



*Godrej*

# FOOD TRENDS REPORT 2024

- Provenance -



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### Survey

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# About the Annual Godrej Food Trends Report

Since its inception in 2018, the Godrej Food Trends Report has emerged as one of the most credible platforms on themes that significantly impact the food industry each year. Over the years, the report has continuously evolved to include a wider group of industry experts who are encouraged to reflect on the year gone by and share their projections on key themes that will influence the industry in the coming year.

The Godrej Food Trends Report has been facilitating deep conversations in the food space each year. Over the last 7 years, the report has drawn on insights from over 1700 experts and thought leaders from food, beverage and allied industries spanning across industry verticals and geographies.

## Media Coverage

Over the last 6 years, the report has driven over 1600 media conversations and has been read by over 500k people. The special 2022, fifth-anniversary Collector's edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report alone drove over 200 news features across six languages, reaching regional and global audiences. This report was downloaded by nearly 200k people!

## Awards and Accolades

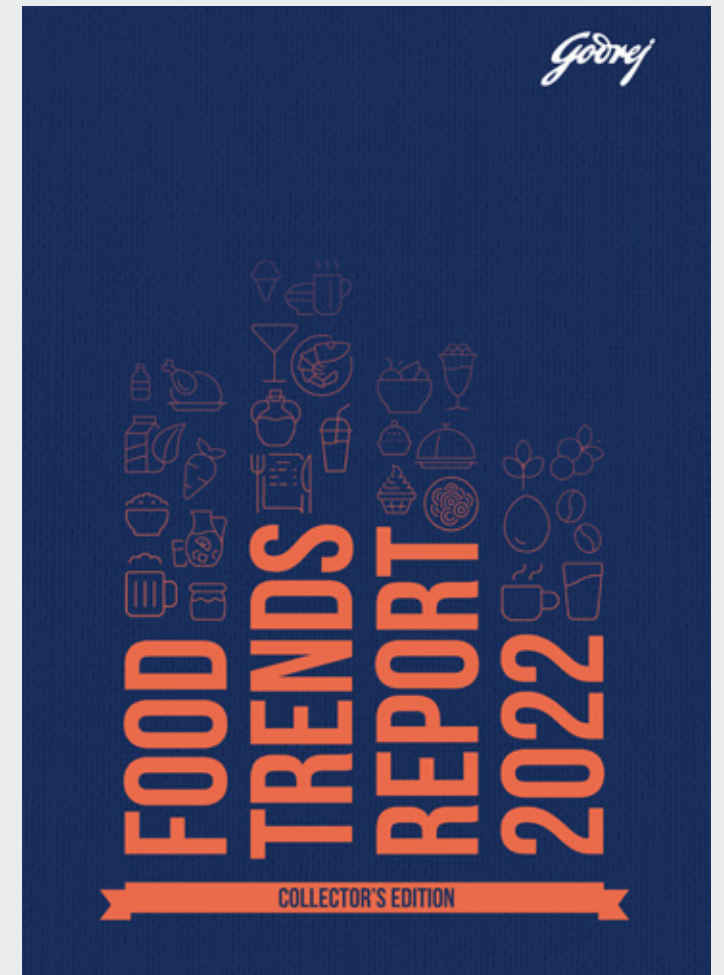
Over the last six years, Godrej Food Trends Report has won over 10 prestigious industry awards and accolades for concept, content and design. Here is a list of all awards won by the report till date.



ABCI: 1 Gold & 1 Silver  
AFAQS Foxglove Awards: 1 Bronze



AFAQS Foxglove Awards: 1 Bronze



AFAQS Foxglove Awards: 1 Gold & 1 Silver  
PR Awards: 2 Silver  
IPRCCA Awards: 1 Bronze



AFAQS Foxglove Awards: 2 Bronze



AFAQS Foxglove Awards: 1 Bronze



Financial Express - Bandwagon ACE Awards: 1 Gold  
PR Awards: 2 Golds, 1 Silver & 1 Bronze  
AFAQS Foxglove Awards: 2 Bronze  
BW Excel Awards: 1 Silver



# Note from Tanya Dubash

Welcome to The Godrej Food Trends Report (GFTR) 2024.

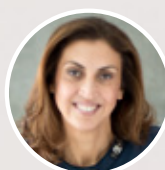
At the outset, I am proud that this report that began as an ambitious initiative six years ago has grown into an award-winning undertaking for the sixth year in a row, with the 2023 edition winning more national accolades than ever. Fuelled by this success, our seventh edition strives to uphold this legacy of a comprehensive, thoroughly researched, and well-designed forecast report on the food and beverage industry.

With each passing year, the Godrej Food Trends team works harder to build an increasingly robust and useful document that can help shape the industry's activities through the year. The deep dive sections, now a permanent feature of this report, continue to fuel dialogue on established trends and practices within the industry, indicating what is to come within each segment.

The 2024 edition focuses on the theme of Provenance pointing towards a deep introspection that will drive innovation and creation across the Indian food industry driven by a desire to embrace and amplify the rich diversity of opportunities that emerge from our land. This will become evident as you go through the deep dive essays, each of which trace the dynamic evolution of the Indian food industry and even more so as you explore the forecasts within each segment.

I am delighted to present you this new edition and hope you enjoy it as much as we did creating it for you. I do hope it sparks new ideas for you and your colleagues in the industry in 2024 and beyond!

Best,



**Tanya Dubash**

Executive Director & Chief Brand Officer  
(Godrej Industries Limited & Associate  
Companies)



# Note from Sujit Patil

Welcome to the 7th edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report (GFTR). It gives us immense pleasure to see how GFTR has evolved over the years. It is bigger, better, and brighter! It is a testament to our ongoing commitment towards fostering dialogue and innovation within the Indian food and beverage industry.

Let me confess, our annual examination of the culinary trends involves a comprehensive process, including surveys, personal interactions, and contributions from industry leaders. And each year, I am energised all over again by the fresh perspectives our contributors offer towards an ever-expansive range of conversations on food and beverage trends. Well, AI is yet to touch this process. Rushina and her editorial team has done a fabulous job on this consistently over the years.

The overarching theme for this edition is 'Provenance'. In it, we explore the myriad of ways in which the culinary culture of India is rooted and connected to the land - from the ingredients, agricultural practices, regional gastronomies, and ancestral wisdom we have inherited, to the contemporary advancements in research, technology and science that are allowing India and its rich culinary tapestry to align with and create an impact at a global level.

In keeping with this theme, this edition offers insightful exploration into the evolution of trends and movements within the F&B scene that have been steadily building momentum over the last few years, and capturing the forecasts, hopes and desires of industry leaders, for the future. From the innovation in mindful convenience foods that embrace local ingredients and food culture, to the development of Indian specialty cacao, from the rapidly growing interest in native grains for craft beer, to a burgeoning market for locally crafted artisanal cheese, and from creative propositions emerging within the culinary tourism sector, to the evolution of the farm to fork movement and Indian food media today - It's all there!

One trend that fills me with joy is that 2024 will illuminate the pivotal role women have played in the culinary landscape of India. From regional custodians to food entrepreneurs, chefs, bartenders and brewers, women will finally get due recognition for their contribution in shaping Indian gastronomy with creativity and leadership, while fostering inclusivity and inspiring future generations.

Without further ado, I present to you our latest edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report with an aim to inspire new creative and strategic horizons for you, its reader.

I trust you will find the report insightful.



**Sujit Patil (@sujitpatil)**

Vice President & Head - Corporate Brand and  
Communications  
(Godrej Industries Limited & Associate Companies)



# Message from Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal

I welcome you to the latest edition of the Global Food Trends Report.

As I write this, Indian culture is already exerting a far greater influence on the world than ever before. Vibrant Indian textiles are gracing runways, while turmeric masks and yoga are redefining beauty and wellness. Bollywood beats are captivating audiences, and Indian dance trends are exploding online. This cultural wave is also fuelling a global fascination for Indian food, evident in the recent spotlight on Indian millets, and the growing list of prestigious international awards won by Indian coffee, chocolate, whiskey, and cheese. I must add that, watching India's cultural tapestry weave its way into the world, one delicious bite and captivating beat at a time, truly makes it an exciting time to be part of the Indian food industry!

Even as the world turns to us for inspiration, we are looking inward for ours. Closer to home, the theme of provenance is guiding our most relevant conversations about food - one that connects us to the land, the people who nurture it, and the rich cultural traditions that guide our relationship with the environment around us.

A growing segment of conscientious consumers are also re-examining their own relationship with the food they consume. They actively seek stories and connections around authenticity and the values embedded in its journey from farm-to-plate. These new-age consumers will continue to gravitate towards brands and products that champion transparency, region, and tradition, and they are more than willing to pay a premium for this additional value.

This interest in provenance is also translating into real growth for the F&B industry. The “Made in India” sentiment, originally conceived as a political movement, has now morphed into a culinary roar! Traditional ingredients are finding new life in contemporary propositions, with craft beers boasting the use of millets, and artisanal cheeses echoing regional terroir, standing as testaments to this homegrown renaissance. Meanwhile, ongoing scientific and technological advancements, coupled with a growing demand in the market, are encouraging more traditional farmers to take up cultivation of new crops like cacao, coffee, mushrooms, exotic fruits and vegetables.

Our dining habits are also evolving. The traditional plate, once dictated primarily by seasonality and local bounty, is now also being driven by a quest for flavour. More global players are entering the Indian market to feed this hunger for new flavours, a trend that has spilled over into desserts and beverages, as well.

This palate-driven wanderlust is not just confined to dining adventures at home. We are chasing flavours across continents, even as we tick exotic local experiences off culinary bucket lists. We are being drawn out of our comfort-zones by award-winning chefs offering exquisite culinary experiences against breathtaking landscapes, even as we yearn to join local and regional food experts on culinary expeditions to uncover hidden secrets of their cities. These experiences not only offer travellers deeper immersion into local culinary culture and traditions, but also help create economic opportunities for local communities and businesses. A win-win in my book!



As our relationship with food continues to evolve, it is more critical than ever to codify our rich culinary heritage for future generations, lest they be lost forever. We have so many unsung culinary custodians, whose deep knowledge of local, regional and community cuisines is just waiting to be mined. Modern chroniclers are finding success disbursing their food knowledge to a growing community of food enthusiasts through workshops, classes, articles, cookbooks, documentaries, and even social media feeds. Meticulously penned and passionately produced, new chronicles are capturing the evolution of Indian culinary culture in all its vibrancy, constantly reminding us that food is more than just fuel. It is a tapestry that weaves together history, geography, culture, and identity!

Amidst this swirling vortex of change, I am delighted to report one constant that emerged this year - women! I have always felt that despite playing a leading role in culinary narratives across home and professional kitchens, women have not received the recognition that is their due. But as I see more women achievers coming into the spotlight across verticals this year, I am optimistic that the Indian food industry will prove to be a benchmark for empowerment and innovation in the years to come.

2024 promises to bring a culinary adventure to our plates, which will travel across fertile fields and bustling kitchens, to explore both ancestral wisdom and lab-grown wonders, brimming with stories yet to be told, even as our plates await in anticipation. Let us raise a toast to the bounty of the land and the boundless creativity of our people that transforms it into the symphony of flavours for our ever-evolving palates.

I hope that this edition, brimming as it is with insights, data, and innovative trends will remain a valuable resource to help you navigate the culinary landscape all through 2024.



**Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal**  
Curator and Editor-in-Chief  
MD, A Perfect Bite Consulting



## How To Use The Report

## What does the report contain?

The Annual Godrej Food Trends Report is designed to be an impactful and accurate resource for stakeholders from the Indian food and beverage industry as well as their counterparts in global entities looking towards building propositions in India.

The foundation of the report is a survey that collates insights

on dining-in and dining-out behaviours of customers, gathered from a panel of respondents that include global voices, celebrities, pan-India and pan-industry. The analysis of the data gathered spans across quantitative and qualitative parameters and is analysed vertically and horizontally to forecast the coming year's (and

sometimes beyond) trends.

We recommend giving the whole report a read once, then going back to look at specific sections for deeper understanding as required.

## Who is the report for?

The simple answer is that it is for anyone with even the smallest stake in the Indian food industry. It has been designed and laid out for a variety of audiences like:

to understand directions the market will take and plan curriculum, events, special lectures, and personal study projects.

and PR professionals across categories can use this report as an advisory tool, for future forecasting, to suggest brand positioning, marketing strategy, and create brand and product messaging as well as social media content to widen existing audiences and tap new markets for their clients.

### Industry Players

Chefs, restaurateurs, owners and managers of large and small food brands, home chefs and food entrepreneurs can use insights on consumer consumption patterns to plan concepts and cuisines to invest energy and resources into, design menu offerings, strategise on festivals, special menus, and design PR and marketing strategies for the year to come.

**Food Media Professionals**

Food journalists, lifestyle, food and travel writers, food bloggers and social media content creators can draw on this report to plan editorial calendars, pitch trend stories, plan deep dives for research, article pitches and content creation, and strategise on social media content creation in the year to come. In the past, the report has also been recognized as useful source for triggering new story ideas when writer's block strikes.

### Hospitality Institutions

Culinary colleges and hospitality students can draw on insights

## F&B Marketing &

**Communication Professionals**  
Marketing, communication

## How to navigate the report?

The 2024 edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report carries eight sections: Dining In; Dining Out; Beverages; Sweets and Desserts; Health, Hygiene and Lifestyle; Food Media and Studies; Food and Travel; and Emerging Conversations.

Each survey section of the report comprises two subsections. The **culinary deep dive** subsection offers a critical review of a key industry trend that has seen persistent growth over multiple years. This review is presented in a long-form essay and contains

valuable learnings and insights from relevant industry leaders and experts. The **top trends** subsection offers a detailed report on the predictions made by our expert panel about the section's themes in the coming year.

**Here's how to make the most of them.**

### Culinary Deep Dive

This subsection contains an **essay** that takes a comprehensive look at a topic

that has shown resilience during analysis. Each deep dive opens with a **visual spread** filled with interesting and useful

information that makes for an enlightening casual read. It can also potentially trigger further study and exploration

or perhaps even instigate conversations on social media. Turn the page to gain deeper insights on the core theme of the section through a rich, well-researched **essay** about the evolution of the topic in focus. A succinct conclusion at the end summarises the **focus areas** along with several actionable **takeaways** that the reader can leverage for the coming year.

## Top Trends

This subsection begins with a short **overview** of the theme and summarises the high points of trends across all the themes in that section. This subsection also carries a **toolkit** with recommendations for various stakeholders in the F&B industry to explore in 2024. This is followed by a detailed summary of the top 3-5 themes that

emerged from our survey.

Team GFTTR itself keeps returning to explore these pages time and again as the year progresses to leverage the key trends statistics and insights from experts against an evolving industry landscape.

## Who are the experts contributing to this report?

The names of our panel of industry experts who contributed to this edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report have been listed alphabetically at the end of the report. It is our way of thanking our esteemed panellists for their valuable contributions to the report, while also offering our readers an overview of the different people and roles that make up our industry, and for them to follow, connect and build networks with.

## Notes

[illegible]



# Top Trend Predictions for 2024



## ***Authenticity will drive travel experiences***

In 2024, travellers will embark on journeys especially designed to offer deep immersion into local culinary culture, cuisine and flavours. They will seek to enrich their travels through authentic culinary encounters such as bespoke dining experiences, market and city food walks, edible souvenirs and more.



## ***Bespoke cocktails will raise the bar***

Discerning drinkers will look for masterfully crafted cocktail experiences in 2024. The beverage segment will meet this demand with signature offerings inspired by unusual local ingredients and techniques. This shift will drive focus towards celebrity mixologists, bar takeovers and pop-ups.



## ***Chocolate will become a sophisticated affair***

Indian chocolatiers are increasingly showcasing the unique nuances of provenance by artfully combining locally-grown, high-quality cacao beans with unusual Indian ingredients, offering discerning consumers a sophisticated experience around quintessentially Indian flavours through the medium of chocolate.



## ***Hot sauces will be on fire***

The rising demand for all things crispy will ignite a parallel demand for accompaniments to spice up beloved fried snacks. Thanks to a wide array of local and exotic chilli varieties sparking culinary creativity at home and across the industry, spice lovers can look forward to a plethora of fiery options in 2024.



## ***Ingredient-forward concepts will flourish***

In 2024, ingredient-forward concepts will transcend their niche and come into the mainstream. From provenance-driven, farm-to-fork concepts to hyper-local sourcing in both products and experiences across the industry, gastronomic ingenuity will shine through a spotlight on quality components.



## ***K-food will become mainstream***

Korean culture has been garnering a cult following, through sustained initiatives in cultural diplomacy. With its bold flavours and diverse dishes, Korean food will capture mainstream sensibilities. Expect it to be on the plate at home, and on dining-out menus across demographics and geographies in 2024.



## ***Ghee will rise again***

From health-conscious millennials to flavour-driven foodies, ghee's natural goodness, its traditional link to Ayurveda, and its perceived ability to enhance digestion, will all contribute to its renewed appeal as a healthy kitchen staple in 2024. Ghee's provenance, deeply rooted in cultural traditions and mindful farming practices, will fuel a newfound appreciation for its culinary versatility and unique taste profile.



## ***Mindful convenience will be the new mantra***

2024 will see home cooks embrace convenience-based food products that emphasise health, nutrition, quality, and provenance. This focus on mindful consumption will also drive a demand for ready-to-eat snacking options that balance convenience with traditional flavours, wholesome ingredients and transparent sourcing.



## ***Protein-rich foods and beverages will stay pumped***

The focus on health and wellness will have consumers continuing their search for high quality, nutrient-packed, protein-rich foods and beverages. The convenience, versatility, and nutritive properties of poultry and dairy will keep them top-of-mind, particularly for home cooks.



## ***Story-based content will drive conversations***

Story-based, narrative-rich content will be the most successful media format to fuel food conversations in 2024. Concepts around cultural explorations, food history narratives, and personal memoirs, that lend easily to compelling stories, will cut through the mire of clickbait and short-form sensational content, and win the attention of discerning audiences.



## ***Sweet Quotient of desserts will be recalibrated***

The focus of desserts will shift from saccharine indulgence, to nuanced flavours and textures that encompass surprising and skillful ingredient pairings, use of natural sweeteners, and a greater focus on technique; all towards catering to diners looking for a lower sweet quotient.



## ***Women in food will be in spotlight***

2024 will illuminate the pivotal role women have played in the culinary landscape of India. From regional custodians to food entrepreneurs, chefs, bartenders and brewers, women will finally get due recognition for their contribution to shaping Indian gastronomy with creativity, leadership, fostering inclusivity and inspiring future generations.





# Regional Perspectives

## Celebrating the Custodians of Indian Cuisine

*India's booming economy, global diaspora, and rising cultural impact is pushing forth the country's image in the global arena. Food is playing a key role in this movement, sparking both domestic and international interest and setting the stage for deeper discourse around Indian culinary heritage.*

*Recent years have seen a resurgence in interest around traditional food culture, and there are numerous culinary conservation efforts underway all over the country, working to preserve and promote indigenous ingredients, traditional knowledge and practices. While this renewed fervour promises to safeguard India's invaluable heritage for future generations, it is often the formalised food industry of professional and celebrity chefs that receive the acclaim. Meanwhile, passionate individuals, communities, initiatives and small businesses driving these efforts alongside established chefs, tend to remain underrepresented in the mainstream dialogue.*

*Supporting these efforts is crucial to ensure a future of Indian cuisine that will be as vibrant and diverse as its past. With this in mind, the Regional Perspectives section this year celebrates the stories of Custodians of Cuisine, Stewards of Traditional Ingredients, and Culinary Chroniclers who have worked to keep our gastronomic traditions alive by championing varied aspects of Indian Cuisine in 2023. Their dedication and their work serve as inspiration for even more exciting explorations in the years to come.*

## Legacy Custodians of Cuisine

Universally acclaimed for their knowledge, expertise and dedication, Legacy Custodians of Cuisine are individuals that have served as tireless ambassadors, championing the unique cuisines of their regions or communities on national and even global stages for over a decade. Their work often goes beyond the kitchen, encompassing experiential education through formats like cooking workshops, pop-ups and food festivals, as well as documentation, writing, speaking, and being the go-to authority on their subjects

across public platforms.

In a fitting start to this section, Madhur Jaffrey, 90-year-old food writer, television chef, cookbook author and actor, added another feather to her cap on receiving the James Beard Foundation 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award. Jaffrey, who for decades has been a force to reckon with when it comes to championing Indian food and culture, is the first Indian and South Asian to win this prestigious award, which has previously included food icons such as author MFK Fisher

and restaurateur Wolfgang Puck.

In Delhi, Gunjan Goela, food consultant, renowned celebrity chef and historian of Indian gastronomy for over three



decades, celebrated her book Baniya Legacy of Old Delhi – Culture & Cuisine through a discussion with esteemed personalities including Indian Filmmaker Muzaffar Ali, Indian Food Critic Dr. Pushpesh Pant, author & historian Swapna Liddle, Manjit Gill, President of IFCA and Rita Ganguly, a famous disciple of Begum Akhtar. Set in early 1930, the book chronicles the history and culinary culture of Delhi's merchant class, The Baniyas, a distinctive community with a rich heretofore undocumented culinary legacy.

Having set the benchmark with her book Pangat, a Feast, Mumbai-based Sae Koranne-Khandekar has been prolific in her custodianship of Maharashtrian cuisine in 2023 by curating pop-ups and food festivals at Masque Lab, Mumbai, Cobbler and Crew, Pune and more. She has also developed products such as Karanji bonbons (a flaky pastry stuffed with a sweet fresh coconut filling), and Thalipeeth crackers, for Hatti and Giraffe, a brand that makes traditional, hand-crafted sweets and redesigned the menu for Mystic Masala restaurant at Blue Diamond to convert it into a traditional Marathi one.

Kaveri Ponnappa, a distinguished author and food writer, celebrated for her extensive documentation of Coorg culture in her book The Vanishing Kodavas, has championed Coorg cuisine through internationally published articles and papers and her website kaveriponnappa.com. In 2023, she contributed essays on Kodava and Karnataka cuisine to The Bloomsbury Handbook of Indian Cuisine (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023)

Ummi Abdullah, affectionately known as The Matriarch of Mappila Cuisine, has left an indelible mark with her pioneering work, crafting five cookbooks in Malayalam, including Malabar Muslim

Cookery and The Epicure Cookbook, also published in English, which offer rare insights into Mappila food culture. In 2023, she presented a curation of her signature dishes at Kappa Chakka Kandhari, Bengaluru.

Bridget White-Kumar, a prolific cookbook author and culinary consultant, has highlighted Anglo-Indian cuisine prolifically throughout her tenure that began in 2004. Twenty years down the line, she has 12 published works, including recent titles like A Collection of Anglo-Indian Roasts, Casseroles and Bakes and A Collection of Simple Anglo-Indian Recipes. In 2023, she launched her latest cookbook Nostalgic Anglo-Indian Comfort Food and consulted on the menu of Ministry of Chutneys, an Anglo-Indian restaurant launched at Radisson Blu Hotel GRT Chennai.

76-year-old Dilnaz Baig, a connoisseur of Hyderabad Nizami cuisine, has been winning hearts across India for a while now. Known for the Nizami meals she serves at her opulent home in Banjara Hills, 2023 saw the home chef bring her food to Mumbai at Ummrao, Courtyard by Marriott.

These are only a selection of legacy custodians with admirable bodies of work that are setting benchmarks for a whole generation of aspiring custodians. It would be remiss not to mention other noteworthy individuals that have diligently been chronicling and celebrating their

specialities. Gurgaon-based Jain-Marwadi Abhilasha Jain, has been running the popular food venture Marwadi Khana since 2014 from her home kitchen and now operates from a cloud kitchen. Osama Jalali, a seasoned food historian turned chef, continues to curate and showcase Mughlai cuisine, preserving and highlighting the legacy of lost recipes from the Mughal era at pop ups and festivals across the country. Shehnaz Siddiqui, with a tenure of 20 years in the industry, runs The Taste of Bhopal: a Begum's Legacy, that celebrates Bhopali food. Sheetal Bhatt has been archiving the culinary culture of Gujarat's various regions and communities, diligently adding to the repository on her blog 'TheRoute2Roots'. Alka Keswani of Sindhi Rasoi, who led the charge on chronicling the culinary heritage of the Sindhi community via her blog Sindhirasoi.com, has added amazing new insights via her Instagram handle. Pritha Sen, former journalist and culinary expert, who has been delving into the rich culinary history of Bangla cuisine, continues to bring nuances of Bengali cuisine to light. Gitika Saikia who has come to be a prominent ambassador for North East Indian cuisine in Mumbai, continues to share the diverse flavours of Assam through pop-up menus under her brand Gitika's Pakghor. Such seasoned Custodians of Cuisine have led the way for a whole new generation that is today emerging to prominence.





## Emerging Custodians of Cuisine

While not yet household names, Emerging Custodians of Cuisine are the new wave of culinary champions taking the Indian food scene by storm. Rapidly carving a place for themselves in the food scene of India, over the past five years, they’ve catapulted from home kitchens to national, and even global recognition with their unwavering passion for preserving and promoting regional and community cuisines. Offering captivating content like videos and blogs, but also bringing culinary history and culture to life for diverse audiences, sparking a newfound appreciation for the rich tapestry of Indian flavours.

Many Indian diners today prefer a home chef’s table over eating at restaurants, for the educational experiences they offer. Home chefs are experts championing the unique traditions of their culinary heritage, offering unforgettable taste journeys from intimate chef’s tables, vibrant pop-up events to interactive cooking classes. Their fresh perspectives and vibrant interpretations promise to introduce new generations to the wonders of regional Indian cuisine, ensuring its legacy continues to thrive for years to come.

Kunzes Angmo from Leh, crafts unique Ladakhi dining experiences using indigenous ingredients and has put Ladakh on the map with her pop ups across various parts of the country. Her exclusive 3-hour long traditional Ladakhi lunches

showcased at The Jade house and Stok Palace in Ladakh are rich with narratives that honour the produce and practices of Ladakhi foodways. In the same vein, Nilza Wangmo of Alchi Kitchen has also been showcasing Ladhaki cuisine at pop-ups across India, and was also recently awarded The Global Naari Samman Awards in Mauritius by Mrs. Leela Devi Dookhun, Vice-Prime Minister of Mauritius for her work.

Mumbai-based Marina Balakrishnan has been curating plant-forward dining experiences inspired by North Kerala’s Thalassery cuisine, and championing seasonal and locally sourced ingredients through her venture Oottupura. In 2023 she took her special brand of vegetarian Kerala cuisine to diners in New York City and Mexico.

Newer players are offering up lesser-known cuisine beyond their home regions in exciting new formats. In Mumbai, cook and researcher, Mogan Rodrigues specialises in the food and culture of the native East Indian community of Mumbai. He conducts special walking tours showcasing his village of Uttan, which culminate in elaborate East Indian feasts.

Bengaluru-based Anjali Ganapathy, of Pigout Coorg Kitchen, offers immersive events that highlight the flavours of Kodava cuisine. Chef, researcher and writer Taiyaba Ali showcases home-style Lucknow food, with a special focus on its

use of seasonal vegetables, and hosts curated pop-ups across major cities. Chef and consultant Rachit Keertiman offers Odia dining experiences, emphasising hyperlocal ingredients and recipes. Chef Deepa Chauhan has been championing Sindhi food culture through her social media content and curated dining experiences, after garnering much recognition on Season 7 of MasterChef India in 2023.

The cuisines of the North East have seen a wave of young champions coming to the fore in recent years. After Assam and Nagaland, the cuisine of Meghalaya became popular in 2023. Tanisha Phanbuh of Tribal Gourmet has brought Meghalaya’s lesser-known tribal cuisine from the Khasi, Garo and Jaintia communities to Delhi. Meanwhile, sisters Daphi & Daki Warjrai are taking the cuisine of the Khasi community across the country through creative pop-ups, paving the way for other hyper-regional cuisines to shine.

Collectively, these emerging experts along with many other passionate, entrepreneurial individuals have been driving conversations around lesser known regional cuisines of India, showcasing the richness and true expanse of our culinary diversity.



test of time and technology.

India possesses a remarkable wealth of plant biodiversity, and the conservation of native edible plant species is of critical importance. Individual and community efforts are underway across the country to preserve, propagate and promote these

valuable resources. Shruti Tharayil of Forgotten Greens has been evangelising wild edible plants through guided foraging walks and is currently on a cycle yatra across South India learning about traditional knowledge and practices surrounding forgotten greens in small towns. Spearheaded by artist and gardener Suresh Kumar G. Sarjapura Curries in B Hosahalli near Bangalore, offers an unconventional hub for community engagement to bring attention back to edible indigenous greens often ignored or forgotten. as weeds, by driving their awareness about them and propagating preservation In Karnataka, individuals like Dr. Prabhakar Rao, founder of Hariyalee Seeds, are building seed banks to preserve heirloom vegetable varieties that have been vanishing from urban diets, while organisations like Spudnik Farms have been working with small farmers to conserve and revitalise the native diversity of vegetable crops. Similarly, in Manipur, Zeinorin Stephen and Leiyolan Vashum run Hill Wild, a company that uplifts small farmers growing hyper regional spices like Sirarakhong Chillies,

supporting them with post harvest processing, packing and distribution.

In the same vein, various initiatives today are attempting to revitalise our biodiversity of native grains, both in the fields and on our plates. The Deccan Development Society, an agri-based NGO from Telangana, empowers marginalised women farmers, particularly those growing millets in the arid state, by supporting them to become seed bankers of their heirloom seeds through their Millet Sisters Network. Meanwhile, Spirit of the Earth in Chennai and Amar Khamar in Kolkata are reviving lost rice varieties, through consumer education and creation of new urban markets for traditional paddy farmers. Similarly, Three One Farms is adopting a systems approach to repopularize vanishing Indian heirloom wheat varieties in the face of climate change.

Dairy has always been a rich business in India, and there are many initiatives around the country that are working to create new propositions in the segment. Ilse Rollefson of Camel Charisma is working to build

opportunities for pastoral camel herders through value-added camel milk products like cheese and milk drinks. Panchal Dairy, an entrepreneurial initiative by the youth of the Maldhari pastoral community from Sayla, Gujarat, are using artisanal cheesemaking as a means to create additional livelihoods for their community.

In a country as vast as India, particularly one with such a rich agrarian history and culture, this is merely a small selection of notable and inspiring work. Countless other champions like these, are the driving force behind a growing movement to preserve culinary heritage by safeguarding regionally important ingredients and creating means to incentivise more small and primary producers to do the same.



## Chroniclers of Traditional Foodways

Chroniclers of Traditional Foodways play a crucial role in preserving and sharing valuable cultural knowledge. These writers, authors, video documentarians, and content creators are consistently building an authoritative and highly regarded body of work on traditional food practices and foodways for a wide audience. Creating in-depth chronicles exploring specific cuisines, traditions, ingredients, or techniques, they are doing invaluable work, fostering cultural understanding and appreciation, connecting people to place, history, and identity, and preserving knowledge for future generations.

In the realm of written documentation, 2023 saw some

really interesting new food books that covered diverse topics, setting the tone for new approaches to chronicling. The Bloomsbury Handbook of Indian Cuisine edited by chronicling stalwarts Colleen Taylor Sen, Sourish Bhattacharyya and Helen Saberi, is a comprehensive reference work that documents the cuisine and foodways of India in all their diversity and complexity. Forgotten Foods: Memories and Recipes from Muslim South Asia, edited by Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, Tarana Husain Khan, and Claire Chambers is an anthology showcasing Muslim food writing in the form of essays and recipes by some of South Asia’s best writers. It carries work by Indian writers Rana Safvi, Sadaf Hussain and more.

Food chronicler Odette Mascarenhas, who has published 12 books, including the Alfie Alphonso series for kids, The Culinary Heritage of Goa and many others launched The Culinary Odyssey of Goa, a book that took seven years of research and documentation into poems, oral lore, recipes, and culinary heritage of the various villages and communities that make up Goa.

Author and publisher Archana Pidathala’s book, Five Morsels of Love, explored her late grandmother’s Telangana cuisine. Under her self-publishing initiative Five Morsels Press, she has also published Why Cook, a beautifully written and photographed book that offers a remarkable perspective



into the culinary biographies of a handful of women from different parts of India. Similarly, Chef Tia Anasuya's book Adukkala, A Family Food Odyssey, takes readers on a culinary journey through Kerala's food through the memories and personal histories of 15 women in her family.

The foodways of Odisha have been emerging strongly in recent chronicling efforts. Sweta Biswal, author of the blog Odisha on My Plate, launched her debut book, Beyond Dalma - A Holistic Foray Into Odia Food, which has added a valuable resource on Odia food. Ritu Pattanaik, launched 259 Inherited Recipes of Odisha, a meticulously curated book on authentic, unique, traditional dishes of Odisha for posterity.

In the same vein, there has been exciting work to document the food of Nagaland. Naga Cuisine: Ethnic Flavours, perhaps the first self published cookbook on Naga cuisine in the year 2003, was re-published in 2023. Its author, Rovi Chasie, renowned in the culinary community of Nagaland, has been championing Naga food for more than two

decades. The new edition has been enriched with articles delving into the journey of Naga cuisine, its growth and development, the place it occupies in people's lives, and how it represents Naga culture. The recipe section showcases dishes from different tribes, and indigenous ingredients like forest fern, squash, yam, sprouts, kholar, rice, beans, and mushrooms, and an array of Naga chutneys and pickles, as well as lesser known meats and protein sources like silkworms, woodworms, crabs, spiders, king hornet, grasshoppers, snails and frogs.

Beyond books, video has become a favoured format for chronicling food. Indian cuisine offers opportunity for diverse approaches to video content creation and channels run by some exceptionally talented creators are becoming very popular. Kanak Khathuria, Nisha Madhulika, Uma Raghuraman of Masterchefmom, Delhi Food Walks, and Bong Eats, are some of the most watched creators on YouTube. But a host of new creators are bringing varied and wonderful facets of Indian cuisine into the spotlight. Independent

creator Nihar Desai of Bay101 Film Studio has been creating beautifully produced short films on Instagram and Vimeo, documenting the nuances of Gujarati food. Meanwhile, Krish Ashok has been making insightful Instagram Reels busting common myths and misconceptions using science and traditional food wisdom. The series Kolkata Classics by Dolon Dutta Chowdhury and Anindya and Madhushree Basu has taken the Internet by storm with its beautifully curated videos that preserve and showcase the culinary heritage and narratives of the hidden gems of Kolkata through digital storytelling and food walks.

Collectively such creators enrich cultural understanding and appreciation for traditional foodways across numerous formats and platforms, pushing the discourse around Indian food to new depths.



### Exemplary Community Engagement Initiatives

Launched in, or having created significant impact in 2023, these noteworthy projects have attempted to build education and public engagement around themes of regional and traditional food.

Edible Issues, a collective that focuses on fostering conversations on the Indian food systems has been busy in 2023. They debuted their project, Roots To Resilience, a collaborative exploration of the untold stories of tuber crops and the vibrant native communities that nurture them, at the Serendipity Arts Festival. They also curated Ripe for Change, a recurring event to explore the indigenous biodiversity of bananas through guided tasting

sessions.

Chennai-based artist and food designer Akash Muralidharan's project The Case of Missing Vegetables is an art installation that began as a pandemic project. This initiative has continued to drive conversations, shedding light on forgotten vegetables and the diminishing vegetable diversity that was in regular consumption as late as the mid 20th century. Serendipity, a not-for-profit arts and cultural development foundation, presented 'The Case of Missing Vegetables' at the India Art Fair in 2023.

OOO Farms, a community farming movement to revive the indigenous seeds and food

crops, has been evangelising wild and foraged foods, heirloom rice varieties and more, through immersive festivals. The objective of these annual festivals has been to create market demand for small-scale traditional producers and drive dialogue around the role of these producers in building nutrition security and food sovereignty in India. In 2023, they brought back both of their incredibly popular festivals - The Wild Food Festival, and The Rice Festival, to great success.

The Locavore is an organisation championing the best regional food across India through storytelling, recipes, events, and producer partnerships. In 2023, they launched the Millet Revival

Project to demystify cooking with millets, showcase the impact they have on the ecology and facilitate the gradual re-incorporation of millets into our diets. Their Worli Koliwada Project is another great initiative launched in 2023 with the aim of bringing attention to Mumbai's native Koli fishing community in Worli, using food as a lens to showcase their unique culinary and cultural heritage, while also providing economic opportunities for the Koliwada's local residents.

The Nilgiri Earth Festival saw its second edition in 2023, hosted by The Nilgiris Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation working to share knowledge and build bridges between eco-development initiatives in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve and the rest of the world. Previously known as The Nilgiri Wild Food Festival, this annual multi-day festival brought together people from diverse disciplines, including chefs, culinary experts, regenerative farmers and gardeners, local artisans, and visitors. The programming featured excursions, workshops, dialogues and shared meals, spotlighting the cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge of the Nilgiris and

its indigenous communities, particularly in the context of a changing climate.

2023 also witnessed the tenth edition of the Samvaad Conclave in Jamshedpur, bringing together more than 2,500 people from over 150 tribes from across the length and breadth of India. The theme for Samvaad 2023, Walk with Me, focused on the journey of ideas, individuals and collectives from and amongst the tribes of India to combine large scale dialogue on critical aspects like climate justice, economic participation, educational outcomes, governance, leadership and more with unstinted celebration of tribal culture. One of the highlights of this year's Conclave was 140 tribal home cooks from 37 tribes and 17 states coming together to showcase their deep connection between food and identity.

There have been many other great initiatives that have fostered community engagement in 2023. Rajasthan-based The Kindness Meal delves into the fusion of food and art, curating immersive culinary encounters that engage multiple senses. Their current endeavour involves a captivating

exploration of Rajasthan's rich culinary legacy, promising to rediscover and celebrate the region's gastronomic heritage. The Open Field, is an agro-tourism venture that has been showcasing Jharkhand's tribal cuisine since 2021, accentuated by native ingredients and a fine dining approach. Its dynamic team has expanded offerings to include farm-to-table dining, cultural events, flea markets and more, all aimed at promoting sustainability and local empowerment through a fusion of tribal traditions and modern innovation.

Such dynamic and multi-disciplinary initiatives have been crucial in driving engagement around regional food and culinary heritage in exciting new ways, creating forums for greater cultural understanding and appreciation in a country as diverse as India.

In 2024, we are excited to see more important work by such Custodians of Cuisine, Stewards of Traditional Ingredients, Culinary Chroniclers and Community Engagement Initiatives, weaving a more nuanced and delicious tapestry of regional Indian food perspectives for the world.







# Global Perspectives

***India is a land of vibrant cultures and diverse landscapes, with a rich, multifaceted, and dynamic culinary evolution. Indians, with their inherently complex palates, love the excitement of new flavours that hit high notes. With a rich history of cultural and social amalgamations through the ages, India has constantly embraced and celebrated global flavours, weaving an intricate tapestry of local and global influences in its cuisines. Recent years however, have seen a revolution in which a young generation of culinary enthusiasts are displaying greater inclination to include international flavours and cuisines in their daily life. Rise in disposable incomes, improved access to global cuisines, growth in international travels, and ongoing proliferation of high-quality food content on traditional and social media, are some of the factors making the contemporary Indian culinary scenario more dynamic and diverse than ever.***

## Dining Out: A Feast of Global Flavours

5-star hotels and fine-dining establishments have always been the primary drivers behind introducing a new global cuisine in India. Buoyed by the success of this initial exposure to elite diners, the cuisine then trickles down over time, passing through casual dining restaurants, smaller eateries, and street food establishments, finally arriving at store shelves, often transforming radically, to become an integral part of everyday eating habits of the masses. This journey can be seen played out in national favourites like European, Italian, and Chinese cuisines. The continued passion for Chindian (Chinese-Indian) cuisine with its masala-fied deliciousness, or Indian-Italian, the spicier, creamier, uniquely-sauced Indian bhaji of Italian cuisine, is a glowing testament of India's ability to create unique hybrid cuisines by adapting international cuisines to its palate. Meanwhile, a growing segment of well-travelled contemporary Indian diners, recognizing the significant difference between the original and local versions of their

favourite cuisines, are now seeking authentic experiences back home. The restaurant industry is quickly recognizing this niche, even as a new, more nuanced segment of eateries up the ante with more authentic offerings.

While it took its time over the last decade, Mexican food will finally have its moment in 2024, with a new wave of restaurants, caterers and cloud kitchens creating exciting new propositions. Local chefs are delving deeper into studying Mexican cuisine, while expat Mexican chefs like Chef Jason James Hudanish of Pompa, Mumbai, are bringing authentic flavours and new ideas to the mix. All of this is resulting in finer offerings for the Indian diner, and has sparked a surge of interest in authentic Mexican ingredients like blue corn masa, chillies like Poblano and Habanero, and in traditional techniques like nixtamalization. Given enough impetus, Mexican cuisine, with its affinity to Indian flavours, will thrive in India in times to come.

The resurgence of Mexican cuisine has also brought renewed focus on erstwhile peripheral cuisines like Mediterranean, Spanish, Greek and other lesser known European cuisines. In Mediterranean cuisine, established fine-dining brands like Bayroute, and casual restaurants such as Zima, by Dubai based gourmet foodpreneurs Zareen Baig and Atiq Kapadia, are bringing a new wave of authentic offerings for diners looking for experiences that go beyond Pita- Hummus, Lavash and dips.

Southeast-Asian cuisines will always be popular with Indian diners who are partial to the flavour profiles of these regions, but the footprint of this long-established segment, is both deepening and widening. Well established restaurants like Seefah (Mumbai), Tsuki (Pune), Kembara (Hyderabad), Muro (Bangalore), Fireback (Goa) will dive deeper into embracing real, traditional flavours and techniques, and take diners on exciting journeys off-the-eaten-path. Simultaneously,

there will be an increase in types of Asian cuisines, with new restaurants bringing in fresh Asian flavours. Japanese and Korean restaurants in particular will see significant traction, with concepts like teppanyaki, robata, and ramen becoming increasingly prevalent.

Meanwhile, India with its rising economy, is increasingly becoming the focus of global food brands. New international chains are arriving everyday, targeting not only metros, but smaller cities as well. Establishments like Pret-A-Manger, P.F.Changs, Taco Bell, The Chocolate Room, Au Bon Pain, Auntie Annies, and even 7-11 are slowly percolating into the everyday food scenario, even as well-established chains like Yauatcha, Jamies, California Pizza Kitchen, Chilis, Hard Rock, Nandos, Ruby Tuesdays, and TGI Fridays continue to make a mark.

The cafe segment in particular is poised for a major transformation. They

will witness an upswing in international luxury, upscale, casual dining spaces with players like Muji Cafe and the soon to open Armani Cafe coming in. In teatotaling India, non-alcoholic casual dining formats that offer accessible and affordable options will always find takers. While trendsetting metro cities already have a well established cafe culture, Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities will see an explosion of cafes offering diverse experiences, across various formats and themes, and catering to varied demographics.

Pop-ups, supper clubs and crossover experiences have been responsible for the most exciting movements in the dining out segment in recent years. Their explosive growth has been whetting appetites and appeasing cravings of the Indian diner chasing new and exciting flavours. A niche section of the food industry, populated by expat and local chefs, home chefs, creative independent chefs, and mixologists, has been

creating unique and exciting propositions of intimate limited edition experiences showcasing the world on the plate. These are creating opportunities for diners to explore homestyle, micro cuisines, experimental meal formats, and seasonal and topical concepts not found in more conventional restaurants.

With global brands and cuisines percolating into more cities, classic flavours like Asian and Mexican being presented with fresh new twists, established cuisines getting more nuanced, newer global cuisines slowly entering the mainstream, and pop ups adding excitement, 2024 looks like an exciting year for dining-out!



## Dining In: The World on the Plate

While dining out offers a taste of the world, home cooking is still at the heart of the Indian culinary landscape. The increasing popularity of international cuisines has home cooks experimenting with global flavours in their own kitchens. From hand-rolling Italian pastas and sushi, to whipping up a ramen or pizza from scratch, home chefs are bringing the world to their dining tables. Home cooking trends are more straightforward, as they directly reflect dining out and travel influences. Mexican and Asian are leading the palate with more options on supermarket shelves, even as fine food stores are groaning under the weight of ingredients from all around the world. Together, they offer experimental home cooks endless opportunities to assuage their hunger for globally-inspired feasts at home!

Mexican food has always been a more popular choice at home in India, but the ubiquitous Taco is now passé. Home cooks have given in to the allure of Mexican ingredients and are whipping up fiestas of Enchiladas, Fajitas, Salsas, and Guacamole using imported fresh produce, spice blends, condiments, hot sauces and a variety of ready mixes from brands like Nandos, Cholula, and Tabasco. Asian food, on the other hand, will never go out of fashion. But here too, there are more choices than ever before. Adventurous cooks today are experimenting with this expanding repertoire of specialty Asian ingredients, taking inspiration from social media and their own travels. Ramen, in particular, is seeing unprecedented popularity as K-food soars, resulting in rising demand for categories typically associated with Korean food like

instant, dried and fresh noodles, DIY kits, ready-to-use stock, exotic toppings and meats.

The pandemic also catalysed bread baking at home. A large majority of people who took up hobby baking while confined to their home in those years, continue to be fascinated by all things yeast. Some of these enthusiastic home bakers even went professional, selling innovatively global baked goods from their own small businesses, or through tie-ups with other cloud kitchens. Their initiatives can be credited for taking sourdough, multigrain, and more complex artisanal breads from occasional indulgences in the past, to a more prominent spot on the dining table, even in smaller cities!

The pandemic lockdowns fueled a home-cooking craze



in India that refuses to fade even two years later. Fueling this hunger for exploration and experimentation, resurgent gourmet food stores are acting as platforms for discovery, offering specially curated selections of products to whet the appetite of the adventurous Indian cooks. Brands like Chenab Gourmet and Urban Platter are already catering to this growing segment of cooks with high-quality, premium ingredients and products that promise to elevate their culinary creations. Not only are they opening doors to flavours that were previously out-of-reach of average home cooks, but they are also enriching home

### Beverages: A Spirited Revolution

Like dining in and out of home, the beverage scene in India is also transforming rapidly, reflecting the changing preferences of a diverse and ever-evolving audience. The Indian consumer is focusing on clean drinking, with a preference for additive-free low sugar options but there are clear demographic-based variations. While boomers prefer traditional choices, Gen X and Millennials are driving exploration, especially in the cocktail realm. Gen Z, still experimenting, are partial to top-shelf drinks and low-alcohol or no-alcohol options. This offers the beverage segment a landscape rife with opportunity to play in.

Within the Indian beverage space, coffee has really seen a revolution. Catalysed by international chains like Starbucks, Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Cinnabon, Dunkin Donuts, Di Bella and Costa Coffee that have now percolated into smaller cities, the thriving segment continues to attract brands, the latest entrant being Tim Hortons. This coffee renaissance has also driven Indian brands into joining the fray, and Indian coffee is winning global recognition. But home is where the real excitement will

cooking like never before with global flavours, Chenab Gourmet once catered primarily to the HoReCa sector, but is now playing a significant role in bringing global ingredients into Indian home kitchens. Urban Platter on the other hand, has not only become the go-to e-commerce platform servicing homes pan India, but is also quietly revolutionising vegan cooking with specialty products like nutritional yeast, nut milk powders, plant-based butters and vegan cheeses.

2024 will bring a dynamic and evolving scenario in the Indian home kitchen, brimming with innovation, experimentation,

and a growing appreciation for diverse culinary experiences. It will also bring interesting new offerings as trends interact and influence each other, such as vegan dishes inspired by global flavours, baking techniques cross pollinating with Indian influences and sustainability, ethical sourcing, and local ingredients playing bigger roles in consumer behaviour.



that prevailed until recently. Robust flavours, ranging from earthy to smokey, varied profiles and a perception of being healthier have contributed to their popularity. This is also driving the rise of homegrown Agave spirits. Rum is poised for growth, with new craft offerings entering the market and the gin craze, once at its peak, has evolved into a broader cocktail revolution, where classic concoctions are receiving exciting makeovers and finding their way onto menus across India.

But it is the Indian bar scene where the most exciting stuff is being stirred up! The adventurous Millennial and Gen Z segments, looking for exciting new tipples are fueling a rising trend of bar takeovers. A new wave of creative talents in the mixology space - celebrity mixologists - you might call them, are collaborating with



Spirits are on the up and up! Tequila, Mezcal, and Agave spirits are a new and exciting category, gaining a cult following, and challenging the traditional dominance of whisky, the wave of Indian gins

restaurants and bars, to shake up the cocktail segment like never before! Bespoke cocktail menus featuring everything from innovative cocktails combining international spirits and Indian flavours, IMFL spirits, mixed with exotic global ingredients, techniques like fat washing and clarification, are all being juxtaposed with indigenous ingredients, giving

### Desserts & Bakeries: A Sweet Escape

The Indian desserts scene is no stranger to global influences. From French macarons with Indian fillings to Italian panna cotta flavoured with cardamom, pastry chefs have been blending international flavours with local traditions and vice versa to create unique and delectable treats for years. But India's love for sweets is legendary, and the Indian sweet lover can never get enough of creativity when it comes to sweets. Add to this the interactive dessert experiences driven by the current social media era and there is no limit to the experimentation and creativity the segment will see.

Innovation across segments is rife, but there has been an exciting rise in treats like Korean doughnuts, Middle Eastern Kunafa, and Turkish Baklava offering delightful global escapes for the Indian sweet tooth. Fuelled by a generation of internationally-trained pastry chefs returning home to exercise their craft for a local audience, coming years will bring continued innovation in viennoiserie and patisserie, incorporating diverse cultural

Indian mixology recognition locally and globally.

2024 promises a rich blend of traditional favourites and exciting new choices, not to mention a unique and delightful beverage culture that will only get more and more exciting for the Indian consumer when it comes to drinking.



influences and offering up a world of confections from small patisseries and cloud kitchens. This new generation will also foster beautiful cross pollinations of technique and flavour pairing.

Chocolate will continue to be the most popular sweet indulgence, but the Indian Chocolate consumer has grown up and is looking for more sophisticated offerings. Chocolate shops, cafes, and experience centres will offer bespoke interactive experiences, showcasing beans and bars of imported and local provenance and masterfully crafted offerings melded with out-of-the-box flavour inclusions of a global standard.

Donuts revolutionised the Indian sweet tooth with the advent of Krispy Kreme. Embraced and taken pan-India by Mad Over Donuts. 2024 will see love for these delectable fried confections, drive increased interest in global variants like Spanish Churros, Korean Doughnuts, Italian Bombolinis and more as more global and

homegrown brands enter the market with ever increasing flavour pairings.

As we look to a sweet 2024, it's evident that desserts and bakeries like every other vertical in the Indian food industry will offer a delightful journey through evolving tastes, cultural fusion, and innovative creations. It will also be interesting to see how sustainability, innovation in diet and health specific categories, like plant-based offerings, will create even more opportunities for the dessert segment.

India is poised to become a global culinary destination to reckon with, in years to come. With a food culture that is a fascinating blend of tradition and innovation, and an ingrained willingness to embrace global influences while staying true to its roots, ensures that India's culinary scenario will remain exciting and ever-evolving when it comes to global flavours. After all there is a feast for the senses and a journey across the globe, waiting to be explored through the plate!





# Dining In

*The dining scene at home is at an exciting crossroads, balancing convenience with conscientiousness at one end, and tradition with experimentation on the other.*

*Time-pressed individuals are ordering-in more frequently, while also relying on ready-to-cook and heat-and-eat options to stay on top of increasingly busy schedules. However, they are less willing to compromise on their health, beliefs, values, customs, and traditions for the sake of this convenience. The conscientious amongst them are looking more critically at the provenance of their food, and gauging their experience in totality, even if it involves paying a premium for this added transparency.*

*Meanwhile, the industry continues to find new and innovative ways to fuel this evolution through convenient and accessible home dining solutions that don't compromise on quality or the experience. Food delivery apps are booming, offering wider choices and faster service. Restaurants, cloud kitchens and even homechefs are expanding their menus to include fresh, healthy, regional, and gourmet meal options, often personalised for individual dietary needs and taste preferences. More brands are sharing stories about their ingredients, processes and supply chains to improve engagement with their customers.*

*With consumer focus firmly on mindful convenience, and the industry playing sous chef to meet this demand, the future of home dining promises to be exciting and flavourful. In the Dining In section this year, we take a look at some of these factors that are influencing big changes in the Indian home and kitchen.*

## Convenience on the plate

*A sample of convenient options available for the time-crunched foodie in 2024*



- DIY Sushi & Ramen Bowl kits
- Frozen bone broths, dumplings
- Customisable add-ons



- Packaged traditional Indian snacks, granola & trail mixes
- Healthy & nutrition focused snackables as meal alternatives



- Pre-marinated, Frozen & RTC hot snacks
- Kebabs, samosas, momos, cutlets



- Fresh and shelf-stable batters & flours
- Ready-made & instant chutney options
- Just-add-water sambar & rasam powders

- Curry pastes, powders and premixes in regional cuisine
- Growing variety of frozen & RTE regional flatbreads
- RTC recipe & meal kits



- Pre-prepped salad kits & subscriptions
- Salad dressings, condiments, seasonings from home chefs, big & small brands
- Pre-portioned, marinated & other convenience-based meat & protein options



- Dry, fresh & artisanal ready-to-use pasta
- Variety of fresh pasta sauces from chefs, big & small businesses
- DIY gourmet pasta kits





# Convenience And The Changing Indian Plate

*The Indian kitchen has always been extremely particular about freshly cooked food. However, the last decade has witnessed a slow but definite shift towards convenient cooking solutions. What initially meant one-size-fits-all and easy cooking solutions, has evolved over time.*

## Focus Areas

India's home kitchens have long emphasised fresh, home-cooked meals, reflecting cultural values and preferences. However, the winds of change that are blowing strongly in the kitchen are bringing a fascinating shift in the convenience segment from the initial one-size-fits-all to nuanced options that cater to specific needs and preferences and diverse requirements, even going so far as to take into account regional variations thanks to changing demographics, rising disposable incomes, and evolving lifestyles of millennials and Gen Z in particular. The landscape for players catering to the convenience food segment is rife with possibilities and opportunities in 2024.

## A Rapidly Evolving Young Market

The Indian food marketplace is at an exciting phase of evolution today. While consumers are more mindful and aware of what they put on their plate, they are no longer shying away from convenient, time-saving solutions like ready-to-cook (RTC) and ready-to-eat (RTE) foods.

Glimpses into Indian kitchens these days may reveal a refrigerator stocked with packets of frozen *kebabs*, *tandoori tempeh*, pre-marinated Thai lemon fish, or jars of *masala kimchi*. Pantry shelves may

boast of pouches of chickpea fusilli, organic *ragi dosa*, or instant *kadha* mixes. Dining tables may have personalised *khov suey* made with pitch-perfect readymade paste, or a salad, assembled with pre-prepped zoodles. Home cooking has shed the notion that all packaged foods are unhealthy, and is now ready to embrace a more customisable individualised philosophy.

Food brands, big and small, are taking cognisance that Indian consumers are increasingly becoming label nerds. In

response, they are offering solutions that cater to varied demands of clean eating and finely spliced dietary choices. Supermarkets and *kirana* stores today are laden with a rapidly expanding array of healthy (or healthier), convenient options placing them at the perfect sweet spot between two seemingly diverse consumer demands. This shift empowers home cooks with a greater degree of control over comfort, quality and customisation while removing the drudge from daily cooking.

compromises on their health or nutritional requirements. These new ways of preparing and consuming food have also made the demand for emerging products more specific than ever before.

*“We became rapid adopters,”* remarks **Ankit Gupta**, co-founder of Burma Burma

Restaurant and Tea Room, which also retails a range of cooking pastes, condiments, snacks, seasonings, and more, via its dedicated online store, Burma Burma Shop. He observes that the pandemic also accelerated consumer adoption of online shopping for convenience foods by five to seven years. *“Many factors*



*contributed to this. Consumers became more aware and tech savvy. UPI payment gateways took off. Last mile delivery became easier as channel partners grew. All this changed our behaviour. Thanks in no small part to social media we began to follow brand stories,*

## Convenience and Last Mile Cooking

As conscious consumers increasingly seek healthfulness in their choices, there has emerged a clear desire to make healthy food, often associated with more work, more convenience!



*“The foremost sign of this is pantry editing, when consumers begin replacing their regular staples with healthier options, such as replacing sugar with jaggery, or rice and atta with millets, and switching to healthier cooking solutions like the air fryer,”* observes **Siddharth Ramasubramanian**,

founder & CEO of Vegolution, the company behind Hello Tempayy. Going on to point out that the conscious foodies of today are aware of their relationship with food, They are constantly making healthier choices at every level, but without caring much for the additional work required to do so. *“Unlike its traditional predecessor, the post-pandemic Indian kitchen doesn't like too much toil,”* comments Ramasubramanian, *“While microwave meals (as seen in the West) are still a stretch for us, because we want to feel like we are eating freshly prepared food, we have become aware*

*and now we want to be part of those brands' stories.”* This demand incubated dozens of brands that offered endless options for healthy solutions, including Hello Tempayy, Two Brothers Organic Farms, Atta Girl, WickedGüd, and more, all available at the tap of a finger.

*that cooking can be as simple as assembling a few easy to prepare elements.”*

This demand is leading brands like Pluckk for ready sprouts and pre-cut vegetables; Harvest Salad Co. and Saladable for salad kits; RUS Organic for raw pressed juices; LQI Smoothies for smoothies; and Mavi's for a gamut of *kombucha*, *kimchi*, *kefir* and other ferments, to flourish.



## Indianness Driving Innovation

The demand for toil-free convenience extends beyond simple pre-preparation solutions. Consumers are also recognising the merit of exploring holistic, Indian dietary wisdom in food practices beyond their own home, community and region. As a result, “Indianness” can be seen as a compelling theme across the industry and media, and the convenience food sector is making the most of it.

Testament to this is scrolling social media or a visit to any food festival lately, where one is spoilt for choice by a treasure trove of small brands and local entrepreneurs offering a variety of signature spices, spice blends, curry pastes and more to make traditional Indian cooking convenient without losing out on flavour.

Semi-processed solutions are listing real ingredients, entirely recognisable by grandmothers, while allowing the home cook ample agency over both nutrition and taste. Solutions like these champion authentic traditional, regional cooking from several small brands, typically run by individuals and women's groups. Notable examples include Mother of Malvan, inspired by Malwani cuisine; *Jevayla* Ye, promoting the East Indian cuisine of Mumbai; Women of Fatorda, a Goan brand; and *MahaRasa* from Chennai. These brands are helping to preserve and promote India's unique culinary heritage, while also bringing people together from different regions of the country. Such offerings allow enough room to experiment with new flavours and formats, all with the

satisfaction of serving freshly cooked food easily and quickly.

One dynamic brand that has taken this concept further is Tulua Foods, which sells ready curry pastes, and has recently launched single-origin spices. Founder **Richy Dave** previously ran a marketing agency that worked with a number of F&B brands, and noticed a drastic evolution of key consumption patterns in India, driven by a younger, busier, and more adventurous generation. *“With Millennials, the market became a lot more open to experiment with things that are new and convenient.”* Dave grabbed the opportunity, and launched the Tulua RTC spice pastes. *“Traditional Indian food is complex and*





*beautiful, but requires time and very specific skills to make properly, both of which are expensive, or in increasingly short supply.”* Tulua's innovative new offerings that went beyond the generic Makhani and Kolhapuri were a good fit, and set a high benchmark for the segment. *“The quality of*

## The Rise Of Provenance

While “Indianness” is driving immersion into varied regional cuisines, it is parallelly sparking conversations around provenance and authenticity, which in turn is driving growth within the Indian F&B industry.

The home kitchen is seeking better quality - from basic ingredients like spices, grains and pulses, to complex accompaniments like pickles, condiments, chutneys, dips and dressings. Dave confirms this, having recently launched single-origin spices for retail at Tulua. She adds that it took them two years to solve Tulua's spice supply issue and create a supply chain strong enough to meet their needs. But once done, they started supplying to the B2B segment. Soon after, getting into retail was a natural extension. *“With spices, it didn't matter to people where they were coming from until a few years ago. But now customers, though still price conscious, are more educated, know what they want, and go the extra mile to find out more. There is a lot more pride in Made in India and Indian origin. It's good because it keeps brands in check,”* says Dave.

In addition to origins, Indian consumers are increasingly becoming more conscious and invested in the idea of foods and beverages having “provenance”, or a backstory anchored in heritage and trust, and/or made using traditional, artisanal processes. This has also given rise to brands like The Locavore,

*the raw ingredients, especially spices available in the existing RTC supplier space was terrible and inconsistent, affecting the quality of our pastes. And this extended across HoReCa, so I began looking for high quality, consistent, unadulterated spices from across India.”*

which champions local produce by highlighting producers and growers, telling their stories, and providing a platform for them to showcase their work. *“When it comes to keywords like sustainable, eco, or organic – the average customer doesn't have the time to investigate products with these labels,”* points out founder ***Chef Thomas Zacharias.***

Elaborating on The Locavore's approach to selecting and promoting producer partners, Zacharias says ***“You have to spend time with each producer to see if they're reliable. We do something a little less quantitative, and more qualitative. To tell the stories of these producers, we have to build a relationship with them with a lot of care and insight.”*** Being able to make conscious food choices is not about labels like 'organic', he explains. At The Locavore, the process is to break down the backstory of partner producers into their various values and practices. *“Can they find the source or origin of a product? Can they pinpoint it to growers? Are farmers getting paid fairly? Is the organisation working cohesively with the community around them? What kind of packaging is used? What are they doing to preserve and promote traditional and cultural heritage? By asking these questions for the consumer, the audience has a rounder picture, and are able to make a more informed choice. The audience*



*that cares about all this is very small, but it is growing.”*

This approach is now also entering the production and marketing strategies of brands like OOO Farms, Two Brothers Organic Farms (TBOF) in Maharashtra, Bengal-based Amar Khamar, and Spirit of The Earth in Chennai. Much of the traditional food that was once made at home and needed time, patience, precise techniques, intensive skill and labour, are now being made available through purveyors like these with the tag of provenance. Cases in point: OOO Farms offers ready flours and mixes made from heirloom grains like *Ajara Ghansal*, *Krishna Kamod* rice as well as *Kalibal* and *Paigambari* wheat, while TBOF offers *nachni* and *gond laddus*, and *gulkand* and *thandai* mix; Amar Khamar offers the legendary, laborious-to-make *goyna bori*, and *aamsotto* made from three varieties of mango, while Spirit of The Earth offers artisanal RTC products like *Arcot Kichili Champa adai* batter, and *Acharmati Arisi upma* mix.



## Taste Before Everything

Readymade foods of any kind are being embraced with gusto! While convenience is a key factor driving home consumption, taste will always hold priority for the Indian consumer who is loath to sacrifice pleasure for the sake of nutrition. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the snack category.

Indians have always viewed snacks as relatively guilt-free, attributed perhaps because of their notionally smaller portion size as compared to a meal. The phenomenal popularity and expansion of the instant noodle, RTC and RTE frozen snack segments are proof that the average Indian consumer wants the comfort and convenience of the familiar, while being able to experiment and adapt to suit varied tastes.

Gupta of Burma Burma concurs, observing that *“customers buy our paste and make khow suey in their own versatile way, adding vegetables and proteins they prefer, at the spice level they like, with their favoured starch accompanying it.”* While most snacks require little else for enhancing taste, these customisations allow consumers to fortify their mini-meals with healthier components - sample RTE fried foods and instant noodles with a generous topping of steamed or air-fried

vegetables, or perhaps a fried egg with a tossed salad on the side.

The last few years have seen frozen foods in particular catch on like magic. Frozen snacks fit perfectly into the instant gratification category here. They can stay safely frozen for long periods, and can be instantly baked, air-fried, or fried when required. GTFL (Godrej Tyson Foods Ltd), a joint venture of Godrej Agrovet Limited and Tyson Foods, U.S.A, have had their ear on the ground and systematically expanded their product portfolios to address this growing demand for convenience. They have invested significantly into research and development-led innovations in two of their most prominent brands - Real Good Chicken and Godrej Yummiez. While Real Good Chicken offers great tasting, safe, and affordable protein products, Godrej Yummiez offers a portfolio of over 50+ frozen vegetarian and non-vegetarian ready-to-cook products.

In 2023, Godrej Tyson launched Starz, a potato snack, and the Yummiez Millet Patty, a fibre-rich patty made with jowar and bajra. These products are packaged using the newer IQF (individual quick-freezing) technology which ensures freshness without the need for

## Customisation and Catering to Niche Markets

The future is bright for the customised convenience segment. The industry has only begun to scratch the surface, and patient players who approach the market with creativity, patience and fortitude, will stand to win in the long run, even with niche products.

*“In India, the population of a niche is bigger than the population of some countries,”* says Ramasubramanian, pointing to the opportunity in

finding 'big niches' in India. It is a truth that many other players will agree with. But all said and done, he emphasises that for any product to succeed in the Indian market, it has to appeal to the Indian taste profile. *“This means that new products either need to fit squarely into our palate, or need to introduce a USP that broadens our taste profile”,* an insight that he believes is behind the success story of Hello Tempay and its current popularity with the protein-conscious

preservatives. ***“Till recently, the adoption of millets was low due to the perception that they are not tasty and are not easy to cook.***

***This has changed drastically and now every household is embracing the goodness of millets.”*** said ***Abhay Parnerkar,*** CEO, Godrej Tyson Foods Limited. *“We supported this adoption by bringing together the nutrition of millets in a ready-to-cook convenient format and launching them in a mass-accepted 'patty' variant. Godrej Yummiez Millet Patty is a preservative-free snack that symbolises our commitment to innovation, nutrition, and convenience.”*

No surprise then that the snack aisle, both online and offline, has hit peak innovation and customisation, with something for every requirement, be it convenience, health, or diet-specific options. From vegan and sugar-free ice creams, to high-protein khakhra, millet pops, makhana and baked chips in every flavour imaginable, gluten-free snacks and millet cookies, FMCGs, small businesses, and home chefs are all converting health into convenience.

Indian consumer. *“Tempeh is a centuries-old high-protein food made by fermenting whole non-GMO soybeans, and can be an acquired taste, but the Indian taste profile we have given it is what drives consumers to come back and stay. Our peri peri tempeh, for example, has hit that note and is our largest seller.”*

Burma Burma Shop on the other hand sells everything from *laphet* (fermented tea leaf dressing), to lotus chips,



dusted with raw mango powder and durian fruit ice cream, in addition to their *khov suey* curry paste. All very versatile products, produced over a long development and refining process, and very much loved by their loyal customer base. “We took one and a half years to get the food tech right, and then six to eight months to launch about six to seven SKUs (Stock Keeping Units),” reminisces

Gupta. “We wanted it to be such that when people enter the restaurants, they feel like they have entered the country of Burma, and when they leave, they take a part of Burma with them.”

Not only is convenience customisable today, but the Indian kitchen has never been more spoilt for choice and the landscape for players catering

to the convenience food segment is rife with possibility and opportunity in time to come.



### Action Points

Convenience Food Makers in India can leverage the evolving needs of the Indian consumer using innovation, effective storytelling and omnichannel marketing. Innovation that marries **health and sustainability** with convenience will be a top draw. **Cross-pollinating Indian flavours with global concepts and ingredients** and vice versa will appeal to the Indian palate that prioritises taste. Healthy ready-to-eat **microwavable & oven-ready** options will appeal to those with busy lifestyles. No vertical promises greater potential than snack-ification. Preservative and additive-free products made with **healthy ingredients** like **millets, lean protein and seeds**. Unique flavours, incorporating **natural seasonings and sweeteners** and convenience foods that cater to **specific dietary needs** including gluten-free, vegan, and diabetic-friendly options will all see a lot of demand. Brands will also benefit from investing in fair pricing, supporting sustainable farming practices, and packaging. Producers in this segment will find **Omnichannel Marketing** via various platforms like mainstream print media, social media, and influencer and content marketing beneficial to highlighting **specific product USPs** to target audiences across B2B and B2C segments.



## Dining In Trends

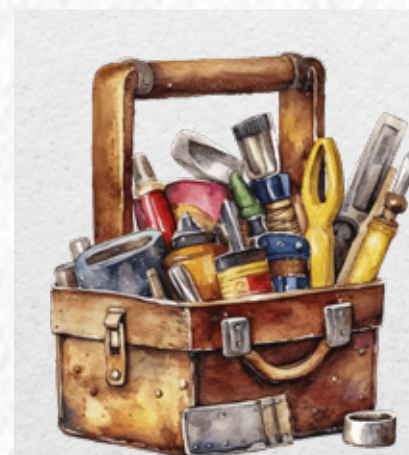
*As more Indians embrace busy lifestyles, they are constantly on a lookout for safe and healthy alternatives to cooking, that are high on convenience, variety, and some degree of personalization. Many of them still cook for pleasure, mostly dishing out family favourites or recreating traditional recipes, but sometimes also experimenting with lesser-known ingredients and regional cooking styles. Many more Indians are now choosing fresher, cleaner, tastier ingredients and products from local farmers and businesses, justifying the premium price as their personal contribution towards better health, social justice and the environment.*

*As convenience and health considerations converge with traditional and global influences, expect to see many more developments in the way Indians cook, order, and savour their meals in the years to come. Meanwhile, read on to see our expert panel's predictions for trends that will shape dining at home in 2024.*

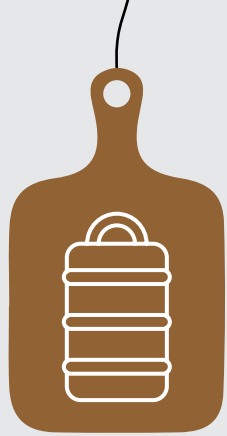


### Toolkit for 2024

Consumers will be as adventurous at home as when dining out, but mindful convenience will be a driving factor. The quest for excitement on the palate will inspire exploration of culinary heritage, regional diversity, and embracing seasonal ingredients. Industry players can leverage this consumer mindset by proudly declaring the provenance around their products on their labels and other communications channels. Restaurants and cloud kitchens can expand their menus to include more regional, traditional and seasonal dishes, to appeal to busy customers looking for a healthy taste of home. Home chefs and small entrepreneurs can test local markets with authentic, homemade, from-scratch masalas and condiments. Food content and media professionals can expect many new opportunities to explore regional, local and seasonal themes. Snacks will also be a very popular topic for new content, with many new avenues of exploration like provenance to nutrition. The magnetism of food with storytelling is especially effective to bridge the gap between the home consumer and marketing teams across the industry can take advantage of this narrative format in their formal and social media communications.



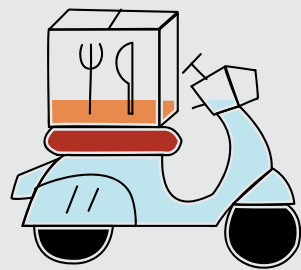




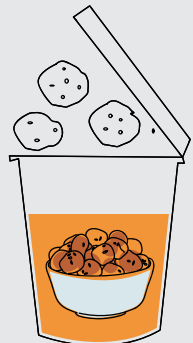
## Alternatives to Home-cooked Meals

The landscape of home dining in India is changing, as home-cooked meals continue to face serious competition from exciting new alternatives. Our expert panel predicts that the demand for convenient solutions will continue to grow, with **home delivery services** leading the charge. Busy lifestyles and changing preferences will drive this trend, as people seek options that fit seamlessly into their routines.

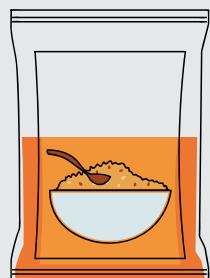
Beyond just delivery, the focus is shifting towards varied formats. Our panel expects **ready-to-eat snacks** to gain further traction, offering tasty bites for on-the-go individuals. Meanwhile, consumers seeking more substantial options will lean towards **fresh, ready-to-cook solutions** that offer the promise of effortless meal preparation without sacrificing quality. Additionally, **personalised meal plans** will cater to specific dietary needs and preferences, offering greater convenience alongside customization in 2023.



Home delivery solutions  
75%



Ready-to-eat snack solutions  
51.9%



Fresh ready-to-cook solutions  
44.2%



Personalised meal plan solutions  
42.3%



As a chef and founder of Palate Culinary Academy, we teach things from scratch but see a growing demand for fresh & frozen ready-to-cook products with new start-ups as well. Busy consumers are increasingly seeking convenient meal solutions, but they're no longer willing to compromise on quality. Fresh, or frozen ready-to-cook options that bridge the gap between convenience and quality will be popular. People have become more conscious about what they eat but have less time to cook meals from scratch due to hectic schedules and demanding lives, and yes, they crave exciting new flavours, even on busy weeknights. Ready-to-cook frozen solutions offer the people what they seek without hassle and they are willing to pay a premium for these convenient, high-quality meal solutions.



Chef Rakhee Vaswan



Atul Sikand

The pandemic brought about a change in how most of us snack. People have become more "health" conscious and I feel the average home cook is more informed, discerning, and ready to experiment today.

Social media and the pandemic highlighted home cooking and freshly prepared meals. With the opening up of work from the office again our schedules require more alternative, quick options. Home delivery solutions and ready-to-eat snacks are still highly popular. The next easiest alternative to fix a meal while keeping the 'freshly cooked' factor intact is ready-to-cook ingredients and kits that make cooking convenient.



Garima Tiwari



Jay (Janmejaya Pradhan)

I see people either opting for ready-to-eat, where one just heats up the food in the packet at home, or ordering from restaurants. I see a lot of traction these days on pre-cooked food and frozen meal solutions as these are hygienic and taste decent.

## Menu Inspirations at Home

Our panel predicts a strong focus on rediscovering and reinterpreting India's rich culinary heritage in the coming year. Nearly all our experts believe more home cooks will **take inspiration from their culinary roots** by delving into family recipes, exploring heirloom ingredients, and reviving forgotten cooking techniques. They will continue **applying traditional wisdom** with Ayurvedic principles, emphasising on cooking with fresh ingredients, balancing spices and **eating seasonally**. Our panel also expects to see more dishes from other **Indian regional and community** cuisines regularly sharing dining space with other family favourites at home.



By connecting with their heritage, celebrating regional diversity, and embracing seasonal ingredients, home cooks will be crafting special meals that are both delicious and meaningful in 2024.

While chefs and street food, and even royal cuisine get well-deserved attention, home cooking - the heart of Indian food - has been overlooked. The lockdown sparked a rediscovery of our culinary roots, leading to a renewed appreciation for the memories and stories connected to the food we grew up with. Culture and cuisine are intertwined, unless one understands and appreciates the culture of a place, it's difficult to appreciate its cuisine. With the focus shifting towards home-cooked meals, now is the perfect time to rediscover our cultural heritage through our food. Let's celebrate the generations-old family recipes that define us.

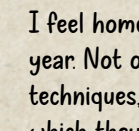


Ranveer Brar



Rajeshwari Puthalapattu

Life has evolved beautifully since the pandemic which taught us many lessons. Food has evolved in this journey. We have reconnected to our roots and realised that nourishing ourselves with seasonal and regional produce and recipes is the best medicine, especially for strengthening immunity. And that many of the methods and methods and essentials that our forefathers set down are best to live a healthy life.



Sanjyot Keer

I feel home kitchens would cook more traditional and regional dishes this year. Not only regional recipes but following regional and traditional cooking techniques, the use of traditional ingredients and people are trying recipes which they have not ever tried before.



Debjani Chatterjee

In 2024, our food choices will be driven by a strong sense of mindfulness towards personal well-being, and a deliberate conscientiousness towards food conservation and the environment. To do so, we will take inspiration from our culinary heritage by revisiting cherished family recipes, rediscovering forgotten favourites, and utilising traditional knowledge.



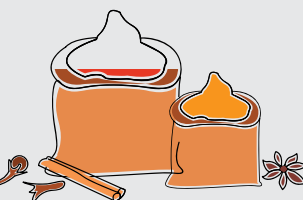
Taking inspiration from culinary roots  
84.6%



Applying traditional wisdom  
80.8%



Exploring Indian regional and community cuisines  
80.8%



Eating seasonally  
75%

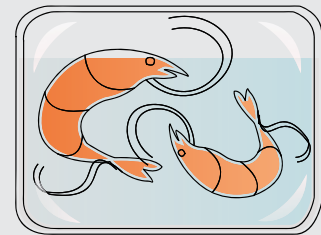




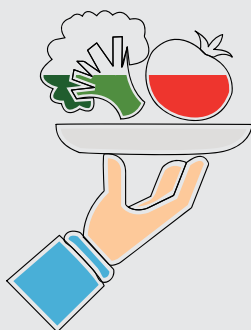
## Food Categories in Focus

In 2024, discerning home shoppers will wield their purchasing power more consciously than ever, prioritising transparency, quality, and responsible sourcing. Our experts share their pick of the most important criterias that will influence purchase decisions of home shoppers in the coming year.

As the buy-local movement continues to gain momentum, most of our expert panellists estimate more consumers will seek **locally-sourced** products that are grown or produced close to home. They will also increasingly be drawn towards **freshly-processed** products for their perceived higher quality and greater nutritional value, highlighting a distrust of overly processed foods. Lastly, thanks to heightened concerns about food safety and hygiene, labels highlighting safe handling and packaging practices will hold significant sway in the coming year. Our panel predicts that more consumers will be attracted to **hygienically packed** products, especially meat and seafood, in the coming year.



Locally-sourced  
88.5%



Freshly-processed  
84.6%



Hygienically packed  
84.6%

I am committed to using the freshest, most flavorful ingredients in my cooking. That's why I source my ingredients locally whenever possible. I believe that locally sourced ingredients are not only better for the environment, but they also taste better. When you know where your food comes from and who grew it, you can trust its quality and freshness. When good ingredients are processed and packaged hygienically food tastes better, and is better for those consuming it.



Chef Harpal  
Sokhi



Monika  
Manchanda

The buzzword "Artisana!" is here to stay! Today's home cook is a busy person with everyday cooking being taken care of by the cook at home. So when they cook, it is a "little something special". Global cuisines & exotic ingredients will continue to rock the home kitchen. However, people are increasingly health conscious and if you ask me not just 2024 but this will be a decade of wellness and health in the food industry. A lot of what we buy for everyday eating will be driven by diet-specific needs and options.



Dr. Poorvi Bhat

Post-pandemic, the usage of traditional methods of cooking and indigenous ingredients has increased as people are looking for new unexplored cooking styles and flavours. Home shoppers are more informed and selective with the ingredients they use in their daily diets, driving up the demand for traditional and organic brands in the market.



Robin Nagar

Food fear is at an all time high with a lot of content being made online about the potential harmful ingredients in packaged foods, consumers are now reading labels and looking to see if claims in the front label are substantiated in the back label.

## Kitchen Appliances/Tools

As home cooks become increasingly time-conscious and health-focused, kitchen appliance and tool manufacturers are adapting to cater to their evolving needs. Against this backdrop, our panel of experts sheds light on the top propositions that will drive purchase and adoption decisions in 2024.

Almost the entire panel is betting on a high demand for **low-maintenance** tools that save time and effort, paving the way for a hassle-free cooking experience. They also predict that consumers will be drawn to **versatile, multi-purpose** tools that can tackle multiple tasks, reduce clutter and maximise kitchen efficiency. Most panellists believe that steaming baskets, pressure cookers that retain vitamins, and food processors that preserve nutrients, will be top priority for consumers looking at options for **nutritious and little/zero-loss cooking**.



Multifunctional equipment can be a compelling choice over a single-purpose product due to its versatility, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, ability to optimise space and most importantly convenience. All of which contribute greatly to streamlining workflow, and switching between tasks.



Anuradha Joshi  
Medhora



Amar Gutta

As the popularity of home cooking continues to surge, the need for equipment that simplifies and enhances the daily cooking experience grows alongside it. But beyond the essential tools, a world of exciting and innovative equipment awaits adventurous cooks eager to explore new culinary frontiers.

Customers will want convenience over fuss when it comes to gadgets, though this sector will be divided between first-time buyers and people in their 40s and 50s. First-time buyers will prefer buying multi-purpose gadgets over single-purpose options.

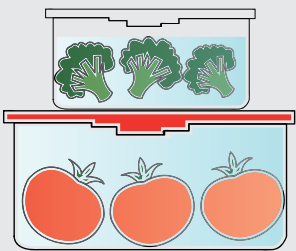
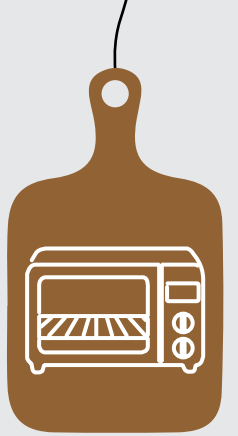


Shweta  
Mohapatra

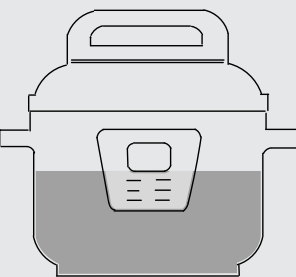


Nehal  
Karkera

I've observed a burgeoning interest in cooking appliances, particularly air fryers and combo air fryer ovens. There's a noticeable surge in demand for healthy air-fried recipes, with positive responses from users. Recently, a simple video showcasing an air fryer translated into significant sales for a company I collaborated with. Beyond air fryers, I foresee substantial potential in appliances designed to expedite ingredient preparation, as chopping and cutting tend to be tasks people dread. Any tool that simplifies this process is sure to be a hit.



Low maintenance, easy  
to clean and store  
94.2%



Versatile, multi-purpose  
functionality  
94.2%



Nutritious and little/  
zero-loss cooking  
88.5%



# Dining Out

India's culinary landscape, steeped in a rich history of complex flavours, is undergoing a dynamic transformation. This shift is driven by a well-established appreciation for intricate taste profiles, coupled with a burgeoning desire for exploration and experimentation. Diners are exhibiting a willingness to venture beyond familiar favourites, seeking out novel taste experiences.

This adventurous spirit is demonstrably influencing the menus of Indian dining establishments. Forward-thinking restaurants are embracing a nuanced fusion, incorporating international flavours and techniques to complement, rather than overshadow, the essence of Indian cuisine. By embracing this evolving palate, the Indian dining scene is poised to not only retain its rich heritage but also establish itself at the forefront of global culinary innovation. Against this backdrop of exploration and innovation, Indian diners can look forward to an exciting culinary landscape brimming with innovative dishes that are distinctly Indian yet undeniably global in 2024.

In the Dining Out section this year, we examine the fundamental role of flavour in defining traditional Indian cuisine, and explore how it continues to evolve with the times.



# Chasing Flavours

A historical perspective of adoption and assimilation of popular flavour agents in Indian cuisine.



**Cardamom**, native to India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar



**Black Pepper**, native to the Malabar Coast



**Curry Leaves**, native to India and Sri Lanka



**Turmeric**, native to many parts of India

Derived from plants indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, these spices have been used since ancient times for both flavour and medicinal value.



**Cinnamon**, native to the Malabar Coast, Sri Lanka and Myanmar



**Tamarind**, native to Africa and brought in by sea-faring Arab traders



**Tomato**, brought through the Columbian Exchange



**Chilli Peppers**, introduced during the Columbian Exchange



**Rosewater**, a Persian aromatic introduced by the Mughals

A prime hub on the ancient Spice Route, and later influenced by various foreign cultures, India adopted many spices and flavour agents that are intrinsic flavours today.



**Nutmeg**, native to Indonesia and propagated by the British East India Company



**Dry Guajillo, Ancho & Chipotle**, chilli peppers central to Mexican cooking



**Broth & Bullion Powders**, dehydrated stock for building umami and savoury flavours



**Gochugaru**, Korean chilli powder used in condiments like Kimchi and Gochujang



**Za'atar**, an earthy herb seasoning from the Levant

Today, in a post-globalised era, India has access to spices and flavouring ingredients from across the world. Here are a few that will be top of mind in 2024.



**Miso Paste**, Japanese seasoning paste made from koji-fermented soybeans

Indigenous Flavours

Historical Imports

Emerging Favourites





# Indian Cuisine

## The Great Flavour Chase

*India’s flavour palate, shaped by centuries of evolution continues to develop, fueled by a deep-rooted love for complex flavours. In recent years, the Indian spirit of culinary exploration has transformed into a chase for exciting new flavours and taste adventures.*

### Focus Areas for the Convenience Sector

India’s intrinsic biodiversity and strategic location along ancient trade routes naturally allowed for a robust culinary culture to develop, with diverse regional, micro-regional, and even micro community cuisine based flavour profiles. Multi-cuisine restaurants offering something for every palate were all the rage pre-pandemic, however there has been a significant shift post-pandemic. Diners today are looking for meaningful and immersive flavour rich experiences that offer personalisation, authentic connections, and foster their individual interests.

### The Foundation Of Flavour

The tropical climate, diverse landscapes, and immense biodiversity of the Indian subcontinent offered plenty of ingredients that laid a robust culinary foundation. Distinct regional, micro-regional, and even micro-community cuisines developed, each based on local ingredients, traditions, and signature spice combinations, resulting in a rich tapestry of distinct flavour profiles that vary as one travels across the country. Multiple schools of traditional wisdom that highlight the link between food and health also greatly shaped our culinary profile, emphasising the intrinsic role of spices as flavouring and medicinal agents.

India’s strategic location along ancient trade routes further enabled the frequent exchange of ingredients, dishes and culinary practices, with multiple external influences shaping Indian cuisine down the ages. For instance, Persian and Central Asian flavours, introduced by the Sultanate and Mughal dynasties, led to the evolution of Mughal cuisine. The Columbian exchange of the colonial era introduced ingredients from far and wide, including the likes of cabbage,

cauliflower, potatoes, tomatoes, and chilies - all staples in Indian cuisine today.

Thus, the foundation of Indian cuisine is rooted in this synchronisation of food, science, holistic medicine and aesthetics. However Indian cuisine’s dynamic nature has also allowed it to continually adapt to factors like urbanisation, technological advances in agriculture, and global influences. Spices stayed crucial throughout this centuries-long evolution, and played a key role in shaping the Indian taste palate, which gravitates towards intensity and embraces bold flavours.

Appreciating India’s intricate flavour palate requires understanding how taste perception works. **Krish Ashok**, author of the seminal book Masala Lab, elaborates on this. **“Flavour is a multidimensional cognitive experience. While the five kinds of taste buds detect basic tastes (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami), perceived flavour is mostly aroma, detected by the olfactory receptors in our nasal canal, augmented**

**with sensations like heat and cold, texture sensed by the trigeminal nerve endings in the mouth, sounds from the sizzle and crunch of the food we eat, and finally visual cues from the colour and shape of food.”** Adding the role of memory and lived experience, he says **“All of this is combined and then compared against past nostalgia of similar experiences, resulting in either familiar/comfort flavour experiences or novel/unfamiliar experiences.”**

When put in the context of the incredibly diverse building blocks available to Indian home kitchens in different regions, Ashok’s framework explains the sheer multiplicity of cuisine profiles across the country.

But varied as tastes preferences may be, the heart of Indian cuisine beats for intense bursts of flavour, high notes that leave you wanting more. **“On average, Indian food is more intense, in every sense of the word. We enjoy higher levels of salt, sweet and sour, and more layers of flavour and punchy contrasts - sweet with hot, sour with sweet, sweet with bitter, and unique aroma combinations,”** observes Ashok.

### Kaleidoscope Of Culinary Traditions

The kaleidoscopic culinary culture of India, woven from social, religious, and regional threads, presents a labyrinthine challenge for the global food industry. Thriving on this diversity, multi-cuisine restaurants have come to be the backbone of our country’s dining industry. These culinary chameleons effortlessly adapt to any occasion, offering budget-friendly meals for everyday dining and upscale options for celebrations. Their menus feature a potpourri of options including Tandoori, Punjabi, Mughlai, street food and chaat, Indo-Chinese, Continental, and Italian. Their success is in balancing familiar comfort food alongside that which is considered novel and exotic, effectively offering something for everyone. And while the multi-cuisine restaurant may never lack demand, in an increasingly globalised world, the consumer preferences are ever evolving.

Prior to March 2020, the Indian dining-out industry functioned along specific categories. Affordable street food and small local eateries, midrange multi cuisine restaurants, and luxurious fine dining. Each category catered to distinct needs and preferences but largely served up a caricatured perception of global and most regional cuisines, often stereotyped under a few limited notions.

The post-pandemic world witnessed a fascinating shift

in attitudes towards food. The virtual feasting of the pandemic years resulted in a consumer mindset of revenge eating in 2023. Pent up yearning for lost opportunities drove diners towards unique dining experiences, a race to tick off bucket-list items by splurging on extravagant culinary escapades and exotic flavours. As things have settled in the years after, a more nuanced approach has emerged. Diners today prefer to prioritise meaningful and immersive experiences that offer personalisation, authentic connections, and resonate with their individual interests. The Indian diner emerged from the pandemic insatiably hungry for MORE. Especially with flavour.

**Vaibhav Bahl**, Co-founder of Conosh, a platform for online culinary classes, delivery of home-cooked meals & pop-up experiences, observes that easy access to international content, global travel, and a rise in the the frequency of culinary pop-ups across the country has led diners to seek out exotic and diverse international flavours and menus. **“The pandemic spotlighted and celebrated local regional cuisines in India, further fuelled by a focus on consumption of locally available produce, all of which propelled many of them into the mainstream. Fast forward to today, many home chef ventures have transitioned to cloud kitchens and restaurants.”**



Our deep-rooted passion for complex tastes, fueled by a spirit of culinary exploration, has intensified the search for new taste sensations. **“There’s a more open mind and a desire to experiment,”** notes **Chef Auroni Mookerjee** of Siena Cafe, which has fueled a come-back for pop-up culture and home chef collaborations. **“Regional Indian food will boom, with North East, Himalayan and distinct micro cuisines like Madurai, Palakkad from the South or Saraswat and Portuguese from Goa, coming into focus and keeping their authenticity.”** However, he observes that with global cuisines, **“Classics will still rule, and mainstream restaurants will still aim at the more accessible cuisines and menus. From global pizza chains to Tex Mex, the likelihood of a butter chicken or tandoori chicken variant is always high.”**

Indian dining is set to explode! Experiential concepts like hyperlocal restaurants and gourmet street food join cloud kitchens, pop-ups, and global collaborations. Blurring lines mean endless choices: gourmet burgers, fine dining at home, and everything in between. Every palate, from seasoned gourmand to curious newbie, will find their flavour adventure.



### Fueling the Flavour Frenzy: Social Media and Instant Gratification

We’re living in a golden age of social media. Online content is fueling an insatiable desire for culinary exploration, and a growing interest in culinary travel is fanning a frenzy for the next flavour adventure.

Platforms like Instagram and TikTok serve as virtual buffets, overflowing with mouthwatering

visuals and tantalising recipes. The constant exposure to the world of culinary possibilities has created a craving for instant flavour gratification. We want what we see, and we want it right now! And food delivery apps are happy to oblige, supporting delivery from a growing array of restaurants, cloud kitchens and home chefs.

Grocery delivery platforms, too, are rapidly meeting this burgeoning demand, from carb-rich chips and healthier makhana in wild and wonderful flavours, to gourmet popcorn drizzled with single origin chocolate or truffle oil and air-fried okra chips infused with global spices. There is a newfound ease of availability



across gourmet and exotic ingredients, snacks, ready to use sauces and condiments from established and emerging brands, and innovatively flavoured beverages like kombuchas and infused tonic waters. With a rapid adoption of technology in the food and beverage industry, the need for instant gratification fueled by social media is being swiftly catered to thanks to delivery apps and platforms supplying anything one's heart's desires at the tap of a button.

The allure of social media has transcended taste into a pursuit for connection, a canvas for self-expression, and a celebration of shared stories that unite us across cultures and backgrounds. Food influencers weave narratives around ingredients, techniques, and the joy of eating, turning every scroll and tap into a sensory adventure that ignites cravings and inspires home cooks to

recreate those flavours. "Social media is playing a pivotal role in shaping the culinary landscape of India today, where viral content is even dictating the potential for commercial success among budding food ventures," observes Bahl.

Thanks to our growing desire to participate in our online communities, the new food traveller is venturing off the eaten path in search of local specialties, street food tours, home-cooked experiences, and visits to local markets to immerse into the food culture of a place - often based on recommendations from those they follow online. *"The world is looking at India as the next big culinary destination. And painting a flavourful picture of the momentum we are building influences more and more international chefs to come to India. Our international pop ups with chefs like Ana Ros - Chef & Owner of three*

*Michelin starred restaurant Hisa Franko, in Slovenia and Chef Alvaro Clavijo - Chef of restaurant El Chato, No. 33 on the world's 50 best restaurants list, in Colombia; attracted many diners who had dined at their restaurants,"* says Bahl of Conosh's pop-up programming. *"With international travel reaching unprecedented levels, incoming chefs also have access to a wide array of exotic local ingredients, heightening the appeal of international flavours for local diners who actively seek ways to recreate the flavours and experiences they enjoyed experimenting with new ingredients, trying out exotic recipes, and even hosting cultural food gatherings with friends and family."*



## The Chase for Flavours

This growing culinary open-mindedness is driving restaurants to transform into flavour playgrounds. The result? A cultural shift. A vibrant, dynamic food scene where the only constant is change. Flavour is king, and Indians are chasing it with unbridled enthusiasm, across continents, cultures, and culinary boundaries celebrating the endless possibilities that lie within a single bite.

One particularly exciting category is the advent of the hyper-local restaurant spearheaded by chefs and creators blending ingredients, flavours, international influences, and techniques. Prateek Sadhu's NAAR at Kasauli and Amninder Sandhu's Palaash at Gondwakadi are leading the charge, turning off-beat locations into dining destinations that champion local, seasonal, regional ingredients and foodways.

The beverage scene in particular is undergoing an amazing metamorphosis as Indians reach for the unconventional with their tipples as well. ***"Passionate people are getting involved in the process, and that's what is going to make 2024 most exciting!"*** exclaims ***Shatbhi Basu***, master mixologist and partner at Mumbai's STIR Academy of Bartending. Basu is excited about the Made in India category. *"Spirits will continue to grow. Gin was the favourite alongside whiskies but rum is the next big thing, and we should also see growth in flavoured spirits, and liqueurs - especially coffee based ones. And it's about quality, not quantity."* A category that is set to explode is cocktails. Basu expects Indian tippers to seek more balanced flavours. *"Surprisingly not everyone wants really sweet cocktails*

*anymore. They want freshness and complexity rather than just singular flavours."* Concept driven menus like the textile/fabric inspired menu by PCO Bar, Mumbai, and regional and micro regional flavour inspired cocktail flavours like those on the Koli village inspired menu at Slink & Bardot, Mumbai, will offer new directions of exploration.



## Indianness To Take Centre Stage

The pandemic, despite its immense challenges, had an unexpected silver lining for Indian cuisine. Indians who had been exploring regional cuisines at home, are today rediscovering the rich offerings of their cuisine. This is driving "Indianness" to the fore across the food sector.

*"Indian flavours are currently enjoying a spotlight on the global stage,"* celebrates Bahl. *"Restaurants like Tresind and Gaa, being awarded Michelin stars, are leading the charge in championing Indian cuisine, and this focus on Indian gastronomy will endure in the years to come,"* he adds. His company Conosh, is adding significantly to this by fostering a bilateral exchange within the global culinary community. *"We bring international chefs to India and showcase the rich diversity of Indian cuisine abroad by featuring indigenous talents like Chef Manish Mehrotra of Indian Accent*

*in Melbourne or Chef Niyati Rao of Ekaa in Kuala Lumpur."* However, he emphasises maintaining consistency in flavours, especially during pop-ups abroad is crucial. *"It influences the trajectory of the cuisine's future in that country. Prioritising flavour consistency and authenticity over adaptation for broader acceptance ensures that we remain faithful to our culinary representation."*

The world's gaze is on India, but within its borders, a culinary rediscovery is unfolding. India's vast, unexplored tapestry of flavours is finally coming into its own. Each state, even each district, harbours micro-regional specialties waiting to be savoured. Delving into this incredible diversity is dispelling misconceptions and revealing the dynamic flavour scape of Indian cuisine. *"India is incredibly diverse!"* exclaims Ashok. *"As much, if not more than the European Union. We have more languages, more*

*regional cuisines, and greater religious and cultural diversity than the entire West put together."* Pointing out that this is not appreciated enough even within India, he laments over the tendency to homogenise and use "Indian food" as a moniker. *"It's rather unfortunate because a certain narrow category of restaurant-friendly Punjabi and South Indian tiffin food has come to define Indian food globally!"* Adding that there is no single way to highlight Indian flavours, he says *"The industry should embrace the full diversity of flavour combinations from various parts of India instead of striving to create one homogenous 'Indian flavour.'"*



## The Future of Flavour

2024 promises a delicious adventure for every palate! In this digital age, the world is India's culinary playground. Each bite is a journey - a story on the plate, a connection to vibrant flavours, the thrill of discovering a new regional gem, and the endless joy of exploration. As we navigate the culinary landscape of 2024, several flavour trends are poised to take centre stage.

The quest for intensity and spice, particularly the fiery kind, will drive a craze for chilli. The zing of hot sauces, the smoky kiss of chilli oil, and complex heat of chilli crisps will continue to be sought for the endorphin rush they trigger. But intensity isn't everything. India's long-standing love for rich, layered flavours, evident in its varied regional curries and obsession with Indo-

Chinese food, will fuel a growing pursuit of "full-bodied" flavour experiences. Diners will seek out tastes that surprise, and linger. Southeast Asian cuisines that offer a spectrum of taste sensations will be popular. *"Japanese will diversify into distinct offerings like ramen or yakitori focused restaurants, and Korean will diversify into more accessible formats like bakeries and quick-service food*





trucks” predicts Mookerjee. With its unique flavour profile, increasing accessibility, and cultural influence fueled by the “Hallyu Wave,” Korean food is poised to become the next culinary phenomenon thanks to its unique combination of bold spices, savoury sauces,

fermented flavours, and fresh ingredients. There is a notable rise in Korean restaurants while online food delivery platforms and grocery stores are stocking a growing number of Korean ingredients, for home cooks. Every bite offers an explosion of taste without breaking the bank.

2024 beckons with a world of flavours. As we embark on this culinary adventure each bite promises to be a journey – a story on the palate, a connection to vibrant cultures, and the endless joy of discovering something new.

Action Points

The Indian food Industry can leverage the demand for *new and exciting flavours* of the Indian consumer by offering *unusual dining experiences*, and exciting *new flavour propositions*. Dining concepts that *highlight global and hyperlocal cuisines*, new takes on *street food* and anything that offers high flavour satiation will thrive. This chase for flavour is particularly exciting for the snack segment for whom incorporating exciting new flavours *targeting varied profiles* will attract consumers. India is gaining prominence on the global stage for its complex cuisine, and industry players can experiment with *cross-pollinating global cuisines with Indian ingredients and flavours* and vice versa to appeal to both global and adventurous new Indian palates. The industry will find *omnichannel marketing* via varied platforms like mainstream print media, social media, and influencer and content marketing initiatives beneficial to *highlighting specific products* and *exciting flavour offerings* to target audiences across B2B and B2C segments.

Dining Out Trends

As we move into 2024, our industry experts predict a visible shift towards menus that celebrate local, seasonal, and artisanal with a focus on nutrition. These preferences highlight a shift towards more mindful and personalised dining experiences across all popular dining formats. By celebrating local ingredients, showcasing artisanal craftsmanship, and offering balanced nutritional options, chefs are creating menus that cater to the evolving preferences of discerning diners.

Meanwhile, emerging food categories reflect a pivot as well, with fine-dining moving beyond formal settings and exceptional food, to creating more approachable, immersive and meaningful experiences that connect diners to local communities, celebrate culinary traditions, and cater to evolving health preferences. As Indian restaurant menus continue to evolve, diners can expect to see greater focus on passion and purpose to deliver innovative, personalised, and flavorful journeys in years to come!

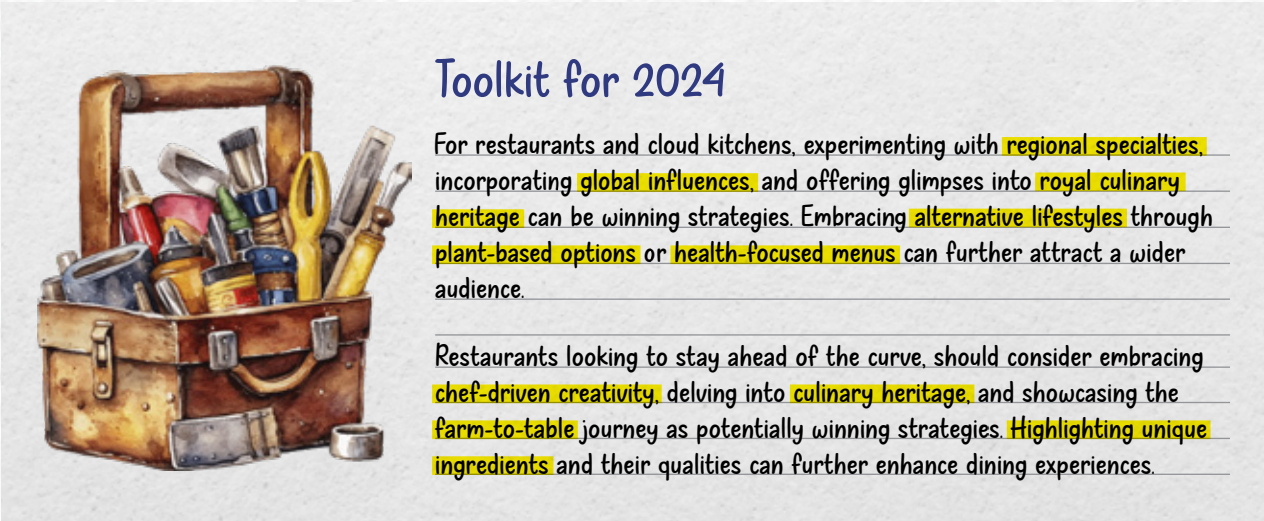
The following pages summarise how our expert panel sees the entire dining out scene in India play out in 2024.



Toolkit for 2024

For restaurants and cloud kitchens, experimenting with regional specialties, incorporating global influences, and offering glimpses into royal culinary heritage can be winning strategies. Embracing alternative lifestyles through plant-based options or health-focused menus can further attract a wider audience.

Restaurants looking to stay ahead of the curve, should consider embracing chef-driven creativity, delving into culinary heritage, and showcasing the farm-to-table journey as potentially winning strategies. Highlighting unique ingredients and their qualities can further enhance dining experiences.







## Bar & Restaurant Concepts

Gone are the days of static menus and predictable ambiance. Today, diners crave more immersive and transportive dining experiences. The industry is responding to this growing demand with “pop-ups” that change themes and cuisines regularly, offering a taste of international flavours and cultures, often for just a short period of time.

In 2024, our panellists expect more noteworthy chefs and mixologists to hit the road with pop-up experiences, taking their culinary artistry to unexpected locations. These **travelling restaurant and bar concepts** will offer spontaneity, exclusivity, and the chance to savour culinary creations outside the confines of brick-and-mortar restaurants.

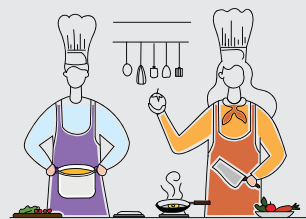
Popularity of **home-style (community and regional)**

**food** grew tremendously during the pandemic years, as more people experimented with flavours outside their traditional offerings. A significant majority of our experts predict that more hotels and restaurants will capitalise on this trend, by tying up with home-chefs and regional culinary experts, to offer authentic dining experiences that evoke a sense of warmth and familiarity.

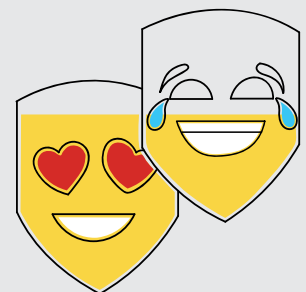
Nostalgia is a powerful emotion, and restaurants are tapping into it by creating concepts that evoke memories of a bygone era. In the coming year, our panellists expect to see many more **nostalgia-themed restaurants and bars** that will transport diners to their favourite decade, with vintage decor, classic dishes, drinks and even period-appropriate music and entertainment.



Travelling restaurant/bar concepts  
84.6%



Home-style food concepts  
67.3%



Nostalgia-themed  
65.4%

## Cuisines in Focus

This year, survey findings reveal a clear thirst for culinary exploration, with a focus on both, unearthing hidden gems within India, and venturing beyond familiar borders.

**Lesser-known regional Indian cuisines** top the list, with most of our experts predicting a growing desire to dive deeper into India's diverse culinary heritage, unique flavours and cooking styles. **Exotic international cuisines** follow closely, highlighting an openness to exploring global palates and adventurous new ingredients.



The allure of royalty will continue to captivate Indian diners, with more than half of our experts anticipating a rise in outlets offering **royal cuisines**. This suggests a fascination with experiencing the rich culinary traditions and opulent flavours associated with India's regal past. A growing awareness of dietary choices and a willingness to embrace innovative approaches to food will drive demand for **cuisines inspired by alternative lifestyles**.

Today's epicurean is more open to newer flavours and experiences than ever before, not just for the novelty but out of genuine curiosity and joy associated with discovery. It's time for oriental cuisines to become more prevalent in their true form - whether it's Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese or Thai. People are looking for better, more nuanced, thoughtfully done food, and the same can be seen with oriental cuisine within India. The classic Mughlai and South Indian archetypes don't cut it anymore.

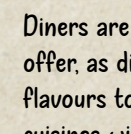


Navika Kapoor



Shaun Kenworthy

India is an exciting fast moving F&B space but I believe that it is at the beginning of its modern culinary journey and for the next few years, we'll continue to see a fusion of international flavours bastardising Indian favourites.



Sameer Seth

Fine dining in India is undergoing a significant transformation, moving away from its traditional, stuffy image. The evolving landscape demands bars and restaurants to adopt a more relaxed, vibrant environment, shedding traditional rules associated with fine dining. This shift blends quality dining with a welcoming, less pretentious atmosphere, emphasising warm hospitality. The increasing popularity of food theatre concepts reflects the growing demand for transparent and engaging dining experiences. Diners now seek immersive culinary adventures, akin to theatrical performances, where they can witness the cooking process firsthand. Open kitchen concepts further enhance this connection, allowing guests a unique and direct interaction with the chef.



Gauri Devidayal

As chefs and mixologists increasingly take centre stage, and with the parallel growing interest in food and its preparation, it's no surprise that show kitchens are becoming increasingly popular. Diners not only want to see the talent in action but also be able to interact with them at closer quarters. Experiential dining is only going to get bigger.



Adele De Fontbrune

Diners are increasingly interested in the variety of cuisines India has to offer, as dining out is an exciting option and yet appealing to have familiar flavours to suit their existing palates. More often than not, regional Indian cuisines will also offer good vegetarian food as this is a cultural requirement. Successful and exciting regional and international restaurants tend to offer a slightly themed or particularly interesting menu/plating design which often creates an impression of travelling through food.



Abhishek Goel

Diners are becoming experimental to a certain degree but not to an extent where they will keep visiting places serving anything differentiated from their comfort food. Opening up of regional and indigenous food places will happen but they will still tag behind places serving exotic international food and royal cuisines.



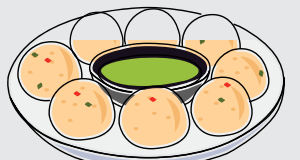
Ajit Balgi

India is still developing in terms of their dining wants, each diner is at different levels and a specific concept like a vegan space or a Tequila only bar would be negated for a group dining experience. Spaces like this will be a hit or miss and hence will not be a hot sell unless of course they only market it a vegan or Tequila friendly but have everything for everybody.

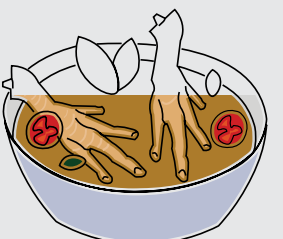


Urv Khanna

The global shift towards sustainability and wholesome living will shape consumer choices in the beverage domain as well. There is a greater appreciation of crafted beverages and if aligned with plant-forward and sustainable options, non-alcoholic offerings might possibly see more limelight as well.



Lesser known regional Indian cuisines  
84.6%



Exotic international cuisines  
73.1%

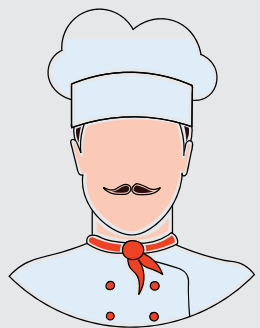


Royal cuisines  
53.8%

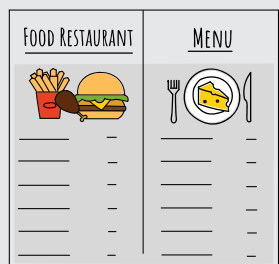


Cuisines inspired by alternative lifestyle  
51.9%

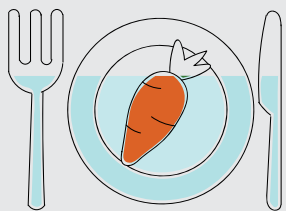




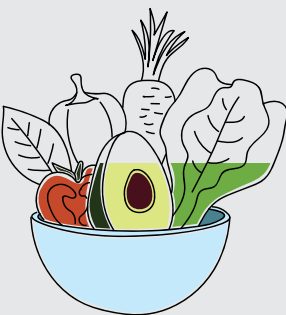
Chef-driven, cuisine-agnostic menus  
90.4%



Menus inspired by culinary heritage, traditional practises  
86.5%



Menus inspired by farm-to-table concept  
75.0%



Ingredient-forward menus  
67.3%

## Menu Inspirations

In 2024, **chef-driven, cuisine-agnostic menus** will reign supreme, with nearly all our experts applauding it as a move away from strict culinary boundaries, allowing chefs to showcase their creativity and passion through unique flavour combinations and innovative dishes. **Menus inspired by culinary heritage and traditional practices** closely follow, indicating a strong desire to connect with the rich tapestry of Indian food history and rediscover forgotten flavours.

The **farm-to-table** movement will continue to captivate diners, with three-quarters of our panellists predicting a higher demand for menus displaying transparency and freshness, where ingredients take centre stage and their stories are woven into the dining experiences. **Ingredient-forward menus** will further emphasise this trend, focusing on the quality and provenance of each element on the plate.



There's no doubt that the Chefs of today, the ones we recognise and respect, will take things a couple of notches higher. They will inspire a whole new generation of cooks to do the same. "Chef-driven" also makes room for more entrepreneurial opportunities, completely changing how we see the industry today. With menus, the premise of "Cuisine-Agnostic" is just another revival of the countless Multi-Cuisine restaurants India has always enjoyed. However, we can look forward to more Chefs drawing inspiration from various parts of the world, incorporating their own personal expressions and values, and adapting it all to resonate with local tastes in 2024.



Manu Chandra

One of the biggest shifts for the discerning diner in 2024 will be the preference for specialised menus dedicated to specific dishes or cuisines, rather than pandering to the mainstream multi-cuisine norm. There will be an increased spotlight on menus honouring cultural heritage. Traditional cooking methods, and authentic experiences emphasising the origin and story behind ingredients or dishes, will appeal to diners interested in the narrative and cultural significance of their food. Menus fostering connections between diners and their food sources, highlighting unique, locally sourced, seasonal produce, and celebrating creativity will be popular.



Azmat Ali Mir

Consumers are excited by discovery and provenance offers. Discussing food is quite a trend in itself and provenance facilitates an insightful discussion. Cuisine-agnostic eclectic menus will be awe-inspiring in 2024!



Prashant Issar



Niyati R Rao

People becoming more exposed to the world and increased awareness of their own culture has resulted in an influx of global micro cuisines, riding interest in tribal food as they want something refreshing and new. Which fine dining offers. I think fine dining will always thrive on originality and uniqueness, the character of every ingredient and specific technique used. To leave no stone unturned, chefs will try every flavour combination, in cuisine-agnostic, ingredient-forward establishments as the world of possibilities is going to become limitless for chefs.

## Food Categories in Focus

Diners are increasingly seeking transparency and a connection to their food. As consumer preferences shift towards personalised, authentic, and health-conscious dining experiences, innovative high-end and fine-dining restaurants are augmenting their menus with exciting new food categories. In the coming year, our experts predict **locally-sourced, fresh ingredients** will be the most exciting category on restaurant menus, a move that will also benefit local farmers, promote sustainable practices, as well as allow diners to experience the distinct flavours and terroir of their surroundings.



The focus on terroir extends beyond ingredients to encompass culinary techniques and craftsmanship. Our panellists predict that more culinary establishments will raise their game by offering **signature, house-made products** like artisanal breads, handcrafted charcuterie, and fermented condiments, showcasing the culinary artistry and dedication of their kitchens. Finally, the coming year will see chefs incorporating **high-protein ingredients** like lean meats, legumes, and plant-based alternatives to create balanced and satiating offerings for diners seeking nutritious options without compromising on flavour.

With consumers growing more conscientious of what they're eating and homegrown brands gaining more presence in the market, all signs point towards fresh, locally sourced products taking up more space on our plates. Artisanal, Indian-made cheeses, clean-label snacks that use desi grains, and cafes and restaurants using local ingredients are all on the rise as we see a renewed focus and pride in Indian-made products, recipes, and regional cooking.



Aditi Duggar



Chef Sahil Arora

A restaurant typically reflects the passion and creativity of its chef and aligns with its concept, current food trends, and knowledge of its market. Today we are dealing with a more informed and inquisitive consumer who is aware of the importance of less processed food, being more healthy, and carbon footprint on the environment today. Artisanal, homegrown, hand-cut, less processed and local will be key words that consumers will look for in menu offerings in 2024.

Locally sourced fresh ingredients & signature house-made products go back to the fundamentals of cooking. The focus is on quality over quantity, and - thanks to growing awareness among guests - mindful, sustainable, and smart eating. Categories like indigenous produce, regional millets, homemade preserves, probiotic food, and hand-pounded masalas are here to stay. Guests are willing to pay a premium for authentic, unique dining experiences, where culinary heritage, traditional cooking techniques, local, seasonal ingredients and their traceability, are valued. ITC Hotels foresaw potential in these concepts and were early movers with their culinary brands, Avartana, Dakshin and programs like Local Love.



Chef Diipti Jadhav



Lakhan Jethani

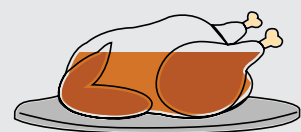
I believe we are moving towards a culinary renaissance in India. There is a boom in intelligence, food is looked at more closely than it ever was. I see a very forward step toward local, regional ingredient-driven, and hyper regional restaurants popping up. The world has realised that food has always been our medicine and chefs are starting to have fun with that idea.



Locally-sourced fresh ingredients  
88.5%



Signature house-made products  
86.5%



High-protein ingredients  
75.0%



# Beverages

The year 2023 has already witnessed a fascinating evolution in the realm of beverages. From the resurgence of artisanal craft beers to the quiet boom in functional non-alcoholic drinks, consumer preferences are shifting with remarkable fluidity. As a result, consumers can look forward to new experiences at home, in bars and in their favourite restaurants where hosts, mixologists and chefs continue to explore boundaries between seemingly diverse concepts of exotic and local, Indian and Global, flavour and health.

This year in the beverages section, we dive into the past to learn about the rich tradition of grain-based fermentation in India and learn about several new initiatives that aim to bring it to the masses in the form of craft beers. We then look at the biggest trends in alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages that will shape the industry in 2024.

# Indigenous Ingredients in Indian Craft Beer

A sample list of craft beers in the market deriving their flavour and taste from indigenous ingredients

COCONUT	JAGGERY	FLOWERS, HERBS, ROOTS	SOUR FRUIT
			
			
Coconut Brown ale	Jaggery Lager	Hibiscus IPA	Kokum Gose
			
Coconut Smoked ale	Jaggery Scotch Ale	Hibiscus Cream Ale	Kokum Sour Ale
			
Coconut Blond Ale	Jaggery Belgian strong	Palash Flower Lager	Tamarind Belgian Wit
			
Coconut Cream Ale	Jaggery IPA	Kashmiri Saffron Lager	Tamarind Sour Ale
			
Jaggery Blond Ale	Jaggery Trappist Ale	Betel Leaf Pale Ale	Tamarind Saison
			
Jamun Gose	Coffee Stout	Sasparilla Stout	Gondhoraj Belgian Wit
			
Jamun Sour Ale	Coffee IPA	Mango Red Ale	Gondhoraj Belgian Blonde
			
Jackfruit Saison	Coffee Belgian Golden Ale	Alphonso Wheat ale	Mosambi Gose
			
Jackfruit IPA	Coffee & Cacao Stout	Mango Saison	Gondhoraj Sour
			
Pineapple Saison	Darjeeling Tea Pale Ale	Alphonso IPA	Mosambi Belgian Wit
			
Guava Gose	Tea American Wheat Ale	Mango Milkshake Wheat Beer	Mosambi Wheat beer
			
Guava IPA	Chamomile & Green Tea Lag		Heiribob Wheat beer
			
Mahabaleshwar Strawberries IPA			
			
Custard Apple Sweet Stout			
OTHER FRUIT	COFFEE/TEA	MANGO	CITRUS
			





# Seeds of Change

## The Use of Indigenous Grains in Indian Craft Beer

*India, with its ancient and rich agrarian history, produces an abundance of grain and has a vibrant tradition of grain-based alcoholic drinks. The last decade has seen the Indian craft beer industry burgeon and flourish and now the sector is creating new possibilities with indigenous grain varieties.*

### Focus Areas for the Craft Beer Segment

Craft beer has become an appealing alternative to mass-produced commercial beer in recent years. Embracing creativity and diversity, it has distinguished itself by experimenting with a wide range of beer styles, indigenous grain, and unusual local ingredients to offer an increasing range of localised taste and flavour propositions. All of this experimentation has the Indian beer lovers excited to try new flavours and adventures from the tap!

### A History Of Grain-Based Ferments In India

Like all good things, alcohol production was the result of a happy historical accident. Grain-based gruels left unattended would have fermented, and humans of the time discovered the beneficial effects fermentation brought on flavour and digestibility. Over centuries, processes of making alcoholic drinks from grain evolved and refined, leading to a culture around the world offering a vast variety of grain-based traditional alcoholic offerings.

Most grain-based cultures around the world developed some form of alcohol based on indigenous grains, independently of each other. Naturally, India, with its centuries old grain-based culture also had its own vibrant tradition of grain-based alcoholic drinks. Local grains were being fermented into

alcohol by tribal communities as far back as five thousand years ago, many of which are still being made today.

Crude beers are found all across India. In the Himalayas there is the *Lugdi* of Himachal, a cloudy homemade beer of rice or barley, fermented with *Phab*, a crude inoculum. Rice beer is popular across the northeast of India, with names and preparations varying from *Tongba* of Sikkim, *Zutho* of Nagaland, *Judima* of Assam to the *Kiad* of Meghalaya. There is also the barley and finger millet-based *Chhang* that is popular all the way across India, Tibet and Nepal.

In the tribal belts of the eastern and central states, rice-based *Handia* fermented with *Ranu*, a local inoculum, and little millet-based *Katul* are wild fermented,

low alcohol, cloudy beers that play significant roles in indigenous festivals and rituals and are typically brewed around the harvest season as marks of gratitude and celebration for a bountiful crop. West Bengal loves *Cholai* made from rice and *mahua* flowers with a very distinct taste. Towards the south of India, there is a predominance of sap-based ferments, like toddy, over grain-based options.

A vast variety of regional variations of beer can be found as one travels across the country. Which is not surprising considering the extraordinary wealth and diversity of starch-rich local grains that span rice, barley, and various millets. And these indigenous grains are today beginning to find their place in modern craft beers in fascinating ways.

## The Adoption Of Traditional Grains In Modern Craft Beer

The last fifteen-odd years have witnessed urban India develop a flourishing craft brewery culture thanks in part to consistent effort towards consumer education. Today most of the major metro cities have a robust audience of avid craft beer lovers that seek out exciting new offerings which incentivises brewers to push boundaries with experimental brews.

Traditionally, beer is brewed with malted barley or wheat. These malts, as they are

called, have traditionally been sourced from major global producers who supply high quality products developed through centuries of research. Unlike commercial breweries, however, craft breweries tend to be more experimental, and focus on trying varied brewing techniques, and unusual flavours. The growing movement towards using local ingredients across the food and beverage landscape, is rapidly percolating into craft breweries, thanks to their agility. Initially

gradual experiments began with the incorporation of flavouring ingredients like spices, herbs and aromatics, and citrus and other fruits, but over time has expanded to include local grain varieties.



### Millet In Craft Beer

Toit Brewing Company, one of India's first microbreweries, was an early mover that introduced one of the first millet craft beers in 2013. Christened "*Namma Beeru*", which literally means 'my beer' in Kannada, this ale was made with *ragi* or finger millet, substituting 20% of the malted barley.

This was a bold move at a time when craft beer itself was at a nascent stage in Bangalore, and it brought its share of challenges. "*While it might have been immediately apparent that this would benefit local ragi farmers, there was a lot more to it,*" observes **Sibi Venkatraju**, partner at Toit. Going on to explain that most microbreweries primarily rely on imported malts because they go through rigorous R&D processes. "*Brewing beer is*

*more akin to baking than cooking, so you need specific information about your raw materials.*

*India has a very large agrarian footprint, so it may sound strange that we use imported malts, but there is little to no research or development in terms of quality, and efficiency when it comes to local grain that is consistent with imported malts. We are only just beginning to learn about it."*

Three years later, in 2016, **Rohit Parwani**, brewmaster at The Biere Club, the first ever brewpub to pour their own beer in Bangalore pushed the bar again, by introducing a *ragi* ale that is considered to be the first millet-dominant beer made in India, clocking in with 70% *ragi*. He recalls a different challenge, "*Brewing equipment is geared toward making beer with malted barley or wheat. Ragi needs to be worked for much longer to extract its sugars. The addition of 30% brewers' malt, which has active enzymes thanks to the malting process, helped balance out the time and processing required to brew the beer."*

Millets differ in structure and composition from wheat and barley malt. Unmalted millets contain far more complex sugars compared to malted wheat and barley, which makes the brewing method a little more complex. However, considering that in 15 years, the market for craft beer has gone from non-existent to 71 operational craft microbreweries in Bangalore alone, there is definitely potential in pushing research into local grain-based malts for craft beer.

A fact that Pune-based Great State Ale Works discovered early on. "*Our focus was always on crafting beers that showcased local and seasonal Indian ingredients*", recalls **Shivani**

**Unakar**, coordinator of the Millet Beer Project at Great State Ale Works. "*Then in 2017, we were introduced to Dr. Amrita Hazra, a researcher from Berkely, who had moved back to Pune.*" She elaborates that Hazra, who had pioneered The Millet Project in the drought-hit farmlands of California with the goal of cultivating millets, introduced them to the concept of brewing with millets, which was already making headway with gluten-free beer drinkers in North America.

Having experimented with these local grains extensively for six years means Great State has a fairly wide repertoire of millet based beers today. "*At present, our millet beers are limited edition and use anywhere from*





**15-58% millet. Each batch is a different style of beer with a unique profile.”** This has allowed Great State to work with different millet varieties – *ragi*, *jowar* and *bajra* so far – from different sources each time. The challenge they face as they look to scale up their Millet Beer Project, is understanding how Indian millets differ even within themselves and tackling this variation, *“India has such a vast variety of millets and exploring*

*this diversity, particularly in the context of beer, is something we have only begun to embark on.”*

Overcoming these challenges at the microbrewery level will help commercial breweries also get into the game, and increase the potential for millet farmers. Some have already entered the fray. Bira, a commercial-scale craft brewery introduced a series of limited release beers at their taprooms in Bangalore

and Gurgaon in mid 2023. Brewed using local grains such as jowar and ragi, these saw great response and today Bira has at least one such beer on their standard taproom line-up. The additional challenge at the commercial brewery scale are the regulations that need to be considered, which currently hold them back from scaling up into packaging and distributing in bottles and cans.

### Heirloom Rice And Wheat Beers

Rice is a slightly more commonly used ingredient in the production of beer compared to millets. Many commercial, big-brand lagers across the world use rice – well-known examples include Asahi Super Dry and Budweiser. These are often mixed with corn, in addition, of course, to brewers malt. The choice to use rice is convenient as it grows abundantly in most parts of the world, and is fairly affordable, especially at the massive commercial scale they manufacture at.

Bombay Duck Brewing, a small craft brewery outside Mumbai, is known for working with local farmers who grow local rice varieties. They have been using the rice to manufacture an ongoing and often-evolving series of rice-based beers. *“The*

*inspiration for this stemmed from the fact that there are plenty of varieties of rice that grow in the immediate vicinity of our brewery. We source our rice at local mills in the area, which act as collection points for local small farmers,”* says **Pooja Pangtey**, co-founder at Bombay Duck Brewing. *“One of our longest standing brewing team members, Ravi, is also a rice farmer during the season. He has taught the team a lot about how we can work with this grain.”*

**Abhishek ‘Chinsi’ Chinchalkar**, Co-founder and Head Brewer at Bombay Duck adds, *“While the end result is more or less the same, our brewing process needed a few clever adjustments to*

*get the desired effect. This is because rice is not malted, so it needs a bit of ingenuity to make the starches available to make beer.”*

In 2023, Bombay Duck Brewing also released a limited series of beers called Slow Flow, featuring heirloom varieties of Indian wheat. Pangtey carefully sources local ingredients from the country, and for these experimental wheat beers, they have chosen to work with *khapli* or Emmer wheat grown in Jalgaon, Maharashtra, as well as white and red soft winter wheat, cultivated by smallholder farmers in Leh.



### The Potential Of Indigenous Grain-Based Beers

Bombay Duck Brewing has worked with brands like Three One Farms, a company working to research, document, and distribute high-quality heirloom varieties of Indian wheat, and OOO Farms, a brand working with small farmers to preserve, cultivate and distribute heirloom grains including indigenous rice and millets. *“India had*



*140,000 indigenous rice varieties, prior to the Green Revolution in the 1960s. Today we have only about 5,000-6,000 left,”* shares **Shikha Kansagara**, Co-Founder and Director at

OOO farms. Kansagara, who has been working closely with Bombay Duck Brewing, by growing heirloom rice varieties for beer, explains that their mission is to reintroduce the cultivation and seed saving of dwindling heirloom varieties to revive biodiversity and help farmers become self-sufficient. *“We buy back surplus yield, and find new markets to distribute them. While using these grains for beer requires a lot of research, a start is being made, and the hope is to tie up with universities who will do this research, eventually leading to a viable product to use for*

*production of beer at scale,”* she concludes.

Similarly, Great State Aleworks has been working with initiatives like The Locavore and Taru Naturals to explore opportunities in sourcing millets directly from farmers in drought hit regions of India. *“Initially we were just excited to work with local grains, but we soon realised that millet beers could help create new markets for millet farmers in India!”* concluded Unakar with palpable excitement.

### The Future

Indian consumers have taken enthusiastically to the experimental and unconventional beers put out by both craft and commercial breweries. A happy circumstance that suggests investment in research and development, streamlining regulations and government support can reap rich rewards across the industry. The benefits of using more local and heirloom grains in brewing beer, offer brewers a new line of creative experimentation, reduce input costs even by just partially replacing imported malts, and most importantly, create the potential to support and incentivise Indian farmers.

A fantastic example lies in 2023 being declared the International Year of Millets by the United Nations, with the Indian government investing resources in pushing millets locally - moves that have injected renewed interest and investment into the exploration of millets, among other local grains. In the Union Budget for 2023-24, the Indian Government has allocated funds toward research and development of millets via the Millet Research Institute. While current regulations around craft beer need to be updated to better accommodate, even encourage

the usage of local and heirloom grains in India, more craft microbreweries are attempting experiments with millets and other local grains today.

An important aspect of making progress in homegrown local grain-based craft beers is facilitation of dialogue between stakeholders. Great State Ale Works has been driving conversations between craft brewers, farmers, researchers and other stakeholders in a move to address challenges and leverage opportunities around incorporating more local grains into Indian craft beer. *“We have understood that for breweries to use millets at scale, they would require certain consistency in supply and grain characteristics,”* shares Unakar. *“We have also learned that many farmers would be happy to work with brewers to understand and meet their requirements. However this will take time, research and collaborative effort from the brewing community, millet farmers and other players like research bodies.”* The brewery published an open-source Brewing With Millets handbook in 2023, documenting their learnings, research, failures and best practices. *“Ultimately, our objective is to see more millet-based beers brewed in India, and our hope with this*

*handbook is to create resources to catalyse collective action in this direction. We’re rooting for the craft beer community to embrace more local grains!”*

While the beer industry is looking to India’s culture of indigenous grain-based beers for inspiration and research, the path to fully-homegrown modern craft beers is still a long one. The industry has only begun to scratch the surface with its exploration into indigenous grains. However, this is certainly a step in the right direction, and if pursued fervently, can be fruitful for farmers, beverage entrepreneurs and consumers.



### Action Points

Indians will continue to enthusiastically embrace craft beer in 2024. The footprint of breweries will widen to spread across tier 2 and tier 3 cities across India. Established markets will see go deeper with crafting their product for excellence and flavour, while simultaneously working on scaling up. The already dynamic craft beer sector can leverage opportunities by investing resources and energies in specific areas like **targeted innovation, infrastructure enhancement, and skill augmentation**. Players can leverage the growing consumer interest in exploring new flavours by investing in **R&D, especially with indigenous grain**, streamlining regulations and **soliciting government support of Indigenous grain based beer**. The beer segment offers rich picking for **storytelling** and the industry can take advantage of this in **planning menus, concepts, and products** while **beverage media can craft content** as varied and wonderful for **publications and social platforms**.





## Beverage Trends

*In the beverages section this year, we once again attempt to identify emerging trends, delving into the factors that will drive consumption behaviours of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, alongside the timeless staples of tea and coffee. We explore the factors driving demand for popular categories, while also estimating the growth potential of niche products, and the consumer appetite for new concepts. Whether it's the surge in demand for low-calorie cocktails or the growing popularity of herbal tea blends, this section offers a roadmap for navigating the changing consumer landscape.*

*Read on to find out what our panel forecasts for the beverage industry in 2024.*



### Toolkit for 2024

Farmers and producers of tea and coffee can learn from their peers who chose to look beyond the traditional supply chain to **build small, niche brands** around select products, and found success by promoting them through **creative collaborations**. In 2024, restaurant and bar businesses that offer a good selection of **Indian-origin spirits**, can boast about their **signature cocktails**, have innovated with **fermented drinks**, and also have a wide selection of **non-alcoholic drinks** on their menu, will see greater success. Content creators and marketers will find exciting opportunities to engage with their audience by telling **absorbing stories around local, Indian-origin, artisanal products** across all beverage categories. Meanwhile, consumers can encourage small, artisanal producers and manufacturers by **adopting and promoting new concepts and products** in their own circles.



## Beverage Trends in Home Kitchens

The Indian palate is undergoing a transformation, and its impact is being felt most keenly within the home. Our expert panel offers compelling insights into beverage categories poised to dominate the Indian living room in 2024, promising a sensory experience unlike any before. A significant majority of our panellists predict that locally sourced, **Indian-origin, artisanal coffee** from regions like Coorg and Chikmagalur will continue to seek centre stage.



As more locally produced gins, single-malts and rums receive international recognition, most of our experts also believe that **Indian-origin spirits** will be the toast of town. A growing desire for more trendy and premium tea experiences will drive demand for **exotic teas** across social occasions at home, chai breaks at work and evening *chai-pe-charcha* sessions. Finally, a significant majority of the panel predicts that **fermented drinks** will continue to make inroads into refrigerators and bars at home in 2024.

2024 will be exciting! Passionate people are getting involved in the process, and that's what is most exciting! Spirit will continue to grow. The made-in-India category is getting extremely interesting. And it's about quality, not quantity. Gin was the favourite alongside whiskies, but rum is the next big thing, and we should also see growth in coffee-based liqueurs and flavoured spirits. Cocktails will also see innovation in all aspects from glassware to speciality ice, mixers and unusual ingredient pairings.

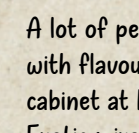


Shatbhi Basu



Rakshay Dhariwal

Tequila, Mezcal, and Agave spirits have gained a cult following in the last couple of years, thanks to being some of the healthiest spirits available, and robust flavours that vary in profile from earthy to smoky. There has been a rise of home-grown Agave spirits, offering an altogether new and exciting category. Interestingly Indian consumers are attracted to any craft spirit that has a great story attached like the aged expressions: Reposados, Anejos, and extra Anejos.



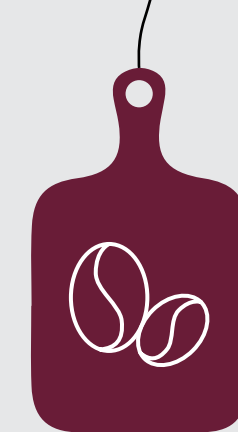
Larissa Amanda Valladares

A lot of people have become hobby bartenders and love experimenting with flavours and ingredients. Gone are the days when owning a bar cabinet at home with fancy glassware and a decent bottle of 'scotch'. Exotic mixers, flavoured liquor, savoury flavoured mixers and cocktails are now making the rounds.



Chef Regi Mathew

Single-origin coffee will have an edge over regular coffee as it defines the character based on the altitude where it is grown and the climatic conditions of the region. Customers are concerned about high added sugar in cocktails. Substitutions with the natural sweetness of juices, fermented beverages and teas with various fruity and herbal flavours will be appreciated.



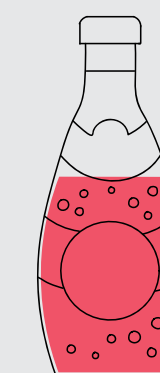
Indian-origin, artisanal coffee  
80.8%



Indian-origin spirits  
78.8%

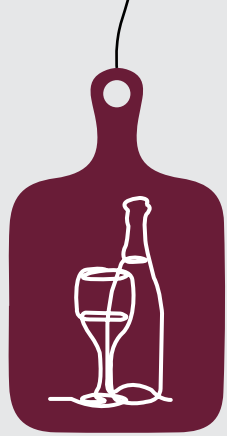


Exotic teas  
76.9%



Fermented drinks  
65.4%





## Alcoholic Beverage Trends

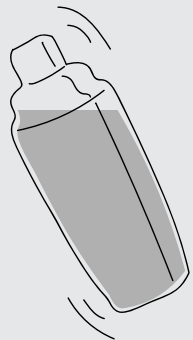
The bar scene in 2024 is set to be illuminated by a focus on unique experiences and exotic flavours.

A whopping majority of our experts expect to see **dedicated menus showcasing Indian-origin spirits**, promising a vibrant exploration of spices and tradition. Close behind, a significant majority envisions a rise in **events and popups hosted by renowned mixologists**, injecting a touch of celebrity flair and personalised cocktail artistry into the scene.



**Botanical infusions** are also poised to bloom, with most of our experts predicting a surge in cocktails featuring fresh herbs, flowers, and other botanical elements. This trend reflects a growing desire for natural ingredients and unexpected flavour combinations, pushing the boundaries of what a cocktail can be.

Dedicated menus around Indian-origin spirits  
82.7%



Events and popups by celebrity mixologists of repute  
80.8%



Botanical-infused cocktail options  
75.0%

I've noticed a shift in preferences among Indian drinkers. They are increasingly embracing a sense of adventure in their choices, moving beyond traditional options and showing a growing interest in flavoursome spirits such as tequila or single malt in cocktails. This trend reflects a desire to savour nuanced flavours created by the production process which allows a departure from overly sugary mixers to a more sophisticated approach to crafting enjoyable drinks.



Evonne Eadie



Aneesh Bhasin

I see mindful consumption as the trend since last year and going forward. On a larger timeline, I think we are now used to more (and better) brands in the market, and overall, the drinks culture has become a lot more mature.

Cocktails are at an all-time peak. If things continue on this trajectory, India has the potential to be a cocktail powerhouse the way New York, London, and Singapore are. But this is a long-haul journey; it needs intent and passion. A positive is that the constant passion for a good cocktail has made bartenders (especially internationally reputed ones) equivalent to DJs, musical artists, and gigs today.



Sayoni Bhaduri



Aslam Gafoor

Friendly neighbourhood bars and retro drinks will be in focus in 2024. Locally sourced natural ingredients, and artisanal produce will be in demand. There will be a significant shift to using home-grown mixers, shrubs, fresh juices, and low-sugar options, in cocktails.

## Non-alcoholic Beverage Trends

The non-alcoholic beverage scene is bubbling with excitement, and **fermented drinks** are slated to take the lead in 2024.

A significant majority of our panellists predict a frenzy for global favourites like kombucha, kefir, and other gut-friendly brews, offering a healthy and invigorating alternative to popular sugary options. Coming next, **cold-pressed fresh vegetable and fruit juices** are poised for a surge, quenching thirsts with vibrant flavours and natural health boosting properties.



Over half our experts believe that a strong wave of nostalgia will see the revival of classic sodas, milkshakes, and mocktails, with **retro drinks** giving a playful twist on these childhood favourites. They also predict a rise in **ready-to-drink mocktails**, offering consumers delicious and hassle-free alternatives to alcoholic beverages at home.

The sober-curious movement has already gained interest abroad, and several bars at home too have begun paying attention to non-alcoholic options on their menus. Not drinking alcohol shouldn't be the reason to miss hanging out at a great bar.



Anisha Rachel Oommen



Ketan SS Gohel

With mindful drinking catching up, people are drinking less nowadays due to health reasons. I expect the demand for healthy beverages, fermented drinks etc will continue to grow.

Botanical-infused sparkling waters, offering a subtle yet sophisticated flavour profile, will gain popularity for their health benefits and refreshing taste. These categories, with their focus on health, craftsmanship, and global flavours, are poised to redefine the at-home beverage experience.

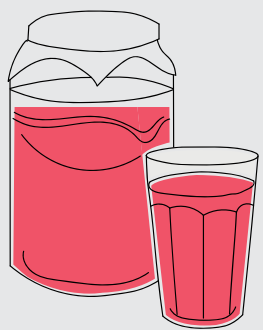


Pooja Khanna



Sadaf Hussain

Nostalgic drinks are also coming back in a real or updated avatar. For instance, People's Brewing Co. recently brought out Dikra, an alcoholic raspberry beverage that takes inspiration from a very popular raspberry soda from the Parsi community.



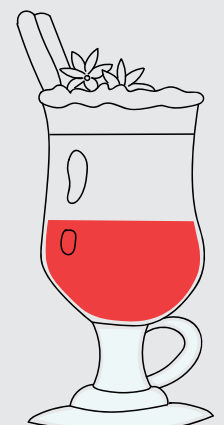
Fermented beverages - Global  
73.1%



Cold-pressed fresh vegetable & fruit drinks  
67.3%

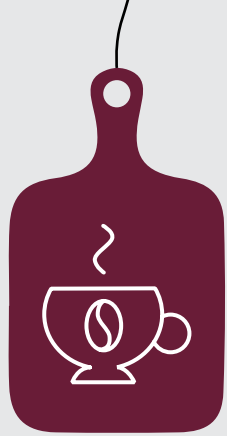


Retro drinks  
57.7%



Ready-to-drink mocktails  
57.7%





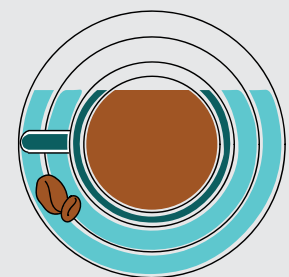
## Coffee Trends

Coffee connoisseurs are in for a treat in 2024! Most of our panellists expect a surge in **convenient gourmet and specialty coffee** options, making high-quality brews readily accessible for busy coffee lovers. The thirst for knowledge is also brewing strong, with three-fourth of our responders predicting a rise in **coffee tasting, brewing, and other educational workshops**. These experiences will allow enthusiasts to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the craft.

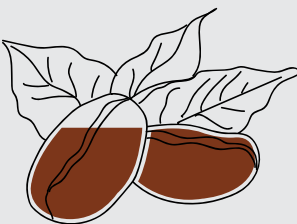
Meanwhile, a large majority of experts also anticipate a growing **focus on provenance**, resulting in increased demand for beans meticulously sourced for unique flavour profiles and sustainable practices. Finally, they expect a renaissance of **premium and gourmet brands of traditional South Indian filter coffee**, adding a touch of exotic sophistication to the coffee scene.



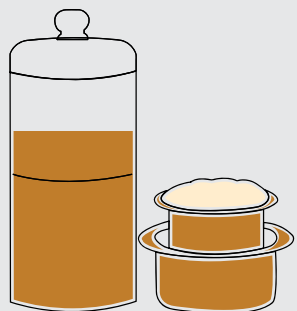
Convenient gourmet/  
specialty coffee options  
80.8%



Coffee tasting, brewing  
and other educational/  
experiential workshops  
75%



Provenance-focused  
coffee  
73.1%



Premium and gourmet  
brands of traditional  
South Indian filter coffee  
71.2%

As a coffee enthusiast, I have realised and even written about the rising love for coffee in tier-II and tier-III cities. Coffee is the new chai and enjoys the same love now in India. People are now happily brewing their own cup and going beyond just instant coffee.

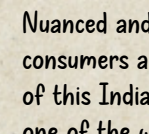


Tarannum Manjul



Akash Hirebet

There has been a revolution of sorts in the coffee space. Home brewers are growing in number, and brands are also trying to raise awareness via workshops and the like. Provenance is playing a big role in coffee purchase nowadays, and brands are working with growers to popularise estates where these grow. There is definitely potential for Indian coffee to be recognized as the world's best, and some growers are ready to put in the work to make it happen.



Charmaine  
O'Brien

Nuanced and sophisticated coffee consumption is a lifestyle essential for consumers around the world and no less so for Indian consumers. As part of this Indian consumers are now appreciating the fact their country is one of the world's biggest coffee producers and welcoming local branding re: region, estate etc. Anything coffee should be popular.



Harish Rao

The coffee industry is poised for continued innovation and growth in 2024. The key drivers are likely to include a combination of convenience, education, unique experiences, and an emphasis on quality and origin. The coffee concepts that resonate the most will depend on the evolving preferences of discerning coffee enthusiasts and broader societal trends.

## Tea Trends

For the tea aficionado, 2024 promises to bring a delightful blend of tradition and innovation. A comforting majority of our experts forecast a resurgence of **Masala Chai and its variants**, offering a familiar yet exciting journey through spiced flavours. But alongside this warmth, the panel expects to see a strong demand for **sustainable, eco-friendly packaging**, reflecting their growing concern for the environment, and a commitment to conscious consumption.

The quest for well-being will also take centre stage. Most of our panellists expect to see this desire translate into a rise in **tea-based fermented drinks**, promising gut-friendly benefits and unique taste profiles. Meanwhile, **wellness teas** catering to specific health goals and mindful indulgence will also gain popularity. And for those seeking natural goodness, a flourishing demand for **herbal teas** offering diverse flavours and therapeutic properties is predicted.



In 2024, tea is more than just a beverage, it's a reflection of our lifestyle, combining health, flavour, and care for the environment. The classic Masala Chai is back, bringing its comforting spices to the forefront, yet there's a growing excitement for teas that offer more than just taste. Tea-based fermented drinks and wellness teas are on the rise, catering to our desire for gut health and personal well-being. This trend goes hand in hand with a demand for eco-friendly packaging, showing our commitment to sustainability. It's clear that our love for tea is evolving, embracing tradition while welcoming innovation and responsibility.

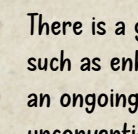


Chef Guntas  
Sethi



Chef Rahul  
Wali

Healthy drinks will be the go to category in 2024! After the pandemic, health and healing, detox and healthy drink options will be more popular than ever. As a tea-loving country, I expect many Indians will experiment with other tea varieties and styles in the year to come.



Prerna Kumar

There is a growing interest in beverages that offer functional benefits, such as enhanced hydration, added vitamins, and adaptogens. With an ongoing interest in tea culture, consumers may explore unique and unconventional tea blends. Herbal infusions, floral teas, and blends with unique flavour profiles could be favoured by those seeking a sophisticated and diverse tea-drinking experience.

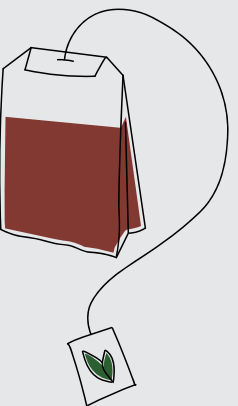


Pallab De

India loves its chai, and it's impossible to recreate the taste of tea brewed in boiling milk with instant tea powders. This immediately limits the popularity of this product category. However, packaged masala chai mixes, with emphasis on high quality, is an evolving category which is well poised for growth.



Masala Chai and  
its variants  
73.1%



Sustainable packaging  
71.2%



Tea-based  
fermented drinks  
63.5%



Herbal and  
Wellness teas  
63.5%



# Sweets & Desserts

Over the past decade, the sweets and desserts segment has emerged as one of the most dynamic sectors within the Indian food industry. The evolving profile of the Indian consumer reflects the delicate balance between making health-conscious choices and the unwavering desire for indulgence. Meetha has consistently occupied the paramount position in driving special occasion menus both at home and at venues for dining out.

The nation's enduring love for traditional mithai will never really abate. However, as more Indians are travelling to explore diverse cuisines than ever before and conversations around Geographical Indication certification (GI) tags for mithais, exploration regional Indian sweets is definitely on the sweet lover's bucket list

The excitement towards trying new flavours is also driving growth and innovation in specific sectors like Ice cream and chocolate. There is innovation taking place across every vertical of the sweets segment be it traditional mithai, gourmet takes on traditional mithai, exotic international desserts, ice cream or desserts with healthier claims and more. Whatever a consumer desires, somebody is serving up. This year the Sweets and Desserts section examines new and exciting sweet adventures that will entice the Indian consumer in 2024.

# Flavours of Indian Craft Chocolate

A selection of classic Indian flavours that are finding their way into local craft chocolates.

Salty	Sweet	Fruity	Fermented	Spicy	
 Sea Salt	 Halwa	 Orange	 Dark Gin & Candied Ginger	 Pepper	
 Smoked Sea Salt	 Rasmalai	 Mango	 Rum & Raisin	 Longum Pepper	
 Himalayan Pink Salt	 Sarkarai Pongal	 Banana	 Dindori Reserve Shiraz Wine	 Sichuan Pepper	
 Soy Sauce	 White Chocolate Kulfi	 Jackfruit	 Dark Whiskey & Cashew	 Ginger	
 Sea Salt Caramel	 Desi Rabdi	 Wild Apple	 Butterscotch	 Cinnamon	
Fresh	 Jaggery & Coconut	 Blueberries	 Mango Lassi	 Naga Chilli	
 Mint	 Palm Sugar	 Cranberries	 Masala Chaas	 Bhut Jolokia Chilli	
 Peppermint	 Black Jaggery	 Raspberries	 Thandai	 Mor Milagai (Curd Chilli)	
 Rosemary		 Plum	 Milagai Podi		
 Zaatar	<th>Bitter</th>	Bitter			
 Moringa	 Espresso				
 Bamboo Shoot	 Filter Kaapi				
 Malligai (Jasmine)	 Sukku Malli Kaapi				
 Paneer Roja (Red Rose)	 Lemon, Ginger & Tulsi Green Tea	 Almonds	 Cashew	 Perilla Seeds	
 Hibiscus	 Spiced Tea Latte	 Pistachio	 Peanuts	 Pumpkin Seeds	
	 Indian Style Masala Chai	 Hazelnut	 Black Sesame		





# Cacao

## Growth And Proliferation In India

***For most of India, the benchmark of what chocolate should taste like was set by Cadbury (now Mondelez India) with Dairy Milk, which was introduced in the market in 1948. From then to now, Indian chocolate has come a long way and is making its mark in the global chocolate sector.***

### Focus Areas for the Cacao Segment

Cacao and all its derivatives have created a whole new proposition for India. Cacao farming will continue to expand. The footprint of cacao farming will continue to grow and innovation in the sector will grow exponentially

## The Arrival Of Cacao In India

For a long time, the cacao fruit, from which chocolate is derived, was relatively unknown in India. Like many other plants, cacao was transported to several parts of the world by the British Empire which utilised its colonies worldwide to cultivate and propagate many cash crops during the Columbian Exchange, thrived in West African soils. The delicate Criollo varieties also took well to Sri Lankan soil, but it did not take in Southern India.

The British first introduced cacao to India in 1798, with the establishment of eight Criollo cacao plantations in Courtallam, Tamil Nadu. In his book “Cocoa Growing in India (1964),” G.A.R Wood, a tropical agricultural adviser and cacao consultant, shared that specific areas in the south including Nagercoil, Courtallam, Tenkasi, Palani Hills, and Anamalai Hills (all in present-day Tamil Nadu) as

well as the states of Kerala, Madras, and Mysore in South India, were recognised as ideal for cacao cultivation because of the climate and rain cycle. Eventually, the vulnerable Criollo variety of cacao was replaced by a hardier, higher-yielding variety called Forastaro from the upper Amazon region that was thriving in West Africa and Malaysia.

At this time, the Malabar coast saw what was termed a dependent development of cacao. Mathew V Kurian in his “Economics of Cacao Cultivation (1990)” explains this and observes that ‘In many agrarian matters of the third world, ranging from cropping pattern to procuring and marketing of the final products, the producing countries were made dependent on the dominating ones by western colonialists.’

It was only in the mid-1960s,

when Cadbury got involved in Wayanad, Kerala, that cacao cultivation became a significant agricultural endeavour. The Kerala Agricultural University initiated cacao breeding programs in 1979 and through collaborations with Cadbury in 1987, went on to develop highly productive hybrid seeds to maximise production. Cadbury and Nestle grew exponentially in the ‘80s and ‘90s and continue to dominate the Indian chocolate market today by purchasing a substantial portion of Indian-grown cacao for commercial chocolate production.



## The Proliferation of Cacao

Cacao cultivation in India has spread exponentially in the last 40 years making inroads into Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh too. Chennai-based **L Nitin Chordia**, India’s 1st Certified Chocolate Taster, Judge at the

International Chocolate Awards (ICA), London and a cacao Post Harvest Professional who has been a keen observer of the cacao market shares, **“Cacao growing in Andhra Pradesh at 46-degree temperatures**



**was once thought impossible but today it is thriving there. Interesting things are also happening with cacao cultivation in Northeast**

**India,”** he adds. *“While the quantum of cultivation is low, the characteristics of northeast cacao are similar to that of Kerala.”* He emphasises that this progress is thanks to the single-handed efforts of the government which has encouraged cacao cultivation in the region over the last 15 years, resulting in the first harvests being seen.

Today, India ranks 19th alongside several West African nations on the list of largest cacao bean producers internationally. Globally, the Ivory Coast and Ghana are dominant cacao producers, today, collectively contributing to over 50% of global cacao production. Like these countries, India’s location is also near the equator and possesses the ideal hot and rainy climate for cultivating cacao trees. India’s cacao output constitutes approximately 1% of the Ivory Coast’s production and accounts for less than 0.33% of the world’s total cacao production. But that 1% production has managed to put Indian cacao on the world

map in more ways than one. Andhra Pradesh produced the highest volume of cacao in India in the fiscal year 2022, at over 11 thousand metric tonnes, followed by Karnataka and Kerala at 3.9 and 2.9 metric tonnes respectively.

Alongside increasing acreage being dedicated to cacao, customised processes to elevate its production and usage as an ingredient are also increasing. **Chaitanya Muppala**, Founder of Manam Chocolate and CEO of Distinct Origins who works with over 100 cacao farmers in Andhra Pradesh explains the evolutionary process of the ‘Cadbury tree’ as these were popularly known among farmers. Understanding this will help make sense of the characteristics of Indian cacao and potentially strengthen India’s standing as a cacao-producing region even more.



**“The cacao tree varietals referred to as ICS (Imperial College Selections), were specifically engineered for industrial**

**requirements and focused on factors like productivity, disease resistance, yield per acre, and fat content. They were brought to India by industrial players for commercial use.”** He goes on to add that, while all cacao trees in India trace their roots back to these initial imports from the early 1960s, their genetic integrity has been compromised from solely being propagated through seeds, leading to cross-pollination and genetic mixing. This has resulted in even the original industrial hybrids deviating from their initial characteristics and causing the genetic composition of cacao trees across India to become largely homogenised. *“Potentially, decoding the characteristics of Indian cacao will help the country stand out as a cacao region globally,”* he concludes.



## Indian Cacao’s Unique Flavour Profile

There is a notable difference between farms supplying the commercial and craft chocolate sectors. Commercial brands seek the most cost-effective cacao and often employ alkalisation, a chemical process used to reduce bitterness, darken colour, and improve solubility often used in making cacao powder and some chocolates. Craft chocolate brands on the other hand have proactively established protocols from farming and harvesting, to processing, fermentation and packaging, to ensure the exceptional quality of their end product, so much so that many Indian, craft chocolate brands have even chosen to oversee cacao cultivation.

*“Notable distinguishing variations in flavour are valuable*

*in crafted chocolate and primarily attributed to terroir, soil quality, climate, humidity, and moisture, each of which significantly influences the end flavours,”* Muppala observes. Thriving as it does in 40%-50% shady conditions, cacao is predominantly cultivated as an intercrop with oil palm and rubber within regions like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. Approximately two-thirds of India’s cacao cultivation today, takes place in coconut groves, and an additional fifth in areca nut plantations.

Intercropping has an undeniable impact on cacao. The role of intercropping is significant because these crops share the same soil. **“The best-flavoured highest yielding cacao cannot be mono-cropped,”** explains

**Mansi Reddy**, Head of Brand and Marketing at Auroville-based Mason & Co. She goes on to share, **“Mono-cropping also impacts the ecosystem, resulting in the loss of the fruit fly which is the cacao plant’s natural pollinator.”** In the long run, intercropping necessitates documentation, systematisation, and data collection. Some brands are already experimenting with this.

**“Our beans acquire a unique flavour profile from being cultivated on farms adjacent to the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, and intercropping with coconut and nutmeg”** observes **Karthikeyan Palaniswamy**, co-founder of Regal Plantations, which has 100 acres of cacao plantations



at the foothills of Anamalai in Tamil Nadu and produces approximately 45 tonnes of beans. “We also follow a signature fermentation profile and process to ensure that we extract the maximum complex flavour profile from our beans. Most chocolate makers worldwide like our beans due to their acidic, floral flavour notes. Our brand Soklet also reflects

### Creating With Cacao

For artisanal chocolate makers and chocolatiers in India, good quality cacao has provided an incredible base to creatively spring off from. At Manam Chocolate Karkhana, in Hyderabad, the brand showcases 45 categories reflected in 250+ unique products. These range from snacking nibs, single farm origin chocolate, a set of products exclusively for gourmet bakers, a range of varietals in drinking chocolate and more, showcasing the vast potential of cacao. This is just one example of a brand working on a portfolio of creations with chocolates. Sapa Bakery in Mysore offers a range of chocolate products crafted only with artisanal chocolate.

Many Indian craft chocolate brands are experimenting with techniques to give their product an edge. “We omit the roasting of our beans and keep our temperatures below 50 degrees celsius,” explains David Belo, Creative & Managing Director, Naviluna (Mysuru).



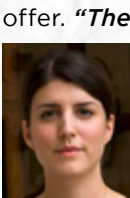
“Asian cacao tends to be fruit-forward. This preserves the characteristics of the terroir of Southern India while retaining a lot of the amino acids, positive health benefits and antioxidants. Flavour-wise, we get a fruitier taste, with slightly more acidic notes.”

Another aspect of Indian craft chocolate that has put India on the global map, has

this mellow complex flavour profile,” he concludes. Patricia Cosma, a Bengaluru-based bean-to-bar chocolate consultant marvels at the tremendous growth in new chocolate origin regions in India over the last five years. “What is working for Indian farmers right now is that not only are they able to produce good quality



specialty cacao but every cacao origin has its specificity and uniqueness that varies from farm to farm, not just region to region. Add to this, the experimentation and creation of new trends and it is a win-win all around.”



offer. “There is a diversity of climate, there is wheat, vanilla, cacao and coffee, ensuring you don’t have to import ingredients. I aim to use local resources to minimise my ingredients’ travel miles. Today, we work with Mason & Co’s 70% cacao for creations where chocolate takes centre stage, like our Sea Salt Caramel and Dark Chocolate Tart and the Flourless Chocolate Cake,” she explains.

In October, Chef Karan Upmanyu presented a cacao and corn-inspired menu(cornerstone crops of Mesoamerica from where cacao is said to have originated) at The Conservatory in Bengaluru. This was done in collaboration with Mason & Co chocolate as part of the Cacao & Craft Chocolate Festival at The Conservatory.

The menu had dishes like Charred Cream Corn and Cacao Nibs, Pozol, a cold cacao-masa drink, Pantheon Salad with cacao fruit mustard vinaigrette, Cacao Miso marinated tenderloin and a Corn Custard with Cacao Nib Salsa among other dishes. This menu is a perfect example of how creativity with cacao can extend beyond chocolate. “In India, cacao is still pigeonholed as a



dessert ingredient, but with its earthy, fruity and acidic flavour notes, its use in savoury dishes can produce unexpectedly

delightful outcomes,” observes Upmanyu “And it’s not just the cacao beans, the flesh of

the fruit also has interesting applications. On this menu I also used cacao fruit juice and

vinegar,” he concludes.

### The Future Of Cacao

What the industry requires, going forward, can be viewed from two perspectives – the chocolate-producing community on one hand and the chocolate consumer on the other.

For the chocolate-producing community that counts cacao farmers, chocolate makers and chocolatiers the key lies in education, shares Reddy. “There’s a need to convey the wealth of knowledge and information behind the Indian craft chocolate movement and what sets it apart and why it’s extraordinary. Educating consumers about the exceptional qualities, ethical aspects, and value of Indian craft chocolate will help them truly appreciate and understand the product.” She goes on to say that events like the Indian Craft Chocolate Festival are great platforms that are helping drive this narrative.

Chocolate makers and chocolatiers believe that the

Indian craft chocolate sector is one the world should watch out for. “Today, almost all brands operate in a niche, which is great because they are developing,” observes Chordia. Elaborating that Pascati operates in the fair trade and organic segment, Paul and Mike focuses on unique flavours and attractive packaging, Soklet is an understated tree-to-bar product, and Naviluna cold processes their beans – each is starting to grow and make an impact in their segment.

Cacao’s potential goes beyond the food sector. Cacao products also offer potential value-adding profits. Thanks to its moisturising properties and natural antioxidants, cacao butter is valued in the skincare, cosmetics and pharmaceutical sectors. cacao absolute, derived from cacao beans, is used to add chocolate aroma notes to perfumes, candles, personal care items, lubricants, and in phytoremediation to cleanse polluted soils. Cacao husks and

by-products are also recycled into mulch, fertilisers, animal feed, and used by the arts and crafts sector.

Cacao may not be indigenous to India, but with a location and climate conducive to propagating it, successful initial forays into cacao production and application, the potential of unique flavour profiles Indian cacao offers, and the creativity of Indian chocolatiers and brands, Indian cacao brings infinite promise. What the industry needs, to realise this promise, is a unified voice on the global stage. And this, like Indian cacao and chocolate, is a work in rapid progress.



### Action Points

The propositions cacao offers will continue to seduce the Indian consumer in 2024 and beyond. Industry players can leverage this excitement by investing resources and energies in specific areas like R&D into cacao crops, innovation with product offerings and flavours, and skill augmentation in production of cacao products like hot chocolate and more. Institutions can build curriculums around chocolate making and patisserie. Cacao being considered a superfood, has potential in the alternative diet-based category, with nutritionally-fortified, vegan and keto options appealing to health-conscious consumers. Chocolate and by association, cacao are more seductive to the consumer than anything else and make fascinating subjects for content around food with storytelling, and verticals across the industry can take advantage of this in planning menus, concepts, and products as well as to fuel content for social platforms







# Sweet & Dessert Trends

For most Indians, sweets are synonymous with joy and togetherness. They weave themselves into the fabric of every celebration - from family gatherings and personal milestones to festivals like Diwali and Holi. Sharing a mithai in India is universally accepted as a symbol of affection, blessings, and strengthening bonds. This cultural significance imbues every bite with an emotional resonance, making desserts an essential part of the Indian social landscape.

Beyond celebrations, sweets also evoke powerful memories of childhood and home. The familiar aroma of freshly made jalebis or the comforting sweetness of gulab jamun transports us back to simpler times, filled with warmth and love. These nostalgic triggers create an emotional pull towards traditional desserts, making them more than just a treat but a comforting journey down memory lane.

Against this culturally evocative backdrop, the expert panel was asked to forecast the most exciting sweet and dessert trends Indian consumers can look forward to in 2024. Read on to know what they have to say about it.



## Toolkit for 2024

Traditional mithai companies will do well by expanding their offerings to include more **international** and **fusion desserts**, along with **gourmet versions of traditional mithais**. Meanwhile, frozen dessert brands that are more **transparent** about their **processes**, and the **source and quality of their ingredients**, will find greater traction with customers. So will bakeries that have **healthier treats** on offer.

In 2024, conscientious diners will prefer restaurants willing to expand their menus with **healthier dessert options** that support lifestyle choices of their entire group or family. Restaurants and cloud kitchens can also attract new customers with **house-made desserts** inspired by **international concepts** or **exotic Indian flavours**.



# Dessert Trends at Home

Dessert consumption at home continues to evolve, driven by a confluence of health-conscious indulgence, global influences, and a renewed appreciation for tradition. From gourmet reinventions to healthier options, the focus is on personalization, innovation, and a touch of global inspiration.

Three-fourth of our expert panellists expect to encounter many more **gourmet versions of traditional mithais** in 2024, with classics getting a gourmet makeover, especially around festive occasions. An equal number see **desserts with healthier claims** gaining wider acceptance with consumers seeking treats that satiate their daily sweet cravings without compromising well-being. **Baked treats** will continue to flourish as a convenient option for occasional indulgence, offering a warm and comforting alternative to traditional sweets. Exotic **Middle Eastern desserts**, like flaky *baklava*, drizzled with honey, creamy *kunafa* stuffed with pistachios, or refreshing rose-scented *loukoun* adorned with nuts, will find greater demand from consumers looking to make an impression with their festive gifting!



Desserts are the one cheat that most people allow themselves. It's also the one course that consumers are willing to experiment with. Drama, daring and desire is what I see happening with desserts.

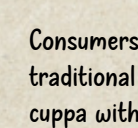


Salloni Malkani



Abhay Kewadkar

Indulgent desserts are going to remain the first choice with diners even though they are increasingly aware that excess sugar is not good for health. Reports on increased diabetic population are adding to the concern. Looking forward, desserts with healthier claims are definitely going to drive the choice.



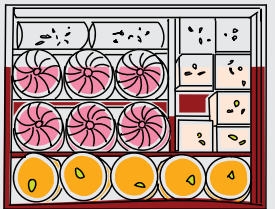
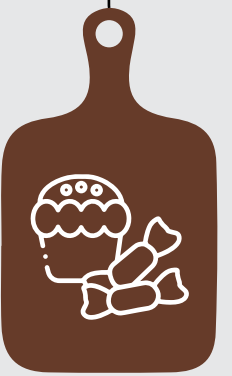
Odette Mascarenhas

Consumers seem to prefer creative dessert options over traditional ones today, but the taste for an early morning cuppa with a croissant will continue to linger.

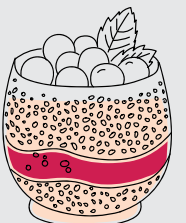


Chef Manish Khanna

"Kuch metha ho jaye", either before, during or after the meal. This phrase is synonymous with our country's eating habits. However, sugarfree, vegan, keto and gluten-free desserts will continue to grow by leaps and bounds, owing to a greater market demand for healthier options for those sweet cravings.



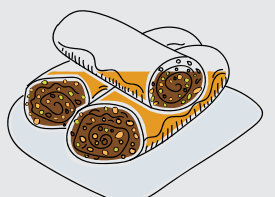
Gourmet versions of traditional mithais  
75.0%



Desserts with healthier claims  
75.0%

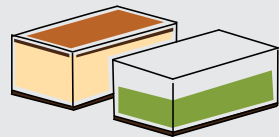
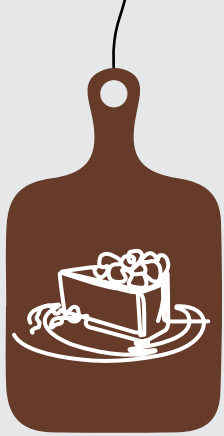


Baked treats  
69.2%

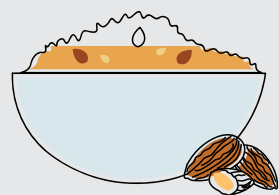


Middle Eastern desserts  
67.3%

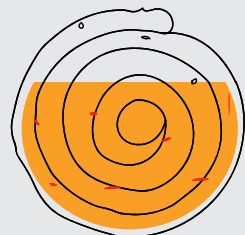




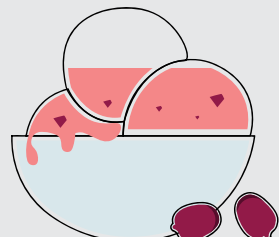
Exotic international desserts  
80.8%



Desserts with healthier claims  
80.8%



Signature, house-made desserts  
75.0%



Desserts inspired by Indian flavours  
73.1%

## Dessert Trends in Restaurants

The dessert segment in restaurant menus has been undergoing a delicious transformation, often a reflection of the tumultuous relationship between the diners and their desserts. In 2024, our panel believes that the industry is now ready to take charge by offering a riot of exotic flavours and formats, exquisitely crafted, and packaged for guilt-free indulgence!



A significant majority of our panel is convinced that **exotic international desserts** will be most sought after by diners looking to add adventure to their meal. An equal number of panellists expect to see sugar-free alternatives, options with natural sweeteners like jaggery, and even vegan and gluten-free offerings on the menu. These **desserts with healthier claims** allow diners to enjoy their desserts guilt-free, making every bite a celebration of both taste and well-being.

Our experts also feel that more **signature, house-made desserts**, showcasing the culinary skills and creativity of its creator, will leave a lasting impression in 2024. Finally, they predict that **desserts inspired by Indian flavours** will continue to see traction, celebrating tradition even as they push the boundaries of culinary creativity.

As we enter 2024, I see a rising demand for indulgent yet wholesome, healthy desserts. Desserts with a gluten-free or refined sugar-free element are definitely taking centre stage. There's also a large emphasis on eating more sustainably and locally.



Pooja Dhingra



Chef Anees Khan

International desserts such as Baklava and Kunafa have been a rage and will continue to do so. There has been an increase in locally produced quality Middle Eastern desserts in India and the demand is phenomenal.

Indian diners are now accepting newer ways of dining out and are always on the lookout for new experiences and flavours. Desserts are a big part of eating out but also becoming a regular pattern when ordering in. That said the Indian diner is getting wiser and more practical and portion sizing has become essential.



Pinky Chandan Dixit



Dr. Avin Thaliath

Dessert remains a universally cherished category in India, with a perennial love for "meetha." While diners increasingly prioritise health, festivities often provide a delightful excuse to indulge. The global dessert trend also holds strong, reflecting a diverse palate that appreciates sweet treats from around the world. The dessert landscape continues to evolve, striking a balance between mindful consumption and the joyous celebration of diverse sweet offerings.

## Mithai Trends

India's beloved mithai will continue to evolve in 2024, embracing new influences while celebrating its cherished heritage. Over 75% of our experts predict an uptake in **gourmet mithai**, enriched with premium ingredients, exquisite packaging, and unique flavour combinations, especially around traditional festivals. At the same time, a great majority of our panel expect an equally strong demand for **special diet versions of traditional mithai**, with low-sugar alternatives, sugar-free sweeteners, and vegan options, from consumers looking for some mindful indulgence in 2024.



Most of our panellists also expect to see a lot more **fusion mithai** on offer - embracing global techniques and influences, and incorporating international flavours and ingredients into beloved recipes!

My ancestors were Mithai walas - sweetmeat makers. (I feel that) it's time to bring back the original, put a creative spin on it, and excite India and the world! Ancient ingredients like frankincense and camphor, used in devotional desserts (prasad), will make a comeback.



Chef Shagn Mehra

This year, I expect a shift in how people enjoy mithai regularly. Beyond the usual favourites like Rasmalai and Gulab Jamun, lesser-known delights are gaining attention. Take, for instance, the winter Black Carrot Halwa at Bombay Sweet Shop, which was a hit. As is our Coffee Rasgulla Tiramisu, a combination of Bengali and Italian classics - imagine coffee-soaked rasgullas layered with mascarpone cream, topped with almond brittle, and dusted with cocoa powder! These gourmet twists are making daily consumption of Indian mithai a trend to watch.



Girish Nayak

Many consumers want 'something new' all the time. Brands are innovating with all kinds of fusion mithai to satisfy this demand and cater to fads that change constantly. Fusion is temporary, cheeky & meant for a bit of drama and while I understand this phenomenon, I firmly believe in preserving the goodness & authenticity of products and their history.

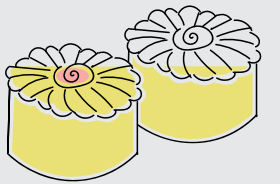
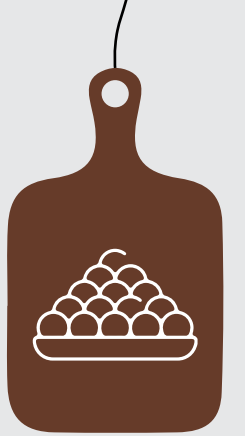


Zeba Kohli

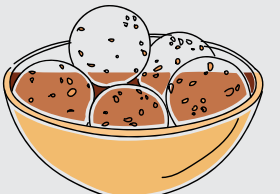


Vishal Nagpal

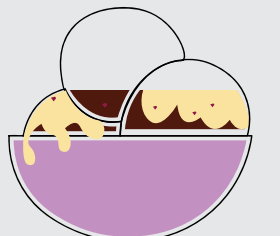
Indian sweets in modern avatars are likely to be more visible. Exciting modern approaches to traditional mithai will make them more popular among younger consumers who are not the classic "mithai" consumers currently.



Gourmet mithai  
78.8%



Special diet versions of traditional mithai  
67.3%



Fusion mithai  
63.5%





## Ice Cream Trends

Indian ice cream will continue its makeover, with health and transparency taking centre stage in 2024. Nearly three-fourth of our panel predicts a greater yearning for **clean label ice creams**, free from artificial additives and obscure ingredients. Expect a rise in labels showcasing simple, recognizable ingredients and highlighting ethical sourcing practices. An equal number of experts see increased demand for **ice cream with healthy claims**, paving the way for options boasting low sugar, high protein, probiotic cultures, or even incorporating superfoods like berries and nuts.

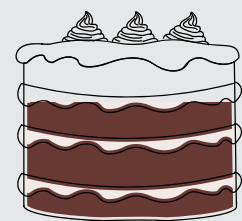


But indulgence will not go totally out of the picture! A significant majority of our panellists expect to see **ice cream cakes and desserts** retain popularity amongst traditional consumers. Finally, many of our experts anticipate a rise in demand for **spice and Indian flavour-infused ice creams**, with these tantalising, bold fusions redefining the possibilities of ice cream.

Ice cream is one treat that caters to a wide age group. It's a blank canvas that can carry all kinds of flavours well. Commercialization had narrowed down flavour options manufacturers were selling, but with the ever-increasing demand for artisanal ice cream, there is scope to bring back fresh & seasonal Indian-infused flavours. They evoke nostalgia, and are familiar, but at the same time fresh & unique, highlighting the flavour diversity of India.



Saloni Kukreja

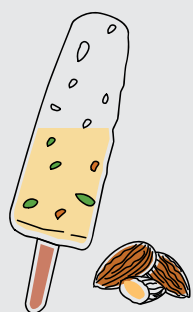


Ice cream cakes and desserts  
67.3%



Anindya Sundar Basu

An interesting segment to watch in the coming year will be ice creams. After all, it's always been the most popular dessert. Gourmet and Artisanal ice creams are in a stage of evolution and hence we can expect more and more unique flavour profiles coming up. There will be a lot of experimentation with ingredients and Indian spices will rule flavour offerings.



Spice and Indian flavour-infused ice creams  
61.5%



Michael Swamy

People are still cautious when experimenting with ice creams and want their regular flavours as it has a lot of memories associated with it. Though the change is there the sales of creative ice creams is not as high as the regular flavours.



Saina Jayapal

Nostalgic desserts will always be popular. Ice creams started out as indulgent, and artisanal ice creams have been extremely successful, in this space, with many brands that started in covid continuing to do well but there are many offerings for healthier and non-dairy versions today that offer a balance of indulgence and mindfulness.

Godrej  
**Jersey**™

# Ghar Jaisa Shudh Ghee





# Health, Hygiene and Lifestyle

Over the years, a growing segment of consumers have shown disenchantment with western medical and lifestyle models, practices, and frameworks, especially related to their role in personal food and diet choices. As a result, there has been a notable shift in home dining behaviours to conscientiously include more traditional wisdom and local, community practices as viable alternatives. This consumer movement is driven by greater awareness of factors affecting personal wellness, and a deepening desire to adopt a better, cleaner lifestyle. It is fueled by a growing tribe of lifestyle experts, practitioners and evangelists who are adopting and promoting this movement. It is also being supported by the industry through innovative concepts and products that seamlessly blend traditional wisdom with modern convenience.

This year in the health, hygiene and lifestyle section, we examine how a few industry upstarts have found success in rediscovering and packaging traditional wisdom and practices into products and experiences that appeal to the ever-growing segment of conscientious consumers.

## Producer To Plate

Tracing food on its journey along the value chain, with examples of innovation at every stage.



### Farms, Fisheries & Primary Producers

- Egg producer Ovo Farm uses **blockchain technology** to track their supply chain.
- Diaspora Co. **publishes an annual report** on the impact of its direct sourcing strategy.
- Tons Trails uses **storytelling on social media** to promote its affiliate farmers.



### Processing, Packaging & Value Addition

- Distinct Origins' Cacao Fermentary **shares data on fermentation processes** with buyers and consumers.
- Chennai's Greenpod Labs **developed bioactive sachets** to reduce spoilage of fruits.
- Delhi-based Krishi Kress **created ready-to-use salad kits** using their fresh farm produce.



### Markets: B2B & D2C

- Ooty-based Kikui Farms supplies **weekly subscription boxes** of fresh produce **D2C** in nearby cities.
- Chennai's In Season Fish works at a **B2B** level **connecting restaurants to small fishers** who supply local seasonal fish.



### Chefs & Restaurants

- At Edible Archives, Goa, Chef Anumitra Ghosh Dastidar **showcases locally sourced ingredients** like indigenous rice and local seafood to reduce carbon footprint
- At Naar Restaurant Chef Prateek Sadhu **highlights locally foraged Himalayan ingredients** like wild nettle and prickly pear.



### Home Cooks & End Consumers

- All over the internet, conscientious home cooks **actively learn and share information** about ingredients, their origin, production, processing, packaging, and transport as well as creative ways to use them in their cooking.





# Producer to Plate

## Connecting the Dots from Farm-to-Fork

**While Indian tradition historically entailed deep consciousness around food origins and practices, the contemporary farm-to-fork movement is still young in India. But its growth in recent years emphasises that the urban consumer is becoming increasingly aware of the food system at large, and businesses are striving to reinforce this interconnectedness.**

### Focus Areas

Farm-to-fork solutions that are **convenient and easy to adapt** will plug nutritive gaps and help consumers deal better with everyday lifestyle challenges. Food producers can leverage growing interest in exploring **new flavours and cuisines** by promoting use of local and seasonal ingredients in regional Indian and global cuisines. Buying from local producers as opposed to more mainstream avenues will **enhance the value and market price of local ingredients** as well as **create employment opportunities**, especially for women farmers and food producers.

## Understanding Farm-To-Fork

The phrase farm-to-fork may seem like stating the obvious to some – after all, where would food come from if not from a farm? However, this phrase is more than a pedantic buzzword today. At its core, it describes the journey of food or ingredients that are sourced directly from where they are produced, with the aim of shortening the long and complicated supply chains food often travels to get to the plate.

There has been a growing gap between food producers and consumers, in recent years, particularly in urban metros, where even the most basic staples often travel great distances globally and locally and change many hands, to

reach urban consumers. This gap was highlighted by the pandemic when the lockdown abruptly severed many of these supply chains, forcing both consumers and producers to quickly recalibrate.

This meant producers had to find and nurture new markets for their offerings closer to the origin, rebuild shorter and more direct lines of trade within their immediate surroundings and build trust and credibility around their farming, processing, packaging and transport practices. This also meant the increasingly conscious consumer had to take a harder look at where their food came from and reassess their consumption practices

based on what was within reach. Growing cognisance of health and nutrition also drove people to take more control of what they chose to eat. So much so that those with access to space and time even tried growing their own food. This habitual awareness of their food behaviour and the core behavioural changes they brought about have prevailed in the wake of the pandemic with both consumers and producers.

## Tracing The Journey

Not only did the industry witness a notable rise in sustainable practices, and conversations around them across verticals, but terms like provenance, transparency and traceability have also become important differentiators for brands and consumers focussed on sustainability, today.

One of the most straightforward means to bridge the gap between producers and consumers, across geographies and contexts, is through building narratives that connect dots along the supply chain for both the industry and the consumer. While some brands opt for more intimate, human-centric approaches, others prefer taking the tech route and build their narratives around hard data.

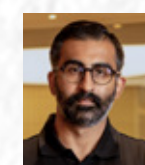
Black Baza Coffee Co based its entire premise on the personal human-centric approach using field notes, social media posts, newsletters, and a self-produced YouTube channel to share stories about their individual producer-partners and the practices they applied.



**“Rather than talking only about the challenges that producers face – which are many – we prefer to focus on individuals and their ingenuity, this allows us to share stories with a much more empowered outtake,”** shares founder **Arshiya Bose.**

Her strategy behind this is simple. *“Today there are many voices competing for attention, some brands may spark powerful storytelling, but it can be fleeting in consumer recall. We have found that consistently sharing the same messaging over the long term has strengthened our credibility with our consumer.”* Bose goes on to elaborate that the Black Baza consumer feels a sense of trust in the brand’s production and trade practices, and many now also recognize Black Baza’s coffee growers by name and face, and remember anecdotes they have shared through the years. What more can a brand hope for?

In contrast, a new approach that is rapidly gaining traction in today’s times, is blockchain-backed food traceability, a modern tech-driven system that brands in the sustainability space are leveraging. Blockchains are decentralised, tamper-proof databases that record information whenever a significant interaction between two or more parties along the supply chain occurs, creating a credible log of the product’s journey. While this system is primarily used for internal quality control and accountability, companies are also finding interesting ways to share this data with consumers to create transparency and trust.



**“At Manam Chocolate, we can pinpoint which farm the cacao in a particular tablet comes from, the name of the farmer that grew it, and even the day it was harvested,”** shares **Chaitanya Muppala,** CEO of Distinct Origins and founder of Manam Chocolate. This system allows them to produce serious reports detailing scientific data on plant genetics, soil, terroir, fermentation metrics, and even transaction certificates on farmer payments for Distinct Origins, the B2B arm of the brand, through which the organisation trades cacao beans globally.

Manam also calibrates some of this data into consumer-friendly information they share through their packaging. Every box that they send out has an illustrated map and QR code depicting the 398-kilometre journey of the cacao from the farm to the fermentary - where it is processed, to the Manam Karkhana - where it is crafted into fine confections, and finally to the consumer. The QR code invites deeper consumer engagement by offering interesting trivia and video clips. *“A big objective of this narrative exercise is to remind ourselves and our children that chocolate is something that comes from a tree, not from the fridge or supermarket,”* concludes Muppala.

## Meeting Halfway

While storytelling has the power to reach a targeted audience for brands, the hospitality industry plays an integral role as an intermediary, by creating a space for both producers and end consumers to meet at strategic points along this value chain. Led by chefs and restaurants the approach allows for more immersive and experiential opportunities targeted at a smaller, more niche but far more curious audiences.

Initiatives like the OOO Farms Wild Food and Rice festivals in collaboration with restaurants, institutions and chefs like Chef Thomas Zacharias of The Locavore, Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal of A Perfect Bite Consulting and more have been leading the charge in connecting consumers to farmer-producers since 2018. More recently Goya Journal’s series of Farmer’s Fests allowed diners across four cities - Mumbai, Gurgaon, Jaipur and Hyderabad - to partake in

exquisite tasting menus curated by stellar chefs showcasing the produce from three farmers while dining alongside them.

Karnataka-based Spudnik Farms took this a step further, with a Chef’s Residency Programme.



**“Chefs can really influence local food trends and choices in our cities. For example, the first time I ate broccoli years ago, was at a restaurant as part of**





**a dish a chef had prepared. I got curious, and eventually comfortable enough to cook with it,”** shares **Sumeet Kaur**, Founder of Spudnik Farms, on the inspiration behind the programme.

Five chefs were invited to travel to Joida, Karnataka, to meet farmers from the Kunbi community that supply a variety of tuber crops to Spudnik’s weekly vegetable subscription boxes in Bangalore. The chefs got to observe the

Travelling to Origin

While the typical narrative brings the story of the farmer to the urban consumer, some niche organisations are turning this idea on its head and taking immersive experiences further by bringing the consumer to the primary producers of their food, facilitating interaction within their native context. Initiatives like Mharo Khet, in Jodhpur, and The Farm in Chennai among many others around the country, offer such experiences, particularly encouraging children to come learn about food and farming.

One of the most popular formats for this is farm-to-fork cooking and dining experiences in which guests visit farms, better understand how the foods they enjoy everyday are grown, and sit down to a meal made from freshly harvested produce. Lubna Rafiqi, and her husband Fayaz Ahmad Dar, are Co-founders of Sagg Eco Village, an initiative in Kashmir that routinely hosts farm-to-table meals, as well as workshops through which participants can learn about Kashmiri cuisine, organic farming, and sowing and harvesting crops. **Rafiqi**, Executive Director of Sagg, shares that health has become a big concern for people. **“There is a desire to know more about one’s food and eat better. Here in Kashmir, people used to have small kitchen gardens**

cycle of growth, usage and preservation of these crops in the local context and explore possible applications in their own culinary styles. All of this learning culminated in a collaborative feast the chefs and farmers laid out in Bangalore for 100 guests, consisting of home-style dishes including tuber based stir fries, curries, chutneys, papads, payasam and more, served on a banana leaf.

The residency not only empowered the chefs to forge



**at home. But now, especially in big towns like Srinagar, where lifestyles are busier, people don’t have the time to grow their own vegetables,”** she concluded, adding that some of Sagg’s patrons come with a desire to revive their kitchen gardening practices, while others just want to be more aware.

While consumers today have several avenues to explore the farm-to-fork journey of land-based food crops, be it fruits, vegetables, cacao or coffee, a vast gap in knowledge and access still exists when it comes to meat and seafood. In Season Fish, a Chennai-based sustainable seafood initiative has been working to address this through spreading awareness online and through ‘Fishplorations.’ These are signature seafood walks they offer, in which consumers are taken to local seafood markets to interact with fishers and fishmongers first-hand.



**“We realised it’s important for seafood eaters to interact with the people catching their fish and understand how it reaches their plates. It is also important for fishing communities to know who is buying their catch, because it encourages them to be more ethical with their practices,”**

relationships with the farmers, and become direct mediators between them and their urban consumers but has also made the chefs champions of Spudnik’s produce, effectively creating a ripple effect in consumer education. **“We work with many small farmers who grow these lesser-known local vegetables, so I feel a responsibility towards creating awareness about them among consumers, so the market for them can grow,”** concludes Kaur.

shares **Divya Karnad**, Co-founder of In Season Fish, whose objective is to create market demand for diversity, ultimately disincentivizing the overfishing of more popular species.

Recalling a big story that made the news in 2017-18 about formalin being used to preserve fish that created panic among seafood lovers, Karnad goes on to point out, **“Typically, fishers sell to middlemen traders, so they don’t think much about the end consumer. Participants also acquire skills like selecting fish that are fresh and in season, identifying different fish species and learning how to use them. Bridging this gap through personal interaction catalyses many positive outcomes – including curiosity, trust and conscious purchasing on the consumers’ side, as well as incentive and accountability on the part of the producers.”**



The Last Mile

Unique forward-thinking experiences like the Fishploration walk from In Season Fish are the need of the hour. They offer the kind of last-mile education that is an important step in closing the loop of conscious consumerism, something **Vijhay Ganesh M**, Founder of Maiyam Past Food, also offers via his platform in an attempt to revive traditional knowledge systems.

A self-taught chef who has honed his skills over years of travelling in South India, learning from traditional healers,

food researchers & professional chefs, Vijhay Ganesh M has conceptualised workshops he calls Food Sense and Food Grammar in which he teaches the skills required to navigate the vast array of produce available to consumers today. In these workshops, he encourages participants to look beyond the conventional ingredients by covering food distinctions like heirloom, hybrid, GMO, and more, and offers suggestions on how to incorporate better ingredients in their day-to-day meals. **“Over the past decade, there has been a**



**steady growth in farmers cooperative stores selling clean, heirloom and ethically sourced produce, but modern consumers have forgotten how to use them. That is where I come in,”** he explains **“I don’t dictate what is good or bad, I simply share the concepts behind each, and how they play a role in flavour, nutrition and convenience, so that the consumer can make informed decisions on what works best for them.”**

The Way Forward

The contemporary farm-to-fork movement is still young in India, but its growth emphasises that the consumer, especially the urban one, is becoming cognisant of the direct relationship between farms, grocery stores, restaurants and the food industry and its overall impact on the individual, the community and the environment.

The most important aspect of this movement is to keep the dialogue alive across demographics, platforms and mediums, be it in the form of workshops, classes, or digital campaigns, allowing more and more consumers to make informed choices about the food they choose to consume and feed their families.

Education is important, and digital platforms offer a great channel for more eyeballs. **“It feels like our duty to communicate a richer story to consumers,”** shares Bose from her experience at Black Baza. That said, she feels that a bigger

movement will take shape to incorporate data-driven routes like blockchain, particularly for large systems like coffee, milk, grains, and the export market. **“For these things, buyers want data and credibility, and that is very different from the smaller more immersive channels, where people want intrigue, anecdotes, recipes, and so on.”**

Immersive interactions on the other hand, tend to impact more niche audiences. **“While our social media campaigns are effective in driving awareness, the in-person interactions we facilitate seem to have more long-term impact on consumer buying and eating practices,”** observes Karnad. A point that Kaur of Spudnik Farms agrees on. Spudnik hosts monthly cooking workshops called Cooking with Friends that facilitate dialogues between experienced chefs who teach their home consumer audience easy, inventive and exciting ways to use their hyper-local seasonal vegetables. **“Most participants are existing**

customers that already order our vegetables and want to learn new ways to use them. But these events also introduce our produce to new people, which helps bring in new audiences,” says Kaur.

Historically India has had a rich tradition of farm-to-fork consumption. Indians have always sought out and sourced the best they could afford – grain from local farmers, fish from nearby water bodies, and vegetables from local markets and backyards. Many of these practices still exist when one moves away from urban food ecosystems where industrialised food production has changed the landscape. But the urban consumer is reconnecting with the philosophies of the farm-to-fork movement and while at a nascent stage, whatever avenues it takes and scale it operates at, there is space for every solution that encourages more engagement and interactive conversation when it comes to farm-to-fork consumption.





## Action Points

The industry could invest in studying traditional practices around growing indigenous ingredients and apply **knowledge and skill enhancement** into their production and usage to convert them into viable propositions that offer **nutrition and convenience**, with **investment in R&D and innovation**. The focus on health and mindfulness and demand in the **alternative diet-based category** will offer much opportunity to **innovate with dishes and menus** built on health boosting propositions like local, seasonal, vegan, and plant-based offerings. Media channels and influencers will find rich pickings in **storytelling**, and **experimenting with both producers and small businesses** in the farm-to-fork space as well as the **ingredients and products** they bring to the plate.



# Health, Hygiene and Lifestyle Trends

*With every passing year, Indian consumers are showing greater interest in learning about the intrinsic relationship between their food, health and wellbeing. This awareness is enabling them to make more informed decisions about their personal food choices. As a result, the food habits of a typical modern Indian family are becoming less homogenous than ever before. This is especially evident in metropolitan cities, where the nuclear status of families, combined with convenience and access, has made it easier to accommodate individual taste and lifestyle choices. That said, it has also contributed to sharper and more divisive lines between opposing camps such as vegetarian vs non-vegetarian, unprocessed vs processed, and fresh vs packaged food.*

*This section presents the predictions made by our panellists on the top factors that will drive health, hygiene and lifestyle choices at home, and in the industry in 2024.*



## Toolkit for 2024

As the industry responds to the unique demands of the nascent health, hygiene and lifestyle market, a larger group of uninitiated Indian consumers are likely to be overwhelmed with the choices they have to make. Initiatives that support these consumers with selecting the most relevant product and lifestyle choices will help grow this market.

In 2024, farmers and producers can **engage directly with their consumers by reducing complexity of messaging** across all their marketing, packaging and communication channels. They can collaborate with food businesses and chroniclers to get their **message across to a larger audience**. Food businesses can invest in **refining their existing propositions** to include information that emphasises their **commitment to consumer wellbeing** and the environment. They can work with farmers and producers to bring new concepts and experiences to life. Chroniclers, journalists and content creators can support consumer choices with **educational content**, resources and material around these topics to enable them to make more informed decisions about their lifestyle choices.

# Trends in Home Kitchens

When asked to identify the top health, hygiene and lifestyle choices of a conscientious consumer in 2024, the entire panel agreed that **cutting back on ultra-processed ingredients and foods** would be their highest priority. This clearly indicates that the awareness of the health risks associated with consumption of ultra-processed foods is finally sinking in. Nearly all panellists also felt that consumers would look for ways to **support local farmers and producers**, emphasising the growing importance of sustainable and ethically sourced food.

Finally, a significant majority felt that more consumers will rely on traditional wisdom like **sourcing clean food**, indicating a growing concern for food safety and quality, and **adopting a climatarian diet**, showing a positive shift towards consuming foods that have a lower carbon footprint in 2024.



Personal well being and health will drive these choices more than social good. We need to also temper our understanding of these choices by acknowledgement of the class/urban-semi urban/privilege divide. While across the board, I don't see choices for local and seasonal eating being driven majorly by climate concerns, there is a growing association of well-being with it.



Tanushree Bhowmik



Ryan Fernando

As time passes by, and the world just moves forward, people are getting busier. Time is such an important commodity. Comforting options and easy-to-prepare meals will remain on the list but healthier alternatives and better-quality food will be in focus. People will be more conscious about what goes into their system and are looking for products and services that will make their lives easier.

As most of us are discovering, supporting local farmers and producers works for us in multiple ways. It provides access to fresh, seasonal, relatively preservative-free produce while keeping the carbon footprint low. In some way, it also encourages the local producers to produce more free-range eggs and animals.

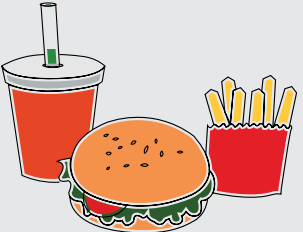
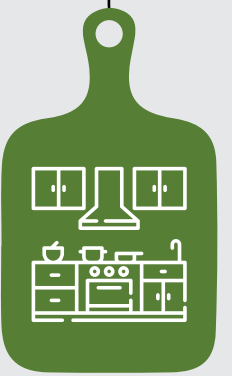


Sweta Biswal



Rajnush Agarwal

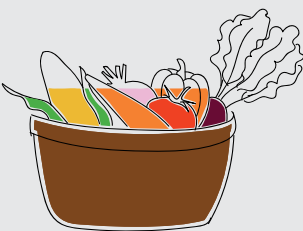
'Seasonal' and 'Local' have been the buzzwords since covid, and this is a trend that is here to stay. Parts of the world were already focusing on conscious cooking/consumption and for India covid was the catalyst. It forced the industry to look inwards and that started an exploratory journey for both restaurants and diners. The industry had to pivot to concepts around the availability of local ingredients and readjust offerings on their menu. Artisanal cheese and fermentation gained a lot more prominence and I reckon every fine dining establishment is working towards partnering with local providers who could add this value to their menu.



Cutting back on ultra-processed ingredients and foods  
94.2%



Supporting local farmers and producers  
90.4%

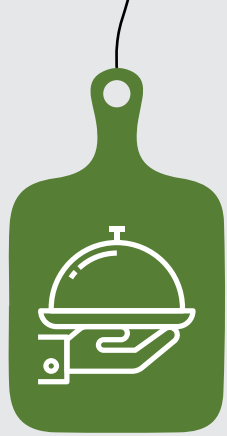


Sourcing clean food  
78.8%

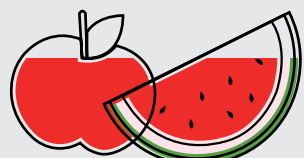


Adopting a climatarian diet  
75.0%





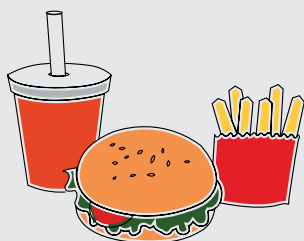
Promoting local farmers and producers  
98.1%



Eating seasonally  
88.5%



Sourcing clean food  
84.6%



Cutting down on ultra-processed ingredients and foods  
80.8%

## Trends in Restaurants

The demand for menus supporting alternative lifestyles and food choices is on the rise in India. As more individuals embrace vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and other dietary preferences, they expect their favourite restaurants to adapt to cater to their changing needs. While several pioneering restaurants and cloud kitchens have taken a lead in this regard, there is plenty of room for the industry to learn and grow.

Nearly all our respondents believe that **promoting local farmers and producers** will have a significant impact on restaurant menus in 2024. This suggests that there is increasing importance being placed on supporting local food sources and fostering sustainable agriculture. Additionally, a significant portion believe that **eating seasonally** will also influence restaurant menus, highlighting a growing preference for fresh, in-season ingredients. Furthermore, **sourcing clean food** and **cutting down on ultra-processed ingredients and foods** are other important factors that will likely shape future restaurant menus as consumers prioritise healthier and more natural options.



Adopting a healthy lifestyle is all about making a few simple changes like avoiding ultra-processed ingredients, including seasonal ingredients, being careful about portion sizes, eating salads first followed by proteins while starting a meal. Few people have become careful about sourcing from clean sources and supporting the ethical farmers keeping in mind the larger picture. This is in the right direction, though it will take some time to gain ground.



Supriya Arun



Hans Sadhu

There has been a pragmatic shift in the consumer's choice of lifestyle. Guests are keen to have newer flavours with no added preservatives, fats or processed ingredients. Farm to table concepts or locally sourced ingredients are grabbing the consumer's attention. Including healthier cooking practices, herbal or ayurvedic ingredients with emphasis on clean and ethically sourced meat or poultry is essential for today's woke consumer.

Consumers may prioritise a climatarian diet, emphasising the consumption of locally sourced and seasonal foods. Additionally, practices like nose-to-tail and root-to-leaf consumption, to maximise nutritional value and minimise environmental impact that have been a part of Indian culinary traditions are coming back. These choices support sustainability, reduce carbon footprint, and reflect a holistic approach to eating that considers nutrition, environmental impact, ethical considerations, and cultural practices.



Madhushree Basu Roy



Elton Fernandes

Most of our grandmothers were very aware about the kind of ayurvedic/ medicinal qualities of the ingredients that were used in everyday food. I feel that has been lost due to the availability of hyper processed foods and fast foods. Reviving these concepts will be an important to-do in 2024 and restaurateurs edging towards these concepts will definitely see a rise in diners.



Godrej



# Kitchen Experts Ke Chicken Experts



Highly bio secured farms

Only veterinary certified flocks are selected for slaughtering

In-house QC lab

High protein, tender & juicier

LOW FAT  
HIGH PROTEIN  
LOW CARB\*

\*Carbohydrates

NO HORMONES  
STERIODS  
PRESERVATIVES





# Food Media & Studies

India boasts a culinary tapestry woven from diverse regional traditions, each boasting unique flavours and techniques. For aspiring food professionals and home enthusiasts alike, unlocking the secrets of this rich heritage can be a daunting yet rewarding pursuit. Cookbooks and food media have emerged as indispensable tools in this exploration, offering a comprehensive and dynamic platform for learning the culinary art and science of India. From ancient texts documenting regional specialties to vibrant food blogs and informative cooking shows, these resources offer a treasure trove of knowledge on culinary techniques, historical influences, and the stories woven into every dish.

In the Food Media and Studies section this year, we examine the changes taking place in this new world of culinary chronicling, and the impact it is expected to have in the years to come. We delve into the significance of cookbooks and food media in India, exploring how they empower individuals to not only master the art of Indian cooking but also gain a deeper understanding of the scientific principles that underpin this vibrant culinary landscape.

## Food Books And Publications

*The evolution of food books and publications in India*







# The Evolving Role Of The Food Book In India

***From side dishes to main course: Indian food books are set to ignite a publishing revolution. 2024 will bring a transformation in formats, content, treatment, and authorship as passion for Indian culinary culture redefines the next chapter of Indian publishing.***

## Focus Areas

India's culinary heritage was originally recorded through oral tradition, and written documentation is relatively recent. The popularisation of home cooking during the pandemic accelerated interest in understanding and documenting the diversity of Indian cuisine. New publishing formats like digital platforms, e-books, and self publishing options have democratised publishing. All of this is creating an exciting scenario that is drawing out many new voices and conversations around varied aspects of culinary documentation.

## Culinary Chronicles Of The Past

Unlike many other cultures, Indian civilization recorded its culinary heritage through oral tradition, rather than written texts. While early Indus Valley food culture remains obscured within an undeciphered script, scriptures from the later Vedic era, including the Vedas Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads, illuminate ancient Indian culinary practices. As civilizations thrived and language evolved, documentation became vital, particularly for royalty seeking

to immortalise their reigns. Expanding to encompass various aspects of life, manuscripts like Kautilya's treatise on statecraft, Kalidasa's poetry, Vatsyayana's Kamasutra, and medical treatises like Astanga Samgraha offer insights into the culture and culinary practices of their time.

Centuries of wisdom fill these ancient Indian chronicles, authored by diverse voices — religious, medical, and royal — offering insights and

instructions for peers and students. Predating modern medicine, these manuscripts persistently documented the procurement, preparation, and consumption of food when it was pivotal to existence, likely laying the groundwork for what we recognize today as Indian cuisine. They provide a unique glimpse into a past culinary landscape for contemporary food scholars. Dedicated cookery books, however, remained elusive for centuries after.

## Royalty And Vanity Publications

India's culinary chronicling evolved significantly during the Sultanate and Mughal eras. Though the term "vanity publications" is modern, it aptly describes the pioneering efforts of royalty to document and codify culinary traditions that left a lasting legacy.

During the 13th-16th centuries, Muslim dynasties in India sought to elevate the image of Mughal culture through art, architecture, literature and, notably, cuisine, introducing the elaborate

dining practice of the Mughal Dastarkhan. Over the next century, emperors like Akbar, known for his discerning palate, commissioned works like Ain-i-Akbari to document culinary traditions. This trend extended to nobility, who crafted lavish manuscripts showcasing their extravagant feasts for an elite audience.

Beyond royal courts, the Sultanate and Mughal eras witnessed a vibrant exchange of ideas and ingredients, much

of which was meticulously recorded and laid the groundwork for a rich tapestry of Indian cuisine that emerged. Two culinary gems surfaced in the 15th century: Nimatnama and Soopa Shashtra. Nimatnama, containing recipes from the Malwa Sultanate, presents early versions of dishes like samosas and halva. In contrast, Soopa Shashtra, a Jain chronicle by King Mangarasa III, details his vegetarian diet, including permitted foods, cooking techniques, and utensils.

## The Colonial Era & Post Independence Emergence Of Community Cookbooks

Colonisation introduced movable type and book publishing to India, igniting a surge in food-related publications during the 19th century. Early colonial publications highlighted a dynamic fusion cuisine born from encounters between the British and locals, popularising dishes like mulligatawny soup and kedgerie. The term "curry" became synonymous with Indian flavours. Post-1857, cookbooks reflected a growing racial divide, with new "household management guides" prioritising European recipes and distancing from "native" offerings such as curry and dal.

With independence in 1947, India embraced a new era, paving the way for a new generation of cookbooks catering to a transformed audience and the eventual emergence of a distinct Indian food identity.

The emerging Indian elite and middle-class households of the late 19th and early 20th centuries adapted Colonial traditions. The Industrial Revolution spurred urban growth, leading to societal transformations as people migrated for work and women entered the workforce. Amidst this rapid evolution, nationalist sentiments arose, alongside a heightened awareness of regional and community identities. Concurrently, the expansion of print media and advancements in kitchen technology, including gas stoves, refrigeration, and pressure cookers, reshaped home kitchens. These shifts culminated in the emergence of community cookbooks, reflecting the changing social and cultural landscape.

Community cookbooks filled the void left by the shift from traditional family structures.

Tailored to specific groups, they provided practical domestic advice, adapting to evolving circumstances. Prioritising function over flair, these cookbooks offered recipes with minimal explanation, assuming basic skills and cultural familiarity. Their simple design and affordable printing made them accessible guides for navigating the home kitchen in a changing era.



## The Modern Era Of Cookbook Authorship

As publishing flourished, it ushered in the era of celebrity cookbooks. Culinary icons like Tarla Dalal and Chef Sanjeev Kapoor elevated the status of food, paving the way for mainstream cookbooks in India. Their influence validated the genre of cookbooks within publishing, inspiring future generations. This marked a significant shift, empowering homemakers and aspiring chefs to publish their culinary innovations and expertise.

Despite these advances, cooking was often viewed as mundane and domestic, relegating food-related books to the periphery of the Indian publishing industry. That is until the Indian culinary scene witnessed a surge in food blogging. This new format of push button publishing opened up opportunities for passionate individuals wanting to write about food. Over the next few years, many passionate bloggers, driven by their

online success, transitioned to cookbook authorship, became household names, and created a significant shift in the publishing landscape by publishing books that resonated with home cooks through relatable narratives and accessible recipes. This democratisation of food literature challenged traditional publishing norms, inspiring a new generation of aspiring food writers and creating a platform for diverse voices, cuisines and culinary narratives to find representation. It also created space for new genres of food writing that looked beyond recipes.



***"My all-time favourite food books are those that straddle history, science, and memoir. There have been some amazing food books lately – as opposed to recipe books – such as Daastan-e-Dastarkhan by Sadaf Hussain,***

***Degh To Dastarkhwan by Tarana Husain Khan, Forgotten Foods edited by Tarana Husain Khan, Desi Delicacies edited by Claire Chambers, Whose Samosa Is It Anyway? By Sonal Ved, and Masala Lab by Krish Ashok."*** shares **Ravi Miglani**, Professor, Home Cook, Food Blogger (ravimiglani.com), This Professor Cooks.

During this era, even before the pandemic-driven spurt in culinary content, the internet was transforming how we were thinking about and consuming food content. After cooking became the most popular activity thanks to the global lockdown, culinary pursuits, both offline and online, became the flavour du jour. Many





professional and celebrity chefs, regional food experts, and home cooks and bakers not only 'invited' fans into their home-kitchens but, later, also embarked on a variety of culinary research and writing journeys that will yield a spate of food and cookery books in time to come.

A happy circumstance considering the quantum of

food knowledge being lost with the passing of every generation in a traditionally orally transferred culinary culture. Add to this modern mediums of content creation and the pressure to create unique offerings that endanger the authenticity and diversity of knowledge being recorded. Something **Saee Koranne-Khandekar**, herself an author of several food books, feels

cookbooks can prevent. ***“In the age of YouTube and Reels, it seems nearly irrelevant or archaic, even, to turn to cookbooks for recipes but I feel that cookbooks are more important today than they ever were.”*** Observing that video formats are too instructional and leave nothing to the audience's intellect or imagination.



Paradigm Shift Brought On By The Pandemic

The Covid-19 years, while unfortunate, did have silver linings. One of which was the paradigm shift they brought in the Indian food and cookbook publishing space.

At first, the renewed interest in home cooking, and growing appetite for recipes made cookery books popular. The increased focus on digital and self-publishing platforms, drove experiments with innovative formats like e-books, and subscription-based services, inspiring many pandemic recipe collations. Authors learned they were also able to reach wider audiences. All of this further democratised publishing and fueled varied voices, including regional food experts, food historians, food writers, food scientists and more. Bringing forth unique new topics and perspectives on Indian food

that went beyond recipes. The interest in books on Indian food was significantly heightened and grew beyond typical recipe cook books.

**Kanishka Gupta**, founder of Writer's Side literary agency, identifies three key trends in Indian food and cookery books of the past decade. ***“Personal Food Memoirs, books that focus on specific cuisines, weaving together family or community recipes with personal stories is a genre India leads in.”*** Adding that Celebrity Food Books, authored by celebrity chefs like Vikas Khanna or Bollywood stars with a love for food and books by social media stars and food content creators like Shivesh are growing segments. ***“However cookbooks focused***



***on restaurants, fine dining, or ancillary food topics tend to have less success.”***

**Dr. Avin Thaliath**, chef, food researcher, culinary educator and co-founder of Lavonne Academy of Baking Science and Pastry Arts, observes that the resurgence of print media despite the popularity of digital media in recent years, reflects a continued appetite for diverse and immersive food-related content in various formats. ***“Food publications are***



***experiencing an all-time high. Beyond traditional recipe books, publishers are investing in high-value publications such as anthologies, and independent creators are contributing to the landscape with self-published offerings.”***

Paradigm Shift Brought On By The Pandemic

A widening audience of consumers and professionals is shaping the type of books they want in the future. ***“There is a desire to learn about where our food came from, the politics of food, the social and economic bases for food choices, the science of food, the busting of food myths (as done brilliantly by Krish Ashok of Masala Lab fame), and the future of food,”*** points out Miglani.

Evolution in both traditional formats and new self publishing alternatives promise a dynamic

future for the genre - one that established publishers are excited about! **Priya Kapoor**, Director of Roli Books, a publishing house that has always been partial to cookbooks and produces some of the highest quality offerings in the segment shares ***“the last 4-5 years have seen an exponential rise in interest in books on regional cuisines coupled with a higher buying power for beautiful books. With India's rich and varied culinary traditions, this makes***



***always stories behind food and they should be told – as long as they add to the reader's understanding.”***

Thanks to the onslaught of regurgitated recipes on the internet, there is an increasing desire amongst consumers for quality over quantity. Traditional recipe collections are still popular, but there is a growing demand for well-explained, nuanced recipes, with background, historical narrative, cultural significance and even personal stories. ***“Recipe books that at least have some context, and story around recipes are the most engaging form of food writing”*** shares Miglani, who feels that traditional recipe books, with pages of context-less recipes are boring ***“history, stories, and the social-cultural context of food make recipes more interesting. In this category, Abhijit Banerjee's Cooking to Save your Life is excellent, as is Crumbs - a compendium of bread stories and recipes from around India by Saee Koranne-Khandekar.”***

The demand for deeper context will grow significantly among

cookbook buyers going forward, concurs Koranne-Khandekar. ***“Without the narrative, the romance of a cuisine would be lost,”*** she observes, highlighting that the transfer of culinary knowledge in India thus far has mostly been through oral literature and inter-generational verbal communication. ***“With the evolution of nuclear families and urban lifestyles, there is a marked reduction in access to cooks from older generations—familial, communal or otherwise,”*** she laments. There is nobody to explain certain practices in a community kitchen, and narrative-rich food and cookery books, she feels, will address this lacunae.

Recognising the demand, Indian publishers are working to offer more unique value propositions and encouraging authors to create more focused, high-quality cookbooks, with in-depth explanations and storytelling.

The bright potential for Indian food and cookbooks, is also driving a boom in the self-publishing segment in India. ***“Traditional gatekeepers of***



***the publishing and media world are being challenged through networks formed across social media, as well as self-publishing channels,”*** observes **Pankhuri Agrawal**, founder of Yayavr, facilitator, writer and researcher. Miglani, concurs, ***“the lowering of barriers that allows one to write and publish, circumventing intermediaries like agents and publishers, is leading to an explosion of interest in food writing, and drawing out diverse writing and new voices that traditional publishers may not always have been receptive to.”***

Self-publishing empowers authors to cater to niche culinary interests, craft personal narratives, target specific audiences and manage every aspect of their book's journey from writing, editing, design, marketing, and pricing.



A Renaissance of Indian Food Writing

The future is bright for Indian food and cookery books. The growing appreciation for diversity, a growing global Indian diaspora, and a rising global interest in all things Indian has pushed Indian food writing into the mainstream.

***“Food anthologies have done fairly well recently, everyone's writing for anthologies and promoting them”*** observes Gupta, ***“and Food History is a big genre that many publishers are very interested in. I am personally interested in narrative driven food histories too. A Taste of Time by one of my authors - Mohana Kanjilal, did really well and even went into multiple reprints. And I have just signed up a couple of new authors in this genre.”***

Many Indian agents and publishers are focusing their energies on food and books that showcase regional Indian cuisine, including Roli Books. Kapoor of Roli, observes a real and growing interest in books on everything from street food to home cooking and family recipes. Highlighting some great well-documented books like Tiffin by Sonal Ved to Five Morsels of Love by Archna Pidathala, she shares that Roli too have sold rights or co-editions of cookbooks steadily year on year and 2024 promises to be no different. ***“Cookbooks from India continue to do well both in the domestic and the international market but this is just the beginning. The variety of books being published today offer a wide range of subjects,***

***from Indian vegan recipes to traditional Indian sweets and one bowl dishes (a forthcoming offering from Roli by Chef Megha Kohli), publishers are reacting to the way readers are cooking, eating and entertaining, but there is more lots more ground to cover.”***

Koranne-Khandekar agrees that there is space for many more topics and cuisines to be chronicled in the Indian context. ***“Given the times we live in,***





food books (food anthropology, history, politics, creative nonfiction) and cookbooks (especially for region-specific cuisines that run the risk of being soon forgotten) are especially important for culinary students so as to expand and support the knowledge that their culinary school syllabi provide.” She emphasises the importance of research and documentation into the food traditions of India’s tribal communities “Not just for the richness of ingredient, method and seasonality, but also

as a stark reminder of what we have ignored and undermined thanks to centuries of elitism.”

Indian food and cookery books are finally shedding their marginalised status with consumers demanding variety and diversity. Answering these demands are an increasing number of subject matter specialists, custodians of regional cuisines, and food writers who are finding their voice, challenging stereotypes, offering a wider range of

perspectives and richer narratives. Fueled by research, science, technology, and a growing audience, Indian food books are all set to take centre stage in publishing in years to come.



# Trends in Food Media and Studies

*Scholarly foodies crave for both diversity and depth in formats, voices, and perspectives to fuel their culinary journeys and satisfy their insatiable appetite for knowledge. In 2024, they will look for greater diversity of content in food shows and culinary events, and invest in cookbooks and workshops for greater depth of knowledge.*

*At the same time, ambitious F&B professionals will be driven by a quest for greater skills, deeper knowledge, and wider perspectives to help advance their career ambitions, and stay ahead of the game. This year, many more will take up culinary travel and apprenticeship for the unparalleled opportunity they offer to learn from culinary mastery firsthand, and absorb the wisdom of the experts they meet.*

*In the following pages, our experts weigh in with their picks of the most popular resources available to a food scholar in 2024.*

## Action Points

2024 promises to be extremely good for food writers and culinary chroniclers. Food and cookery books are showing great promise with a growing group of food enthusiasts investing in them and many specialists, chroniclers, and writers working to capture the richness of India’s food history, anthropology, and diversity. Authors and publishers can look towards investing in **narrative focused propositions**, delving deeper into **context and nuance**. Topics like **origins stories of food**, the **social and economic implications of production and distribution**, and the **politics and science behind food** will be popular. Authors can also leverage **digital, self-publishing, and ebook platforms** that are offering opportunities to voices and topics that may not appeal to traditional publishers. For food media, this category of books offers endless opportunities from author interviews and book reviews to subject matter **experts to quote**, and diverse new **food topics to explore**.



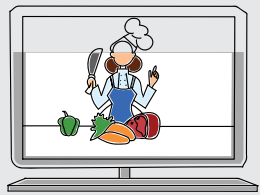
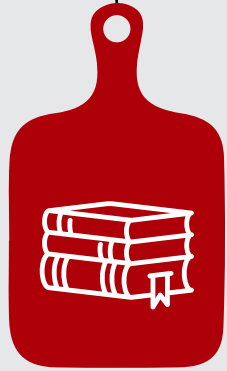
## Toolkit for 2024

As the popularity of **live streaming** continues to grow, chefs can collaborate with content creators to engage directly with audiences, offering **real-time cooking demonstrations** and interactive experiences. Marketing and content creators can offer **in-depth conversations, interviews with industry experts**, and exploration of food trends to cater to a more audio-focused audience. Marketing teams can **leverage niche groups** on platforms like Facebook and Discord to foster deeper connections and discussions around specific interests related to their brands and products. Brands testing new products and concepts, can take advantage of the credibility associated with the written word, and **invest in print and digital publications** to create greater awareness and engagement with potential consumers.

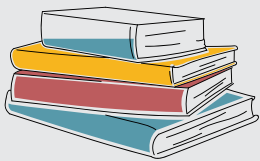
Meanwhile, food scholars can **connect with fellow foodies on platforms** like Facebook and Reddit, sharing recipes, tips, and discussions in a vibrant online community. They can also immerse themselves in **podcasts** for in-depth interviews, food history explorations, and industry discussions, perfect for multitasking or on-the-go learning.







Television food shows and channels  
82.7%



Food books and publications  
80.8%



Food exhibitions and events  
80.0%



Food media workshops  
78.8%

## Top Sources for Food Enthusiasts

The enduring popularity of **television food shows and channels**, with their stellar cast of chefs and food experts and high-production values, made TV our panel's top pick this year. From learning new techniques with celebrity chefs to discovering hidden culinary gems across the globe, food shows will continue to be the primary source for expanding culinary horizons everywhere. Our panellists also expect the timeless allure of **food books and publications** to persist, owing their continued popularity to collectors, who still prefer tangible ownership of their favourite content in the print form. These compendiums, with their stellar content and stunning photography, also continue to be the best, and often most respected, showcases of culture and cuisines.

Meanwhile, **food exhibitions and events** offer further opportunities for curious cooks and food enthusiasts to connect with food producers, artisans, and fellow food enthusiasts. This is why our experts predict a significant rise in their popularity in the coming year. Lastly, **food media workshops** from established food and media professionals will be popular with aspiring food chroniclers who wish to learn how to navigate the media food landscape in the coming year.



Documenting our traditional knowledge systems and oral histories is important so the next few generations know that every bite of traditional food they eat is a spoonful of history. They should know about the food of their ancestors. One way of showcasing micro-regional cuisines is through spotlighting the custodians of these cuisines, documenting their knowledge, and serving it to the Millennial and GenZ generations - that want to connect to their heritage - in formats like TV and social media and in a format that they can relate to in today's context.



Rakesh Raghunathan



Pankhuri Agrawal

An interest in deep-diving and documenting food across the subcontinent comes from a desire to tell our own stories. Moreover, traditional gatekeepers of the publishing and media world are being challenged through networks formed across social media, as well as self-publishing channels such as YouTube and Substack. People are sharing numerous stories, across manifold formats - images, writing, video, multimedia, and this abundance and multiplicity of views (sometimes contradictory) is making our understanding of food deeper.

Books, TV shows, and the internet are easily accessible sources that allow for passive consumption. While long-form blogs are losing out to digital zines in terms of visibility, print still has its fans. Awareness of specialised training has to grow and will currently only attract the very dedicated. The area that evokes the highest interest in food media is recipes. Recipe-based content still rules, and has established itself well on OTT, youtube, and reels platforms.



Kalyan Karmakar



Shanti Petiwala

WhatsApp groups are the new classrooms. The amount of user knowledge we get there is unparalleled. Insta reels continue to gain momentum with newer ideas becoming popular. But at the end of the day, it's the stories that are exciting. Anything that tells a food story will be devoured!

## Top Sources for Culinary Professionals

The world of food and beverage is ever-evolving, and staying ahead of the curve is crucial for any F&B professional. As we dive into 2024, our experts shed light on the avenues F&B professionals will likely invest in to expand their knowledge and navigate emerging trends.

Our panellists anticipate a significant surge in **culinary travel and excursions**, where culinary professionals immerse themselves in different cultures, cuisines, and food production methods firsthand. They also predict a rise in F&B professionals seeking **apprenticeship under culinary experts**. Learning from seasoned chefs and industry veterans will provide invaluable hands-on experience, mentorship, and insights that textbooks simply cannot offer.

These professionals will continue to rely on **television food shows and channels** as a convenient and accessible way to stay updated on the ever-changing culinary landscape. Meanwhile, **specialist cooking and baking classes** from known experts, will create more opportunities for them to refine their skills in specific areas, catering to evolving consumer preferences and niche markets. Finally, our experts predict a growing attraction for **food exhibitions and events**, to get the pulse on the latest food trends, and also for the added benefits of networking, and potential collaborations.



Shorter duration classes and workshops with a hands-on approach and training smaller batches of students, coupled with exposure to the industry either through chef visits, internships, or job training, will be the way forward in 2024. Basic and Advanced level Academies would find it easier to attract students in comparison to the large format colleges (quality over quantity).



Chef Kunal Arolkar



Chef Rohit Sangwan

As a chef, I'd say culinary innovation is like a call and response between tradition and the future. We listen to the wisdom of the past, the techniques and flavours that have been passed down for generations, and then we use them as a launchpad to get creative. It's about connecting the dots, taking the best of what we know and using it to explore new possibilities.

2023 was phenomenal for chefs doing pop-ups, showcasing culinary heritage and some of the best local food with great storytelling. I believe that travelling chef-driven, ingredient-forward, and community-based menus, inspired by road trips for travel research, will be in the spotlight and excite diners more than anything in 2024.

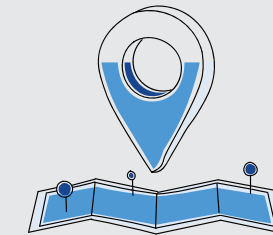
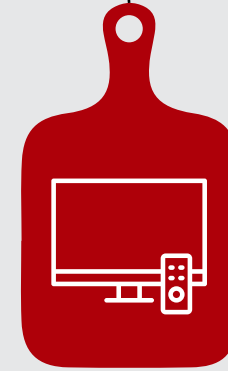


Rachit Keertiman



Dolon Dutta Chowdhury

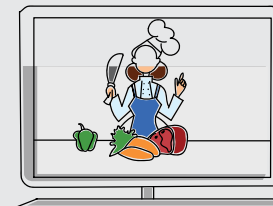
It is no longer just about eating food but also about exploring and gaining knowledge. Driven by today's intense social media activity around culinary experiences, there will be more food-related events and especially local food-themed experiences. Consumer affinity toward food will drive food-related content even more. With reels becoming extremely popular, the trend of aesthetically pleasing food content documenting food will evolve to push boundaries further.



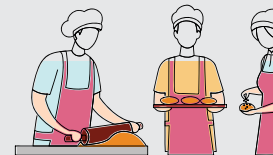
Culinary travel and excursions  
86.5%



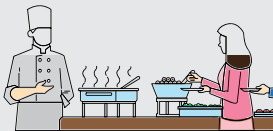
Apprenticeship under culinary experts  
82.7%



Television food shows and channels  
76.9%



Specialist cooking and baking classes  
76.9%



Food exhibitions and events  
76.9%





Instagram reels and short-form video content  
95.2%



Food videos by independent content creators  
92.3%



Culinary shows on television and OTT channels  
82.7%

# Top Food Media Channels

As technology evolves and consumer preferences shift, the food media landscape will continue to transform. Our experts weigh in on the top channels consumers and professionals will be flocking to for culinary news, knowledge, entertainment, and inspiration in 2024.

They were near-unanimous in predicting a continued popularity of **Instagram Reels and short-form video content**. These bite-sized bursts of culinary inspiration offer convenience, creativity, and an endless variety of increasingly high quality content.

The rise of the influencer is upon us, and the food scene is no exception. Experts predict a significant increase in the popularity of **food videos by independent content creators**. These passionate individuals offer unique perspectives, diverse culinary styles, and relatable personalities, resonating deeply with audiences.

While new platforms and formats emerge, our experts predict that conventional **culinary shows on television and OTT channels** will continue to remain a popular source of knowledge and entertainment. From food competition shows that push culinary boundaries, to documentaries exploring the fascinating world of food production, these shows offer in-depth exploration, expert insights, and the timeless comfort of settling in with a good culinary adventure.



Social media has become very important and interesting, as another medium to showcase content or recipe knowledge. That said, it has its pros and cons and can also be misleading. All in all, it can be a source of learning and a lot of fun as well, provided it is not misused. In my time, there was no internet, or Google, or anything. We could only learn through newspapers, magazines and books at the college library, so I think aspiring chefs today should take every advantage of the knowledge they have access to via different mediums.

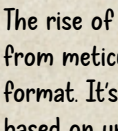


Chef Vicky Ratnani



Ruchi Shrivastava

Less time more knowledge is the mantra! Food content has flooded our lives and in most cases when consumers can consume information without putting in too much effort or time it is favoured. Reels, shorts, and quick recipe videos by credible content creators will be big for consumers looking for recipes or just exploring food. WhatsApp groups on the other hand are more personal and offer a good way to keep getting new info on food without extra effort.



Ronak Rajani

The rise of Instagram Reels is a fascinating shift in food media. We're moving away from meticulously crafted presentations towards a more dynamic and engaging format. It's a fantastic platform to highlight hidden culinary gems and inspire travel based on unique food experiences. This space empowers everyone - from established chefs to home cooks - to share their passion for food in an accessible way.



Ronak Rajani

# Top Digital and Print Publications

Despite the dominance of photos and video in popular media, enthusiastic culinary scholars, looking for deeper knowledge and connection with food, still show a distinct preference for the written word. We asked our panellists to forecast which long-form formats across print and digital domains would hold out on their own in 2024.

Our experts picked **cookbooks profiling cuisine and culinary cultures** as their top choice. They felt that serious students of food will continue to gravitate towards these immersive formats that offer more than just recipes; by delving into the history, traditions, and techniques of culinary cultures and cuisines. Their second pick was **digital magazines and publications**, offering the convenience of on-demand access, the flexibility of diverse content formats, and the ability to delve deep into specific food trends and interests.

The unique and continued appeal of blogs lies in the personal touch and diverse voices these platforms offer. This made **food blogs** the third most popular choice amongst our panellists. From passionate home cooks sharing their family recipes to professional chefs experimenting with innovative creations, food blogs continue to provide a window into different culinary perspectives and cater to specific niches.



Food has the power to give a consummate perspective to history and research as a social science. Documentation through cookbooks focusing on different cuisines, especially regional food, plays a crucial role in preserving culinary traditions, showcasing cultural diversity and promoting a deeper understanding of local flavours. Not only do cookbooks serve as a repository of traditional recipes, techniques, and ingredients unique to specific micro-regions and culinary heritage but they also contribute to cross-cultural appreciation by allowing people to explore and appreciate a rich tapestry of global cuisines by becoming arm-chair travellers.

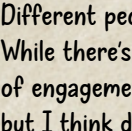


Varun Inamdar



Kaveri Ponnappa

Some of the most engaging culinary books I have read recently have been self-published, and I look forward to more. The growing trend of self-published cookbooks and family food memoirs that focus on topics that often don't attract mainstream publishing houses are adding greatly to knowledge of regional, community, and family food heritages and filling important gaps in culinary knowledge of the vast and complex geography that we inhabit in India by spotlighting highly localised cuisines, ingredients, how to cook them, and the way people eat, or ate. Invaluable in an environment, where culinary knowledge is rapidly being lost.



Aatish Nath

Different people have different ways to imbibe/better their knowledge. While there's an acknowledgment that food is visual and so the best kind of engagement comes with photos or visuals. Social media offers immediacy but I think depth can usually be found through podcasts or publications. For authoritative knowledge books and publications still win. But with so many community-based and local cuisines to discover, engaging widely helps.



Bindu Gopal Rao

As the world goes online, most people are often likely to 'Google' to find out what they need. However, serious seekers of knowledge will gravitate to books - especially ones that are traditional and written by people with experience.



Cookbooks profiling cuisine and culinary cultures  
86.5%



Digital magazines and publications  
80.8%



Food Blogs  
72.1%



# Food and Travel

Travellers have always considered food as an important aspect of travel planning. For most Indians, a travel destination is finalised only once the dining preferences of the entire family, including child-friendly and strict vegetarian, have been suitably accommodated. As a result, the hospitality industry has learnt to ensure that familiar Indian-vegetarian options are on offer across all dining formats and occasions in all popular destinations.

However, the profile of the Indian traveller is changing, and there are clear signs that this provisioning alone may no longer be enough to cater to their evolving tastes and desires. Recent tourism industry reports show that more Indians are travelling than ever before, many of them individually, or in small peer groups. The nature of travel itself is changing as well, with people travelling more frequently, but taking shorter trips throughout the year. They are also breaking away from traditionally popular itineraries, and instead, actively seeking out authentic local culinary experiences.

This year in the food and travel section, we explore different ways in which the travel and the food industry are coming together to offer new and exciting food adventures to entice the Indian traveller to go off the beaten path in 2024 and beyond.



## Culinary Tourism

*Evolving formats of gastro-tourism to explore in India*



### Farm Tours

Farm tours are going beyond visitors learning about, and participating in sowing, tending, harvesting and post-harvest processes. They now include farm-to-table cooking and/or dining experiences, ingredient-focused farm tours, and longer landscape or geography-based excursions.



### Food Souvenirs

Food souvenirs like local spices and spice blends, cooking kits, cooking tools and gadgets, recipes and cookbooks reflect the character and traditions of the region. They are edible tokens of a place, experience, or culture, brought back to preserve and share memories.



### Regional Cuisine Experiences

Travel itineraries are expanding to include planned outings to local outlets serving authentic regional cuisine, home-dining experiences, and attending regional pop-ups, so that the curious food explorer can immerse into the unique culinary heritage of a region.



### Fine Dining Destinations

Some places have carved out a reputation for themselves as fine dining hubs by virtue of the multitudes of elevated culinary experiences they have on offer, often around regional, seasonal, hyper-local, indigenous and foraged ingredients.



### Beverage Tours

Pub and bar crawls, as also local wine, brewery and distillery tours and tastings, offer travellers exciting opportunities to explore and learn about local beverages, and get first-hand experience of the popular drinking culture of the place.



### Local Cooking Workshops

Cooking workshops, operated by local experts on regional and community cuisines, offer travellers a hands-on opportunity to learn about regional ingredients, local food culture, and culinary practices, and learn recipes they can take back home to try.



### Food Walks

Food walks offer a multi-sensory journey through the heart of a city, neighbourhood or local market, allowing participants to taste local delicacies, engage with the vendors, and learn about the history, traditions, and cultural nuances of a region.





# Off The Eaten Path

*The Indian gourmand is exploring food like never before and culinary explorations are becoming a large part of travel decisions in 2024, beginning with the choice of the destination itself, and influencing what goes on itineraries. Addressing this demand are a host of experiential travel companies that are serving just about anything a food explorer could desire.*

## Focus Areas for the Culinary Travel Industry

The Indian consumer will continue to explore new flavours and adventures on the plate enthusiastically and passionately in 2024 and beyond. The food and travel industries as well as tourism entities can leverage this optimally by investing resources and energies in creating value-based propositions that showcase the culinary culture of their destinations.

## The Evolution Of Culinary Travel In India

Travel Industry statistics predict that the Indian traveller will spend more on travel in 2024 while the Godrej Food Trends Report has consistently reported an increase in culinary travel since 2022.



***“The significant shift from the post pandemic ‘revenge travel’ mindset to a YOLO (you only live once) one, will have travellers seeking more culture-led immersive travel experiences, and food will be a large part of the proposition”,*** shares, ***Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal***, curating editor of the report.

The concepts of food tours, trails and walks are not new to Indian tourism. However, unprecedented interest in travel for cultural and culinary immersion has brought them into focus in recent times. With Indian cuisine gaining prominence worldwide — from Michelin star restaurants to street food icons, and family run places being listed among the world’s finest — there has been no better time for Indian food. Add to this government and state tourism agencies investing in building local tourism and promoting regional cuisines, and the potential of experiential travel is at an all-time high.

Meeting the demand of the “Gastro Traveler” are a host of experiential travel companies, serving up everything from street food crawls to food history tours, beverage tasting trails to interactive meals in local homes, cooking workshops to fine dining experiences, and everything in between. In short, for just about anything a food explorer is looking for, there is someone to serve up. The number of locals offering to showcase their regions, cities, and neighbourhoods through the lens of food and culinary practices is growing rapidly. And why not, when India’s unparalleled cultural diversity means there is a new food story waiting to be discovered around every corner!

Until a few years ago, food was a part of the overall itinerary, and people did not travel especially to eat. In the past few years there has been a shift and food has become the main agenda of travel for the food loving traveller. ***“When I started Delhi Food Walks in 2011, the idea was to bring the hidden gems of Delhi’s streets to the fore.***



***At the time my guests were mostly locals, curious to learn about their city by discovering new neighbourhoods and local***

***cuisines,”*** shares ***Anubhav Sapra*** who now conducts food walks in many other cities and is considered a pioneer in the field. ***“In the past 12 years the market has completely changed. Today, our guests are mostly inbound travellers or corporate groups who already know where they want to go and what they want to eat.”*** He added that he is quite happy with this evolution because it means that there is a growing interest in hyper-local cuisines, culinary icons, and legendary eateries across the country. ***“They do, however, still need hand-holding in exploring these places and that is where we fit in.”***

According to Sapra, cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, and Jaipur in the north, Madurai, Karaikudi, Hyderabad and Mangalore in the south, Goa, Ahmedabad and Mumbai in the west, and Calcutta in the east have emerged as some of the most popular culinary destinations in the past few years. New options also come into focus every season. ***“The Northeastern region of India has been attracting a lot of attention in recent years as have cities like Bikaner and Jodhpur in the West which were not traditionally known for their food,”*** he observes.

## Striking Deeper Conversations Through Food

The pandemic catalysed conversations around regional cuisines, while food publications and social platforms lent impetus to them by bringing focus onto regional ingredients and dishes, and the legendary eateries and iconic restaurants that served them. Juxtaposed alongside a long period of restricted international travel, it became the perfect recipe for a significant rise in interest in all things local including food.

This rising popularity of culinary explorations led ***Harshvardhan Singh Tanwar*** and his partner Eesha Singh of No Footprints Tours to pivot post the pandemic and recalibrate their offerings by adding culinary trails to their repertoire of offerings. While the original objective of the organisation was to talk about communal spaces, local communities, and the little things that make Mumbai what it is, they quickly realised that food was intrinsic to these explorations if not

primary. ***“When we started No Footprints in 2014, we saw that while there was a focus on Mumbai’s history, conversations about communities and micro cultures – especially the micro cuisines – that have existed here for centuries were being neglected. We wanted to bring focus on those through our work,”*** reflects Tanwar. Consequently, when they added culinary tours, they were curated to focus on a deeper exploration of a community, neighbourhood, or micro cultures of an area via the medium of food.

Case in point, No Footprints offers a Sindhi Walk in Chembur that showcases iconic eateries juxtaposed against a rich backdrop of the community’s history. Similarly, their Kalbadevi walk focuses on the history of Bombay’s cotton mills, the arrival of the Gujarati and Rajasthani workers and traders that powered them and their



## Exploration Of Newer Flavours In Smaller Centres

While evolved markets like Delhi and Mumbai have offered ways to experience micro cultures and cuisines for a few years, food travellers are looking at newer destinations of culinary explorations as well and are happy to have locals guide them. ***“I have always found***



***food to be a way of exploring the local culture of a place be it in India or outside. How and what locals eat, the vegetables they buy, the markets they go to, and the recipes they cook, lend an insight into the cultural and social fabric of the city,”*** shares entrepreneur ***Namrata Sundaresan*** who loves travelling to experience regional food and finds local guided tours enriching. Her latest culinary trail was via Lucknow with Anubhuti, a pioneering initiative that offers a chance to explore Lucknow with locals.



***“At Lucknow with Anubhuti, our endeavour is to offer our guests the finest food experiences the city offers in a thoughtfully curated itinerary,”*** shares ***Debashish Kar***, co-founder of this boutique initiative. Designed by two individuals passionate about the city, Lucknow with Anubhuti, aims to change the narrative around the legendary city’s culinary culture, going beyond the oft-treaded path of kabab and biryani by showcasing signature experiences like homestyle meals, that are relatively hard to find, and lesser-known offerings from legendary establishments. All of which is seasoned with nuanced storytelling of their origins and evolution. Avid food explorers like Sundaresan feel that initiatives like these make the experience of eating one’s way

influence on the Kalbadevi area evolving to become primarily vegetarian. Their very popular Bohri Mohalla progressive walk, on the other hand, allows participants to taste their way through the meat rich offerings of the Bohra community along with stories of their migration and settling in Mumbai. ***“People reclaim their identity via food, especially when migration happens to a huge city like Mumbai, and for us these community-based food stories were pivotal to our offerings,”*** explains Tanwar. Another example of this is their Aarey Food Walk where indigenous communities of the forest showcase their food practices and recipes over a traditional meal with the guests, sparking conversations about the unique ecosystem of Aarey that exists within Mumbai city, but also highlighting the importance of this forest area that has been under threat for some time now.

through a city that much more flavourful. ***“It was an enriching and moving experience to see Lucknow from the eyes of the locals and not just learn about the history of the city but belong to it, in a small way for a few days.”***

Like Sundaresan, many travellers today want to immerse themselves into a city through its food. A demand that is growing across tier-three cities too. ***“With a diverse population of Sindhis, Muslims, Jains, and Marwaris and food practices that go back to the Mughal era, Agra has always had a rich culinary fabric. It is only now that we are being recognised for it,”*** shares ***Tahir Ahmed Qureshi*** of Agra Heritage Walks who conducts food tours that go beyond popular food districts into lesser-known areas and offers





immersive meals in local homes of various communities. Qureshi observes that he has seen a steady rise in travellers wanting to explore the culture of Agra, beyond the Taj Mahal via the local food in recent years.

**Jayanti Rajagopalan** of Detours India who runs Khaanasutra, a trail that covers multiple cities showcasing their cultural and historical identity through their cuisine, feels that there

is an increasing willingness to discover local dishes, which until sometime ago were overshadowed by homogenised choices. **“It is finally time to bring traditional food and its stories back — both for small businesses and home chefs who can now recreate heirloom dishes, home recipes and offer them to tourists and travellers from and within their homes.”**



**who can now recreate heirloom dishes, home recipes and offer them to tourists and travellers from and within their homes.”**



### The Changing Demographic Of The Traveller

Until recently, the Indian traveller explored destinations the traditional way, by visiting tourist spots and local attractions. Food came into consideration from dietary or religious proscription perspectives and local food explorations were limited to token regional dishes thrown into a generic multi cuisine buffet format. But this is changing.

*“I have been travelling for food for over a decade now, from the time when there was little visibility of local food and the audience seeking such experiences was far more niche,”* recalls **Sameer Bawa**, a senior travel management professional and social media influencer, whose content focuses on a combination of hyper-local specialties and high-end restaurants. He elaborates that a significant percentage of his 100k followers, who are from the US and UK, constantly reach out to him for advice and

bespoke experiences nowadays. **“I do intensive research on the culinary landscape of a city whenever I plan my personal itinerary; the culinary scene in every city changes rapidly and knowing what is current, helps.”** he concludes, sharing that this also puts him in an ideal position to curate similar experiences for others, which he is known to do rather well.

It isn’t only travellers who are embarking on journeys focused around trying specific dishes, experiencing a particular cuisine in their authentic context or understanding a place through its food. Restaurateurs, chefs and culinary archivists are on similar quests for new flavours and experiences. The team at Masque, Mumbai, has been exploring and reinterpreting regional cuisines on their menus for the last seven years, driving conversation around indigenous cultures, cuisine and

ecosystems. In Gurugram, the team from OMO Café has been travelling to remote locations on what they call OMO Adventures, an initiative to explore varied culinary cultures and native culinary practices. **“We started travelling to understand the ingredients, recipes and the ecosystems of specific regions.**

**It brought perspective to the way we were using and interpreting these unusual ingredients on our menus and increased the interest of our guests in the food we serve,”** shares **Deepika Sethi**, co-founder of OMO, who has been leading exploratory trips to regions like Uttarakhand, Nagaland, Coorg, and Kashmir. This has led to increasing guest interest in accompanying the team on their explorations, and OMO is considering making it a public proposition soon.



### Bringing People To New Places

Even as people are choosing to travel for culinary exploration, be it to follow the Michelin restaurant trail, savour fine course-wise plated meals in Europe, eat their way through street food stalls across the world, or discover local regional cuisines with cooking classes in a far-off city, chefs and restaurateurs are creating new culinary destinations here at home.

Goa is a vibrant example. Home to multiple award-winning restaurants and bars, the sunshine state is a vibrant hub for the food explorer, but far flung destinations like Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh and Tipai in Maharashtra are also becoming a focus of food exploration thanks to chefs like Prateek Sadhu and **Amninder Sandhu**. Both globally renowned chefs have launched

experiential establishments that draw on their environment for inspiration. Sadhu’s NAAR serves a seasonal Himalayan menu near Kasauli and Sandhu’s Palaash, and serves hyper-local food made by local women inside a National Park in Tipai.



**“As a traveller I have always looked for a local food experience but finding them is not**

**always easy,”** reflects Sandhu, going on to share the lack of places serving local food in Nagpur is what strengthened her resolve to create a space that addressed this gap. To achieve this, she elected to have local women create and execute the menu over expert chefs. **“When we were setting up Palaash , we consciously chose a menu that was entirely made with ingredients grown**

**in and around Tipai and trained local women to cook and serve it. This not only gave them confidence but also made our product more authentic,”** she observes. The concept seems to have worked wonderfully given how the little-known town has been attracting travellers from Hyderabad, Nagpur, and even Mumbai. A similar initiative that shows great promise is 8th Generation Perfumer &

Chef Pranav Kapoor’s initiative Perfume Tourism that has created a proposition out of Kannauj’s ancient perfume heritage and food. His small boutique property 24 MG road Kannauj, is drawing travellers from as far as US, UK and France for its novel pairing of food with perfumes manufactured in the town.

### Leveraging The Trend

With food explorers and travellers looking to newer pastures both within and outside of their home cities, opportunities are rife for locals with a knowledge of local, regional culinary cultures, a knack for storytelling, and/or a deft hand at cooking to create new business opportunities. *“Locals can leverage this growing interest through innovation,”* observes Tanwar, whose spice market trails visit includes a popular 75-year-old shop where he recently introduced customised small packages for guests who want to carry spices back. This not just added value for the guests but also created additional income for the shop. He also shares how, over the years, home cooks have become a part of the No Footprints eco-system either by hosting travellers to

home style meals or by catering at large events and bringing hitherto hidden cuisines to the fore while also generating additional income. According to Kar, this is a fantastic time for people to jump into the game by creating authentic culinary experiences because locals, with a penchant for food make the perfect guides. *“People can open their homes, hearts and dining tables to travellers via social media, AirBnB and even local food groups. I have observed travellers embrace opportunities to immerse themselves into hyper-local cultures with passion and I am certain this trend is here to stay!”*

As culinary tourism grows, and local experiences bring more and more cities onto the culinary travel map of

India, Sapra cautions, *“As a curator you have to be ready to customise everything according to your guests’ needs, be it accommodating diet preferences like vegetarian, vegan, or gluten free, or creating exclusive itineraries, your flexibility is your strength today,”* going on to concluding that knowing the pulse of the market – and every player in the market remains non-negotiable.

When it comes to culinary exploration, few places equal India with its diversity. With experts, travellers, and industry insiders concurring that 2024 is going to be the year India travels for food, the future is portentous for both the food traveller and the food travel industry.

### Action Points

**Growing interest in exploring regional cuisines**, such as that of Himalayan and Northeast Indian shows a clear penchant for culinary explorations to discover new frontiers in Indian food. Explorers are also curious about the food culture of their own cities. The industry should take note of the **increased demand for knowledgeable experts on local food, regional cuisine, and local ingredients** and convert them into viable propositions of **curriculum development and local skill enhancement** for employment opportunities. The magnetism of **food with storytelling** is something the travel and food Industries can leverage in planning narrative driven menus and concepts with **investment in R&D and innovation**.







# Food and Travel Trends

Over the last decade, there has been a shift in tourist interest when it comes to food in travel itineraries. Food has grown from being a perfunctory inclusion, to becoming the focal point of the itinerary. Culinary tourism in India is at the brink of becoming a viable standalone travel proposition, capable of generating excitement in the new food explorer, and profit for both food and travel industry players willing to invest in developing concepts. An increasing number of boutique operators are already transforming mainstay propositions by curating delicious offerings that the new food traveller is embracing with gusto and validating enthusiastically on their social networks.

Against this evolving backdrop, we asked our panel to weigh in on the most exciting domestic and international food adventures that Indian travellers can look forward to in 2024. Read on to know what they have to say about it.



## Toolkit for 2024

Exploring iconic street foods of a city, meeting and eating with locals at their favourite outlets, learning about the culinary culture from local experts, and visiting home kitchens to experience traditional home-style food, will continue to be major attractions in the year to come. The demand for experiences beyond restaurants also opens myriad possibilities for passionate entrepreneurs to package and promote local culinary culture through cooking classes, market tours, food walks with local experts, and home-dining experiences. The food and travel industry can harness the knowledge and expertise acquired by these passionate entrepreneurs, and leverage them to create lucrative propositions around local culinary culture and attractions for the traveller of 2024.

# Top Trends in Travel

According to the latest travel reports, more Indians travelled on vacation, more frequently, and for longer periods in 2023 than ever before. They also spent nearly 20% more during their vacation compared to the previous year. The panel of experts were asked to predict what culinary experiences would most influence travel choices of a growing segment of adventurous Indian food explorers.

The panel forecasts that the itineraries of these travellers will continue to be driven by a deep desire to explore local and regional flavours. Nearly all our panellists have picked local street food and market tours as the single biggest attraction of 2024. They also predict that many more travellers will join culinary site tours to learn how their favourite products are produced, and often book home dining experiences to learn about local food culture and practices from regional and community experts.

While interactions with local food experts will be high on the agenda of professionals in the industry, consumer voices leaned strongly towards more excursions to source signature products from the regions they visit.



One of the best ways to get to know a destination is by its food and drink, and discerning travellers will be making both of these a top priority in the coming year. I see a continuing trend of meaningful travel, where travellers will choose unique culinary experiences particular to a specific region. We saw it happen last year, and this year too, more and more travellers will choose to hit the road for destination-focused dining, dining with locals, eating at renowned places, gourmet restaurants, enjoying street food, experiencing traditional fare and a focus on wine.



Kunal Vijayakar



Alka Jena

Foodie travellers in 2024 are likely to prioritise a blend of experiences that offer both sophistication and authenticity. Engaging in street food and market tours is anticipated to be a frequent choice, allowing travellers to savour authentic local flavours. Interacting with local food experts, exploring signature products, and participating in culinary events or pop-ups are experiences that will enrich their understanding of regional cuisines, culinary traditions and craftsmanship.

Indian central and state tourism authorities need to have clearer food tourism strategies that encourage people to travel for food discovery, and not just eat food as a side activity to sightseeing, or adventure or leisure tourism. They will attract more attention if they offer specific food-centric itineraries - which include food heritage walks, farm visits, vineyard tours, food markets, and home visits to experience local home food.

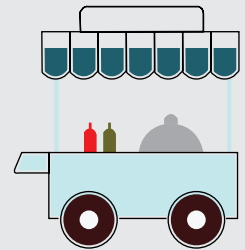


Ravi Miglani

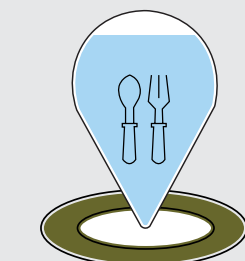


Debolina Ray

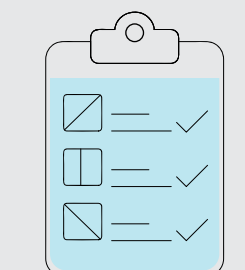
There's a different thrill to researching and exploring restaurants and hidden gems while travelling - to go beyond the "usual" things to eat and discover what's popular with the locals, where they hang out, and the kind of food intrinsic to that culture, through food, market and vineyard tours and more.



Street food and market tours  
94.1%

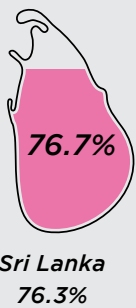
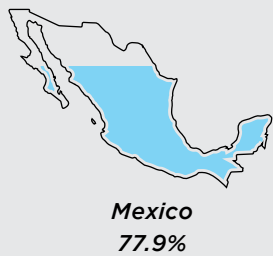
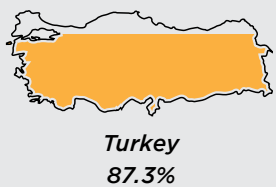
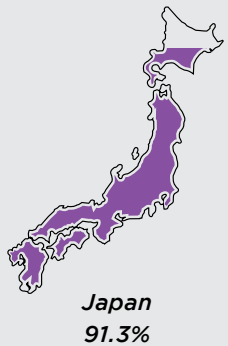


Culinary site tours  
92.3%



Home dining experiences  
Interactions with local food experts  
signature products  
87.5%





## Top International Food Destinations

A recent survey from a leading travel portal, reported that apart from cost, the three biggest factors for Indian travellers when deciding their next destination are food (71%), culture (65%) and weather (65%).

With this in mind, we asked our panellists to forecast which international food and beverage destinations would excite the culinary traveller most in 2024. Almost all of them felt that the desire to get authentic, first-hand experience of the culinary culture and traditions behind popular cuisines of **Japan, Vietnam, Turkey, Mexico** and **Sri Lanka** will drive most international travel itineraries in 2024.



The evolving landscape of culinary tourism reflects increasing consumer motivation to explore and savour authentic local dishes. Food has become central to international travel thanks to a rising interest in exploring unique regional cuisines and the thrill of discovering hidden culinary gems. The accessibility of culinary information online, including recipes, food travel guides, and virtual experiences, enhances knowledge and curiosity about global cuisines and encourages travellers to seek out new and exciting food explorations. Social media, particularly platforms like Instagram and food blogs, significantly influences decisions, contributing to the allure of destinations.



Anushruti

Japan offers an exciting destination for F&B professionals due to its rich culinary heritage. The combination of tradition and innovation in diverse regional specialties, innovative culinary techniques, emphasis on seasonality and freshness, vibrant street food culture, culinary craftsmanship, blending with modern culinary trends, and hospitality excellence make Japan a source of inspiration and adventure for those seeking to explore and elevate their understanding of the culinary world.



Anirudh Kheny

I think Indian travelers have now moved away from Europe which was the biggest lure to them. The Indian traveler is now on a quest for cultural experiences even when it comes to their culinary choices. They're chasing flavour, umami and local traditions with food. Japan has always been a popular destination and with the access of Japanese cuisine in India the intrigue is building further. Mexico is another destination that is seeing a steady rise with the Indian traveler. The cuisine is similar to ours but we now want to explore authentic Mexican verses the tex mex we're familiar with.



Roxanne Bamboat



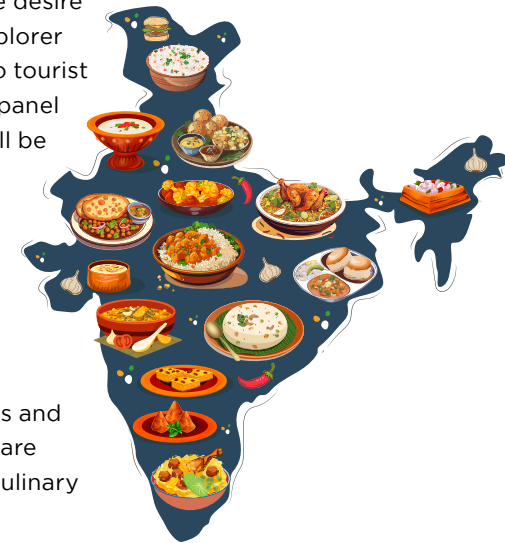
Chef Vikas Seth

I would suggest Oaxaca, Mexico to all the food and beverage lovers to plan a trip to for its traditional Mexican cuisine, its street food delights, its Mezcal - a traditional Mexican spirit made from agave plants, its culinary traditions and festivals and the use of indigenous ingredients and techniques. Oaxaca has the potential to become an international food and beverage destination for 2024!

## Top Domestic Food Destinations

Indian culinary tourism is on the brink of exploding. The desire for adventure on the plate is driving the Indian food explorer to travel with a vengeance. The age of the Indian gastro tourist is here, and will stay well into the future. We asked the panel of experts to weigh in on domestic destinations that will be popular for the Indian culinary traveller in 2024.

**Kashmir** has always been a fascinating destination for travellers. With the radical transformation around its perception as an accessible destination, the region is attracting a lot of attention, within and outside India. Kashmiri cuisine, especially the legendary wazwan, is renowned, but the desire to go beyond these high notes and explore the nuances of the cuisine in a deeper manner, are some factors that have made Kashmir our panel's top culinary destination for 2024.



Vibrant food culture, and an abundance of culinary experiences ranging from local to exotic, shack food to fine dine, and more have already made **Goa** a popular culinary destination. With some of the most respected names in the business opening in the sunshine state will drive Goa to be an even more desirable culinary destination in 2024!

Bengal's love affair with food has always been celebrated by food lovers and conversations around food inevitably highlight that Bengali food tastes infinitely better in Bengal! All this talk seems to have touched the right nerves, making **Kolkata** the third most desirable place to visit for food in 2024.

The cuisines which have been popular for the last two or more decades will take a slight back seat for the culinary explorers as they have newer grounds to cover. Pride in local cuisine and the increasing demand for off beat flavours will be the impetus to seek newer and underexplored destinations.



Deepa Chauhan



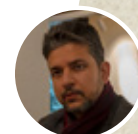
Dr. Chef Parvinder Singh Bali

In 2024, curious F&B professionals seeking immersion into India's culinary culture might prioritise destinations like Kolkata for its rich history of sweets and unique dishes. Additionally, exploring regional gems like Amritsar for Punjabi flavours or Jaipur for royal Rajasthani dishes could provide an enriching and diverse culinary experience.

India and all its states are a haven for all their culinary delights but some truly conquer the gastronomic scene in all shapes and forms. Goa, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Uttarakhand and Kolkata are making way for some of the most interesting restaurants, bars and cafes giving the avid food enthusiast a great experience.

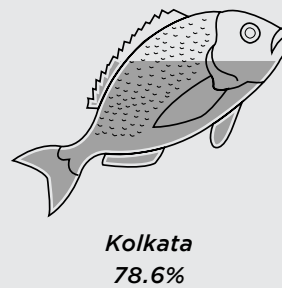


Nalini Sadhu

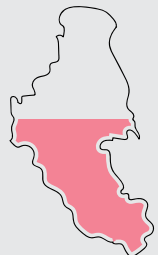


Pawan Hora

NE and Kashmir for me will be the biggest destinations. For years, these areas have been marked as inaccessible for various reasons. But in the last few years, owing to the brilliant infrastructure, political stability, and the penetration via SM tools, People have gotten to know about the beauty of these places both in terms of their topography and food.







Lucknow,  
90.3%



Amritsar  
88.3%



Kolkata,  
86.4%



Banaras,  
80.6%

## Top Indian Street Food Destinations

The street food of any city is a reflection of its culinary diversity. For a curious traveller, it can provide a window to the culinary traditions and preferences of its population - from the locations of popular food stalls, the type of 'foodies' they attract, the menus on offer, and the manner in which food is served and consumed by patrons. Street food has always been one of the most exciting attractions for the food explorer, being local, cheap, and high on taste. Over the last few years, a growing number of enterprising locals and food influencers have taken to Youtube and social media, to share local street food specialties with the world - whetting the appetites of a new breed of travellers, ready to follow the trails to exciting culinary adventures.



Here are the predictions from our experts on places food travellers will pick for street food in 2024. Not surprisingly, stories around the rich cultural traditions and diversity of **Lucknow**, **Amritsar**, **Kolkata** and **Banaras** stood out most.

Places like Old Delhi, Amritsar, Lucknow, Kolkata, Varanasi and Indore are likely to rule the roost of street food explorations - especially after revamping of old congested areas. Fuelled by Instagram, many food connoisseurs and bloggers are making a beeline to these places to share their own food stories.

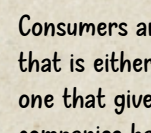


Anurag Mallick



Swetak Abhisek  
Mohapatra

Few places have 'iconic' written beside their name. It is not easy to ignore them. While that is that, there are places like Banaras, Lucknow where food preferences and variations change with season. New season, addition or subtraction of items from the list of street food you tried last season. Colours and flavours are all different.



Insia Lacewalla

Consumers are attracted to destinations offering local street food that is either an establishment that has been around for decades or one that gives it a familiar twist. Street food walks by walking tour companies have made places like Delhi and Haridwar unique in the street food culture.



Sanchit Khandelwal

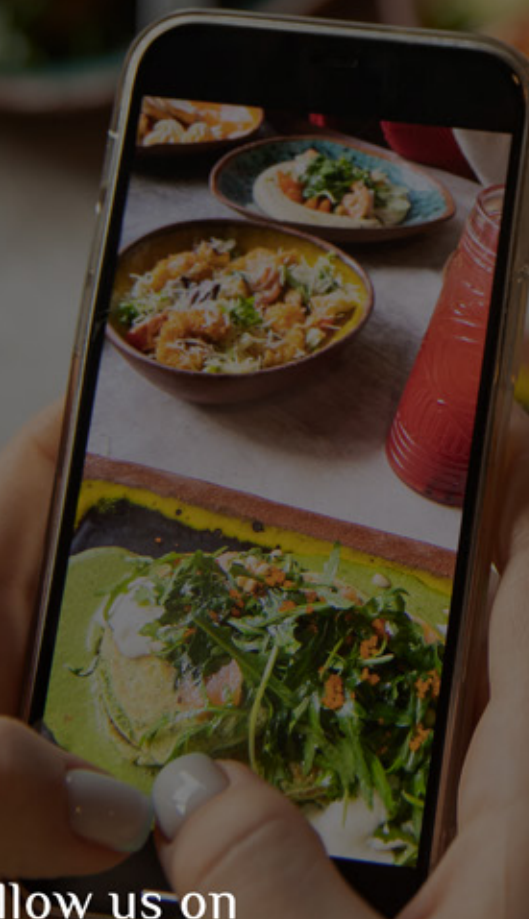
Steeped in history and spirituality, Banaras emerges as a must-visit destination for street food aficionados. The allure of Shreeji's Malaiyo, Deena Ki Chaat, Vatika's Apple Pie, and the conversations over chai at Laxmi Tea Stall contribute to a Soulful journey that seamlessly blends tradition with innovation.

Godrej

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# Emerging Conversations

India's cheese scene is undergoing a delicious revolution. Rising above the ubiquitous processed cheddar, an exciting artisanal movement is carving its own niche. This carefully crafted sector boasts not just international favourites like mozzarella and brie, but also daring innovations like Himalayan yak cheese and masala-infused cheddar. This isn't a passing fad; the artisanal cheese market is projected to grow at a blistering 22% annually, driven by factors like increasing disposable incomes, an evolving palate, and growing appreciation for high-quality, locally sourced food.

This year in the emerging conversations section, we learn about traditional cheeses of the subcontinent, and meet cheesemakers who are boldly experimenting with indigenous ingredients and age-old techniques to redefine the conventional notion of cheese. We then look at the biggest trends for 2024 in two new categories of emerging conversations – Chocolates and Snacks/convenience foods.



## Say Cheese!

A sample selection of cheeses produced in India.

Traditional Indian Cheese			
<b>Kalari</b> Semi-soft cheese from Kashmir, made from cow or buffalo milk	<b>Bandel</b> Salty, crumbly cheese from Bandel (West Bengal), made by separating curds from whey.	<b>Chhurpi</b> Dry, saltless cheese made from yak milk popular across the upper Himalayan region	<b>Paneer</b> Fresh, soft cheese made from full-fat buffalo or cow milk found all over the subcontinent
<b>Kalimpong</b> Slightly acidic cheese with a crumbly texture, named after the city of Kalimpong (Sikkim)	<b>Topli nu paneer</b> Jelly-textured, soft, subtly salty cheese from the Parsi community, made with full cream milk	<b>Chenna</b> Sweet cheese, made with cow or buffalo milk, and found everywhere in the subcontinent	<b>Churu</b> Highly aromatic, pungent cheese made from yak or goat milk in the Himalayan regions
Processed Cheese			
<b>Processed cheddar block</b> Hard blend of one or more natural cheeses with other flavouring and stabilising agents	<b>Processed cheese slices</b> Thin rectangular slices of processed cheese packaged individually for convenience	<b>Cream Cheese</b> Soft, mild-tasting fresh unripened cheese made from milk and cream	<b>Cheese spread</b> Soft blend of natural or processed cheese and other flavouring and stabilising agents
Artisanal Cheeses			
<b>Burrata</b> Italian-style cow milk cheese made from mozzarella and cream	<b>Ricotta</b> Italian-style whey cheese made from sheep, cow, goat, or buffalo milk	<b>Queso Oaxaca</b> Handcrafted Mexican-style cheese is stringy, lightly salted with excellent melting properties	<b>Brie</b> Soft-centred cheese from France is made with cow's milk and has a sharp aroma and flavour
<b>Cheddar</b> English-style cheese is relatively hard, and sometimes aged to enhance its sharp flavour	<b>Tomme</b> Semi-firm French-style cheese made from cow's milk is mildly flavoured	<b>Blue Cheese</b> Range of sharp, salty and pungent cheese made from cow, sheep or goat milk	<b>Bocconcini</b> Small, semi-soft, white balls of fresh mozzarella packaged and stored in whey
Innovative Cheeses			
<b>Herbed Chevre</b> Small balls of classic chevre cream cheese crusted with local herbs and spices	<b>Milagai Podi Cheddar</b> Cheddar crusted with a house blend of Milagai Podi	<b>Cumin-infused Gouda</b> Classic Gouda cheese spiced with Cumin for a sharp, spicy flavour.	<b>Camel Milk Feta</b> Feta made from camel milk instead of traditional goat milk





# Evolving Cultures: New Directions for India's Rich Dairy Legacy

*Cheese is a vibrant sector of the global food industry. India, while rich in dairy traditions, had a limited repertoire of cheese through its culinary evolution. However it has more than made up for this in recent years, with Indian cheeses winning awards on global forums today.*

## Focus Areas

Although cheesemaking was an active part of the culinary culture of pastoral and dairy-forward communities in India in the past, the practice has grown beyond that, and Indian cheese is now garnering international attention. Cheese in India has gone from mass-produced, processed varieties that were known for being shelf stable, to more artisanal, European-style varieties, that have taken on fascinating experimental shape influenced by the Indian flavour palate.

## History Of Cheese In India

Since the domestication of livestock, animal milk has been an important source of nutrition in the human diet and milk and its many derivatives have enriched culinary cultures across the globe. Cheese evolved out of a necessity to preserve surplus milk among nomadic pastoral tribes in various parts of the world but is today an art form. Cheese is the output of separating milk solids or curds from whey, coagulating and compressing the curds. Further treatment in various ways including ageing and ripening yields different types of cheese. Over time, good cheese has evolved into a gourmet category.

However, for all the diversity it boasts in other aspects, India has an extremely limited repertoire of traditional cheese. One hypothesis as noted by historian KT Achaya in his book “Indian Food - A Historical Companion,” attributes the absence of cheese from the ancient Indian diet to the fact that Hindu dietetics considered the act of curdling milk to be profane, and proscribed its consumption.

Another theory is that the act of cheesemaking, while historically present, barely evolved in India. Food historian **Dr. Pushpesh Pant** points out that a 12th-century textbook, “*Manasollasa*,”

written by King Somesvara III, references a sweet prepared by adding rice flour to split milk solids, or channa, to make a dough that was rolled into balls, cooked in ghee, and immersed in sugar syrup. “*Channa was*



*probably part of India's culinary history long before the Portuguese influence in the early 16th century, which is popularly cited as its origin. The Portuguese, Parsis, or Mughals might have updated the recipes, offered new ways of making cheese and may even have given us various names, but we most likely always had some version of this cheese at least.”*

## Traditional And Regional Cheeses

That said, notable indigenous Indian cheeses did exist in pockets. Cheesemaking has been part of the culinary culture of pastoral and dairy dependent communities of the Himalayas

for centuries, but remained within their home regions, as part of the diet of the communities that made them. In the North Indian Himalayas, pastoral communities have

been extending the shelf life of surplus milk by rolling molten cheese solids into flat circles with a similar stretch and softness to mozzarella. Called *Doodh Roti* locally, *Kaladi*

or *Kalari* is relatively mild in flavour when fresh, and subtly sour when aged. The leftover whey from *Kaladi* making is further used to make another Ricotta-like cheese called *Kudan*. On the other side of the Himalayas, *Churpi*, a strong, sharp, pungently flavoured, sour and saltless cheese similar to well-aged European cheeses is a staple. *Churpi* evolved in Tibet but has travelled across the Himalayas to Ladakh, Himachal and Sikkim and as far as the Northeast, with Tibetan communities.

In the East, cheeses like *Channa*, *Bandel*, and *Dhakai*

can be found, some with ancient roots, and others born of colonial influence. *Bandel* cheese, a legacy of the Portuguese settlers around the Bandel region of West Bengal is an aged cheese produced exclusively in Kolkata by a handful of artisan cheesemakers. Reminiscent of a Greek feta, it comes in small roundels and may be plain or smoked, and both versions are firm and salty. In direct contrast, the *Topli nu Paneer* or *Surti Paneer* of Western India, an invention of the Parsis in Gujarat, has a delicate jelly-like consistency and fresh milk-like taste with hints of sweet and

salty notes. Named after the *Topli* or cane basket in which it was set, this distinctive cheese was traditionally coagulated using enzymes from dried chicken gizzards, however the modern version is made with rennet.

Outside of these, the only cheese consumed in India for decades was paneer, if at all. European and American styles of processed and canned cheese arrived in the later colonial era but what little of this imported commercial commodity was available to Indians of the time was affordable only to the affluent.

## Early Cheese Consumption

India's cheese industry only came into being in the post-independence 1950's, but saw rapid growth. The then-newly formed government called for reduced dependence on food imports, and Amul, already rich in dairy offerings, harnessed the opportunity to tap into a new market by establishing the first cheese factory in India in 1960. This marked a new era for cheese, according to **Aditya Raghavan**, owner of Fleur Jaune Cheese, Canada and an expert on Indian dairy and cheesemaking traditions, “*Amul*



*revolutionised cheese consumption in India. Indians have traditionally stored pickles and preserves in cool places of their kitchen and Amul made processed cheese that was shelf stable as well as suitable*

*in flavour and texture to Indian climates and palates.”* Amul went on to produce millions of kilos of cheese. Most of the cheese available at this point was of the processed kind - made from one or two cheese types blended together, and processed to kill any micro-organisms that give natural cheese individuality of nuance, flavour and texture, Raghavan explains adding that “*Even though there were a few independent cheesemakers at the time, they were rather small.”*

The late '70s saw pioneers like Flanders' Dairy Products, ABC Farms, and Brother Abraham begin to explore European-style cheesemaking in small, less mechanised and more artisanal facilities. One noteworthy figure of this time was GK Shanker,

founder of Kodai Cheese who began his venture in 1973 and whose legacy thrives under the aegis of his grandson, Hari Shanker today. Auroville, with its substantial international populace, became the birthplace of La Ferme Cheese in 1988. Artisanal continued to grow slowly and steadily.

**Mukund Naidu**, among the first artisanal cheese makers to pioneer and make European-style cheeses in India, reflects,



“*When I started making cheese 30 years ago, it was just five of us cheesemakers, but this number has now grown to over 50 especially in the last five years.*” More recently the cheese sector has seen a tremendous boom.

## Growth Of The Cheese Sector

That said, the Indian cheese market is multifaceted. Commercial and processed cheese remain the mainstay across households and local eateries. But the last decade has seen a significant rise in the variety and accessibility of imported gourmet cheeses from around the globe, for which a growing segment of discerning food lovers with a desire to

explore have developed a taste and are willing to spend on. The demand for superior quality cheese has seen a growth of 30-40% as confirmed by the sales staff at Modern Bazar in Lajpat Nagar, Delhi.

**Mansi Jasani**, cheesemonger and founder of The Cheese Collective, foresees that the market for artisanal cheese will

only grow. “*For years most fancy cheese was processed and imported, but in the last 15 years there has been a steady rise in local artisanal cheesemaking.*” Jasani's prediction is already seeing early signs of fruition. Recent years show a noteworthy surge in local brands producing



artisanal cheese, including Bengaluru-based Begum Victoria, Kodaikanal-based Caroselle Dairy Products, Uttarakhand-based Darima Farms, Kolkata-based Meraki, Happy Cow Cheese in Goa, Spotted Cow Fromagerie in Mumbai, Delhi’s Kumaoni Blessings, Chennai-based Kase, and Eleftheria in Mumbai to name a few. These companies are producing global quality cheese as was evidenced at the 2023 World Cheese Awards, at which a number of Indian cheese brands won, including Eleftheria’s Brunost, which made their mark by being recognised across silver, gold and super-gold categories. “I hope to see Indian cheese grow

The Indian Element

India’s rich pastoral history also means that a majority of our dairy sector is built around cooperative models like Amul’s, which collects milk from numerous herds. Thus, replicating the nuances of foreign cheeses consistently can be a complex endeavour. Enterprising Indian cheesemakers, however, are exploring a number of avenues to differentiate their offerings in ways that are uniquely Indian, while also catering to a rapidly growing experimental market.

Some artisanal Indian cheesemakers are embracing the natural terroir of Indian milk to build unique offerings. “Depending on the dairy animal’s diet, and if the milk comes from the mountains or the plains, the flavour of the cheese will change, reflecting that unique terroir” shares Naidu. In India, cheesemakers have access to milk from a range of livestock, including cows, buffalos, goats, sheep, camels and yaks, and they are celebrating this diverse dairy

further, with over 150 artisanal cheese makers producing European-style cheeses, albeit adding their spin for the Indian market,” comments Naidu enthusiastically.

This rapidly growing artisanal cheese sector has not only put Indian cheesemakers on the world map, but also directed new attention towards indigenous cheeses like kalari, bandel, and churpi, observes Jasani. These regional Indian cheeses are beginning to gain popularity among chefs and gourmands who want to use local ingredients. Chef Ajay Siotra, head chef at Cocks and Bull, Hyderabad, loves to plate a simple grilled Kalari with salt,

paired with a bun and green chutney. And Raghavan has served a fresh Topli nu Paneer - a star dish just by itself - to guests at his workshops and pop-ups. Look closely and you will find beautifully plated salads finished with crumbled bandel, and modern desserts crafted with channa, beginning to emerge on thoughtful menus around the country. However, Chef Siotra believes we’re only at the cusp of this trend and adds, “Educating consumers

about the nuanced flavours of local cheese is paramount in driving their popularity.”



culture, which Naidu feels can be a potential game changer.

Like in the case of Rajasthan-based Camel Charisma, which is producing soft cheeses like feta and cream cheese using naturally salty camel milk, sourced from indigenous herding communities in the region. Or Chennai-based Käse Cheese, which has partnered with the Centre for Pastoralism to source milk from the free grazing herds of traditional shepherds in Gujarat and Rajasthan, producing a range of cheeses that showcase the terroir of these arid regions. Their Alpine-style washed rind cheese with a slightly sticky rind, and nutty, herbaceous, and woody flavour, won a silver award at the World Cheese Awards in 2023-24.

Aside from highlighting terroir, cheesemakers are also infusing their products with an array of Indian flavouring ingredients, such as malabar black pepper, jeera, saunf, methi, mor milagai, milagai podi, rose petals, bhut

jolokia, mustard, and more to create offerings that stand out as uniquely Indian. While there is a demand for the more popular feta, mozzarella, and haloumi, Namrata Sundaresan, founder of Käse Cheese, observes that their customers keep coming back for their flavoured cheeses. She has been drawing inspiration from various indigenous ingredients and spices to flavour her cheeses that showcase local flavours.



“Our best sellers are pepper jack, cumin chilli, and the ‘Ode To Chennai’ cheddar crusted with milagai podi” she shares, adding that India needs more artisanal cheesemakers, “they are regional players and help make consumers aware of how their products are different from processed products.” She believes through innovation that caters to the Indian palate, cheesemakers can create an ecosystem of cheese lovers that eventually explore and develop a taste for a broader variety of offerings.

The Future Of Indian Cheese

Artisanal Indian cheesemakers are unanimously focused on bolstering this very ecosystem, through a number of approaches. One is working with dairy farmers to improve quality and showcase terroir, and another is innovating to create better and more interesting products. Yet, as the Indian artisanal cheese industry grows, so do the challenges.

While they may face stiff competition from more affordable processed cheese brands in the market, artisanal cheese brands today enjoy a swelling demand from discerning consumers of gourmet food. Better established brands are even garnering interest from consumers across the country

and the world. But in the face of this demand, transport logistics, or the lack thereof, form a considerable hurdle. Many artisanal cheese makers currently cater only to localised markets, within or near their areas of production. Both Raghavan and Naidu observe that better cold supply chains are the need of the hour, and the ability to rapidly and effectively transport cheeses to a wider audience around the country without compromising on quality and shelf life has the potential to propel this segment to new heights of success.

While we slowly but surely rekindle our relationship with the flavours of traditional cheeses like Kaladi, Bandel, Topli nu Paneer, exploring

innovative new applications in the contemporary kitchen, global styles of artisanal cheese are rapidly establishing their place on the tables of discerning Indian chefs and gourmands alike. We stand at the threshold of a whole new world of cheese, marrying technique, quality, local milk rich with nuanced terroir, and a gamut of Indian flavours, all waiting to be discovered and cherished.



Action Points

The combination of innovative techniques, incorporation of local milk varieties, an assortment of flavours, and growing appreciation among culinary enthusiasts, has the industry excited to see this niche take shape. Investments in efforts to work with dairy farmers and showcase local terroir in new cheese products, and experimenting with Indian flavouring ingredients will be key to further growth of artisanal cheese in India. It will also be vital for cheese makers to enhance supply chains to improve shelf life and transport cheese to a wider audience rapidly and effectively. The unique twists Indian cheesemakers are giving their cheeses, offer interesting opportunities for chefs and restaurateurs to experiment with on menus. All this activity makes for fantastic storytelling about the people involved, the artisanal processes and about the growing cheese culture among culinary enthusiasts.







## Trends in Emerging Conversations

*Every year, some food categories stand out for their potential to make a significant impact on consumers and industry in the year to come. In 2024, our panel predicts two categories will ride this wave - Chocolates, and Snacks and Convenience foods.*

*The inherent Indian love for chocolate, combined with rising health consciousness and a desire for unique flavours, will fuel a growing market hungry for more sophisticated offerings. It is a demand that an increasing tribe of Indian chocolatiers will meet with a widening selection of locally sourced, bean-to-bar offerings infused with exotic Indian spices and flavours. Sustainable practices and ethical sourcing will add another layer of appeal, attracting conscientious consumers and propelling Indian chocolate onto the global stage.*

*Snacking is a much loved aspect of Indian culture, and the snack segment will continue to see a lot of innovation in 2024. Consumers will seek new flavours that pack a nutritional punch, opting for natural ingredients, whole grains, and minimal processing over fried, sugary options. But all of this, without compromising on taste. Think air fried spiced okra and flavoured red rice crisps!*

*Read on to find out what the panel feels about these two sizzling hot categories in 2024.*

## Toolkit for 2024

Taking cue from the successes of their peers, more farmers and producers can engage directly with their consumers to **promote their personal brands**. They can start with promoting their products and stories on popular channels, and work towards creating dedicated consumer facing channels for themselves. Food businesses will do well to continue looking for innovative ways to make **traditional snacks** more **nutrient rich, convenient, shelf-stable, and appealing** to a wider audience. Brands can invest in upgrading **packaging, branding, and distribution channels** to appeal to evolving consumer expectations of trustworthiness and clarity with **higher transparency in product claims and labels**. Chroniclers, journalists and content creators can engage with producers to share **stories and information about new initiatives** and their benefits to consumers.



## Chocolate Trends

Chocolate has been undergoing a tremendous revolution in India over the last decade. The movement has been led by innovative chocolatiers, collaborating with local cocoa producers and artisanal brands, and offering exquisitely crafted chocolates that constantly defy popular perceptions!

Continuing its upward trend, nearly all our experts believe that **artisanal, handmade, or craft** chocolates will entice the discerning consumers most in 2024.

This shift towards small-batch, meticulously crafted treats also reflects a desire for unique flavour profiles and personalised experiences.

Most panellists also believe that, beyond the artisanal allure, the **bean-to-bar** philosophy around using carefully sourced beans for a pure and traceable experience, will continue to resonate strongly. Interestingly, a growing appreciation for local flavours and sustainable practices, along with a strong, conscious desire to support local artisans and businesses shines through. Perhaps that's why a significant number of experts predict greater demand for **Indian-origin** chocolates.



The artisanal touch, careful craftsmanship, emphasis on organic ingredients, and overall care and respect given to each component significantly impact the perception of product quality. A rising trend towards higher chocolate percentages, reflecting a growing awareness among consumers about what constitutes real chocolate are factors that contribute to a more informed and discerning consumer.



Ashish Bhasin



Priya Ganapathy

Be it Mason & Co from Puducherry, Earth Loaf from Mysore, All Things from Jaipur, Flury's in Kolkata, or Hill Wild in the North East, local chocolate makers are discovering the complex flavour profiles of Indian cacao and incorporating local ingredients such as coconut, ginger, gondhoraj lime, jackfruit, black pepper, mango, red capsicum, and chili, besides international flavours like yuzu and matcha.

Unlike other craft movements such as beer, wine or cheese – where the movement began in other world markets and India only got a chance to catch up – craft chocolate being so nascent globally, gives Indian chocolate makers an opportunity to lead the category. Indian craft chocolate brands are leading the way with world class interpretations at product, packaging and retail experience levels. We at Manam Chocolate, received validation on this when we won in the Brand experience Category at the Academy of Chocolate Awards.

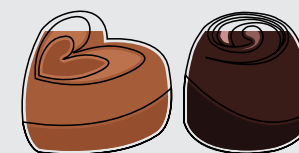


Chaitanya Muppala

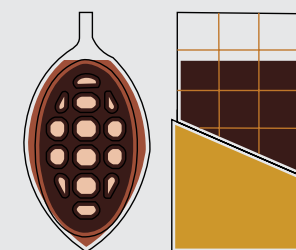


Payal Rajankar

With chocolate cultivation growing well in our own country, there is a great interest in chefs wanting to support local businesses. There is a sense of pride in using ingredients with low food miles. Chefs are researching & testing chocolates & centring their desserts around these flavour profiles. Chocolate manufacturers are also adopting techniques that bring out the best flavours.



Artisanal, handmade, or craft  
94.2%

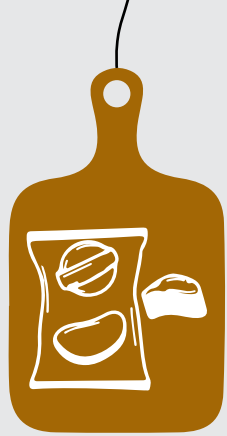


Bean-to-bar  
84.6%



Indian-origin  
76.9%



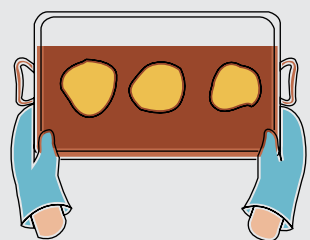


# Snack and Convenience Food Trends

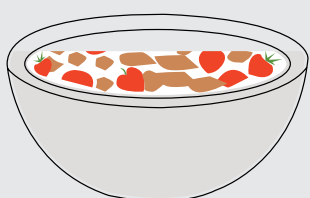
The future of snacking seems to be about striking a balance between indulgence and well-being. While people want to enjoy familiar flavours and textures, they're increasingly mindful of what they put into their bodies. This trend suggests a rise in innovative snacks that are both delicious and nutritious.



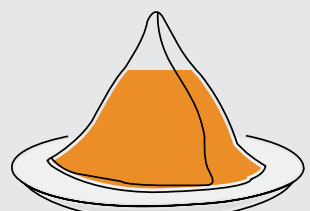
In 2024, grocery lists will tell a tale of conscious snacking. Our experts predict a resounding vote for healthier choices, with an overwhelming majority favouring **non-fried options**. Ditching greasy chips and opting for baked or air-fried alternatives seems to be the new norm. But health doesn't mean sacrificing taste. Close behind comes the desire for **nutritionally-fortified snacks**, offering a satisfying crunch with a guilt-free boost. The familiar still holds charm, with a significant number of experts favouring **traditional flavours and textures**.



Non-fried options  
88.5%



Nutritionally-fortified options  
78.8%



Traditional flavours and textures  
76.9%

We are a country that loves fried food but today, well-being is also non-negotiable. The world is moving towards health in a greater way. So we will still have the vada pav and samosa, to satiate cravings once in a while however, people are turning towards healthy options so baked samosas may be the go-to rather than fried. Healthier options like nut-enriched and non-fried/air-fried options will become more and more popular because they still deliver on the crisp factor without the high-fat content.



Chef Ajay Chopra



Richy Dave

Snacks are back to being an integral part of the meal plan. With WFH and hybrid work options, people are consuming more snacks than they were pre-pandemic, gravitating more towards healthier ingredients like makhana, millets etc and consciously choosing baked and puffed options over deep-fried options.

Cooking even a basic meal can take at least 20-25 minutes compared to opening a packet of kebabs or cutlets and frying them up which is quicker and tastier. Snacks are also perceived as relatively guilt-free compared to meals because they offer a smaller intake of food - in terms of portion size, rather than caloric value. And the perceived control that ready-to-eat snacks allow, of adding a salad or vegetable side, or an egg for protein, to improve a meal nutritionally with high satisfaction is also a draw. That said compulsive and excessive snacking can lead to poor nutrition and lifestyle diseases so it needs to be in moderation. Eat smart!



Rocky Singh



Rummy Nagpal

Parents will attempt to impose healthy snacks, but will also have to compromise to please their children. Traditional snacks with strong nostalgia value, but made with healthy nutrients and healthy cooking methods (low-fat, baked etc) will continue to grow as a category.



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# Panel of Experts

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Freelance Food Writer

## **Abhay Kewadkar**

MD @ Fox In The field  
Microbrewery, Alcobeve  
Consultant

## **Abhay Parnerkar**

CEO @ Godrej Tyson Foods  
Limited

## **Abhilasha Jain**

Owner @Marwadi Khana

## **Abhishek Goel**

Director @LP Hotels

## **Abhishek ‘Chinsi’ Chinchalkar**

Co-founder & Head Brewer @  
Bombay Duck Brewing

## **Adele de Fontbrune**

Partner @ CIRQA Bombay

## **Aditi Dugar**

Owner @ Masque

## **Aditya Raghavan**

Owner @ Fleur Jaune Cheese

## **Chef Ajay Chopra**

Celebrity Chef, Menu &  
Restaurant Consultant @ Zion  
Hospitality

## **Chef Ajay Siotra**

Head Chef @ Cocks and Bull

## **Ajit Balgi**

Founder @ The Happy High  
Wine & Spirit Consultants,  
Cognac & Wine Educator

## **Akash Hirebet**

Beer Consultant

## **Alka Jena**

Food Blogger, Photographer

## **Amar Gutta**

Food Researcher

## **Chef Amit Pamnani**

Chef & Owner @Desserts by  
Pihu

## **Chef Amninder Sandhu**

Chef & Owner @ Palaash

## **Amrita Gangatirkar**

Founder, Researcher & City  
Chronicler @Nashik Heritage  
Trails

## **Chef Anees Khan**

Chef & Founder @ Star Anise  
Patisserie, Chef & Gourmelange  
@ Hospitality LLP

## **Aneesh Bhasin**

Co-founder @ Svami

## **Anindya Sundar Basu**

Food Writer, Photographer, Co-  
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## **Anirudh Kheny**

Managing Partner @ Keen  
Mustard Ventures

## **Anisha Rachel Oommen**

Co-founder & Editor, Goya  
Journal

## **Anita De Kanaga**

Owner, Chez Pushpa

## **Ankit Gupta**

Founder @ Burma Burma

## **Antoine Lewis**

Food Writer

## **Anubhav Sapra**

Founder @ Delhi Food Walks

## **Chef Anuradha Joshi Medhora**

Chef & Founder @ Charoli Foods

## **Anurag Mallick**

Travel & Food Writer, Culinary  
Consultant

## **Anushruti R. K**

Food Writer, Health & Well-  
being Consultant, Nutrition  
Expert, Creator @ Divine Taste

## **Arshiya Bose**

Founder @ Black Baza Coffee  
Co.

## **Aseem Hattangadi**

Founder @ The Travel Therapist

## **Chef Ashish Bhasin**

Chef, Founder & Director @ CB  
Hospitality

## **Aslam Gafoor**

Hospitality Professional,  
Columnist

## **Atul Sikand**

Administrator & Owner @  
Sikandalous Cuisine

## **Chef Auroni Mookerjee**

Executive Chef & General  
Manager @ Sienna Store & Cafe

## **Chef Dr. Avin Thaliath**

Co-founder & Executive Pastry  
Chef @ Lavonne Academy

## **Azmat Ali Mir**

Founder & Owner @ Sarposh

## **Bindu Gopal Rao**

Journalist

## **Chaitanya Muppala**

Founder @ Manam Chocolate,  
CEO @ Distinct Origins

## **Charmaine O'Brien**

Writer, Culinary Historian,  
Educator and Author

## **David Belo**

Creative & Managing Director @  
Naviluna

## **Debashish Kar**

Co-founder @ Lucknow with  
Anubhuti

## **Debjani Chatterjee**

Food Blogger @ Debjanir  
Rannaghar

## **Debolina Ray**

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## **Deepa Chauhan**

Owner @ Mortars and Pestles

## **Deepa Ravi**

Content Creator

## **Deepika Sethi**

Founder @ OMO, @ AMPM, @  
Wild & Raw

## **Chef Diipti Jadhav**

Senior Sous Chef @ ITC Maratha  
Mumbai, Chef-in-charge @  
Avartana

## **Dina Weber**

Founder @ Sapa Bakery

## **Divya Karnad**

Co-founder @ In Season Fish

## **Dolon Dutta Chowdhury**

Co-founder @ Kolkata Classics

## **Elton Fernandes**

Founder @ Serula Foods LLP

## **Evonne Eadie**

Spirit Educator, Luxury  
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## **Garima Tiwari**

Content Creator, Blogger

## **Gauri Devidayal**

Co-Owner @ The Table, @ Iktara  
& @ Mag St.

## **Chef Girish Nayak**

Chief Mithaiwala @ Bombay  
Sweet Shop

## **Chef Guntas Sethi**

Patisserie Chef, Recipe  
Developer, Food Content  
Creator

## **Hans Sadhu**

Owner @ Kanz & Mahul

## **Chef Harish Rao**

Food Consultant

## **Chef Harpal Sokhi**

Celebrity Chef

## **Harshvardhan Tanwar**

Co-founder @ No Footprints

## **Insia Lacewalla**

Travel Content Writer

## **Jay (Janmejaya Pradhan)**

Owner @ Aquila Family Mart

## **Jayanti Rajagopalan**

Founder @ Khanasutra

## **Jayatri Biswas**

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Penguin

## **Kalyan Karmakar**

Food Writer, Brand Consultant

## **Kanishka Gupta**

Founder @ Writer's Side

## **Chef Karan Upmanyu**

Independent Chef

## **Karthikeyan Palaniswamy**

Co-founder @ Regal Plantations

## **Chef Kartikeya Sinha**

Chef & Founder @Kartik's  
Kitchen

## **Kasturi Banerjee**

Founder & CEO @Stilldistilling  
Spirits

## **Kaveri Ponnappa**

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Independent Writer (Food and  
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## **Kaviya Cherian**

Owner @Green Heirloom

## **Ketan SS Gohel**

Co-founder & Owner @Brewbot  
Craft Brewery

## **Krish Ashok**

Author - Masala Lab

## **Chef Kunal Arolkar**

Pastry Chef, Head Trainer, Cake  
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## **Kunzes Angmo**

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Earth Agro Foods & @Artisanal  
Alchemy

## **L Nitin Chordia**

Certified Chocolate Taster,  
Bean to Bar Chocolate & Cacao  
Consultant

## **Chef Lakhan Jethani**

Chef & Owner @ Mizu Izakaya

## **Larissa Valladares**

Homechef, Food Curator @  
Incendiary Kitchen

## **Lipaa Shah**

Homechef @Food Fiesta

## **Lubna Rafiqi**

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@ Sagg Eco Village

## **Madhushree Basu Roy**

Co-founder @ Pikturenama  
Studios

## **Chef Manish Khanna**

Chef, Founder & Partner @  
Brownie Point, @ Noir

## **Mansi Jasani**

Cheesemonger & Founder @  
The Cheese Collective

## **Mansi Reddy**

Head of Brand and Marketing @  
Mason & Co.

## **Chef Manu Chandra**

Founder & Partner @ Manu  
Chandra Enterprises (Single  
Thread Bespoke Catering &  
Lupa)

## **Matuli Madhusmita Swain**

Author, Artist, Consultant, and  
Hospitality Publicist

## **Chef Michael Swamy**

Chef, Food stylist, Food writer  
and Travel Photographer

## **Monika Manchanda**

Co-founder & Chief Culinary  
Officer @ LiveAltLife

## **Mukund Naidu**

Artisanal Cheesemaker

## **Nalini Sadhu**

Owner @ Matamaal



**Namrata Sundaresan**  
Cheesemaker, Founder & Partner @ Kirke Cheese (Kase)

**Navika Kapoor**  
Chef-Owner @ Zuru Zuru

**Nehal Karkera**  
Chef Consultant, Food Content Creator

**Nikhil Merchant**  
Food & Beverages Writer

**Nina Doshi**  
Co-founder @Nina & Dhvani

Chef **Niyati R Rao**  
Chef & Founder @ Ekaa

**Odette Mascarenhas**  
Food Critic @ Times of India, Author, Food Curator

**Oneal Sabu (FC BOY)**  
Food Anthropologist, Chef, Food Writer

**Pallab De**  
Food Blogger @ Hydfoodguy

**Pankhuri Agrawal**  
Founder @ Yayavr Food Book Club

Dr. Chef **Parvinder Singh Bali**  
Corporate Chef, L&D @ Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development

**Patricia Cosma**  
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**Pawan Hora**  
Public Relations Consultant

Chef **Payal Rajankar**  
Chef & Founder @ The Gourmet Gig, @ Dear Food

**Pinky Chandan Dixit**  
Owner @ Soam

Chef **Pooja Dhingra**  
Celebrity Chef & Founder @ Le15 Patisserie

**Pooja Khanna**  
Executive Chef @Crompton Greaves; Food Influencer, Content Creator

**Pooja Pangtey**  
Co-founder @ Bombay Duck Brewing

Dr. **Poorvi Bhat**  
Naturopathic Doctor and Nutritionist

Dr. **Prabhakar Rao**  
Founder @Hariyalee Seeds

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Perfumer & Chef @24 MG Road, Founder @Perfume Tourism

**Prashant Issar**  
CEO @ Bellona Hospitality Services

**Prerna Kumar**  
Founder @ ChaiVeda

**Priya Ganapathy**  
Travel & Food Writer, Culinary Consultant

**Priya Kapoor**  
Director @ Roli Books

Dr. **Pushpesh Pant**  
Author, Food Historian

**Puthalapattu Rajeshwari**  
Menu curator

Chef **Rachit Kirteeman**  
Chef Consultant, Food Experience Curator and Researcher

Chef **Rahul Wali**  
Chef & Partner @ R.W. Hospitality Services

**Rajnush Agarwal**  
Owner @ MharoKhet

**Rakesh Raghunathan**  
Celebrity Chef, Food Historian

Chef **Rakhee Vaswani**  
Celebrity Chef, Author, Entrepreneur, Founder @ Palate Culinary Academy

**Rakshay Dhariwal**  
Founder & MD @ Pass Code Hospitality, @ Maya Pistola Agavepura, Co-founder @ India Cocktail Week

Chef **Ranveer Brar**  
Celebrity Chef, TV Show Host

**Ratika Bhargava**  
Food Consultant & Recipe Chronicler @CauldronSisterss

**Ravi Miglani**  
Professor; Home Cook; Food Blogger @This Professor Cooks

Chef **Regi Mathew**  
Co-owner & Chef @Kappa Chakka Kandhari

**Richa Khetan**  
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# Curator & Editor-in-Chief



**Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal**  
Managing Director, A Perfect Bite Consulting

*In addition to curating, designing, managing and editing the report, Rushina contributed two essays - Chasing Flavour in the Dining Out section and The Evolution of the Indian Food Book in the Food Media and Books section of the report.*

# Associate Editor



**Shivani Unakar**  
Food Researcher and Writer

*Shivani assisted Rushina in putting together the 7th edition of the report. She also contributed the essay titled Producer To Plate: Connecting The Dots From Farm-to-Fork in the section on Health, hygiene and Lifestyle.*

# Associate Editor (Survey)



**Matuli Madhusmita Swain**  
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*Matuli provided content and logistics support for the survey.*

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Mahek Arora



Nidhi Gotgi



Neha P Jain



Sachin Khatwani



Soumya Arjun



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*Akash contributed the essay titled Seeds of Change: The Use of Indigenous Grains in Indian Craft Beer in the Beverages section.*

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*Anindya and Madhushree were the force behind the Regional Overview section.*

**Anubhuti Krishna**  
Independent Food Writer, Consultant and Chronicler



*Anubhuti contributed the essay titled Off the Eaten Path in the Culinary Travel section.*

**Nikhil Merchant**  
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*Nikhil contributed the essay on Global Perspectives.*

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*Roshini contributed the essay on Convenience and the Changing Plate for the Dining In section.*

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Independent Journalist and Food Writer



*Ruth contributed an essay on The Growth And Proliferation Of Cacao In India for the section about Sweets and Desserts.*

**Sadaf Hussain**  
Author and Chef



*Sadaf contributed the essay Evolving Cultures: New Directions for India's Rich Dairy Legacy for the section on Emerging Conversations.*



# Food Calendar 2024-25

2024					
April	May	June	July	August	September
 1 Sourdough Bread Day in the USA	 2 International Harry Potter Day	 1 World Milk Day by FAO, the UN World Parents Day	 6 Jagannath Rath Yatra	 2 International Beer Day	 2 World Coconut Day
 7 World Health Day	 11 Eat What You Want Day	 4 Cheese Day in the USA	 7 World Chocolate Day	 4 International Friendship Day	 5 Onam/Thiruvonam
 9 Chaitra Navratri, Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, Cheti Chand, Ramzan ends	 13 International Hummus Day in Egypt	 7 World Poha Day (#VishwPoha Divas) in India	 12 World Kebab Day	 7 Hariyali Teej	 5 World Samosa Day in India
 10 Eid-ul-fitr	 13 Papad Badi Day in India (#PapadBadi Day)	 8 World Gin Day	 13 World French Fries Day	 9 Nag Panchami	 6 Hartalika Teej
 12 Grilled Cheese Day in the USA	 17 Mother's Day	 12 International Felafel Day	 21 Shravan/Sawan Mahina Begins in India	 18 Shravan/Sawan Mahina ends	 24 Chutney Day in India (#ChutneyDay)
 13 Baisaki	 17 Pizza Party Day in the USA	 16 International Fathers Day	 19 Raksha Bandhan	 19 Raksha Bandhan	 27 World Tourism Day
 16 Day of the Mushroom	 20 Masala Day in India (#MasalaDay)	 17 Bakri Eid	 30 Chai Pakoda Day in India (#ChaiPakoda Day)	 26 International Ramen Day	 28 Poke Day in the USA
 18 World Heritage Day	 21 International Tea Day	 18 International Sushi Day	 31 Avocado Day in the USA	 27 Janmashtami	 29 World Heart Day
 22 Achaar Day in India (#AchaarDay)	 25 Wine Day in the USA	 24 Pulao Biryani Day in India (#PulaoBiryani Day)			
 23 World Book Day	 28 Hamburger Day in the USA	 27 International Pineapple Day			
 24 Stop Food Waste Day					
 25 Anzac Day in Australia and New Zealand					


























































Indian Festivals



International Food Days



Indian Food Days

2024			2025		
October	November	December	January	February	March
 1 International Coffee Day, World Vegetarian Day	 1 World Vegan Day	 4 International Cookie Day	 1 New Year Global Family Day	 2 Basant Panchmi, Saraswati Puja	 3 World Dosa Day
 2 Gandhi Jayanti	 2 Govardhan Puja	 5 World Soil Day	 13 Lohri	 7 World nutella day	 4 Pancake Day /Shrove Tuesday
 4 Sharad Navratri Begins	 3 Bhai Dooj	 9 Indian Breads Day in India #IndianBreads Day	 14 Pongal, Uttarayan, Makar Sankranti Undhiyu Day	 16 Valentines Day	 8 International Women's Day
 9 Bengali Durgotsav Begins	 5 Chhath Puja begins	 11 International Mountain Day	 16 International Hot and Spicy food Day	 18 World Bartender Day	 14 Holi
 10 Porridge Day	 7 International Stout Day	 25 Christmas Day	 17 World Pizza Day	 26 Mahashivratri	 20 Navroz Pakhala Dibasa in Odisha
 11 International Day of the Girl Child	 8 Chhath Puja ends	 31 Last Day of 2024	 25 Dal Divas in India (#DalDivas)	 27 Ramzan Begins (T)	 27 International Cheese Day (Europe)
 15 Laddu Day in India	 14 Children's Day World Diabetes Day		 26 Republic Day		 International Whiskey Day
 16 World Food Day World Bread Day by FAO of UN	 16 National Chicken Day in india by KPFBA		 29 Chinese New Year		 30 Ramzan Ends
 19 Karwa Chauth	 19 International Mens Day		 30 Chinese New Year		 30 World Idli Day
 20 International Chefs Day	 26 National Milk Day in India				 31 Desi Vegetables Day (#SubziTarkari Din) in India
 21 International Day of the Nacho					
 25 World Pasta Day					
 29 Dhanteras					
 31 Diwali					





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**It was easy, right?  
Welcome to the buzz!**

## Notes

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## Notes

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## Notes

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**Survey design**

Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal

**Research and data analysis**

A Perfect Bite Consulting

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