

IFCA MAGAZINE

FOOD AND BEYOND

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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE



Are we already two months into the year? How time flies!

This year has been filled with nothing but new experiences for us at IFCA Magazine. If there's one thing the past months have taught us, it's that the world's challenges are not going anywhere — it's up to us to address them.

From the rise of sustainability and addressing mental health and wellness, to greenwashed kitchens, this edition's articles cover a variety of perspectives on tackling these pressing issues. While discussing modern challenges, we also delve into an engaging article on India's tribal cuisine, showcasing how traditional food practices continue to thrive in harmony with nature and the environment. Don't miss our inciteful article on the forgotten flavours of North Indian cuisine.

This month, we also have some exciting news to share with you — our readers. Several chefs from IFCA have been nominated and selected to join various World Chefs Committees, including those focused on education, young chef development, sustainability, and cultural preservation. I personally cannot wait to see how they take on these global challenges in their own unique way, using our industry as a force for change.

As former WACS President Chef Thomas Gugler once said, "Chefs wear white because it is the colour of peace."

With that thought, I hope you enjoy the 10th edition of IFCA Magazine.

Until next time!

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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Our Regional Associations



Strengthening Tribal Entrepreneurship!

New Delhi, 18th February 2025 – In a landmark move to empower tribal entrepreneurs and promote India's rich culinary heritage, the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) and the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during the prestigious Aadi Mahotsav.

This strategic partnership is set to enhance the visibility and commercial viability of indigenous ingredients, traditional tribal recipes, and sustainable culinary practices. By integrating tribal communities into mainstream hospitality and culinary industries, the initiative aims to create new economic opportunities and preserve India's diverse food culture.

The MoU will facilitate knowledge exchange, skill development, and market access for tribal entrepreneurs, ensuring that their unique food products reach a wider audience. Through workshops, culinary festivals, and industry collaborations, IFCA and TRIFED are committed to fostering a more inclusive and sustainable food ecosystem.

Speaking at the event, representatives from IFCA and TRIFED emphasized the significance of this partnership in strengthening tribal entrepreneurship, promoting self-reliance, and showcasing India's rich gastronomic legacy on national and global platforms.

As we celebrate the authentic flavours of tribal India, this collaboration marks a significant step toward an inclusive culinary future, where traditional wisdom and modern opportunities merge for sustainable growth.



Hunger Free Bharat Mission Launched at Restaurant Cricket League (RCL) 2025

The Restaurant Cricket League (RCL) 2025, sponsored by Incredible India, kicked off with grandeur at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, New Delhi, featuring the launch of the Hunger Free Bharat Mission. Organized in partnership with the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) as the Strategic Partner, this initiative was aimed to combat hunger while bringing together the food and hospitality industry through sports.



The inaugural ceremony witnessed the presence of IFCA President, Chef Manjit Singh Gill, along with renowned hospitality and culinary leaders. The event began with a charity cricket match, reinforcing the league's commitment to social responsibility, with 100 meals donated for every 10 runs scored.

The league matches, ran from 18th-22nd February 2025, featuring eight teams representing top culinary brands, including:

- 🍴 Team Partners: Jaipur Adda, Bikanervala, Molecule, Bel Da Monde, Nathus, Balaji, Constitution Club of India
- 🎧 Entertainment Partner: Radio Mirchi

RCL 2025 is more than just cricket—it's a celebration of food, sportsmanship, and philanthropy, uniting industry professionals in a cause that extends beyond the pitch. With Incredible India's support and IFCA's strategic vision, the event promises to leave a lasting impact.

Celebrating the newly appointed Worldchefs committee members from India. Congratulations!



Chef Manjit Singh Gill

Culture & Culinary
Heritage Committee



Chef Sudhakar N Rao

Education and World
Chefs Academy
Committee



Chef Vinod Bhati

World Chefs Without
Borders Committee



Chef Sheetaram Prasad

International Chefs' Day
Committee



Chef Saurabh Sharma

Education and World
Chefs Academy
Committee



Chef Nimish Bhatia

Culture and Culinary
Heritage Committee



Chef Aditya R Nair

Ambassador, Young
Chef Development
Committee

The Telangana Chefs Association members gain insights into flour production at Minar flour factory



The Telangana Chef's Association (TCA) had the privilege of visiting the Minar Flour Factory, one of the proud sponsors of TCA. During the visit, the Minar team provided an insightful tour of their advanced facility, showcasing the fascinating journey of how raw grains are meticulously transformed into high-quality flour.

The chefs observed each critical stage of the process, including grain selection, cleaning, milling, quality control, and packaging. The detailed explanation of these steps provided valuable knowledge about flour production, reinforcing its significance in professional culinary applications.

This collaboration between TCA and Minar strengthens the association's commitment to industry partnerships, quality ingredients, and continuous learning, ensuring that chefs stay at the forefront of innovation in the food sector.



Eastern India Culinary Association Joins Hands with Sikkim to Promote Local Cuisine at Blue Duke Festival 2025

On February 15, 2025, three distinguished representatives from the Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA) were invited to Gangtok, Sikkim, to participate in the esteemed Blue Duke Festival. The invitation came from Dr. Indra Hang Subba, Honorable Member of Parliament, underscoring the importance of this initiative in promoting local culinary traditions. The EICA delegation comprised Mr. Raja Sadhukhan, Principal of IHM Kolkata, Chef Ranganath Mukherjee, and Debankan Bandyopadhyay.

The festival featured a grand culinary exhibition showcasing the gastronomic diversity of Sikkim, with renowned hotels such as Mayfair Spa Resort and Casino, Gangtok, Taj Vivanta, and Sumi Yashree actively participating. Additionally, home chefs, entrepreneurs, and homestay owners of Sikkim presented their traditional dishes. A special highlight was the participation of Chef Rahel Grace, a contestant from Master Chef India 2025, and her team from her institute, "Master Chef Sikkim."

The central theme of the festival revolved around uplifting regional cuisine by emphasizing the use of indigenous ingredients such as tree tomatoes, squash, local avocados, millets, buckwheat, and native cucumbers. Various communities of Sikkim shared their traditional recipes and unique cooking techniques, enriching the festival with their culinary heritage.

The Government of Sikkim, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, has been actively working to promote the state's cultural and culinary values across India. The vision is to make Sikkim's local foods available in all states and ensure they receive the recognition they deserve. EICA has pledged its support to this initiative by working closely with Sikkim to enhance the visibility and appreciation of its rich culinary traditions.

During a press meet, Dr. Indra Hang Subba, alongside EICA representatives, elaborated on his vision for promoting Sikkim's cuisine on a national scale. He emphasized the importance of educating and training the youth in authentic local cooking methods and ingredient usage. EICA has committed to assisting in this endeavor by fostering skill development and raising awareness about Sikkim's culinary heritage.

The Blue Duke Festival 2025 stands as a milestone in the journey towards the recognition of Sikkim's local cuisine, setting the stage for broader acceptance and appreciation across India.



GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ACHIEVEMENT!

Chef Ajith Kumar and Chef Samema set a new Guinness world record in pastry art. India takes pride in a remarkable achievement as Chefs Ajith Kumar K and Samema D.F have made history by setting a new Guinness World Record for the fastest rosette icing on cupcakes.

On February 23, 2025, the talented duo showcased their exceptional skill and speed, frosting 42 cupcakes each, successfully icing a total of 84 cupcakes in just one minute, surpassing the previous record.

The audience at the event was left in awe and admiration as they worked with unmatched precision and efficiency, proving their expertise in pastry art. This incredible feat marks a major milestone for India's pastry and hospitality industry, bringing international recognition to the country's culinary talent.



Adding to the prestige of this record-breaking achievement, SICA (South India Culinary Association) and IFCA (Indian Federation of Culinary Associations) extended their full support and appreciation, further solidifying the significance of this accomplishment in the global culinary space.

This success is not just a personal victory for the chefs but also a source of inspiration for aspiring pastry artists encouraging young chefs to push their limits and aim for excellence.

IFCA Well-Being: Championing Chef Welfare in the Culinary Industry

The culinary world is fast-paced, demanding, and often leaves little room for personal well-being. Recognising the unique challenges faced by chefs, the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) has taken a pioneering step with the establishment of the IFCA Well-Being task force. This initiative is designed to foster a more balanced professional and personal life for chefs, ensuring their well-being remains a priority despite the rigors of their schedules.

A Vision for Well-Being

The IFCA Well-Being team is spearheaded by seasoned industry professionals, including Chef Madhu Krishnan (the Industry Connect) and Chef Priya Padave (the Academic Lead). They are supported by a dedicated team of experts: Chef Sandilyan Pagaldiviti, Chef Himanshu Malik, Chef Arpan Day, Chef Avijit Ray, and Chef Shailesh Nigawale. Together, they are driving initiatives that aim to transform kitchen work environments into spaces that prioritize health, mental well-being, and professional growth.

Key Initiatives

To enhance chef welfare, the task force has rolled out several impactful programs, including:

- Workplace Audits & Ratings: Developing structured audit parameters with a rating scale to assess and recognize kitchens that prioritize chef well-being.
- Certification & Recognition: Certifying and celebrating top restaurants and outlets that provide exemplary work environments for culinary professionals.
- Awareness & Education: Conducting webinars and leveraging social media to raise awareness about chef well-being and advocate for industry-wide changes.

A Roadmap for the Future

The IFCA Well-Being Team is committed to expanding its efforts through several forward-thinking initiatives:

- Chef Well-Being Program: Creating a comprehensive support framework outlining key initiatives for workplace wellness.
- Structured Grading System: Establishing clear eligibility criteria, a point-based rating system, and a grading framework to assess and improve work environments.
- Anonymous Reporting Mechanism: Introducing a confidential platform for chefs to report workplace concerns, including mental health issues.
- Collaboration with Culinary Schools: Partnering with educational institutions to instill well-being values in future generations of chefs.

Shaping a Healthier Culinary Culture

The concept of chef well-being is still evolving, and fostering awareness within the culinary community is crucial. Through structured programs, industry collaboration, and sustained advocacy, IFCA is committed to building a more sustainable and healthy work culture for chefs. By prioritizing chef welfare, the initiative not only enhances the lives of culinary professionals but also elevates the quality, creativity, and sustainability of the food industry as a whole.

Well-Being for Hoteliers – Staying Fit and Healthy

Dr. (Chef) Sandilyan Ramanujam Pagaldiviti

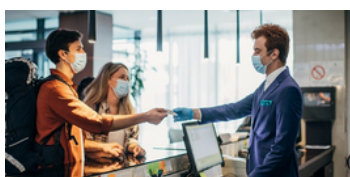


Dr. Sandilyan is amongst the first few Chefs in India to be awarded a Doctorate. He has worked with Taj Group, P & O Cruises, IHM – Hyd, SKHL India Ltd, Bradford Rex Singapore, and other Leading organizations in India and abroad.

In today's fast-paced lifestyle, stress has become an unavoidable challenge, particularly in the hospitality industry. Hoteliers specially freshers starting in this industry need to be able to navigate the demanding work requirement. IFCA has recently initiated a task force to look into the well-being of hotel employees, especially culinary staff.

The Basic challenges of Well-Being in Hotels include:

- Physical Well-Being: The work is physically challenging and demanding. Requires long hours, less rest and breaks and standing for extended periods of time. Steps to follow – The basic points to remember are to eat nutritious meals, keep hydrated, take regular breaks and stretch, exercise regularly and sleep well.
- Mental Well-Being: Dealing with demanding guests, long hours, poor work conditions, lack of sleep, lack of work-life balance are some challenges. Steps to follow – Practice mindfulness techniques like meditation, Yoga, Access stress management programs online and live and look for organizations that offer well-being sessions to their employees.



- Emotional Well-being: Lack of counselling, loneliness, lack of emotional support from friends and peers, fatigue-related issues, overload, etc. can all cause emotional stress. Developing a positive mindset, working on developing emotional intelligence, and working with an organization that offers support to its employees with numerous resilience strategies and support networks can help.

- Financial Well-being: A very crucial area as many face multiple challenges on this front. There may be stress due to low wages, long hours, lack of overtime, debts and loans, social pressures and family demands, lack of financial literacy and inability for financial planning. To solve this look out to learn financial planning and investing early in life. Ask the organization to provide financial literacy programs and competitive compensation. Look out for retirement benefits and be clear in selecting the organization where you wish to work.



- Social Well-Being: There may be stress from relationships that are fruitful as well as those that are not. Lack of acceptance and other issues may trigger stress in persons. To handle social stress have team-building activities, open forums and social bonding sessions. Employees must also develop social literacy and presence to meet regular issues. Organizations that reward and recognize employees are good choices to work for.

Wellbeing is a crucial aspect of a successful career in hospitality, especially for freshers. By taking care of your physical, mental, emotional, and social health, you not only improve your personal quality of life but also enhance your professional performance. Prioritizing wellbeing through simple, practical steps will help you manage the challenges of the hospitality industry and thrive in your new role. Remember, a healthy, balanced approach is the key to a fulfilling career in hospitality. Freshers can ask employers to provide wellness programs and effectively help in giving the employees an adequate work-life balance.

Work-life balance is about finding a way to manage the demands of your work or study with your personal life and the things that 'top you up'. A good work-life balance means you can be happy and productive at work and also have time for yourself and your family. This is very challenging for Hotel employees as they usually work on holidays and have long work hours.

Some hotel chains have come up with initiatives to promote better work-life balance and well-being amongst their employees. Some of the top initiatives include:

- Hilton – "Thrive@Hilton" Program - designed to support the well-being of its team members, offering resources that focus on physical, mental, financial, and career wellness.
- Accor – "Wellness at Work" - focuses on creating a healthy work environment by providing its employees with resources to support their physical, mental, and social well-being.
- Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts – "Employee Wellness Programs" - For providing its employees with a variety of wellness initiatives that focus on creating a balanced, healthy lifestyle.
- Marriott International – "TakeCare" Program - focuses on the well-being of both its associates and their families, offering support in physical, emotional, financial, and career development areas.
- The Ritz-Carlton – "The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center Wellbeing Program" - aims to enhance the overall health and happiness of employees by focusing on leadership, team development, and individual well-being.

·Hyatt Hotels – "Hyatt Thrive" - aims to foster the well-being of both guests and employees, promoting a holistic approach to health across multiple dimensions.

·InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) – "IHG Wellbeing Program" - IHG focuses on the overall well-being of its employees through an inclusive program that combines physical and mental health initiatives with career development opportunities.

·Wyndham Hotels & Resorts – "Wyndham Green" - Wyndham's "Green" initiative is centered on employee health and environmental sustainability. The company promotes a healthier lifestyle by encouraging eco-friendly practices both in and outside of the workplace.

While there are noticeable efforts and practices being implemented to ensure the well-being of employees and their families, it remains to be seen how effectively these initiatives are executed

across the hospitality industry. These practices have the potential to significantly enhance work-life balance and employee well-being. However, a challenge persists in hotels that are brand-managed and owned by profit-driven individuals who often prioritize financial gains over employee welfare. In the Indian market, where labor is abundant and relatively inexpensive, some owners tend to view employees as readily replaceable resources rather than valued assets.



Tribal Cuisine of India: A Cultural and Historical Perspective

Dr Chef Manjit Singh Gill

Introduction

Tribal cuisine is an integral part of India's diverse culinary heritage, reflecting the deep connection of indigenous communities with nature and their environment. Rooted in traditions passed down through generations, tribal cuisine showcases a profound understanding of local resources, seasonal ingredients, and sustainable practices. It offers a window into the cultural identity, resilience, and creativity of India's tribal communities.

Historical Context

Tribal cuisine has evolved in harmony with the natural surroundings of India's tribal communities, which are often located in remote areas like forests, hills, and river basins. With limited access to modern agricultural practices, these communities have relied on wild foraging, hunting, and subsistence farming. Using traditional methods and ingredients has led to the preservation of unique flavours, cooking techniques, and culinary wisdom that have withstood the test of time.

Philosophy of Living in Harmony with Nature

Tribal communities follow a sustainable and holistic approach to food, utilizing everything nature provides with minimal waste. Their diet primarily consists of foraged greens, tubers, millets, grains, forest fruits, and naturally reared livestock. The philosophy behind tribal food aligns with the future trends of sustainability, organic farming, and zero-waste cooking, making it an essential culinary treasure for chefs and food enthusiasts worldwide.

Good Practices of Tribal Food

1.Sustainable Foraging: Tribal communities have an innate knowledge of wild edible plants,

herbs, and mushrooms, many of which have medicinal properties. Their foraging practices ensure biodiversity conservation and seasonal eating.

2.Fermentation and Preservation: Fermentation is a common technique in tribal cuisines, enhancing the nutritional value and shelf life of food. Examples include fermented bamboo shoots in Northeast India and rice-based ferments in central tribal regions.

3.Woodfire and Slow Cooking: Traditional cooking methods involve slow roasting, steaming in leaves, and using clay pots, enhancing the flavours and nutrient retention of the food.

4.Use of Millets and Ancient Grains: Millets, such as ragi, kodo, and foxtail millet, are dietary staples, providing high nutrition, drought resistance, and environmental sustainability.

5.Minimal Processing, Maximum Nutrition: Tribal cuisine emphasizes minimal processing, allowing ingredients to retain their natural taste and nutritional benefits.

The Role of Chefs in Preserving and Promoting Tribal Cuisine

With growing interest in indigenous foods, chefs have an opportunity to learn from tribal culinary wisdom and integrate these sustainable practices into mainstream cuisine. By using tribal ingredients, techniques, and cooking philosophies, chefs can create dishes that not only celebrate India's diverse heritage but also promote ecological balance and health-conscious eating.

1.Incorporating Tribal Ingredients: Chefs should explore wild greens, foraged herbs, tribal rice varieties, and forest-based foods to bring unique flavours to their menus.



Chef Manjit Singh Gill is a renowned Indian culinary expert with decades of experience in traditional Indian cuisine. He is best known for his expertise in sustainable cooking, Ayurveda-based food philosophy, and reviving lost Indian recipes. A former corporate chef of ITC Hotels, he has played a key role in promoting Indian gastronomy globally.

Chef Gill is also the President of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) and a strong advocate for millet-based and farm-to-table cooking.

2.Adapting Traditional Cooking Techniques: Slow-cooked stews, bamboo steaming, and clay-pot cooking should be revived to enhance flavours and retain authenticity

3.Encouraging Ethical Sourcing: Partnering with tribal farmers and foragers ensures fair trade, helps sustain local economies, and supports biodiversity.

4.Promoting Culinary Tourism: Highlighting tribal cuisine through food festivals, cultural exchanges, and culinary tours can create awareness and appreciation for indigenous food traditions.

Tribal cuisine is more than just food, it is a way of life that embodies sustainability, health, and a deep respect for nature. As the world moves toward conscious eating and responsible gastronomy, tribal food practices serve as a guiding light for the future. Chefs and food lovers must embrace, learn, and innovate with these ancient culinary traditions, ensuring they remain relevant and celebrated for generations to come.

Chefs must integrate the tribal philosophy into their skills and create value-added dishes that embrace sustainability, nourishment, and environmental consciousness.

By incorporating tribal culinary wisdom, future food trends will not only offer a more satisfying dining experience but also promote zero-waste practices and ethical sourcing. This approach will empower tribal communities by strengthening their economy and preserving their heritage. Ultimately, this movement contributes to the vision of a Hunger-Free Bharat, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) to ensure nutritious food for all and eradicate hunger worldwide

Traditional Spices, Herbs, and Grains Used in Tribal Cuisine Across India

1.Spices:

Mahua flowers (used for flavoring and fermentation in central Indian tribes)

Pippali (Long pepper) used in tribal medicinal and culinary traditions.

Dhaniya seeds (Wild coriander seeds or called long or sawtooth coriander) have a robust, earthy aroma with a hint of citrus, commonly used in tribal cuisine to enhance flavours while offering digestive and medicinal benefits.

Wild mustard seeds (used in tribal curries and chutneys)

2.Herbs:

Gondhoraj lime leaves (used in Eastern tribal cuisine for aroma and flavor)

Brahmi (used in tribal herbal infusions and chutneys)

Bhatkatiya (*Solanum Indicum*) used in traditional tribal stews

Chakrata wild thyme from Himalayan tribes, used for its robust flavor and medicinal benefits.



3.Grains:

Kodo millet a staple grain in central Indian tribal diets

Sorghum also called Jowar widely grown in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh tribal communities

Rajgira (Amaranth) a nutrient-rich grain used in Himalayan tribal cuisine
Jungli Jau also called Adlay millet consumed in Northeast India and the tribal belts of Jharkhand and Odisha)

4.Seeds and Nuts

Flaxseeds, sesame seeds, and mahua seeds are frequently used as thickeners and flavour enhancers.



Discover the flavours of Thailand - A Recipe for Plah Goong

Chef Chachaya Raktakanishta

"Plah-Goong" Aromatic spicy prawn salad.

is a kind of Thai salad but different from "Yum". The difference is that Plah uses meat that is not fully cooked. To get the sweet taste from the shrimp or grilled beef.

The dressing is usually a combination of chili paste, fish sauce, lime juice, and sugar. It is seasoned with aromatic spicy flavour herbs.

The charm of Plah that is indispensable various aromas of herbs which are finely sliced or shredded with meticulousness.

Just in one bite, you can taste all the various flavours and aroma of Plah-Goong disperse in your mouth!



Vice President, Thailand Chef Association

Ingredients:

- 6 pcs. Fresh White Prawns**
- 15 g Shallots, thinly sliced**
- 5 g. Garlic, thinly sliced**
- 2 pcs. Kaffir Lime Leaved, shredded**
- 2 g. Mint leaves**
- 5 g Saw-tooth Coriander, cut to small size**

Spicy Dressing:

- 40 g Roasted Chilli Pasted**
- 10 g Fresh Red Bird's Chilies, sliced**
- 15 g Lime Juice**
- 15 g Fish Sauce**
- 6 g Sugar**

Directions:

1. Clean the prawns, devein them and blanch them until cooked through, refresh with cold water and then remove shells,
2. Prepare the dressing, mix everything together, stir until sugar dissolved, set aside.
3. Gently fold all the Thai herbs together.

To serve,

1. Fold the mixed herbs and the prawns with the spicy dressing before plating or
2. Arrange the mixed herbs, the prawns and the spicy dressing separately on the plate and mix just before eating.

“Keep yourself updated, to stay in the league” - An exclusive interview with Chef Raju Karthikeyan.

Chef Raju Karthikeyan also known as Chef RK hails from a distinguished family of chefs, making him a third-generation culinary expert. He is now working as a consultant, helping to set up and launch new restaurants and hotels. He is also a professional food photographer and stylist working on TV commercials for major food and kitchen appliances.

1. Coming from a family of chefs, what's the most valuable lesson you've learned from previous generations?

As a third-generation chef, I have learned the importance of passing down culinary traditions to the next generation, drawing wisdom from my ancestors. However, a true passion for cooking must come from within, it cannot be forced. Cooking is an art and an expression of love, not merely a pursuit for profit. It should come from the heart, much like the way a mother lovingly prepares meals for her family.

2. What's the biggest challenge in running a restaurant today, and how do you tackle it?

In today's world, the greatest advantage and challenge is the influence of media, mobile devices, and the internet, which often distract the current and upcoming generations, making them seek shortcuts in everything. Instead of resisting this change, I chose to embrace technology to simplify and enhance their lives. Yet, despite leveraging modern advancements, I ensure that every dish I create retains its traditional essence.

“Keep yourself updated, So you know how to be in the league”

3. Do you believe food presentation is as important as taste? How do you balance both?

There is a saying in Tamil, “Aal Padhi, Adai Paadhi,” which means that a person is defined equally by themselves and their attire

both hold equal importance. The same applies to food. No matter how delicious a dish is, its presentation is just as crucial. In today's world, before food delights the taste buds, it first appeals to the eyes.

4. What inspired you to get into food photography, and how does it complement your work as a chef?

As a child, I learned photography from my uncle, a skill that initially helped me build my portfolio. Over time, I used photography to bring my menu to life, allowing people to see the food before they order. As a photographer, I carefully construct each dish, playing with colours and composition. My visual experience guides me. I first envision the dish, then bring it to life through cooking and presentation.



5. What are the key skills every aspiring chef should focus on?

It's essential to have a strong foundation in the basics of whatever one chooses to pursue. Technology should be used as a tool for learning and growth rather than being wasted solely on social media. As we move into the future with advancements like AI and robotics, certain things, like taste and the art of cooking, remain uniquely human. While technology can assist, creation and execution still rely on human touch. Therefore, we must learn to leverage technology to carry our traditions into the next era.



The Credibility of an Award

Himanshu Barola

Who hasn't heard the name of Mahakavi Kalidasa? The title Mahakavi, meaning "the greatest poet," was bestowed upon him by Chandragupta II sometime between the 4th and 5th century CE. Likewise, Arthashastra, written by Chanakya, highlights the importance of royal cooks—trusted aides of the kingdom. These culinary experts weren't just skilled in cooking; they were well-versed in Ayurveda and, in some cases, held the crucial role of tasters, ensuring the king's meals were free from poison. Imagine a job where one misstep could be your last—talk about high-stakes dining!

The reason for quoting these examples? To emphasize that every profession has its rewards, though the form of recognition has evolved over time. In ancient times, titles and royal patronage were the norm. Today, recognition often comes in the form of Awards.

Let's be honest: every human wants to be acknowledged and appreciated. And receiving an Award is one way to achieve that. But here's where things get interesting. Recently, I attended an Award Ceremony that left me both amazed and reflective. A staggering 150 awards were distributed in the Food and Restaurant category alone. By the time the applause had settled, dinner was served—at 10:30 PM! It seemed as if awards were being handed out with extraordinary generosity, covering every possible niche and subcategory. The jury? Unclear. The selection process? Even less so.

It doesn't stop there. I regularly receive emails informing me that I have been selected for an Award. When I inquire about what's expected from me, the response is usually along the lines of: "The Award is free, but there are PR and administrative charges." This raises a simple question: if recognition comes with a price tag, does it remain a true honor?

Awards seem to be multiplying at an astonishing rate. And at this pace, their significance risks being diluted. Recognition is important, but without transparency in the selection process and clear merit-based criteria, how credible are these honors?

his brings us to an important moral question: Is it really worth receiving an Award? Is it credible? Is the system robust? Have I truly created an impact on society, or am I merely seeking validation? I get paid for my job—so does this Award genuinely reflect my contribution beyond the workplace? Would my children and parents be proud of me? When history looks back at me, will it nod approvingly or dismiss it as yet another ceremonial accolade? The list of questions is endless, and self-introspection is crucial.

Every individual associated with these organizations and awards has a moral responsibility to thoroughly assess their credibility; otherwise, it risks diminishing public trust in the entire process.



Himanshu Barola is Strategic Advisor for Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA). He is also Founder of Sustainability Company - "Everything Recycles".

Every individual associated with these organizations and awards has a moral responsibility to thoroughly assess their credibility; otherwise, it risks diminishing public trust in the entire process.

The Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) takes immense pride in being the true custodian of Indian Food and upholds its own rigorous selection criteria for Awards. Unlike those that celebrate individual job performances, IFCA Awards recognize the value an individual creates for society—because we are all an integral part of something greater than ourselves.

So, let's rethink our approach to Awards. Let's ensure they retain their true value and remain a symbol of genuine accomplishment, rather than just another item on a growing list of accolades.

Culinary Capers

HOLY FOOD

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

Culinary Capers

Think you can solve them?

By Vharun Rajesh

**1. I'm often sought, yet hard to hold,
In the kitchen, I'm worth more than gold.
What am I?**

**2. Peel me, chop me, boil me too,
I'm a staple food, for me and you.
What am I?**

**3. Sweet as honey, crunchy as can be,
A popular snack, for you and me.
What am I?**

**4. I'm a fruit, a berry so fine,
In pies and tarts, I'm truly divine.
What am I?**

**5. Hot and spicy, a flavour so bold,
Add me to dishes, young and old.
What am I?**

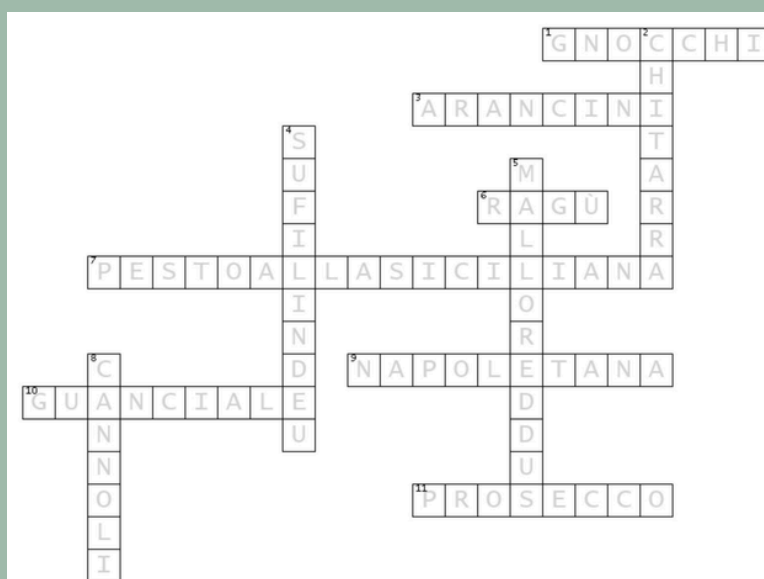
Culinary Capers

Last Month's Word Search's Solution:

1. Peanut
2. Dill
3. Pecan
4. Pumpkin
5. Nigela
6. Sesame
7. Cashew
8. Walnut
9. Almond
10. Caraway
11. Chestnut
12. Celery
13. Hazelnut
14. Pistachio
15. Fennel
16. Poppy
17. Pine nut
18. Basil
19. Linseed
20. Brazil nut

**Solution to "What is my label?" -
It is a Melon..**

Last Month's Crossword: Italian Cuisine Solution



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

PASSION FOR FOOD WILL DIE!

Rohit Manohar Chidurala

Why Passion Alone Isn't Enough to Survive in the Food Industry

The culinary world is built on passion. It's what sparks the dream of becoming a chef, opening a bakery, or launching a restaurant. The thrill of creating something delicious, the joy of seeing people relish your food, and the excitement of experimenting with flavors—this passion is what makes people take their first steps into the food industry. But here's the hard truth: passion will die.

Ask any seasoned chef, restaurateur, or food entrepreneur, and they will tell you that passion alone is fleeting. The food industry is relentless, demanding, and often unforgiving. Long hours, financial pressures, endless competition, and the never-ending pursuit of excellence can crush even the most passionate individuals. If you want to survive, you need to replace passion with obsession.

From Passion to Obsession

Passion makes you love food; obsession makes you commit to it unconditionally. Passion will get you started, but obsession will keep you going when the passion fades. The difference between those who make a mark in the food industry and those who burn out is how deeply they are willing to immerse themselves in their craft.

Think about legendary chefs, successful food entrepreneurs, or master artisans in the industry. What sets them apart is not just their initial passion but their obsessive dedication to perfection. They wake up thinking about food, spend their days refining their craft, and go to bed analyzing what they can do better. Their minds never switch off from their pursuit of culinary excellence.

Why Passion Alone Fails

1. Passion is Emotional, Obsession is Strategic

Passion is driven by excitement. You might love cooking or baking, but what happens when orders pile up, staff calls in sick, or customers leave bad reviews? Passion fades when challenges arise. Obsession, on the other hand, pushes you to find solutions, optimize processes, and innovate even when things go wrong.

2. Passion is Fleeting, Obsession is Discipline

Many people enter the food industry excited about creating dishes, but few stick around when faced with 18-hour shifts, rising costs, and market fluctuations. Obsession keeps you going when passion wears off. It fuels discipline—the ability to show up every day, refine techniques, and maintain consistency, no matter how you feel.

3. Passion is About Love, Obsession is About Mastery

Loving food is great, but it's not enough. Obsession makes you want to master every aspect—understanding ingredients at a molecular level, perfecting techniques, optimizing kitchen workflows, and continuously improving. The best chefs, bakers, and restaurateurs are obsessed with every detail of their craft.

What It Takes to Succeed

Develop a Relentless Work Ethic – Obsession means constantly learning, experimenting, and pushing boundaries. The industry rewards those who work beyond their comfort zone.

Embrace Failure and Keep Moving – Mistakes and setbacks are inevitable. Instead of letting failures discourage you, an obsessed mindset uses them as lessons for growth.



MasterChef India Telugu semifinalist, food entrepreneur, and founder of ROCH Cake Studio, Rohit Chidurala is obsessed with pushing culinary boundaries. From crafting premium cakes to consulting on food R&D, he thrives on innovation and precision. As the host of the ROCH Podcast, he deciphers industry insights, proving that in the food world, passion gets you started, but obsession keeps you going!

Commit to Excellence, Not Just Creativity – Passionate cooks love making new dishes, but obsessed professionals focus on making every dish exceptional and repeatable. Consistency is key in the food business.

Think Beyond Cooking – To survive, you must understand business, operations, marketing, and customer psychology. Many talented chefs fail because they lack an obsessive approach to running a successful business.

Be More Than Passionate

The food industry is a battlefield, and passion alone won't help you survive. If you want to make a real impact, transform your passion into an obsession. The best in the business aren't just passionate—they are obsessed with food, service, and excellence.

So, the next time someone tells you to follow your passion, remember: passion will die, but obsession will keep you alive in the food industry.

New Developments in Kitchen Design

Chef Jeetendra Kale

Technological developments, shifting consumer tastes, and industry demands have all contributed to major changes in kitchen design and culinary education in recent years.

Cooking in the Future with Smart Kitchens-

Every part of our life has been impacted by technology, and the kitchen is no different. The way we cook is being revolutionized by smart kitchens, which are outfitted with AI-driven appliances, voice-activated assistants, and app-controlled devices. The efficiency and accessibility of home cooking are increased by features like AI-assisted meal planning applications, ovens with automatic cooking programs, and smart refrigerators that track inventory. The increasing use of energy-efficient appliances is another significant change. To cut down on electricity use, homeowners are increasingly spending money on energy-efficient dishwashers, induction cook tops, and smart lighting. Additionally, there is a growing desire for environmentally friendly kitchen materials, such as bamboo countertops, recycled glass backsplashes, and eco-friendly cabinets.

Functional and Minimalist Designs- Modern kitchen design emphasizes functionality and tends toward minimalism. While keeping a sleek and contemporary appearance, open shelves, multipurpose islands, and concealed storage solutions help make the most of available space. An orderly, user-friendly kitchen arrangement has become essential as more people start cooking at home. Professional-quality residential kitchens are also in greater demand. The distinction between household and professional kitchens is becoming more hazy as more people install sous-vide cookers, commercial-style stoves, and high-performance ventilation systems.

Admissions Trends in Culinary Education

The standards for culinary education change along with the culinary business. Trends in culinary school admissions show a move toward specialized programs, experiential learning, and inclusion.

Rising Popularity of Online and Hybrid Learning-

Culinary schools have responded to the pandemic's acceleration of virtual education by providing online and hybrid courses. Students can now finish theoretical coursework electronically before attending in-person kitchen training; however practical experience is still essential. Those who might not be able to physically attend culinary school can now more easily get culinary education thanks to this method. Additionally, several institutions are improving remote culinary training experiences by utilizing augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).

Emphasis on Plant-Based Cuisine and Sustainability-

Many culinary programs are integrating sustainability into their curriculums. With increasing consumer interest in plant-based diets and ethical sourcing, schools now offer specialized courses in plant-based cooking, zero-waste kitchen management, and farm-to-table dining concepts. Students are learning to work with alternative proteins, sustainable seafood, and locally sourced ingredients, preparing them for the evolving food industry. There is also a growing emphasis on regenerative agriculture and ethical food production practices.

Farm-to-Table and Local Sourcing Culinary schools emphasize using seasonal, local, and organic ingredients to reduce carbon footprints. Some institutions have partnerships with local farms or even maintain their own organic gardens for hands-on learning.



Chef Jeetendra Kale with the vision to create awareness about the priceless art of cooking and decorating, aims to present new dimension for masterpiece of food art. He has organized and trained various people about food art, sculpture and also associated with different international and domestic hotels and colleges. Presently associated with AISSMS College of Hotel Management Pune as a Assistant Professor & Introducing young students of the new culinary world of food carving and decoration with ice carving, butter carving, fruits & vegetable carving.

Food Waste Management Courses now teach techniques to minimize food waste, such as nose-to-tail butchery, root-to-stem cooking, and composting. Some programs also incorporate the use of AI-powered tools to track and reduce kitchen waste efficiently.

Sustainable Seafood and Ethical Meat Consumption Culinary programs educate students on overfishing issues and promote using certified sustainable seafood (e.g., MSC or ASC-certified). More focus on plant-based cooking and ethical sourcing of meat (e.g., free-range, grass-fed options).

Energy Efficiency in Professional Kitchens Students learn about energy-efficient appliances and eco-friendly kitchen designs (e.g., induction cooking, low-water dishwashing). Many programs integrate zero-waste kitchen concepts and carbon footprint tracking in restaurant operations.

Employment-Study and Apprenticeship Programs-

More culinary schools are collaborating with gastronomy and hospitality organizations to

students may make money while they study and enter the workforce with ease. Employer-sponsored training programs have even replaced traditional tuition-based arrangements at some schools. Additionally, entrepreneurship education is becoming more and more important in order to assist students in starting their own food businesses.

Diversification of Student Demographics-

The diversity of culinary education is growing, and programs are actively seeking admissions from underrepresented groups.

A more inclusive culinary scene has resulted from targeted outreach initiatives, mentorship programs, and scholarships. A growing interest in food-related occupations outside of traditional restaurant roles is also reflected in the increase in mid-career professionals and career changers enrolling in culinary programs. With institutions offering courses in international cuisines and cross-cultural culinary skills, the global influence on culinary education is growing.

The kitchen, whether at home or in a professional setting, is undergoing a transformative phase. Smart technology, sustainability, and efficiency are at the forefront of modern kitchen design, while culinary education is adapting to meet the needs of a dynamic and evolving food industry. The increasing adoption of customized kitchen solutions and immersive learning experiences is redefining how we approach culinary spaces, blending innovation with functionality to meet the evolving demands of modern living.



ITC HOTELS

RESPONSIBLE LUXURY



"The Hidden Truth Behind Health Drinks"

Chef Ashutosh Awasthi

As culinary professionals, we take pride in creating wholesome, nutritious meals. However, it's imperative to question what we consume daily, particularly health and energy drinks marketed as essential for growth, vitality, and longevity. This article aims to shed light on the hidden ingredients lurking in these so-called health drinks and their potential impact on our well-being.

Are We Truly Aware of What We Consume?

Brands promise remarkable benefits—taller, stronger children and everlasting fitness. But have we ever examined the ingredients behind these claims? If you were handed a pinch of Silicon Dioxide, Tartrazine, Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT), or Sodium Benzoate, would you knowingly consume it? If the answer is no, why do we allow these compounds in our daily diet?

The Chemicals in Health Drinks and Their Effects

Anti-Caking Agents

INS 551 (Silicon Dioxide): This widely used additive prevents powder clumping but may cause gastrointestinal irritation. Symptoms include bloating, gas, and potential discomfort, especially in individuals with pre-existing digestive conditions.

Artificial Sweeteners

Health drinks often replace sugar with artificial sweeteners like Aspartame and Sucralose, which present several health risks:

- Aspartame: Linked to headaches, migraines, and potential metabolic issues.
- Sucralose: Research suggests it may alter gut microbiota and negatively impact glucose metabolism.

Artificial Colors and Flavors

Artificial additives enhance the visual appeal and taste of health drinks, yet they come with concerns:

- Synthetic Colors (e.g., Tartrazine, Red 40): Potential allergens, linked to hyperactivity in children and possibly ADHD.
- Artificial Flavors (e.g., Vanillin, Ethylvanillin): Known to trigger migraines and allergic reactions in some individuals.

Preservatives

To extend shelf life, manufacturers use preservatives such as:

- Sodium Benzoate: When combined with vitamin C, it can form benzene, a known carcinogen.
- BHT: A controversial antioxidant linked to liver and kidney toxicity in high doses.

Scientific Studies on Health Risks

Research highlights the potential dangers of these additives:

- A 2006 study in Environmental Health Perspectives linked aspartame to headaches and metabolic disorders.
- A 2013 study in Diabetes Care suggested that sucralose could affect insulin response.
- A 2007 study in Clinical and Experimental Allergy found synthetic colors could cause allergic reactions.
- A 2014 study in Food and Chemical Toxicology examined the risk of benzene formation from sodium benzoate.

So what Can We Do?

1. Read Labels Carefully: Ingredients are often listed in tiny print to discourage scrutiny. Learn to decode the codes.
2. Avoid Blind Brand Loyalty: Even reputed brands use synthetic additives. Opt for natural, homemade alternatives.



"Executive Chef & Founder of Sheer MADness® | Innovator in Chemical-Free Food Production & Research | Marathon Runner | Author of 'Great Health Comes from Exercise & Nutrition' | Creative Chef Who Went from Fat to Fit, Now Inspiring Others."

3. Choose Chemical-Free Alternatives: Certain brands offer genuinely natural health drinks, it may sound simple, but it is ground Almonds and flaxseed in right proportion, and the products are vacuum packed to keep them fresh. Even products as simple as Sattu work miracles.

Conclusion

As chefs, we advocate for real, natural and unadulterated food. While health drink powders offer convenience, it is crucial to recognize their hidden risks. By prioritizing natural, chemical-free options, we can safeguard our health and set a better example for future generations.

Disclaimer: This article aims to inform, not to criticize or defame any brand. Every consumer has the right to make well-informed dietary choices.

Innovations in Wine Making: Blending Tradition with Technology

Mr. Rohit Sah

Introduction

The art of wine-making has a history as rich and complex as the beverage itself. While tradition remains a cornerstone of the craft, innovation is increasingly shaping the way wine is produced, consumed, and enjoyed. From vineyard to glass, technological advancements and creative approaches are redefining the wine industry.

Precision Viticulture

One of the most groundbreaking innovations in wine-making is precision viticulture. Using tools like drones, GPS technology, and sensors, vineyard managers can monitor soil health, water levels, and vine conditions with remarkable accuracy. These technologies enable winemakers to optimize grape quality and yield while minimizing environmental impact. For instance, drones equipped with multi-spectral imaging can identify stressed vines, allowing targeted intervention and reducing the need for excessive water or pesticides.

Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Practices

As consumers increasingly prioritize sustainability, winemakers are adopting eco-friendly practices. Solar-powered wineries, organic and biodynamic farming, and sustainable packaging are becoming industry standards. Innovations like lightweight glass bottles, canned wines, and biodegradable corks not only reduce carbon footprints but also cater to the growing demand for environmentally conscious products.

Yeast Engineering

The fermentation process, central to wine-making, is witnessing a revolution through yeast engineering. Scientists are developing custom yeast strains that enhance specific flavor profiles, improve fermentation efficiency,

and even reduce undesirable byproducts like sulfites. This allows winemakers to craft unique wines that appeal to diverse palates while addressing health concerns related to additives.

Hybrid Grapes

Climate change poses significant challenges to traditional grape-growing regions. Enter hybrid grape varieties—genetically designed to withstand extreme weather conditions and resist diseases. These resilient grapes enable vineyards to thrive in changing climates, ensuring consistent production without compromising quality.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data

AI and big data are transforming the decision-making process in wine-making. Machine learning algorithms analyze historical data to predict optimal harvest times, blending ratios, and market trends. AI-powered robots are also being deployed in vineyards to prune vines and monitor growth, reducing labor costs and enhancing efficiency.

Non-Traditional Wine Styles

The modern consumer's thirst for novelty is driving the creation of unconventional wine styles. Orange wines, blue wines, and low-alcohol or alcohol-free options are gaining popularity. These innovative products cater to younger audiences and those seeking healthier or more adventurous choices.

Augmented Reality (AR) Labels

Winemakers are leveraging augmented reality (AR) to enhance consumer engagement. AR-enabled wine labels bring storytelling to life, offering customers an interactive experience. By scanning a label with a smartphone, consumers can learn about the winery's history, the winemaking process, and even food pairing suggestions.



General Manager of Di-Vine Cellars, a wine importing and distributing company in the Maldives. An alumnus of IIM Ahmedabad and a WSET Level 3 certified professional in Wines & Spirits, Rohit Sah has worked in several hotels across India and the Middle East. Rohit is well-travelled and is passionate about promoting the commercial benefits of vine growing and wine production in India.

Wine Aging Technologies

Traditionally, wine aging is a slow process requiring years in oak barrels. However, advanced aging techniques, such as ultrasound and micro-oxygenation, are accelerating this process. These methods replicate the effects of traditional aging in a fraction of the time, making high-quality aged wines accessible to a broader audience.



The Future of Wine-making

Innovation in wine-making is a delicate dance between preserving tradition and embracing change. By integrating cutting-edge technology with time-honored practices, the industry is not only enhancing wine quality but also addressing environmental and consumer demands. As these innovations continue to unfold, the future of wine promises to be as dynamic and exciting as its past.

Synthetic Food Additives: A Boon or a Threat

Chef Keshi Nisudan



Introduction

With advancements in science and modern food technology, edible chemical compounds and food additives have become a significant part of the food industry. In the context of the human food chain, synthetic food can be considered an outsider, having a relatively short history of less than a century. It is primarily based on chemistry and has gradually been introduced into human consumption over the years.

The Evolution and Impact of Synthetic Food Additives

The rise of synthetic food additives can be traced back to the late 1800s with the discovery of saccharin, one of the first artificial sweeteners. This innovation paved the way for future developments. In the 19th century, the modern pharmaceutical industry began manufacturing synthetic compounds capable of selectively eliminating parasites, bacteria, and other pathogens. Early developments included the use of chemical preservatives such as benzoates and sulfites to extend shelf life.

By the early 20th century, scientific advancements led to the introduction of synthetic food colorings, flavor enhancers, and emulsifiers, which were widely adopted in processed foods. The mid-20th century witnessed a surge in synthetic additives, driven by post-war consumer demand for convenience foods. Additives like monosodium glutamate (MSG) gained popularity, while emulsifiers and stabilizers ensured longer shelf life and improved texture in packaged products. However, as the use of synthetic additives increased, so did concerns about food safety.

By the 1970s and 1980s, the rising popularity of processed foods led to the widespread use of artificial preservatives like sodium benzoate and sulfur dioxide. Synthetic food colors and flavor enhancers became common in packaged snacks, beverages, and confectionery items. The globalization of the food industry in the 1990s and 2000s further accelerated the adoption of synthetic additives, aligning Indian food production with international standards.

To regulate this growing industry, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was established, setting stringent guidelines to ensure consumer safety. Today, while synthetic additives remain prevalent in India's processed food sector, there is growing awareness about their potential health risks, driving an increased demand for clean-label and natural alternatives.

Categories of Synthetic Food

Synthetic food can be broadly categorized into three groups:

1. Chemical Food Additives
2. Oral Chemical Drugs & Hormones
3. Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines (Passive Category)

Since synthetic food sources are not natural, they pose potential threats to food safety and human health due to their side effects and the risks of excessive or uninformed use. Despite their functional benefits, synthetic additives appear in various forms, including:

- Preservatives
- Antioxidants
- Condiments
- Colorants
- Thickeners
- Emulsifiers
- Essences
- Nutritional Enhancers

Spending nearly four decades in the Hotel Industry, runs his own consulting firm "Destination Hospitality" established in 2014 located in Hyderabad, India.

His career in food began with training in Hotel Management at the PUSA Institute, New Delhi. He went on to specialize in Chocolate and Sugar Confectionery at Zurich, Switzerland. He worked for international and domestic 5-star hotel chains such as Taj Group (IHC), Hyatt International, Ambassador Group, ITC Hotels (Welcomgroup).

The Role of Chefs in Food Safety

Chefs must recognize that synthetic food is a relatively recent addition to the human diet. Its long-term impact on human health and sustainability remains to be fully understood. Therefore, the pros and cons of synthetic food additives must be carefully considered. Chefs play a crucial role in maintaining public health by making informed choices about the ingredients they use.

The Way Forward

Chefs should ensure the safe utilization of synthetic food additives by understanding their correct applications. These additives primarily contribute to food texture, including color, taste, flavor, and palatability, while also extending shelf life. The global and Indian food industries continue to evolve, striving to balance the benefits of synthetic additives with consumer concerns about health and safety. With the rise of natural preservatives, plant-based additives, and clean-label products, the future of food additives is moving towards a more sustainable and health-conscious direction.

"Chefs hold the power to create healthier meals by choosing wisely and balancing tradition with innovation."

"The Greenwashed Kitchen: Probably Just a Paint Job"

Chef Ravichander Reddy



Have you heard of "greenwashing"? It refers back to the practice of groups selling their products as more environmentally pleasant than they certainly are. In a few instances, they provide deceptive or false information about the service or product. For instance, a product advertised as "sustainable" or "organic" might not surely meet the ones claims. With the destiny of our planet striking inside the stability and younger generations main the charge for change, it's vital to live vigilant against such misleading marketing. Falling for those fake guarantees is the remaining aspect we need.

In each kitchen, you'll find cookware and substances critical for meals guidance, but not all of them are as harmless as they appear. While we region our accept as true with in certified vendors and packaged items, the fact can now and again be pretty special — and potentially dangerous to our health.

Have you ever stood in a grocery shop or an espresso store, staring at a product, and wondered, "Is this definitely as healthful or eco-friendly as it claims to be?" I've often felt the same manner. Recent controversies — including court cases over specific 'Refresher' drinks — highlight how difficult it may be to make informed choices. In this age of greenwashing, where products are frequently marketed as more healthy or more sustainable than they absolutely are, it's surprising to peer what is labelled "herbal" or "organic." Recognizing what's really pleasant for our households may be a real project.

Even cookware can substantially impact the best of our meals. Non-stick pans, as an instance, are convenient but frequently lined with materials like Teflon that can launch dangerous debris if overheated. Similarly, aluminium cookware can leach metals into food, in particular whilst used with acidic components

Cookware this is Teflon-covered can become worse over the years, the use of these vessels over and over leads us in liberating harmful substances into the air. Inhaling these fumes can cause a condition referred to as polymer fume fever, usually known as Teflon fever.

Preparing bitter or salty in aluminium dishes brings the metal into the food chain. High aluminium consumption is associated with potential fitness risks inclusive of arthritis issues and bone-associated situations.

Solution: Opting for chrome steel, forged iron, or ceramic cookware can reduce such risks and make sure safer cooking practices.

Another example of cookware Aluminium Pressure cooker- used extensively and plenty cherished in Indian families. But ever surprise that how tons its toxicants the food, especially the rubber gaskets which leaches lead. Additionally, cooking starchy ingredients in a strain cooker may purpose the formation of acrylamide, a probably risky chemical.

Many ingredients we use in cooking are below scrutiny, mainly packaged foods. While the ones products also can appearance attractive due to their labels, they could incorporate harmful additives, preservatives, and artificial flavour enhancers. Some of these substances, like Isoamyl acetate (which smells like bananas), Benzaldehyde (which smells like bitter almonds or cherries), Cinnamaldehyde (which smells like cinnamon), and Ethyl propionate (which smells fruity), can motive health troubles over time, together with hormonal imbalances and hypersensitive reactions.

As cooks, it is vital to understand the materials we use in cooking and wherein our components come from. By making clever picks, we can shield our health and hold the splendid of our dishes intact.

Mr. Ravi Chander Reddy, an accomplished academician with 15 years of experience in hotel management education and related fields, holds multiple advanced degrees, including an MBA and a Master's in Hotel Management. Currently an Assistant Professor at Garden City University, he is known for his expertise in human resources, marketing, and training, along with his contributions as a researcher, freelancer, and international instructor.

For instance? Do Fruity Names Mean Real Fruit? Let me paint a image: a warm day, youngsters in tow, and a yearning for something cool and fruity. Enter any cafés with their tantalizing 'Refresher' liquids. Any packed combo beverage or a bottle of easy drinks? Yes! But then, I tripped upon facts suggesting that these drinks may not have all the marketed stop result. It's like buying a toy to your little one, most effective to find out that 1/2 of its components are lacking—in truth irritating, wouldn't you agree?

Now maximum of the cafes argues that the names are about the flavours, now not the elements. And positive on the equal time as "flavour" can be a greenwash location, it had me thinking about how frequently we might be endorsed with the resource of devious naming or branding.

Decoding Health Slogans: What They Actually Mean

I'm no longer a nutritionist, but like masses of you, I try to make healthful alternatives for my family. With such numerous cereal bins and snack bars claiming to be "natural" or "organic," it's hard to recognize what's truly specific for us. And here is a confession: I've fallen for the "organic cookie" concept, wondering it turn out to be healthier. But right here's the reality: An organic cookie can though be filled with sensitive elements.

Advices to Revolve the Greenwashing Philosophy

So, how can we warfare thru the advertising confusion? Here are a few matters I can proportion you curious approximately your next desire of cookware's and packing substances.

Do Your Research

- Watch Out for Bywords
- Genuine Certifications Can Guide You: While not fine, labels much like the, NPOP, Jaivik Bharat, ECOCERT India, EU Organic and USDA Organic may be dependable markers of terrific.

In end, it's miles essential to be vigilant while choosing cookware and components, as more merchandise are marketed as healthful or environmentally friendly than they're it's definitely nice. With a little research, understanding labels, and asking the right questions, we can make knowledgeable selections that defend our health and the surroundings.

While we don't continually get it ideal, a little greater attempt can make certain we are able to offer the best for our circle of relatives. Making clever selections in the kitchen enables us produce meals that no longer only tastes proper however is safe and sustainable.

Forgotten Flavours of North Indian Cuisine

Chef Dr. Izzat Husain



North Indian cuisine, renowned for its rich and diverse flavors, has been a cornerstone of Indian gastronomy for centuries. The intricate blend of spices, herbs, and ingredients has given birth to iconic dishes like qorma, kebabs, biryani, tandoori chicken, and paratha. However, amidst this culinary grandeur, some traditional ingredients have slowly faded into obscurity.

In this article, we'll delve into the almost forgotten ingredients of North Indian cuisine and explore those that are on the verge of being abolished.

Poppy Seeds (Khus Khus)

Once a staple ingredient in Awadhi & Rajasthani cuisine, poppy seeds were used to thicken gravies and harness their medicinal properties. These tiny seeds are a rich source of:

- Fiber
- Protein
- Healthy fats
- Antioxidants

Their versatility extends beyond culinary uses; poppy seeds are known for their soothing effect and are often used in traditional remedies for pain relief and insomnia.

Onion Seeds (Kalaunji)

Kalaunji, also known as onion seeds, were a ubiquitous ingredient in North Indian kitchens. Their culinary uses include:

- Adding flavor to curries and stews
- Garnishing breads
- Mixing into pickling spices

Medicinally, kalaunji is praised for its health benefits, such as:

- Aiding digestion
- Relieving respiratory issues
- Supporting immune function

Carrom Seeds (Ajwain)

Carrom seeds, with their distinctive flavor and aroma, were once a staple in North Indian cooking. Their uses include:

- Adding flavor to curries and stews
- Mixing into pickling spices
- Using as a digestive aid

Ajwain is known for its antimicrobial properties and is often used in home remedies for stomach related problems, cold and cough.

Long Pepper (Pippali)

Long pepper, a cousin of black pepper, was highly valued in traditional North Indian medicine and cuisine. Its uses include:

- Adding flavor to curries and stews
- Mixing into medicinal preparations
- Supporting immune function

Pippali is believed to improve digestion and is a key ingredient in many Ayurvedic formulations aimed at enhancing respiratory health.

Sandalwood (Sandal)

Sandalwood, prized for its fragrance and medicinal properties, was once used in North Indian cooking to add flavor and aroma to dishes. Its subtle, woody flavor was particularly popular in desserts and sweet dishes.

Zara Kush

Zara kush, a type of dried flower, was used in traditional North Indian medicine and cuisine to add flavor and fragrance to dishes. It was also valued for its purported benefits in stress relief and relaxation.

Dr. Chef Izzat Husain is an Indian television chef, Unani physician, author, and restaurant consultant. He shares his passion for traditional Mughlai and Awadhi cuisine. He is widely respected as an 'authority on Indian cuisine'. Chef Husain focuses on healthy cooking and highlights India's long culinary heritage.

Star Anise (Chakra Phool)

Star anise, with its distinctive flavor and aroma, was once a staple in North Indian cooking. Its uses include:

- Adding flavor to curries and stews
- Supporting digestive health

Star anise is known for its antimicrobial properties and is often used in traditional remedies for flu and cold symptoms.

Reviving Forgotten Ingredients

As a chef and food enthusiast, I believe it's essential to revive and promote the use of these forgotten ingredients in North Indian cuisine. By incorporating these ingredients into modern recipes and dishes, we can help preserve the rich culinary diversity of North India and introduce new flavors and textures to a wider audience. Additionally, emphasizing the health benefits of these ingredients can attract health-conscious consumers looking for natural and wholesome food options.

Let us embark on a culinary journey to rediscover and incorporate the forgotten flavors of Indian cuisine. By doing so, we can ensure that these traditional ingredients continue to play a vital role in shaping the culinary identity of our country with proper healthy food.

Keep the legacy of Indian cuisine alive for future generations to enjoy.

Unlearn and Relearn: Transforming Hotel Kitchen Operations

Dr. Chef Chetan Bagul

Unlearn and Relearn: Transforming Hotel Kitchen Operations

As the new technologies emerge and the global culinary trends shift the need to unlearn and relearn in the hotel kitchen becomes not just an option but a necessity for staying competitive. Unlearning and relearning is a transformative process that allows culinary professionals to grow, innovate, and adapt to the dynamic nature of the food and hospitality industry.

Concept of "Unlearn and Relearn"

The "unlearning" involves letting go of outdated practices, misconceptions, or habits that may no longer serve a kitchen's evolving needs. Relearning is about acquiring new skills, insights, and approaches that are more relevant to today's demands. For example, traditional cooking methods and recipes that once ruled the kitchen may now need to be revised to accommodate contemporary dietary trends such as plant-based diets, gluten-free meals, or low-waste cooking.

The Need for Unlearning

Unlearning involves letting go of outdated practices, habits, or mind-sets that no longer serve the operational goals of a hotel kitchen. For many chefs and kitchen staff, traditional cooking techniques and long-held beliefs about food preparation can create barriers to innovation. For instance, relying solely on classic recipes may hinder creativity, preventing chefs from exploring contemporary culinary trends or dietary preferences. Additionally, the rise of health-conscious dining has prompted a shift in how hotel kitchens approach menu development. Chefs must unlearn the notion that rich, indulgent dishes are the only way to attract guests. Instead, they can adopt a more balanced approach, incorporating lighter, healthier options that cater to a broader audience.

The Importance of Relearning

Relearning allows hotel kitchen professionals to remain agile, innovative, and responsive to the evolving culinary landscape. Here are some key areas where relearning is essential:

1. Embracing New Technologies: Modern kitchens are increasingly adopting technological innovations to streamline processes, from digital inventory systems to smart cooking appliances. Relearning in this context means chefs and kitchen staff must familiarize themselves with new tools, whether it's mastering a combi oven or learning to use sous-vide techniques. These tools improve efficiency, consistency, and precision in cooking.

2. Global Culinary Trends: The modern diner is more adventurous and well-travelled, often seeking diverse and globally inspired menus. Relearning global cuisine techniques—whether it's the art of sushi making, mastering Indian spices, or exploring the nuances of Mediterranean cooking—helps hotel kitchens cater to an increasingly diverse customer base. Relearning also allows chefs to experiment with fusions, leading to innovative and unique dishes that set hotels apart.

1. Health and Sustainability: Today's consumers are more health-conscious, with a growing demand for organic, plant-based, and allergen-free options. Kitchen staff must relearn how to cook with alternative ingredients such as plant-based proteins or gluten-free flours. Moreover, sustainable practices such as sourcing locally, minimizing food waste, and reducing energy consumption are crucial for meeting both customer expectations and environmental responsibilities.

2. Guest-Centric Experiences: Relearning in a hotel kitchen extends beyond the food itself to the overall guest experience. Today's diners are not just looking for great food but also memorable dining experiences.



Dr. Chef Chetan Bagul has completed B.Tech in Hotel Management and Catering Technology, MBA, Masters in Tourism Management, Higher Diploma in French language and Ph. D. He has more than 25 years of experience in education and hospitality sector. He has written 09 research papers in national and international research journals and the chapters in various books.

With open kitchens, interactive dining experiences, and an emphasis on presentation, kitchen staff needs to relearn the importance of aesthetics, plating, and guest engagement.

Encouraging a Culture of Continuous Learning

For unlearning and relearning to take root in a hotel kitchen, leadership must foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This involves:

- Training Programs: Regular workshops and training sessions help kitchen staff stay updated on the latest trends and techniques.
- Mentorship: Pairing experienced chefs with younger staff encourages knowledge sharing and the integration of new ideas.
- Open-mindedness: Encouraging a culture of curiosity and innovation allows kitchen staff to experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them without fear of failure.

Conclusion

The process of unlearning and relearning is essential for any hotel kitchen that wishes to remain competitive, innovative, and responsive to modern culinary trends. By discarding outdated methods and embracing new techniques, technologies, and mind-sets, culinary professionals ensure that they not only meet but exceed the expectations of today's discerning guests.



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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.

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