate sugar artistry, chocolate showpieces, and contemporary plating styles, providing attendees with practical skills and fresh inspiration to elevate their culinary craft.

The event received an enthusiastic response, with participants praising the hands-on approach and the chance to interact directly with industry leaders. Many highlighted the workshop's role in bridging the gap between professional standards and aspiring talent, particularly within India's rapidly growing pastry and fine-dining sector.

As a respected regional chapter of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), SICA once again reaffirmed its commitment to fostering professional growth and knowledge exchange within the culinary community. The 2025 edition of the workshop strengthened this mission, offering a platform where chefs, educators, and students came together to share ideas and push creative boundaries.

"This event was not just a workshop—it was a true celebration of culinary artistry," said a SICA spokesperson. "We were delighted to see chefs, educators, and learners connect so deeply, and the energy in the room demonstrated the strength of India's evolving culinary scene."

With the success of the 2025 workshop series, SICA has further solidified its position as a driving force for culinary education, innovation, and collaboration in South India.

SICA PASTRY ART & HOT PLATE PRESENTATION WORKSHOP 2025
Master the art of presentation and detailing

Master Trainer
Chef Dimuthu Kumarasinghe
President, Chef's Guild of Lanka

Trainers
Chef Ranasingha Arachchige
Chef Gayan Basnayake
Chef Kamal Surendrajith

Venue: The Park
Location: Hyderabad

Date: 16th August 2025
Time: 09:00 AM - 06:00 PM

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SICA Announces the 7th Edition of the SICA Culinary Olympiad & Exhibition 2025

Asia's Premier Culinary Event to be Held in Chennai from 19th–21st September 2025

Chennai, India – [Insert Date of Release] – The South Indian Culinary Association (SICA) announced the 7th Edition of the SICA Culinary Olympiad & Exhibition 2025, scheduled to take place from 19th to 21st September 2025 at the Chennai Trade Centre, New Building, Hall No. 1 & 2. Recognised as one of Asia's largest and most prestigious culinary gatherings, this three-day event will showcase exceptional talent, creativity, and culinary mastery from across the globe.

The Olympiad is India's first WACS-approved culinary competition, certified by the World Association of Chefs' Societies (WACS). As a benchmark in international culinary excellence, the event will bring together top professional chefs, hospitality students, and culinary institutions, creating a platform for competition, learning, and global recognition. Highlights of the Olympiad include:

- Live Culinary Competitions – Chefs competing across multiple categories, demonstrating skill, innovation, and presentation.
- Exhibitions – Featuring the latest trends, technology, and products from the food and beverage industry.
- Networking Opportunities – For chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers, educators, and food entrepreneurs.
- Masterclasses & Demonstrations – Led by industry icons and global culinary leaders.

Speaking about the Olympiad, a SICA spokesperson said: "The SICA Culinary Olympiad is not just a competition—it's a celebration of culinary spirit and a platform for global recognition. We are excited to welcome chefs, students, and industry professionals to Chennai for this unparalleled event."

The Olympiad promises to be the culinary war of 2025, attracting chefs, students, industry experts, and food enthusiasts to experience the highest standards of gastronomy and hospitality innovation.



Farm-to-Table Academy Hosted India's Most Sustainable Culinary Competition

Excitement reached its peak as BCC 2025 - Season 2 took place on 20th and 21st August 2025 at India's first Farm-to-Table Culinary Academy, set amidst the lush green surroundings of Hosur.

Organised with a vision to nurture young culinary talent and promote sustainable cooking practices, the national-level competition drew participation from hospitality and culinary institutions across the country. Hosted by a pioneering academy that embraced freshness, seasonality, and traceability, BCC 2025 offered a dynamic platform where creativity blended with conscious cuisine.

Following the overwhelming success of its first edition, Season 2 presented a series of challenging competitive rounds that tested students' technical skills, innovation, and understanding of farm-to-fork concepts. Participants competed before a distinguished panel of chefs, industry experts, and hospitality leaders, receiving valuable feedback and recognition.

"We were thrilled to welcome the next generation of chefs to this one-of-a-kind event that not only tested technique but also educated and inspired," said Chef Stephenson, the event's curator. "BCC 2025 was more than a competition - it became a movement toward sustainable gastronomy and future-ready kitchens."

Institutions from across India took part enthusiastically, making BCC 2025 - Season 2 a true culinary landmark and reinforcing the importance of sustainability in professional kitchens.



Culinary Kaizens Talent – Season 1

In partnership with FoodTech Kolkata, August 3, 2025 — The Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA), in partnership with FoodTech Kolkata, successfully hosted the inaugural season of Culinary Kaizens Talent on August 2–3, 2025, at the Milan Mela Grounds, Kolkata. Celebrating innovation, knowledge-sharing, and regional pride, the two-day regional festival brought together over 300 attendees, renowned chefs, and key culinary stakeholders.

Highlights — Day 1: August 2

- The event commenced with “The Art of Cake” competition, followed by live judging.
- Chef Abhiru Biswas, President of EICA, welcomed esteemed guests of honour: Chef Manjit Gill, Chef Satish Arora, and Chef Sheetharam Prasad. The dignitaries engaged with attendees, sampled dishes, and shared insights with the audience.
- In four captivating batches, round 2 competitors presented a Regional Thali, showcasing traditional Eastern Indian cuisine.
- A panel discussion on “The Gap Between Home Chefs and Professional Chefs Is Narrowing” sparked lively conversation among industry leaders.
- Two regional culinary demonstrations were featured: Chefs Michael and Shiv presented Odia cuisine, while Chefs Pinaki and Sushanta showcased Bengali specialties.
- Hon’ble Sikkim MP Dr. Indra Hang Subba graced the event as a special guest.

Highlights — Day 2: August 3

- The “Sweet Legacies” competition, held across two batches, highlighted innovations in Indian mithai and contemporary presentation.
- Regional demonstrations continued, with Chefs Joel and Clive introducing North-Eastern flavors, and Chefs Sandeep and Shakesh presenting Jharkhand cuisine.
- A second panel discussion, “Taking Eastern Cuisine onto the Global Plate,” brought together hospitality experts and culinary thought leaders to explore global opportunities for the region’s foodways.
- In the final competition, “Chef’s Main Stage,” culinary professionals and students presented their signature appetizers and main-course dishes.
- Shri Pranav Prakash, Deputy Director General & Regional Director (East), India Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, attended as a special guest.
- Chef Abhiru Biswas delivered a moving concluding address and led a felicitation ceremony honouring attendees, jurors, and dignitaries.

As a fitting finale, 6 Ballygunge hosted an Epicurean Dinner on the evening of August 3, bringing together sponsors, VIPs, and participants to celebrate the event’s success in an immersive culinary atmosphere.



From Food to Camera: Professional Food Styling for Chefs & Creators.

The Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) successfully hosted a highly engaging and hands-on webinar titled *"From Food to Camera: Professional Food Styling for Chefs & Creators"* on 23rd July 2025. The session was led by Chef Raju Karthikeyan, one of India's foremost food stylists, and drew enthusiastic participation from chefs, culinary students, food bloggers, influencers, and photographers from across the country.

Focus and Content

The webinar centred on the artistic and technical aspects of professional food styling, equipping attendees with practical techniques to enhance the visual appeal of food. Topics covered included:

- Using textures and colours to create impact
- Mastering composition and plating for different formats
- Industry insights into preparing dishes for photography and media

Chef Raju shared real-world styling strategies along with live demonstrations, offering participants a behind-the-scenes view of how professionals prepare food for the camera.

Key Highlights

- A live styling session showcased how everyday dishes could be transformed into visually striking creations suitable for menus, magazines, and social media.
- Participants expressed particular appreciation for the practical tools and immediately applicable tips that could be adopted in their culinary and digital work.
- The interactive format encouraged active engagement, blending visual storytelling with culinary expertise.

An IFCA representative commented: "This webinar was a perfect blend of visual storytelling and culinary expertise. Chef Raju's insights were invaluable in helping participants understand how to elevate their food presentations to a professional level."

The session concluded with a lively Q&A segment, during which participants sought guidance on styling for different mediums and practical challenges faced in food presentation. The webinar proved to be both memorable and enriching, leaving attendees inspired to elevate their culinary presentations with professional styling techniques.



Launching IFCA Scholarships

The Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) proudly announced the launch of the IFCA Scholarships, a transformative initiative aimed at empowering aspiring chefs from underprivileged backgrounds across India. The programme seeks to provide access to quality culinary education while fostering diversity and excellence in the profession.

As the inaugural step, IFCA confirmed sponsorship for one deserving student from ITI Kaushal College, Ranchi, who will enrol in a six-month specialised culinary programme. This initiative has been made possible through the combined support of Bangalore Culinary Academy (BCA) and Cornell India.

The Bangalore Culinary Academy, led by Dr. Chef Sheraz Nair and Dr. Chef Rajesh Nair, has offered a 100% scholarship covering the full tuition fee for the course, ensuring the student receives world-class culinary training. The academy is recognised for its rigorous curriculum and hands-on approach, preparing students for success in global culinary careers.

Cornell India, under the leadership of Mr. Oommen Matthew, will sponsor the student's accommodation and living expenses, enabling them to focus entirely on learning without financial constraints. Their joint support guarantees a comprehensive and meaningful opportunity for the recipient to excel in the culinary field.

"We are committed to nurturing talent and promoting inclusivity in the culinary arts," said Mr. Himanshu Barola. "This scholarship is a step toward empowering deserving individuals to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background."

IFCA extended heartfelt gratitude to the Bangalore Culinary Academy and Cornell India for the visionary contributions. With this launch, the IFCA Scholarships programme aims to expand nationwide, unlocking opportunities for aspiring chefs and celebrating India's diverse culinary talent.



The graphic features the IFCA logo at the top left, which includes a stylized flame and the text 'INDIAN FEDERATION of CULINARY ASSOCIATIONS'. To the right is a red banner with 'IFCA SCHOLARSHIPS' in white. Below this, three lines of text in red and black announce the launch, the student's details, and the sponsors. At the bottom are three logos: 'CORNELL' with the tagline 'Energy in Excellence', the 'Bangalore Culinary Academy' logo, and the 'IIT ALLAHABAD' logo.

IFCA SCHOLARSHIPS

IFCA launches IFCA Scholarships to support aspiring Chefs from underprivilege backgrounds.

A student from ITI Kaushal College, Ranchi will be sponsored for a 6 Months Pastry Program.

Our gratitude to Bangalore Culinary Academy and CORNELL INDIA for making this possible.

CORNELL Energy in Excellence

Bangalore Culinary Academy

IIT ALLAHABAD

Young Chefs Shine at North Zone Round of India's National Young Chef Competition

Chandigarh – The National Young Chef Competition (NYCC), India's first national-level culinary competition for final-year hospitality students, successfully concluded its North Zone round today at the Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Hotel Management, Chandigarh. Organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) in partnership with IFCA, Ministry of Tourism, and THSC, the competition celebrates Indian culinary heritage while blending tradition with innovation.

Eleven teams from premier hospitality institutes across northern India showcased exceptional skill, creativity, and modern reinterpretation of traditional Indian cuisine. IHM Pusa, New Delhi, and IHM Kufri emerged as joint winners, securing a place in the grand finale in New Delhi in January 2026, while the Indian Culinary Institute, Noida, was named runner-up.

Chef Manjit Gill, President of IFCA, said, "This competition is not just about identifying the best young chefs; it's about preserving India's culinary identity and passing it forward. NYCC celebrates regional diversity and reconnects us to our roots with a modern flair."

Ms. Shalini S Sharma, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI, added, "NYCC is more than a competition; it is a movement. It brings together education, industry, and youth, fostering aspirational pathways and pride in Indian gastronomy."

The event also featured a Career Sensitization Workshop for Class 11 and 12 students from THSC-empowered schools, introducing them to career opportunities in hospitality and tourism.

NYCC is supported by leading industry partners including TATA Consumer Products, Nestle Professional, Cremica Food Industries, Venus Industries, HAKS, Wagh Bakri Tea Group, Welbilt India, McCain Foods, and others.



Artificial Intelligence Revolution in the Culinary Industry

Arihant Saha

In today's world the food has become a part of the culture heritage of the humans. Humans, they have been also the reason of many transformation as we know that "Necessity is the mother of all Inventions" so rapidly the technology has been the friend of us. Since earlier times optimizing processes and creating new opportunities for innovation from head to tail, AI is shaping the future of food production, distribution, & consumption. The culinary sector has been a remarkable example for the technology expansion.

AI has become a boon for the Industry especially when we are in 20th Century. We are researching all kind of science & innovation through which our mankind could be benefitted at large scale. Here is how AI is revolutionizing culinary space: Smart Kitchens and Automation, Recipe Development and Innovation, Food Safety and Quality Control, Personalized Guest Menu Experience, Chatbot for Orders, AI-Integrated Inventory & Purchase, and improved Cost Tracking & Menu Pricing.

Kitchen Planning & Designing: AI revolutionizes kitchenette renovations by optimizing layouts, suggesting personalized designs, and visualizing changes through 3D renderings and virtual walkthroughs. It enhances space utilization, recommends smart appliance integration, and allows real-time customization. AI tools estimate material costs and project timelines, streamlining the entire process. Users simply upload photos, choose preferences, and refine AI-generated designs, making renovations more efficient, cost-effective, and visually guided from concept to completion.

AI in Recipe and Food Product Development: Predicting Flavour Trends and Combinations: Advanced platforms are harnessing big data to forecast emerging flavour profiles. These tools scan social media, recipe databases, and consumer reviews to identify patterns, enabling brands to experiment with novel combinations that resonate with current tastes.

Accelerating Innovation Cycles: Traditional recipe development often involves extensive trial and error. AI-driven models, such as those developed by Agilitas, can simulate countless iteration tweaking ingredients, textures, and flavours to identify the optimal balance. This data-driven approach reduces time-to-market, lowers costs, and increases the likelihood of product success.

Enhanced Consumer Research: AI tools integrate data from multiple channels—purchasing patterns, social media interactions, and real-time feedback—to deliver a granular understanding of consumer behaviour. This deep insight allows brands to refine products and marketing strategies, tailoring offerings to meet precise consumer needs.

AI is still in its infancy. We're a long way from robots and AI that can think or behave just like a human. In fact, that breakthrough may never happen. But smart AI tools are here, and they may take a lot of the guesswork out of the restaurant and food industries. If AI in the food industry can help chefs to spend less of their time on inventory, ordering, and menu pricing, they may be able to spend more time on recipe development and cooking—the things they truly love to do!

AI is reshaping the culinary sector with smarter kitchens, data-driven personalization, and operational efficiency. While it enhances creativity and convenience, it also calls for upskilling workers and ethical use of customer data. The future of food is not just about taste—it's about intelligent innovation. The integration of AI into the food industry is far from a passing trend—it is the cornerstone of a transformative era in culinary innovation. From streamlining restaurant operations to pioneering the next generation of recipes, AI is enabling food companies to innovate faster and smarter. As these technologies evolve, they will continue to redefine food product development and dining experiences, offering a competitive edge to early adopters.



Arihant Saha, a dedicated culinary learner at Vedatya, recently completed an internship at Hotel Radisson, Varanasi, gaining valuable professional experience.

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Embracing Technology: Transforming the Future of Food & Beverage in Hospitality

Ashish Tiwari

In today's fast-evolving hospitality landscape, technology has moved from being a luxury to an essential part of delivering exceptional guest experiences. The Food & Beverage (F&B) industry traditionally known for its hands-on service model is now undergoing a major digital shift. From kitchens to dining areas and back-end operations, tech innovation is changing how we cook, serve, manage, and interact.

Smart Kitchens & Operational Efficiency: Modern F&B operations are now adopting kitchen automation systems that track inventory in real time, auto-generate purchase orders, and alert the team about nearing expiry dates. In one of the hotel kitchens *I worked with, we implemented a system that reduced food wastage by nearly 30% within the first quarter simply by tracking consumption trends and minimizing over-ordering.* Similarly, digital recipe management platforms have improved consistency across multi-outlet kitchens. Prep instructions, plating guides, and portion controls are now accessible via tablets mounted in the kitchen, ensuring uniformity even with rotating staff.

Contactless Dining & Guest Convenience: Since the shift toward contactless service, many F&B outlets now offer QR-code-based menus, mobile ordering, and app-based payments. This not only enhances safety but also gives guests full control of their experience—from browsing the menu at their own pace to requesting specific modifications without any communication barriers. *In one property, we observed a 22% increase in order value after implementing digital menus. Guests were more likely to explore and order add-ons when they could see images, suggested pairings, or chef's recommendations on-screen.*

Personalization Through Technology: Guest expectations have evolved. They now look for experiences that are intuitive and tailored. By integrating feedback systems with ordering patterns, *we've been able to recognize returning guests and personalize their experience welcoming them back with a favourite drink or meal suggestion based on past visits.* Such personalized touches have shown a direct impact on guest satisfaction scores and repeat dining frequency, especially in high-volume outlets where remembering individual preferences is otherwise difficult.

Integrated Systems for Smarter Decisions: Today, data is a powerful driver of F&B success. Integrated POS and analytics dashboards allow real-time visibility of sales trends, table turnover, guest feedback, and staff productivity. *At one of the outlets I managed, these tools helped us identify underperforming menu items and replace them with high-margin alternatives, resulting in a 10% increase in overall profitability over two months.* Operations can also forecast busy hours, allowing more accurate staffing and reducing labour costs without compromising service.

Sustainability Powered by Tech: Sustainability is no longer a buzzword it's a responsibility. Kitchens are now leveraging systems that monitor water and energy use, track waste bins, and offer insights on food disposal patterns. *In one initiative I led, simply tracking prep waste daily led to process improvements that saved over 200 kg of raw material per month.* Digital sourcing platforms also help connect with local producers, track food miles, and offer cleaner, fresher alternatives catering to guests who are increasingly conscious about what's on their plate and where it came from.



Ashish Tiwari brings over 15 years of experience in hospitality; he is recognised for his expertise in elevating food and beverage operations with a focus on guest satisfaction and operational excellence. Throughout his career, he has led high-performing teams in areas such as banquet operations, restaurant management, and outdoor catering, earning a reputation for his results-driven approach and commitment to quality. Under his leadership, Four Points by Sheraton New Delhi anticipates an enriched food and beverage offering that sets new industry benchmarks.

Technology in F&B is not about replacing people it's about empowering teams, enhancing guest experiences, and building more agile, efficient, and responsible operations. The properties and professionals that embrace this change will not only meet modern expectations but set new standards in hospitality.

As we step into the future, those who blend innovation with intuition will lead the way.

Lost or Forgotten Ingredients: "Back to the Roots: Lost Ingredients Rediscovered"

Chef Shyam Prasad

In every culture, food tells a story—of seasons, celebrations, hardships, migrations, and evolution. But as cuisines evolve, some ingredients are lost along the way. Whether due to modernization, urbanization, changing tastes, or industrial agriculture, many ingredients once central to traditional diets have faded into obscurity. These lost or forgotten ingredients are not just culinary relics; they are reminders of a more diverse, sustainable, and often healthier way of eating.

Across the world, there are thousands of native grains, herbs, roots, legumes, and fruits that were once integral to daily meals. However, many of these have been replaced by a handful of commercially dominant crops. Wheat, rice, and corn, for instance, now form the bulk of global carbohydrate consumption, pushing aside regional grains like millet, amaranth, sorghum, and teff. While these "ancient grains" are experiencing a revival in health-conscious circles, they are still under-represented in mainstream agriculture and cuisine.

One of the major reasons ingredients are forgotten is globalization. With the standardization of tastes and mass production, local varieties and seasonal produce gave way to hybrid, high-yield crops that could withstand long shipping times. As a result, regional biodiversity suffered. Vegetables like snake gourd, bitter melon, or tubers like taro and yam, which once held pride of place in kitchens across Asia and Africa, are now niche items or limited to rural diets.

Similarly, culinary herbs and medicinal plants used by indigenous communities are disappearing as knowledge holders grow older and younger generations drift away from traditional practices. Ingredients like ajwain leaves, moringa flowers, wild mushrooms, and lesser-known berries were not only flavourful but also packed with nutritional or healing benefits. Losing them means losing both health wisdom and ecological richness.

Urbanization has also played a key role. As people migrated to cities, they often left behind foraging practices and access to fresh, locally grown produce. Supermarkets replaced backyard gardens, and packaged convenience foods replaced time-intensive cooking methods. In the process, many ingredients that required special preparation, such as jackfruit seeds, bamboo shoots, or tamarind flowers fell out of favour due to their complexity or unavailability.

Another overlooked category of lost ingredients is food waste by neglect—parts of plants that were once consumed but are now discarded. Pumpkin leaves, beet greens, banana stems, and cauliflower stalks are nutritious but rarely used today. In traditional cuisines, no part of the plant was wasted. Rediscovering these forgotten components can lead to more sustainable cooking practices.

Fortunately, there's a growing movement to rediscover and reintroduce these forgotten ingredients. Chefs, farmers, food historians, and cultural revivalists are working together to document and revive traditional crops and cooking methods. From the "slow food" movement in Italy to millet promotion programs in India and heirloom seed banks in the U.S., the effort to reclaim lost flavours is gaining momentum.

Urbanization & Industrialization - Shift to processed, packaged foods, Commercial agriculture Globalization of Cuisine- Western foods and ingredients became aspirational, Local ingredients seen as "backward" or "peasant food.", Agricultural Modernization, Hybrid seeds replaced traditional varieties, Loss of biodiversity. Favoured high-yield, uniform crops. Colonial Influence - Colonial powers discouraged native grains and crops in favour of imports, some ingredients were harder to grow or less profitable, Supply chains didn't support niche crops are keys reasons why they are lost.



Chef Shyam Prasad is an Assistant Professor of Food and Beverage Production at Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bangalore. He is dedicated to delivering innovative teaching, hands-on training, and academic mentorship to his students.

Chefled initiatives – Restaurants incorporating ancient ingredients in modern cuisine, Government Schemes & Policies – Millet year, Organic farming reviving old seeds and crops. Media & Social Awareness - Documentaries, blogs, and food influencers highlighting lost ingredients.

Documentaries, blogs, and food influencers highlighting lost ingredients. Reviving method Bringing these ingredients back into our diets isn't just about nostalgia or novelty—it's about resilience. Forgotten foods are often drought-resistant, climate-adaptive, and require fewer chemical inputs than modern monocultures. They diversify our plates and reduce dependency on a few global crops, which is crucial in the face of climate change and food insecurity.

In conclusion, lost or forgotten ingredients hold the key to culinary diversity, environmental sustainability, and cultural continuity. Reviving them involves more than planting old seeds—it means renewing our relationship with food, land, and heritage. It's a journey worth taking, one ingredient at a time.

By following these simple rules, you help your digestive system work smoothly and prevent the buildup of toxins.

5. Eat Mindfully and with Gratitude

Ayurveda beautifully reminds us that how we eat is just as important as what we eat.

Always sit down in a calm, pleasant place to eat. Standing, walking, driving, or scrolling through your phone while eating disrupts digestion.

Take a moment to offer thanks for your food, acknowledge the farmers, cooks, and nature's bounty.

Eat slowly and chew thoroughly. Digestion begins in the mouth, not the stomach.

Be aware of the taste, texture, and aroma of your food. Engage your senses fully. Avoid heated arguments, negative conversations, or stressful thoughts during meals. The mind affects digestion more than we realise.

6. Follow Nature's Rhythm

Ayurveda advises us to align our eating habits with nature's cycles:

Eat your largest meal at midday when the sun is highest and Agni is strongest.

Breakfast should be light yet nourishing to awaken your body.

Dinner should be warm, light, and eaten at least 2-3 hours before bedtime to allow proper digestion.

Late-night eating is discouraged, undigested food creates toxins that disturb sleep and health.

Avoid lying down immediately after eating, it can lead to sluggish digestion and acidity.

If needed, drink a small cup of warm herbal tea like cumin or fennel to soothe digestion.

7. Post-Meal Rituals

Good digestion continues after you finish eating:

Sit calmly for a few minutes to let your food settle.

A short, gentle walk (100 steps) after meals aids digestion. In Ayurveda, this is called Shatapavali.

8. Cook with Mindfulness

Food prepared with care and positive intention carries subtle energy. According to Ayurveda, the cook's state of mind enters the food. So:

Cook when calm and happy, not angry or stressed.

Use fresh, clean ingredients.

Avoid reheating food multiple times, it loses its Prana.

9. Listen to Your Body

Finally, Ayurveda invites us to trust our body's wisdom.

Notice how you feel after eating different foods, light or heavy, energetic or dull.

Honour hunger and fullness signals.

Adapt your diet to changes in weather, lifestyle, age, and health condition.

Bringing it All Together

In the rush of modern life, we often treat food mechanically, as just something to fill the stomach. But Ayurveda teaches us that every bite is sacred, every meal is an opportunity for self-care, and every food has the power to heal when chosen and eaten with awareness.

When we align our eating habits with nature's wisdom and our unique constitution, we cultivate balance, vitality, and joy. We rediscover the simple truth that food, when eaten with respect and love, connects us to ourselves, our families, and the world around us.

So the next time you sit down for a meal, remember: Your kitchen is your pharmacy. Your plate is your medicine. Eat with mindfulness, and let your food be your greatest healer.

"When diet is wrong, medicine is of no use; when diet is correct, medicine is not needed." , Ayurvedic Proverb

Ayurveda recognised gluten issues before modern intolerance frameworks

Wheat is considered heating and heavy, and therefore unsuitable for individuals with sluggish digestion, inflammation, or certain skin disorders. Such people were historically advised to avoid or reduce wheat, long before gluten-free became a trend.

Sel roti

Padam Bahadur Aale Magar

General Secretary, Chefs Association of Nepal
Executive Chef | Culinary Educator | Social Advocate

SEL ROTI

Sel roti is a symbolic food of Nepali culture; traditionally known as deep fried ring-shaped rice bread. Sel roti is typically prepared during festivals, religious occasions, and family gatherings. Sel Roti's origin dates back centuries in Nepali households, particularly in the hills and Himalayan regions. It is believed to have emerged as a celebratory food during Tihar and Dashain, where it is offered to gods and used in family rituals.

Ingredients

- Medium or long grain rice 500gm (Rice flour can also be used)
- Sugar 180 gm
- Ripe banana 1pcs
- Melted ghee(clarified butter) 30ml
- Cardamom powder 10 gm
- Oil or ghee for frying(shallow frying)
- Milk /Water 350 – 400 ml approx

Making procedure:

Rice Preparation

-Rice is washed and soaked for 6–12 hours or overnight.

Soaked rice is drained and ground into a smooth paste using a silauto (stone grinder) or modern blender.

Making of Sel-roti batter

-To the ground rice, ingredients such as sugar, ghee, mashed banana, cardamom, and milk/water are added.

-The mixture is beaten thoroughly for at least 30 minutes to achieve a smooth, slightly thick but pourable consistency.

-Batter is rested for about 30 minutes to 1 hour for flavors to develop.

Frying of Batter:

- A deep, wide karai (wok) is used.
- Refined oil or ghee is heated to around 170–180°C.
- Batter is carefully poured in a ring shape with the hand or a spouted vessel (metal/glass) into the oil.
- sel roti is fried for 3–5 minutes, flipped halfway until golden brown and crispy on the outside.





Steep Decline in Hotel, Hospitality & Culinary Career Aspirants

Chef Sudhakar N Rao

As the founder of one of the first recognized Culinary Arts Academies in India, I have been involved in the selection process for admitting students to the college. Being a member of various educational bodies like the Senate of Osmania University and a technical expert on NAAC inspection panels, I have observed a concerning decline in the number of students opting for careers in the hospitality industry.

This downturn in admissions is a multifaceted issue, stemming from the evolving aspirations of students and the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality sector. Despite the industry's post-pandemic resurgence with high occupancy rates and growing revenues, the appeal of a career in hospitality has diminished. The steep decline in enrolments in colleges offering Hotel, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts programs in India can be attributed to several factors, which may vary depending on the institution and industry trends.

In my view, the perception of a demanding work-life balance and concerns about remuneration are major deterrents. Industry experts and academic leaders point to the long hours, high-pressure environments, and comparatively lower starting salaries as significant factors pushing students towards other professions that are perceived to offer more stability and financial rewards. Additionally, the changing job market expectations have led some students to be deterred from pursuing hotel management or culinary arts due to perceptions of limited career growth opportunities.

Furthermore, the increased competition from numerous colleges offering similar programs has intensified the competition for students, potentially leading to decreased intakes.

The proliferation of sub-standard hotel, hospitality, and culinary institutes without proper recognition or affiliation has contributed to the declining reputation of these courses and the profession itself. Many of these institutions lack adequate infrastructure, qualified faculty, industry exposure, and updated curricula, resulting in graduates lacking the necessary practical skills or professional discipline required by the industry.

It is also observed that there has been a shift in student preferences, with more students opting for modern or trending courses, such as data science, artificial intelligence, or sustainability-related fields, over traditional hospitality and culinary programs. Additionally, economic factors or uncertainty are leading some students to prioritize more stable career paths.

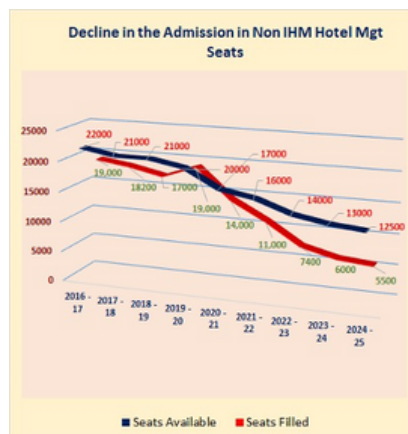
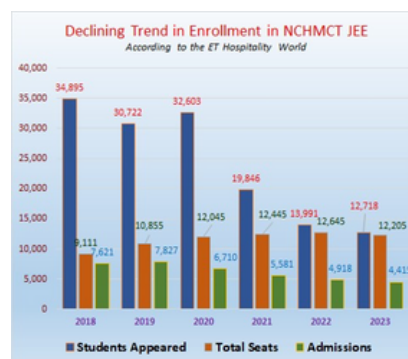
The Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs) under the NCHM&CT across the country are grappling with a significant decline in student enrolment, leaving many batches with empty seats. The once-coveted field is now facing a challenging perception battle, fuelled by concerns over career stability, demanding work conditions, and a perceived gap between education and industry realities.

To address this issue and increase student intakes in Hotel, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts colleges in India, a multi-pronged approach is needed. The key lies in rebranding the industry, improving education quality, and aligning with career expectations. This can be achieved by modernizing the curriculum to include global culinary trends, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, inviting industry professionals to teach modules or hold masterclasses, and providing stronger emphasis on practical sessions, internships, and simulation kitchens to enable students to gain real-world experience without leaving campus. Adopting dual-education models where learning and earning go hand-in-hand can also be beneficial.



Chef Sudhakar N. Rao, the visionary Founder-Director and Principal of the Culinary Academy of India (CAI), Hyderabad

Additionally, it is crucial to educate students and parents that careers in the hospitality industry are not limited to chefs or hotel managers. Opportunities exist in areas such as food entrepreneurship, event management, travel and tourism, cruise liners, and food technology/startups. By highlighting the diverse career paths and the industry's potential, we can help change the perception and attract more students to these programs.



Health Impact of Precooked, Packed Meals

Chef Manpreet Singh

In today's fast-paced world, many individuals are increasingly turning to precooked and packed meals to save time and effort. These meals are readily available in supermarkets, online platforms, airports, and railway stations. While they offer great convenience, it is essential to understand their impact on human health, especially when consumed regularly over a long period.

What Are Precooked, Packed Meals?

Precooked and packed meals are food items that are prepared in industrial kitchens or food factories, packaged using specialized materials, and then distributed for retail sale. These meals usually only require minimal heating before they are ready to eat. Common examples in the Indian market include ready-to-eat biryani, rajma-chawal, poha, instant noodles and pasta, and frozen parathas. Brands such as ITC's Kitchens of India and MTR Foods have gained popularity for offering a range of ready meals including dal makhani, paneer butter masala, upma, and pongal.

Why Are These Meals Popular?

There are several reasons behind the growing popularity of precooked and packed meals. They are extremely time-saving, making them ideal for working professionals, students, and people with hectic schedules. Since they require no cooking, they eliminate the need for washing, chopping, and cooking ingredients. Their long shelf life allows them to be stored for weeks or even months without spoiling, making them a convenient option for travel, workplaces, and emergency situations.

Health Issues Related to Precooked Meals

Despite the convenience they offer, regular consumption of precooked and packed meals may pose several health risks.

One major concern is the high preservative content. To increase shelf life, manufacturers often add preservatives such as sodium benzoate and other artificial additives. Although these substances are approved by food safety authorities, frequent consumption may lead to long-term health problems, including allergies and digestive disturbances.

Another significant issue is the excessive amount of salt and sugar found in most packed foods. These ingredients not only improve flavor but also act as natural preservatives. However, high intake of salt and sugar is associated with increased risks of high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and dental problems such as tooth decay. Additionally, these meals are usually low in essential nutrients. They often lack dietary fiber, fresh vegetables, and important vitamins and minerals. Instead, they contain high levels of refined carbohydrates and unhealthy fats, which can lead to poor digestion, fatigue, and unhealthy weight gain.

Artificial flavors and colors used to enhance the appeal and taste of these meals can also have adverse effects. These synthetic additives may cause skin rashes, headaches, or even behavioral changes such as hyperactivity in children. Furthermore, the packaging of these meals is often done in plastic containers or pouches that may contain harmful chemicals like Bisphenol A (BPA). When heated, these chemicals can leach into the food and may disrupt hormonal balance, increasing the risk of other serious health concerns.

Healthier Alternatives and Safer Choices

Not all precooked foods are unhealthy. In recent times, some manufacturers have started offering healthier alternatives by focusing on the use of natural ingredients with no added preservatives,



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reducing salt and sugar content, including whole grains and real vegetables, and using eco-friendly packaging materials. Consumers are becoming more conscious and are encouraged to look for product labels such as "low sodium," "no added preservatives," "organic," or "made with natural ingredients," which indicate safer choices.

Conclusion

Precooked and packed meals provide a practical solution for the challenges of modern-day life, particularly during emergencies or when time is limited. However, they should not become a substitute for regular home-cooked meals. Over-reliance on these foods may result in serious health complications in the long run. By choosing fresh, wholesome meals and limiting the intake of processed food, individuals can work toward better health outcomes. Health should always take priority over convenience.

Tips for Consumers

It is important for consumers to be informed and make wise food choices. Always read the ingredient list and nutrition label before buying a product. Try to avoid items that contain a long list of artificial additives or chemical names. Use precooked meals occasionally rather than making them a part of your daily diet. Most importantly, ensure that your regular meals include fresh vegetables, fruits, pulses, and whole grains to maintain a balanced and nutritious diet.

Sourdough Around the World: A Global Lens on Regional Starters and Living Traditions

Chef Ajith Kumar K

In an era craving authenticity, sourdough has re-emerged—not just as a rustic loaf on artisan café shelves, but as a quiet global phenomenon steeped in history, health, and heritage. At first glance, it may appear as a Western revival trend. But look closer, and you'll find a deeply rooted, living tradition shaped by place, people, and time-honoured practices across continents. Sourdough is not a trend; it is a timeless thread that stitches cultures together through the wild magic of fermentation.

Before it became the centrepiece of social media feeds during the pandemic or the pride of boutique bakeries, sourdough was—and remains—one of humanity's oldest food traditions. Its ancient origins span thousands of years and countless communities, with each culture nurturing its own version of naturally leavened bread. Though the basic method—wild fermentation using native yeasts and bacteria—is universally understood, its expression is as diverse as the grains and climates from which it springs.

In Germany, bread holds a sacred place in the culinary landscape. With more than 3,000 officially documented bread varieties, the country treats baking as a cultural ritual, not just a profession. Here, rye sourdough reigns supreme. Dense loaves like Vollkornbrot and Pumpernickel are fermented for up to 24 hours, developing deep, earthy flavors and a striking black-brown hue. These loaves, rich in fibre and resistant to spoilage, are built for both nourishment and longevity. German bakers often maintain starters that have been passed down through generations—a living inheritance, cared for like family.

Across the continent and into the highlands of Ethiopia, sourdough takes on an entirely different rhythm. Made from teff, one of the world's oldest grains, injera is more than just a flatbread—it's the heart of Ethiopian cuisine.

Left to ferment naturally for several days, the injera batter becomes bubbly and tart. Once ladled onto a clay griddle, it transforms into a spongy, tangy base for sharing meals. Its signature sourness and texture come not from commercial yeast, but from the alchemy of time and environment. In Ethiopia, to eat is to gather, and injera is the edible thread that ties hands, hearts, and heritage together.

“Injera is not just bread; it's a living canvas of community, flavor, and fermentation.”

Further east, in India, a new sourdough wave is gently rising. Rooted in the rediscovery of ancient millets, Indian bakers are reimagining fermentation with grains like ragi (finger millet), jowar (sorghum), and bajra (pearl millet). Ragi, with its subtle nuttiness and high calcium content, is especially prized in modern loaves aimed at health-conscious eaters. Once dismissed as humble or rustic, these grains are being elevated by chefs and micro bakeries who blend traditional wisdom with contemporary technique. In India's context, sourdough isn't just a baking method—it's a powerful response to climate sustainability, diabetic-friendly diets, and a growing desire for locally rooted nourishment.

Zooming out, we see that the sourdough story stretches far and wide. In France, pain au levain whispers elegance with its golden crust and slow ferment. In Italy, pane di Altamura—made from durum wheat semolina—is a protected product, baked in wood-fired ovens that have seen centuries pass. In Mexico, masa Madre is blended into corn batters, preserving indigenous fermentation practices. And in parts of China, the subtle, tangy taste of steamed buns comes from lao mian—a quietly maintained old dough, refreshed daily like a sacred ritual. These breads may not always look like the European sourdoughs we know, but they all share the same beating heart: fermentation guided by time, touch, and tradition.



Chef Ajith is a renowned pastry chef, culinary expert, and educator with over eight years of experience in the field. He currently serves as an Assistant Professor at Coimbatore Marine College and as an instructor at Whitecaps International School of Pastry.

What makes this global evolution of sourdough so relevant today is not just its taste or texture—it is its deeper resonance with modern values. In a world increasingly aware of gut health, natural fermentation offers improved digestibility and nutrition. In climates battling environmental fragility, local grains fermented slowly offer a path toward agricultural resilience. And in societies seeking reconnection with their roots, sourdough provides a living link between the past and present—a way of remembering, through flavour.



“Sourdough isn't just trending—it's traveling, teaching us to slow down and reconnect with our roots.”

Bread has always been more than food. It is memory, patience, identity. And sourdough, with its bubbling starters and unpredictable rhythms, reminds us that the most extraordinary things come not from speed or shortcuts, but from care. Whether it's a German rye slice dense with history, a tangy roll of injera unfurled like tradition itself, or a millet-rich Indian boule shaped by both grandmother's wisdom and modern science, sourdough connects us all.

Today, as the world leans toward authenticity, sustainability, and deeper meaning in what we eat, sourdough is not simply making a comeback—it's reminding us that it never left. It waited, quietly, in clay pots and wooden bowls, in rural kitchens and bustling markets, rising not just in dough but in spirit.

From Ice to Innovation: The Evolution of Frozen Food

Mr. Ram Raj Dev



The journey of frozen food, now a staple in global kitchens, is a story of necessity, science, innovation, and evolving consumer lifestyles. From rudimentary preservation in natural ice caves to high-tech freezing technologies preserving flavor and nutrition, frozen food has undergone a fascinating transformation. This article delves into the history, development, and recent innovations that have shaped the frozen food industry into what it is today.

A Chilly Beginning:

Natural Preservation Long before the invention of modern refrigeration, ancient civilizations used nature's own freezer—ice and snow—to preserve food. In 1000 BC, the Chinese used ice cellars to store perishables. Similarly, Persians developed "yakhchals," underground ice houses for storing ice and food. Native Americans and Nordic tribes used snow and cold streams to preserve fish and meat during harsh winters.

In Europe, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries, ice was harvested from lakes during winter and stored in ice houses to keep food cool throughout warmer months. However, these methods were highly localized and seasonal.

The Birth of Commercial Freezing

The foundation for modern frozen food was laid in the early 20th century by an American inventor and entrepreneur, Clarence Birdseye. In the 1920s, while working in Labrador, Canada, Birdseye observed that fish caught and instantly frozen in the -40°C Arctic air retained their flavor and texture upon thawing. This led him to develop a quick-freezing method using two metal plates cooled to very low temperatures.

In 1930, the first line of frozen foods—vegetables, meats, and fish—was launched under the brand Birds Eye. Despite initial skepticism from consumers used to fresh or canned foods, frozen food gradually gained popularity, especially after the widespread availability of home freezers in the 1940s and 1950s.

Frozen Foods Boom:

Mid-20th Century Post-World War II saw a boom in frozen food consumption in the United States and Europe. As women increasingly joined the workforce and urban living expanded, the demand for convenient, ready-to-cook meals surged. Television dinners, introduced in the 1950s, revolutionized the concept of mealtime. These complete, pre-cooked meals—meat, potatoes, and vegetables—packaged in a tray, appealed to the modern family. Frozen food was no longer just about preservation—it was about convenience and lifestyle.

By the 1970s, supermarkets had entire aisles dedicated to frozen food, and global brands like Nestlé, McCain, and Iglo started entering the market with a wide array of frozen products—from French fries and pizza to desserts and snacks.

Technological Advancements and Quality Focus

Advancements in freezing technologies drastically improved product quality and shelf life. Cryogenic freezing using liquid nitrogen, individual quick freezing (IQF) for fruits and vegetables, and blast freezing for meats allowed for the preservation of cellular integrity, preventing mushy textures and loss of flavor.

Cold chain logistics also evolved, ensuring products remained frozen throughout the supply chain—from factory to freezer shelf. In developing countries like India, improvements in cold storage infrastructure helped reduce food wastage and expanded the reach of frozen foods into Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

In the 1990s and 2000s, consumer preferences shifted toward health-conscious eating. Frozen food brands responded by reducing salt, sugar, and preservatives in meals, offering gluten-free, vegan, and organic frozen options. The rise of microwaveable meals and resealable packaging further enhanced consumer convenience.

Mr. Ram, a commerce graduate from Delhi University and alumnus of Holy Child School, Rudrapur, hails from a family with a strong entrepreneurial background. Having previously managed a flour mill, he recently ventured into the frozen food sector by establishing a frozen peas processing unit. He brings practical insights shaped by hands-on business experience and the dynamics of small-town industry.

Innovation in the 21st Century:

Smart, Sustainable, and Gourmet In recent years, the frozen food sector has become a playground for culinary innovation and sustainability.

- **Plant-Based Frozen Meals:** With the rise of flexitarianism and vegan diets, brands now offer plant-based frozen burgers, sausages, and full meals that mimic meat textures using soy, pea protein, or jackfruit.
- **Ethnic and Global Cuisine:** From Thai curries and Italian lasagna to Indian biryanis and Korean dumplings, frozen aisles have become a global buffet, enabling people to explore international flavors at home.
- **Minimal Processing, Maximum Nutrition:** Advances in flash freezing ensure that fruits and vegetables are frozen within hours of harvest, retaining nearly the same nutrition profile as fresh produce.
- **Smart Packaging and Traceability:** QR codes on packaging now allow consumers to trace the origin of ingredients, see nutritional data, and receive reheating instructions through mobile apps.
- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** Many brands are reducing plastic usage, shifting to recyclable or compostable trays and wrappers, and working on reducing carbon footprints through energy-efficient cold storage solutions.

Frozen Food in India:

A Growing Appetite India, traditionally a fresh-food-dominated market, has witnessed a surge in frozen food consumption in the past decade. Factors such as rising urbanization, nuclear families, e-commerce, and exposure to global cuisines have played a pivotal role.

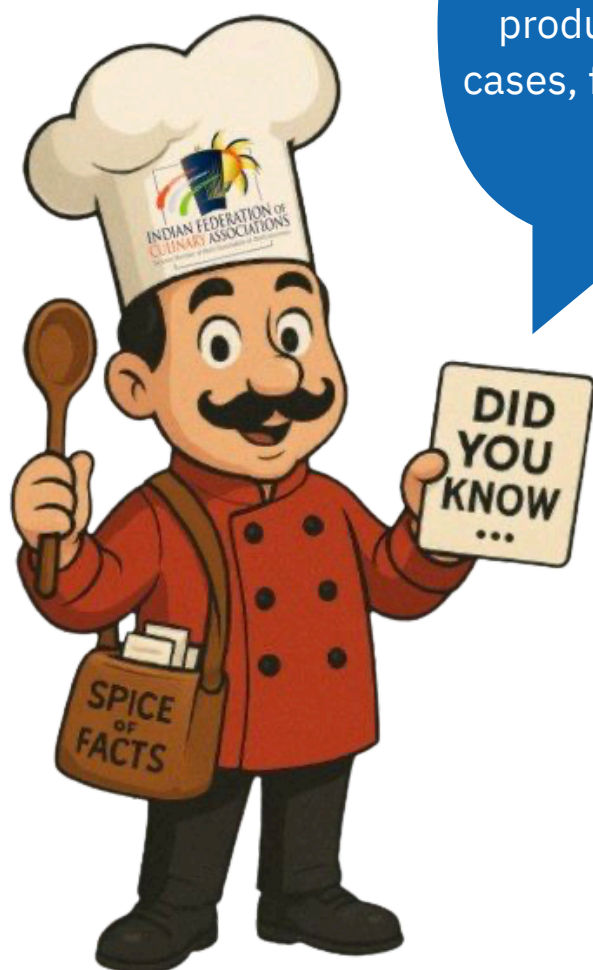
Brands like ITC Master Chef, Godrej Yummiez, Sumeru, and McCain India offer a range of frozen snacks, curries, parathas, seafood, and desserts tailored to Indian tastes. Importantly, frozen food is also aiding the hospitality industry and QSR chains, offering consistency, efficiency, and reduced wastage in kitchens

Looking Ahead:

The Future is Frozen As food security, nutrition, and sustainability become central concerns, frozen food offers a powerful solution. It minimizes waste, allows for seasonal produce year-round, and supports busy lifestyles without compromising on taste or nutrition.

Innovation in AI-powered cold storage, blockchain logistics, AI-based demand forecasting, and customized meal kits are set to redefine the future of frozen foods.

What began as a basic method of preserving food with ice has now evolved into a sophisticated, science-backed industry that is reshaping how the world eats. In this ever-changing culinary landscape, frozen food continues to prove that convenience and quality can go hand in hand—even from the coldest corners of the kitchen.



Recent studies found that there is no difference in nutrition between frozen produce and fresh produce and, in some cases, frozen can be higher in nutrients than fresh-stored produce.

source: <https://frozenadvantage.org/frozen-food-facts/>

Food and Mythology - A brief overview

Radhika Radia



Radhika Radia, co-founder of Mythopia, blends a corporate career spanning over 20 years with a passion for mythology. She specialises in Food and Mythology, Alcohol and Mythology, Ancient Erotica, and Classical Sanskrit Literature, and also teaches at The Studying Food Workshop by Dr. Kurush Dalal's Gyaan Factory.

Joseph Campbell said that the stories used to be in the minds of people. When the story is in the mind, then one sees a relevance to something happening in our own lives thus giving us a perspective on why it is happening to us.

These bits of information from ancient times which have to do with themes that have supported human life, built civilizations and formed religion over the years have to do with deeper inner problems and mysteries and inner threshold of passage. When one does not know the guide signs along the way, one has to work it out for themselves.

With respect to food, to people from the past, food was not mundane. It was magical. It was not just sustenance but it was an affirmation of resurrection and renewal. The early people considered food a gift from the gods and therefore an extremely auspicious offering. The gods gave plants and animals to the people and then taught them the arts of domestication and cultivation. So people returned the gift via offerings etc.

The food fed the soul as well as the bodies and acted as a means of worship as well as a social binder. Food rituals continue to bind people. People created food myths and performed food rituals because they recognised how vital a role food played in the cycle of life. Food was the symbol of life, created by divine intervention and came from nature. So people connected food with the earth and the waters and with fertility gods who controlled them. In mythological belief, this connection to the deities is what made food magical.

In myths, each food had a magical origin. Mostly food came from the womb of the earth goddess or came from a murdered god. This theme of gods dying to allow food from their bodies revealed the ancient knowledge of life from death. The cycles of winter and spring. Food represents hope and symbolizes life. In a world where food formed the basis of myth, life and ritual, consuming it meant to absorb its magic powers.

An example of how food is woven into ritual is the myth of the Mooncake from Chinese mythology. The Chinese and Vietnamese celebrate the Mid-Autumn harvest festival by offering food to a lunar deity, Chang'e. The best known amongst all the food is the mooncake, a circular pastry commonly filled with a sweet bean paste.

Yi, a skilled archer, was sent by the gods to save humanity. He was madly in love and wholly devoted to his wife Chang'e. When he was given the elixir of immortality, he refused to have it as he wanted to live and die with his wife. However, when the elixir was about to be stolen, Chang'e ended up drinking it. Since she was now immortal, she flew to the moon so that she could always be close to her husband.

A heartbroken Yi, honored her every year on the day she left by setting up an altar and offering her favorite foods. This is the day that is celebrated as the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival. The round shape of the mooncakes is symbolic of togetherness and unity.

Aphrodisiacs in Mythology:

The word aphrodisiac comes from the word Aphrodite who was the goddess of love. The dictionary meaning for Aphrodisiac is "a food, drink, or other thing that stimulates sexual desire."

People have always valued foods perceived to have aphrodisiac powers because sexual potency was intimately connected with fertility, longevity and the regeneration of life. Almost every food has at some time or the other been considered stimulating, especially the ones that had a pungent odor or resembled genitalia. The human desire to attract love is key to the consumption of these foods.

For example, Satyrion, a species of orchid, was traditionally considered an aphrodisiac food of the Satyrs who were the sex starved companions of the Greek god of wine, Dionysus.

people believed that anyone who ate this orchid would become a satyr. The word Orchid comes from the greek word orchis which means testicle which makes for a probable explanation of this association.

In the Kamasutra, Vatsayana advises men to drink milk infused with kidney beans, pepper and sugar-cane, mixed with sugar which makes one virile as a bull. He also advises that drinking milk with the testicles of a ram or goat mixed with sugar will also give one the same effect. As does drinking milk with cock's head root, dates and horse-eye bean or milk prepared with almond seeds, sugar-cane root and cock's head root. Other mentions are a cake made by grinding water chestnuts, kysoor root and liquorice, together with dates, jujubes, clarified butter and sweetened milk and cooking it over a slow fire enables one to make love to an endless number of women. There are many more mentions of such stimulants involving milk, ghee, sugar, wheat, sesame seeds etc.

Alcohol and mythology:

Drinking was originally considered so sacred that it was reserved only for priests and shamans - those with the real power to commune with the gods. They believed that intoxicants that were capable of altering mental states had a supernatural influence or were spirits themselves.

Some cultures believed that they had to get drunk in order to please their gods. In these feasts, it was believed that the gods would leave the heavens and come to earth to join in the revelry. This ancient practice was a predecessor to the Oktoberfest and other such beer festivals.

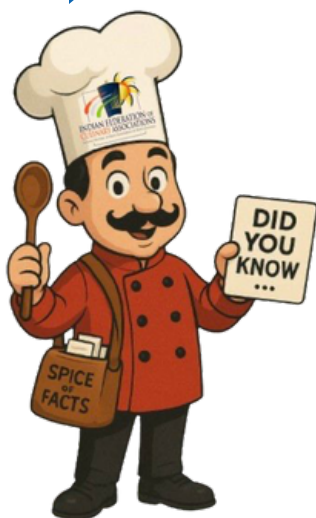
An example of this is the myth of the Agave plant. In this Mayan myth, the God Quetzalcoatl and the other gods decided that they needed something other than food to bring pleasure to people's lives. They knew that Mayahuel, the goddess of the agave plant would be the one to give them that something extra. She lived in the sky with her grandma and a fearful demon.

Quetzalcoatl kidnapped her while she was sleeping and made love to her. He then changed both of them into two branches of a forked tree. They remained like that, entwined on earth till the Grandma found them and ordered a demon and his clan to shoot them. The demons split that happily entwined tree into half and devoured Mayahuel. Quetzalcoatl turned himself back into a God and buried Mayahuel's bones.

From this grave grew the Agave plant and the Aztecs got their special drink. There are many myths and folk tales from across various cultures that interweave food and drink into their storytelling tradition. The aim was always for subsequent generations to build those same bonds and honour the very things that sustained them and to learn how both man's needs and the environment can harmoniously co-exist.

Myth: To lose weight, you have to give up all your favorite foods.

Fact: You don't have to give up all your favorite foods when you're trying to lose weight. Small amounts of your favorite high-calorie foods may be part of your weight-loss plan. Just remember to keep track of the total calories you take in. To lose weight, you must burn more calories than you take in through food and beverages.



source: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/myths-nutrition-physical-activity>



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Say Cheese! A Goat Cheese Word Search

SIBHIYA CHRISTOPHER E

He moves through the kitchen like a maestro, orchestrating a symphony of flavors that dance on the palate. His hands know the rhythm of a knife against the board, the whisper of onions caramelizing, the hiss of oil meeting garlic. Flavors are his native tongue, and he speaks in the nuanced dialects of saffron, basil, and smoked paprika. Each dish is a masterpiece, plated with devotion and presented as a sensory experience that awakens the senses. He's a chef, a scientist, and an artist, all rolled into one - and his kitchen is his playground, his sanctuary, and his stage. With every stir, every sprinkle of seasoning, and every perfectly cooked bite, he's writing a letter to the world - one that's savored, enjoyed, and remembered long after the plate is clean.



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

Banon - France
 Bucheron - France
 Feta - Greece
 Caciotta - Italy
 Caprino - Italy

Cathare - France
 Chabis - France
 Dolaz - Turkey
 Manouri - Greece
 Payoyo - Spain

Robiola - Italy
 Testouri - Africa
 Tulum - Turkey
 Kasseri - Greece
 Nabulsi - Palestine

Culinary Capers

Last Month's : July Junior Mints - Answers : An Chocolate word search

July Junior Mints - Answers

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

Bon Bon

Cacao

Criollo

Cuvee

Fudge

Ganache

Malitol

Pistoles

Praline

Xocoatl

Brut

Callebaut

Mocha

Winnow

Chocolate

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

Interview with Chef Thomas A Gugler

1. Your career has taken you through more than 13 countries and nearly 189 nations you've visited. Which country cuisine surprised you with their specialty and how has that shaped your culinary perspective?

Basically, every country has its advantage and disadvantage and some highlights, which I have to say, I'm very much a fan of the Indian cuisine because the diversity is very, very big. You have everything from the north to the south, from creamy to very spicy and sourish, I mean east to the west. So, this is really nice. I like a lot of the cuisines from the Nordic countries because they do a lot of simplicity with little ingredients. They do an amazing flavor palette. And a lot of other countries which I have visited, actually from Asia, all over Asia, small Asian countries, the Rim Pacific, I was in Fiji, Guam, Samoa, Cook Island. It's very interesting. It's a little bit influenced by many cultures because of the traveling and of the people who visit. But generally, good cuisine, you'll find nearly everywhere.

2. Leadership in chef organizations often requires balancing tradition with innovation. So how did you navigate the tension during your time in the kitchen?

That's quite a good question because what I said today numerous times, it's very important that you adapt to different cultures, to different cuisines, to different behaviors. And what I always said as a chef, you have to be global, unified. You have to actually be full of acceptance, people without this bad of a color, a race, a gender. But if you let them all mix together and mingle, I think this creates a fantastic atmosphere. And this actually creates no boundaries. And at the same time, if you are a chef, definitely, you have to be open-minded to try different cuisines and to explore.

3. How do you think international chef networks can influence food policy and sustainability and labour practices across borders, because everyone has their own perspectives in such matters?

Great. Of course. By 2050, it's double, and we cannot produce double the quantity of the food in the moment on Mother Earth. But it wouldn't be required, because we are throwing too much food in the moment, which is about 30-40%, which definitely, if I avoid this, I can feed double of the population without increasing the volume of production. So, we have to really rethink and value our resources more, and value actually the raw materials and use them completely.

4. Did your time as president change how you cook or think about food on a personal level?

Not really, because I travelled the world before intensively. I visited 189 countries, as you said, and it was not only as a president of World Chefs. I travel the world very, very much because I work for an airline. I was the group corporate executive. Now, I'm the vice president of culinary, and this brings me all around the world because we have 110 international airlines, which are from all around the globe. So, I have to visit the outstations, the food tastings there. And definitely, it influenced in the beginning a little bit my cooking styles because due to this vast experience and exposure of so many different foods from around the globe, you can cross-mingle and, I would say, fusionize food, which is really amazing, which most probably you would not do if you wouldn't have seen certain of the products.

5. Since you do work in the flight kitchen business, as we said, how do you balance the taste? Because, of course, the palate changes on air. And how do you standardize the plating as well?

First of all, what we do, we have a completely test kitchen where we are evaluating all the dishes which are fit to fly. Then, definitely, on 35,000 foot, 40,000 foot, as you said, the change of flavor senses are very, very big.



Chef Gugler is an internationally acclaimed culinary expert, having received more than 178 international awards and recognitions for his outstanding contributions to the world of gastronomy. With professional experience across 13 countries, fluency in 9 languages, and a deep commitment to culinary excellence, he has made a significant global impact through his cookbooks, television appearances, masterclasses, and mentorship. He currently serves as Vice president Culinary at CATRION which is a leading Saudi Arabian company with a 40-year history of excellence and innovation. It diversified into in-flight services, retail, healthcare and integrated facilities management

So, if I would over-salt a little bit on ground, it would be perfectly in the air. If I normally season everything, it's under-seasoned in the air, so you always have to balance, of course, not too much and not too little in the right level. And secondly, it's the same like with beverages and whatever, a phenomenon why people are drinking Bloody Mary on the plane, for example, because the tomato juice has a lot of acidity, which is actually, I would say, tickling your taste buds, and therefore they do that. So, it's a completely different way in cooking. The method is different, the terminology is different, it's a cook-and-chill system. You have to make sure that the food which you produce on ground is really, when it's in the plane, to a perfect standard.

1. What's next for you? Are there any projects or ideas you want to pursue independently? Like your new project that you work with?

I have a lot of projects in the pipe at the moment. I was appointed as the new honorary chairman of the Global Culinary Alliance, which is a corporation of chefs, culinarians, waiters, back of the house, something very, very big, a little bit different than world chefs. And I was actually promoted to the new president of the World Association of Sports. So, sport is also very important for our cooking industry, because due to nutritional values, due to restricted menus and special intakes, what sports people, professional sports people need, it's a very, very big area and field where we can play a very, very big role. And this is really, I would say, important.

Definitely, I'm traveling a lot, I'm doing events, innovational speeches, I'm in numerous universities around the world as a guest professor and whatever. So, it never ends up with being boring or staying at home. Yeah, what the future brings, it's always difficult to say, due to the political situation which we are in the moment going through.

But we always have to think positive and still work and go ahead as if nothing would have happened. Because at the end, you are losing momentum, you are losing, actually, quality aspects, and you always should deliver something which is wow. Yeah, you should represent yourself with what you bring.

1. What excites you the most about the future of gastronomy? I mean, the world club kitchen and everything that you've come up with, that is a great innovative idea. So, what more are you looking forward to?

I'm looking to do events which are unique, which no one ever did, no one did till now. Cooking in a volcano, for example. We're doing crazy things. We had the highest pop-up restaurant in the Mount Everest with one of my Indian friends, Sanjay Thakur. We did a lot of crazy things, the most expensive dinner in the world, \$100,000 per person for charity, then charity CSRs. And I want to do things which are out of the books completely. I mean, cooking is an art. Sure, cooking is art. As I said, art is knowledge, it's like painting, it's like music. It's so many things which plays a role, and I think that's one of the key elements. Yeah, you have to think out of the box, absolutely.

1. looking ahead, what opportunities do you see for world chefs and IFCA, the Indian Federation of Culinary Association, to push the culinary profession forward?

I think what is really important that collectively we are working very hard on development of caliber, because the educational standards are going backwards from day to day, year to year. I think we have to focus more on giving them a deep opportunity to become better, then I would say to be open-minded and go for novelty. And last but not least, I think it's so important that we all go in one direction. And as long as we are doing that and following our ideologies, I think we are doing fine.

Thomas Gugler is an internationally celebrated chef whose career spans decades and continents. Born in Germany, his passion for cooking began at a very young age, leading him to become one of the most decorated chefs in the world, with over 1,500 accolades and 750 diplomas.





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The advertisement features a chef in a white uniform and hat standing with arms crossed. Logos for the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations and the World Association of Chefs Societies are visible in the top corners.



IFCA Centre for Learning & Development

The Indian Federation of Culinary Association (IFCA) offers a learning development program aimed at enhancing culinary skills and knowledge within the Indian culinary community. This program focuses on providing professional development opportunities for chefs and culinary aspirants across the country. It covers a wide range of topics including traditional Indian cuisine, modern culinary techniques, international cuisines, food safety, nutrition, and hospitality management.

IFCA's learning development program incorporates workshops, seminars, masterclasses, and hands-on training sessions conducted by renowned chefs and industry experts. Participants have the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals, gain practical experience, and network with peers in the culinary field. The program is designed to cater to individuals at various skill levels, from beginners to experienced chefs looking to expand their expertise.

By fostering a culture of continuous learning and skill development, IFCA aims to elevate the standards of Indian culinary arts, promote innovation, and contribute to the growth and success of the culinary industry in India.

Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA)