

IFCA MAGAZINE

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FOOD AND BEYOND

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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

This issue brings together the many ways Indian food is finding fresh depth, structure and visibility across the country.

With the World Culinary Heritage Conference; the Indian Culture and Cuisine Program; and the Indus Food trade show, IFCA is all set to present a spectacular culinary extravaganza in January 2026. The International Indian Centre for Culinary Leadership will be hosting the Indian Culture and Cuisine program offering a deep dive into India's culinary roots followed by the World Culinary Heritage Conference 2026. Read more about all the events and activities in this edition.

Also, inside this issue, we focus on ideas shaping the future of kitchens and farming: plant-based thinking driven by the Climate Smart Chefs project, cutting-edge progress in drip irrigation, and the growing impact of local sourcing on both sustainability and flavour. Craft receives its spotlight too, from the technical precision behind a perfect croissant to the distinct character of Laal Bhaat Shorba from the hills.

We bring you an exclusive interview with Chef Nikitha Umesh where she talks about her experience with chocolate.

As India's culinary community broadens its reach while sharpening its identity, this issue stands as a reflection of that shift - grounded in heritage, driven by innovation and carried forward by the people shaping its future.

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
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World Culinary Heritage Conference 2026: Where Global Gastronomy Meets Tradition, Innovation & Cultural Diplomacy

The World Culinary Heritage Conference 2026, organized by IFCA and TPCI, is an international event scheduled for January 9, 2026, at the India Expo Centre & Mart in Greater Noida. The conference aims to reconnect the world with traditional food expertise and sustainable culinary practices, uniting chefs, historians, policymakers, researchers, F&B brands, and culinary innovators to celebrate global culinary heritage. With over 500 attendees, 30 international chefs, and more than 350 Indian culinary experts, the conference offers a vibrant setting where traditional customs and contemporary innovation intersect.

The event examines the evolution of regional food identities, the preservation of indigenous cuisines, and the growing importance of culinary diplomacy in today's interconnected food landscape. The Indian Food Heritage Walk, an interactive investigation of India's enduring culinary culture through chef demonstrations, storytelling, and live tastings, is a major draw.

Thematic seminars on forgotten and tribal cuisines, zero-waste culinary techniques, sustainable kitchens, heritage-based FMCG innovation, and the growing role of chefs as global cultural ambassadors are also included in the conference. Global perspectives on how food influences economies, tourism, trade, and international relations will be highlighted through panels, keynote addresses, and live demonstrations.

The esteemed Food Heritage Awards will recognize individuals and organizations conserving India's culinary heritage. In addition to imparting knowledge, the conference offers chefs, exporters, restaurateurs, investors, and policymakers priceless networking opportunities. It supports the idea that culinary tradition is a strategic asset influencing the future of food, tourism, and trade, rather than only a source of nostalgia.

The World Culinary Heritage Conference 2026 stands as a vibrant convergence of culture, creativity, sustainability, and global collaboration – inviting the world to rediscover the power of heritage cuisine in shaping tomorrow's gastronomic landscape.



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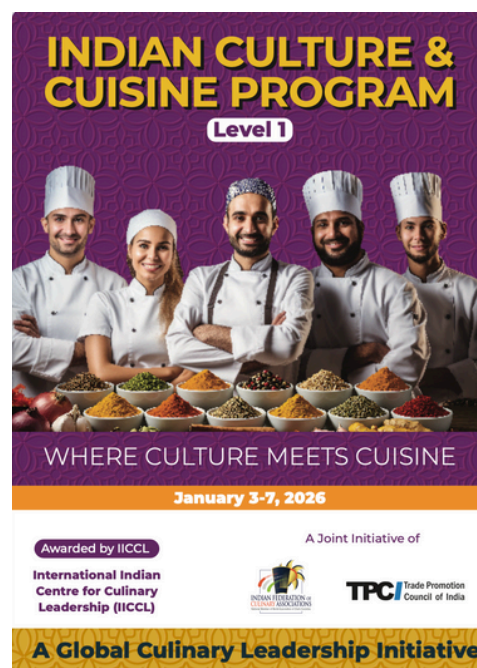
IICCL Announces Indian Culture & Cuisine Program 2026 for Global Chefs

The International Indian Centre for Culinary Leadership (IICCL), a joint initiative of IFCA and TPCI, is set to host the Indian Culture & Cuisine Program (Level 1) from January 3–7, 2026. This prestigious program invites international chefs for a five-day immersion into India's culinary heritage, philosophy, and regional diversity. The initiative features culinary masterclasses, spice trails, Ayurveda-led food sessions, heritage walk-throughs, and cultural visits to iconic landmarks.

Designed as a cultural and leadership experience, the program highlights sustainability, innovation, authenticity, and global collaboration. Selected participants will receive airfare, accommodation, and full program access. Upon completion, chefs will be awarded recognition as Culinary Ambassadors of India. Chef Manjit Gill, President of IFCA, emphasizes, "To learn Indian cuisine is to understand a civilization through its food."

A Power-Packed Culinary Carnival Awaits: IFCA Set to Unveil a Spectacular Series of Events Next Month

Food lovers, industry professionals, Applications are now open for international chefs seeking to elevate their global culinary perspective.



A Power-Packed Culinary Carnival Awaits: IFCA Set to Unveil a Spectacular Series of Events Next Month

Food lovers, industry professionals, and culinary enthusiasts have a thrilling month to look forward to as the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) prepares to roll out one of the most dynamic culinary line-ups of the year.

The celebrations begin with the prestigious International Indian Centre for Culinary Leadership (IICCL) hosting its “Indian Culture and Cuisine – Level 1” program from 2nd to 7th January 2026 at IHM Pusa, New Delhi. More than just a course, it's a cultural deep-dive where chefs and educators rediscover India's culinary roots through immersive experiences, masterclasses, and heritage-driven learning.

Adding a touch of elegance and global charm, the Culinary Diplomacy Dinner on 7th January at the iconic Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, will bring together ambassadors, policy-makers, and culinary leaders. The evening is set to celebrate India's gastronomic identity as a powerful tool of international diplomacy—where cuisine becomes a bridge between cultures. The momentum continues with the World Culinary Heritage Conference 2026 on 9th January at India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida. Expect vibrant dialogues, cultural showcases, cooking demonstrations, and powerful conversations on preserving world food traditions. This gathering will serve as a melting pot of ideas where global culinary minds meet to preserve the past and shape the future.

Simultaneously, the stage is set for one of India's biggest food trade gatherings—IndusFood2026. IFCA will lead nationwide delegate mobilization from 8th to 10th January, bringing chefs, hoteliers, exporters, and industry pioneers under one expansive platform at the India Exposition Mart. With MoUs to be signed, new partnerships to be forged, and a special focus on Viksit Bharat: Indian Cuisine 2047, the event is poised to rewrite the culinary trade narrative.

To add to the excitement, IFCA will also unveil the Indian and Uttarakhand Cuisine Book, recognise exemplary achievers through IFCA Awards, and offer fair platforms for chefs to showcase skills through cooking demos and panel discussions. Next month's line-up is not just a calendar of events; it's a celebration of India's culinary journey, its global aspirations, and its ever-evolving food culture. With passionate volunteers and enthusiastic participation from across the country, IFCA is all set to deliver a month that the food world won't forget anytime soon.



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Food & Culture 2025

EICA's Grand Festivity of Local Heritage & Culinary Mastery

The Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA) presented its significant event – Food & Culture 2025” on 15th November 2025 at the Udayachal West Bengal Tourism Centre, Salt Lake, Kolkata. Celebrating EICA's first anniversary, the event gathered top chefs, hospitality trainers, hoteliers, innovators, and food experts from all over India.

The evening was highlighted by Chief Guest Nandini Chakravorty, IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal, whose presence celebrated the association's goal of enhancing Eastern India's culinary identity.

The distinguished guest speakers—Mr. Sagar Daryani (CEO, Wow!)—brought depth and inspiration. Momo), Dr. Mahuya Hom Choudhury (Senior Scientist & Nodal Officer, Patent Information Centre, West Bengal), and Mr. Deba Prasad Guha (Retired. Joint Director, FSSAI)—who addressed topics related to entrepreneurship, innovation, and modern food safety.

The occasion saw an extraordinary assembly of India's most esteemed culinary experts, featuring Chef Sheetharam Prasad, Chef Kasi Viswanathan, Chef Vijaya Baskaran, Chef Parvinder Bali, Chef Shivam Dixit, Chef Gautam Mehrishi, Chef Bharat Alagh, Chef Vimal Dhar, and Chef Vivek Kadam. Their presence changed the event into a national venue for sharing knowledge and advancing careers. A lineup of live masterclasses highlighted the diversity of India's regional cuisines—Varanasi, Meghalaya, Assam, and Anglo-Indian customs—The cultural segment showcased a heartfelt classical singing performance by Chef Swarup Chatterjee, bringing sophistication to the evening. Visitors discovered local food stalls, handcrafted displays, chef-guided cooking areas, and product exhibitions by top hospitality brands.

The event also featured talks on culinary creativity, eco-friendly hospitality, and the future of local cuisine. “Food & Culture 2025” represents a pivotal moment—unifying heritage, creativity, and collaboration on a single platform, while establishing an adventurous new chapter for EICA and the culinary world.



Food A 'Fair Expo 2025: Hyderabad Turns into India's Culinary Crossroads

Hyderabad witnessed a vibrant celebration of food, innovation, and craftsmanship as Food A 'Fair Expo 2025 unfolded from 14th to 16th November at the HITECH Exhibition Centre. Organized by Blitz Exhibition Pvt. Ltd. in collaboration with the Telangana Chefs Association (TCA), the event transformed the city into a dynamic hub where culinary artistry met industry advancement.

The expo opened on an inspiring note with the presence of Shri D. Sridhar Babu, Hon'ble Minister for IT, Electronics & Communications; Industries & Commerce; and Legislative Affairs, Government of Telangana. His inaugural address underscored the state's growing role in nurturing food innovation and positioning Telangana as a rising force in India's F&B landscape.

A Vision to Connect, Create & Collaborate

Food A 'Fair was more than a trade fair—it was a meeting point for ideas, people, and possibilities. Designed to bridge F&B producers with retail and wholesale buyers, the expo highlighted how India's food sector is rapidly evolving through technology, entrepreneurship, and fresh culinary thinking. From artisanal makers to large-scale manufacturers, the event offered a unified platform where creativity met commerce, and where food professionals could explore new dimensions of collaboration.

A Three-Day Feast for the Senses

Walking through the buzzing aisles, visitors experienced a panoramic display of India's F&B diversity:

Over 100 F&B Brands on Showcase

Innovators from across the country presented everything from gourmet ingredients and packaged foods to beverage concepts and culinary tools—each stall telling a story of evolving taste trends and consumer aspirations.

Live Machinery Demonstrations

Industrial kitchen equipment roared to life as suppliers showcased cutting-edge technology for hotels, bakeries, and food-processing units. These live demos drew the attention of chefs, restaurateurs, and young entrepreneurs eager to upgrade their kitchens with the next big innovation.



Masterclasses with India's Culinary Icons

Perhaps the most engaging segment was the live chef arena curated by TCA and supported by the Regency College of Hotel Management. Renowned chefs—Chef Amey, Chef Jerson, Chef John, Chef Arvind Prasad, Chef Sanjay Thumma, Chef Sukesh Kale, Chef Nikita Umesh, and others—took to the stage, each bringing their own flair, skill, and culinary philosophy. Their demonstrations offered a rare glimpse into professional creativity, blending technique with storytelling.

Competitions That Sparked Passion & Performance

Far beyond a static exhibition, Food A'Fair Expo 2025 pulsed with competitive energy.

Among the most crowd-pulling events were:

- The Biryani Battle – Contestants reinvented Hyderabad's most beloved dish, filling the air with aromas that symbolised both heritage and innovation.
- The Bakery Championship – A showcase of precision, flavour balance, and sweet craftsmanship.
- Fruit & Vegetable Carving Contest – Where artistry met produce, and creativity took sculptural form.

With enthusiastic participation from hotel management colleges, home bakers, and culinary professionals, the competitions created a lively atmosphere that kept spectators engaged throughout the event.

A Landmark in Hyderabad's Culinary Calendar

Food A 'Fair Expo 2025 successfully blended the best of food, technology, and talent.

It brought together industry leaders, aspiring chefs, product innovators, and business visionaries under one roof—highlighting how India's culinary landscape is poised for exciting transformations.

For three vibrant days, Hyderabad was not just hosting an expo—it became India's culinary crossroads, where tradition met innovation, and where the future of food took shape in the form of flavours, skills, and bold new ideas.





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“Where curiosity meets chocolate.” Exclusive Interview with Chef Nikitha Umesh

1. What sparked your journey into chocolate turning a simple love of cocoa into a full-bloom chocolatier career?

My journey into chocolate actually happened quite unexpectedly. I was working at an organization where they needed someone to specialize in chocolate, and since I was already training to become a full-time pastry chef, it felt like a natural extension of what I was doing. What began as a chance opportunity soon became a real passion.

I later trained to become a master chocolatier, and I started my career with ITC's Fabelle. Since then, there's been no looking back. Chocolate is such a complex and fascinating ingredient, there's always something new to explore and learn. That constant evolution is what keeps me deeply connected to this craft.



2. Which flavour combo pushed you out of the comfort zone the most—think daring, unexpected and almost too bold to work?

I've worked with so many unique ingredients over the years that it's honestly tough to single out just one. A lot of projects have pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me grow creatively. We've experimented with everything from betel leaves and sweet corn to tamarind and sea buckthorn, each bringing its own complexity and surprise. Even combinations like raspberries with chilies have been incredibly exciting to explore. I think what keeps it interesting is the challenge of balancing bold flavors with the delicacy of chocolate. Every new pairing test your instincts and opens up a whole new world of possibilities and that's what I really love about this craft.

3. If you could sum up the three decisive qualities you hunt for when judging desserts on Masterchef Telugu, what would they be and why?

For me, there are three decisive qualities: taste, presentation, and texture. First and foremost, a dish has to taste delicious, it needs to be well-balanced and well-seasoned. Then comes presentation, because we always say people eat with their eyes first; visual appeal creates the very first impression. And finally, texture, how well the different elements come together, how exciting it feels when you take a bite, and whether it keeps you engaged throughout the experience. When these three factors align perfectly, that's when a dish truly stands out.



4. What eye-popping innovations stole the show at the recent food affair event in Hyderabad?

There were quite a few interesting brands that stood out to me. I came across some really unique biryani masalas that offered exciting flavor profiles. I also tasted millet-based ice creams, which I thought were both innovative and delicious, a great example of how traditional grains can be used creatively. Another product that really caught my attention was a brand making dried seafood in the form of chips they were surprisingly tasty and very different from anything I've seen before. And there was an instant ramen brand that offered a variety of flavors and could prepare the meal in just five to ten minutes, with packaging that was very well thought out. So overall, there were quite a few food startups doing impressive work, and it was wonderful to see so much creativity and innovation in one place.



Nikitha Umesh, 28, is the youngest judge on MasterChef India Telugu_ and co-founder of Naomi Patisserie. She's known for daring pairings—smoked chipotle-dark chocolate with mango-chili glaze—and for weaving heritage grains and sustainability into every creation. A rebel who chose culinary school over a corporate path, she now mentors aspiring chefs on the very show that inspired her, making her a standout force in India's food scene.

5. What one piece of advice would you give to the next generation of women daring to carve a niche in chocolate and pastry?

The biggest piece of advice I would give is — just go for it. Don't be afraid to experiment and push yourself. This field demands a combination of creativity, technical skill, and both physical and mental resilience. But as you grow in your craft, you also build a sense of independence and confidence — including financial independence, which I believe everyone deserves.

Be patient with yourself, because developing skill and knowledge doesn't happen overnight. There will be moments when it feels overwhelming, but that's all part of the journey. Stay consistent, stay curious, and show up every single day. The results will follow.

Climate Smart Chefs at the Heart of India's Plant-Based Innovation Ecosystem

Narhari Gupta

The Quiet Revolution Transforming India's Kitchens

A quiet but powerful food revolution is unfolding across India. Supermarket shelves now feature plant-based biryanis, kebabs, keema, butter, milks and even eggs, thanks to home-grown brands like Vezlay Foods, Imagine Meats, Greenest, White Cub, Dancing Cow and Blue Tribe. Yet while the products are multiplying, one truth remains: the real transformation happens only when chefs choose to put these innovations on the plate. As an industry summit noted, "no food system transformation can succeed without the culinary professionals who bring innovation to the plate." And increasingly, India's chefs are stepping up to that role.

India's plant-based market is still small — valued at about ₹300 crore in 2024 — but it is growing steadily, rising nearly 18 percent over three years. It represents less than 0.1 percent of the country's massive dairy and meat market, but the potential is huge. Consumer motivations are also shifting. Indian plant-based eaters cite animal welfare (67%) as their top reason for choosing alternatives, followed by environmental concerns (54%) and health (48%). Veganuary India continues to see record participation each year, with many Indians saying the country's deep vegetarian heritage makes plant-based eating both familiar and appealing. Leading chefs, including Radisson Hotel Group's Rakesh Sethi, have publicly predicted a "noteworthy surge" in plant-forward dining.

Globally, hospitality has already embraced plant-forward cuisine. Vegan breakfast buffets, meatless tasting menus and vegetable-led fine dining have become mainstream across major cities. These menus aren't just for vegans or vegetarians — they attract the growing demographic of flexitarians, diners who want the flavour of traditional cuisine but with health and environmental benefits.

Indian chefs are adding their own flair to this global movement with inventive dishes such as jackfruit curries, millet pilafs, lentil "tikkas," and modern plant-based "meats" that echo familiar tastes while aligning with contemporary values.

Chefs also play an essential role in addressing the climate and health crises. Globally, food systems account for nearly 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, making culinary decisions a major lever for climate action. Predominantly plant-based food systems support several UN Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 3 (good health and well-being). Evidence consistently shows that plant-rich diets help reduce risks of heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

International research underscores the impact chefs can have: Europe's LIFE "Climate Smart Chefs" project demonstrated that training chefs in sustainable cooking can reduce the carbon footprint of recipes by up to 30 percent. The principle is simple — chefs who understand climate science and plant-based culinary techniques can dramatically reduce a kitchen's emissions through smarter ingredient choices, local sourcing and low-waste cooking methods.

Ethics and inclusion are also shaping the future of Indian hospitality. India's rich vegetarian traditions give chefs a strong cultural foundation for compassionate, plant-forward cooking. Many chefs view food as an ethical responsibility. Chef Priyanka Naik, for example, has spoken about cooking vegan because "every being deserves respect and compassion," noting that such choices also protect the longevity of the planet.

Meanwhile, DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) is becoming central to hospitality.

Kitchens with diverse teams bring broader culinary perspectives and serve a wider range of dietary needs. Hotels are increasingly prioritizing allergen-safe practices, transparent labelling and digital menus that offer filters for vegan, halal, gluten-free or nut-free options. This level of inclusion does more than ensure safety — it opens the door to new guest segments and adds to a hotel's reputation for thoughtful hospitality.



Narhari Gupta comes across as someone driven by a deep, quiet conviction that small choices can change the world. His work in climate action and vegan advocacy isn't just professional — it reflects the way he thinks, lives, and connects with people. Whether he's speaking to young volunteers or sharing a story online, Narhari has a grounded, relatable way of making big issues feel personal and possible. He carries an energy that is equal parts empathy and determination, and those around him often describe him as someone who leads not through titles, but through example. At his core, he is someone who believes in compassion — for people, animals, and the planet — and that belief shows in everything he does

Yet, despite the momentum, India faces a significant skills gap. Much of the country's formal culinary training still relies on decades-old, meat-centric curriculums. Young chefs are often unprepared for the fast-growing demands of sustainable and plant-forward cuisine. Addressing this, new educational initiatives are emerging. Luma Institute's Sustainability in Hospitality Program (launching January 2026) aims to train India's next wave of climate-smart chefs. The program will cover climate science, carbon-smart menu design, plant-based culinary arts and DEI principles, with scholarships and industry partnerships helping the training reach chefs across the country.

India stands at a pivotal moment. With plant-based innovation accelerating, consumer interest rising and chefs embracing sustainability, the country has a unique opportunity. By cooking with creativity, consciousness and compassion, chefs can nourish people, support planetary health and lead a culinary movement that honours both tradition and the future — one inspired dish at a time.

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Nishant Kumar

AI Technology in Water Management

Artificial intelligence is transforming the way farmers manage water resources. Smart irrigation systems now use sensors to continuously track soil moisture, weather conditions, and specific crop needs. With the help of machine learning, these systems can predict when and how much water is required, allowing farmers to maintain ideal soil conditions while significantly reducing water waste and overall operating costs.

Core Components and System Structure

Today's drip irrigation setups are far more advanced than traditional methods. They include variable frequency drives that maintain steady water pressure, multi-stage filters that stop emitters from clogging, and pressure-compensating emitters that ensure every plant gets an equal amount of water. By using GPS mapping and precision agriculture techniques, farmers can design irrigation layouts that are both cost-effective and highly efficient, even over large farming areas.

Technological Innovations and Uses

Modern irrigation systems work seamlessly with precision farming technologies, enabling water delivery tailored to the conditions of each specific field section. Automated fertigation units mix fertilizers directly into the irrigation water, delivering nutrients straight to the plant roots where absorption is highest. Telemetry and remote monitoring tools provide real-time system data, allowing farmers to quickly detect problems and make adjustments from anywhere.

Economic and Environmental Benefits

Although installing advanced drip irrigation may cost between \$1,500 to \$4,000 per hectare, farmers typically recover their investment within 3–5 years due to reduced labor and resource savings.

Drip irrigation is significantly more efficient—85–95% water use efficiency compared to 40–60% in flood irrigation, resulting in 30–70% water savings. Many farms also report 20–50% higher yields, while reducing soil erosion and nutrient loss.

Future Outlook and Key Challenges

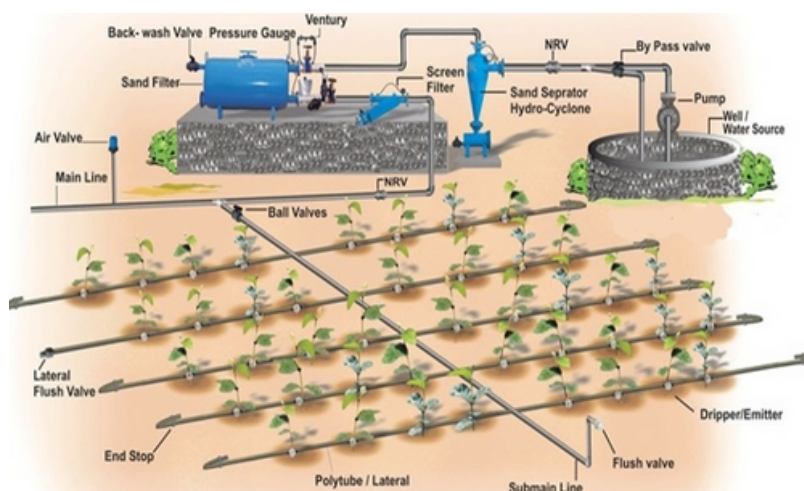
The future of irrigation technology lies in AI-powered decision systems and multispectral imaging that can detect plant stress before it becomes visible. Despite its potential, adoption remains limited by the high initial cost and system complexity. Increasing farmer training, offering government support, and expanding technical service networks will be critical to broader implementation.

Conclusion

AI-driven drip irrigation marks a major shift toward sustainable agriculture and responsible resource use. As water scarcity becomes a global concern, precision irrigation systems offer a reliable solution for improving food production while protecting the environment. By combining AI, sensors, and renewable energy, modern irrigation stands as a powerful example of innovation that benefits both farmers and the planet.



Nishant Kumar, a creative professional with a diverse background in political science, web development, and hospitality. After earning a Bachelor's in Political Science, he completed a Web Development certification in Delhi and worked as a Frontend Developer at TED Techno for two years. Now pursuing a Master's in Hotel Management, he blends technical skills with a passion for hospitality and innovation to shape a versatile career.



Greener Plates, Smaller Footprints: The Power of Local Sourcing

Kamalika Krishmy

Greener Plates, Smaller Footprints: The Power of Local Sourcing

The Food and Beverages (F&B) industry is one of the most influential sectors of the economy—and one of the most impactful in terms of environmental footprint. Complex supply chains, long-distance transportation, heavy refrigeration needs, and extensive packaging all contribute significantly to the carbon emissions behind every dish served. But one simple shift—rethinking how and where ingredients are sourced—can help the industry reduce its impact and support meaningful climate action.

Local Sourcing as a Sustainable Practice

Sourcing ingredients locally is one of the most effective ways to reduce a kitchen's carbon footprint while improving overall food quality. Freshly harvested produce travels shorter distances, arrives with better flavour and nutrition, and ultimately leads to happier customers.

By partnering with nearby farms and producers instead of relying on imports or far-off vendors, the industry can:

- Cut transportation emissions
- Reduce refrigeration requirements
- Lower packaging needs, especially protective materials used for long-distance shipping

This not only strengthens sustainability efforts but also reconnects restaurants with regional food systems and seasonal diversity.

Economic and Social Benefits

Local sourcing aligns environmental responsibility with social impact, making it a holistic sustainability strategy. Beyond lowering emissions, it creates a ripple effect of positive change:

- Supports local communities and strengthens farmers' livelihoods

- Buffers supply chains against global disruptions such as wars, tariffs, or political instability

- Enhances brand value, as customers increasingly appreciate businesses that champion local producers

When brands choose to “buy local,” they demonstrate purpose-driven leadership and authenticity—qualities modern consumers reward with loyalty.

Challenges and Solutions

Like any meaningful shift, local sourcing comes with challenges:

- Seasonal availability of ingredients
- Higher costs compared to mass-imported produce
- Limited supply capacity, as small farms may struggle with large-scale orders

However, these barriers are manageable with thoughtful planning. The best solutions will differ from café to café and from city to city—but solutions do exist. What is required is patience, creativity, and collaboration.

Effective approaches include:

- Designing menus around seasonal harvests, celebrating ingredients at their peak
- Building long-term relationships with local suppliers, co-creating better yield plans and predictable supply
- Educating consumers about sustainability goals so they understand—and support—eco-conscious pricing

When customers feel included in the sustainability journey, they become active partners rather than passive observers.

A Strategic Step Toward a Greener Future

Local sourcing is not just a trend—it's a strategic business decision that strengthens resilience, improves brand reputation, and deepens customer trust.



Kamalika Krishmy is the kind of maker who turned a love of food into a life: a former corporate professional who quietly traded boardroom routines for flour-dust and ovens, she now heads The Brown Box Company. She delights customers with inventive, egg-free bakes and savoury short eats. Her journey — from winning culinary recognition (Super Chef Chennai) to building a home-grown bakery brand and sharing her craft on social platforms — shows a thoughtful blend of discipline and playfulness that comes through in everything she creates. Active in local business networks and community events, Kamalika balances creativity with a practical entrepreneurial streak: she teaches, caters and collaborates while keeping her kitchen welcoming and unpretentious. In short, she's a warm, hands-on baker who leads by example — turning simple ingredients into food that feels like care



It offers fresher, more authentic dining experiences while significantly reducing environmental impact.

The future of food lies in thoughtful choices. By embracing local sourcing, the F&B industry can lead the way toward greener plates, smaller footprints, and a stronger connection between the food we serve and the planet we share.



Flaky, But Serious: The Croissant's Power to Define a Bakery.

Chef Sachin Wilfred A J

In India's thriving bakery and café culture, the croissant has emerged as a benchmark for assessing a bakery's skill, commitment to quality, and brand image. This classic pastry is more than just a flaky treat; it's a testament to precision, patience, and craftsmanship.

The art of making a perfect croissant involves meticulous lamination, where enriched dough and butter are layered to create the signature flaky texture. The quality of ingredients, temperature control, technique, and baking process must all come together in perfect harmony. No shortcuts exist in crafting the perfect croissant.



In India's competitive market, where commercial bakeries prioritize volume over quality, a bakery that perfects the art of making croissants in-house sets itself apart. The croissant's global popularity and local appeal make it a winning product that attracts loyal consumers, culinary enthusiasts, and food influencers.

In cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai, where consumers have global exposure and seek authenticity, a perfectly baked croissant serves as a reputation test for a bakery's credibility. It's a product that drives business, demands a premium, and earns consumer loyalty.



The croissant is more than just a pastry; it's a philosophy that reflects a bakery's attention to detail, excellence, and respect for tradition and craft. For consumers, it offers an experience that's both comforting and satisfying.



In India's demanding bakery industry, the croissant stands as a silent yet significant force. A bakery that gets the croissant right earns long-term credibility, loyalty, and reputation. So, the next time you bite into that golden crescent, remember – it's not just a pastry, it's a brand statement.



Chef Sachin Wilfred A J is known for his calm curiosity and the patient precision he brings to pastry. He blends classical technique with thoughtful innovation, approaching every recipe like a small experiment in balance and beauty. As a mentor, he is steady, encouraging, and hands-on—someone who believes that craft grows through practice, structure, and a positive learning environment. His grounded creativity and people-centric leadership make him a chef students trust and professionals enjoy working with, reflecting a personality shaped by discipline, humility, and genuine passion for the art of baking.



Laal Bhaat Shorba: Savouring the Hills with Every Sip

Chef Surender Singh Bisht

A soulful blend of culture, and sustainability from the heart of Uttarakhand

In today's fast-paced world, where convenience often overshadows nutrition, Chef Surender Singh Bisht brings us back to our roots with a dish that celebrates tradition, health, and sustainability – Laal Bhaat Shorba. This humble yet power-packed recipe draws inspiration from the Himalayan hills of Uttarakhand, weaving together the wisdom of the past with the nutritional needs of the present.

A Dish Born from the Mountains

Laal Bhaat Shorba is more than just a soup – it's a cultural story simmered over generations in the kitchens of Garhwal and Kumaon. "Laal Bhaat" refers to red rice, a traditional grain revered across India for its rich colour, earthy flavour, and medicinal value. "Shorba," from Persian and Central Asian origins, means broth or soup. When combined, they create a wholesome, satisfying dish rooted in wellness and heritage.

Crafted with Local Love

This shorba reflects the rustic charm and nutrient-rich essence of Uttarakhand cuisine. Red rice, the core ingredient, is known for its high fibre, iron, magnesium, and antioxidant content. With a low glycaemic index, it's ideal for blood sugar control and provides long-lasting energy through complex carbohydrates.

A Harmony of Flavours

The ingredients form a synergy of flavour and purpose. A tempering of jakhiya (wild mustard seeds native to Uttarakhand), curry leaves, ginger-garlic, coriander seeds, and dry red chillies brings earthy heat and depth to the soup.

Jakhiya adds a signature crunch and taste instantly familiar to those who know pahadi cuisine. These spices have been used in Ayurveda for centuries to aid digestion, boost immunity, and balance the body.

Smart Food for Modern Life

Using red rice – is both a thoughtful and timely choice. As the world faces rising health concerns, traditional grains offer a solution. This shorba makes it easy, familiar, and delicious to shift toward healthier eating. Red rice is a hardy, low-input crop with strong nutritional value and premium market demand.



A New Wave of Indian Cuisine

Laal Bhaat Shorba balances traditional Himalayan flavours with modern wellness goals, representing a new wave of Indian cuisine that honours heritage while embracing planet-friendly living. It's vegetarian, gluten-free, low-fat, and full of micronutrients – without compromising on taste.

The Need of the Hour: Culinary Sustainability

This shorba shows how indigenous grains and traditional methods offer sustainable alternatives to industrial food systems. Through such creations, chefs like Surender Singh Bisht are leading a culinary movement that champions local produce, seasonal eating, and ancestral wisdom.



Chef Surender Singh Bisht, fondly known as Chef Sandy, stands out for his rare blend of quiet humility and bold culinary imagination. His journey is shaped not just by skill, but by an inner drive to keep experimenting, questioning, and refining every idea until it becomes truly his own. Whether crafting continental plates or developing patent-worthy innovations, he approaches each challenge with calm precision and a teacher's mindset. His strength lies in seeing possibilities where others see routine—turning everyday ingredients and experiences into creative breakthroughs. This unique mix of discipline, curiosity, and mentorship is what makes him a chef young professionals naturally look up to.

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 cup red rice
- 4 cups water
- 1 tsp jakhiya seeds
- 1 tsp curry leaves
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 dry red chilli
- Salt, to taste
- Fresh coriander, for garnish

Instructions:

1. Wash and soak red rice for 30 minutes.
2. Pressure cook with water for 3-4 whistles.
3. Temper with jakhiya, curry leaves, ginger-garlic paste, coriander seeds, and dry red chilli.
4. Add cooked rice and salt. Simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Garnish with fresh coriander.

Serve hot and enjoy the taste of Uttarakhand in every sip!



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CULINARY- QUIZ BRAIN BUZZ

S. LOKESH KUMAR

A creative South Indian chef who blends traditional flavors with modern nutrition, specializing in innovative dishes. Known for crafting healthy, flavorful recipes that highlight South India's rich culinary heritage while introducing fresh, wholesome ingredients.



Apples:

1. What is the Science of growing apples called?
2. On average, how many seeds do apples have?
3. Which American city is nicknamed “The Big Apple”?
4. Which country is the largest producer of Apples?
5. Apple Seeds are often known to amygdalin, which mainly consists of_____

Milletts:

1. Which country is the leading producer of Millets
2. Which Millet is called “King of Millets
3. Which year was observed as the “International year of Millets”?
4. Which State is the largest producer of Millet in India?
5. Millets are rich in nutrients and have _____

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

Culinary Capers

Last Month's : CULINARY-WORDSEARCH Bread Word Search

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



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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)