

# foodism

APRIL 2021 | ISSUE 11

## The Colours of Summer

## Magnificent Mangoes

to try this  
season

Plant-based

# DIET

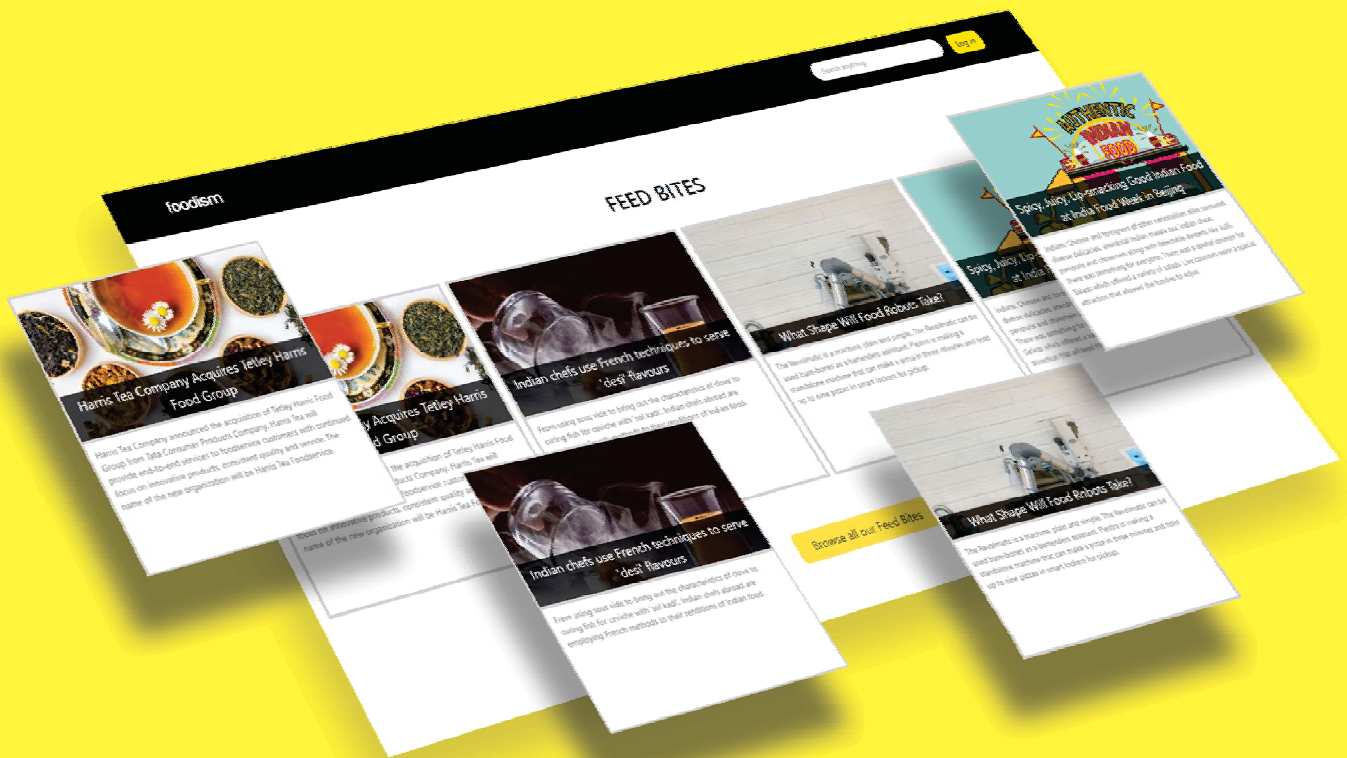
is the future

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# foodism

“if it’s food, it’s foodism”

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## On the Cover

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# FROM THE FOUNDER'S Desk

Dear Food-fanatics,

Welcome to our 'Summer' issue.

The month of April brings with it the delightful fragrance of mangoes and the vibrant colours of summer coolers.

Our life has come a full circle since the emergence of the pandemic and we are still bearing the repercussions of the said phenomenon. Surviving these tough times by supporting each other is the only way to move forward. Don't forget to follow all the rules and regulations, necessary to keep the virus at bay.

While all this is going on, Foodism's focus has always been to come up with new verticals that will enhance your user experience leaps and bounds. The new edition to our website is a brand new **multiple-events calendar**. The calendar will basically facilitate you to be a part of various events simultaneously. All these events will help you showcase your cooking, photography and story-telling skills to a wider range of audience and multiple chances to win big. Apart from that, there are some really fun changes to our ever-so interesting **feedbites** segment that you should definitely check out.

We've collaborated with a lot of interesting brands in March and we've decided to take it up a notch for the month of April. Our brand new collaboration with **Nestlé - Maggi** will surely make a lot of heads turn. We are also conducting two very interesting contests of our own and our goal is to connect with as many food enthusiasts around the country as possible.

We also conducted a fun game of **Fousie** that was all about food, vibrant colours and festivities. Stay tuned for more such games as we love to engage with our audiences and spread happy smiles all around.

I would like to end it on a solemn note and request you all to take precautions and stay safe. May we all sail through these worrying times together, be surrounded by warm people and gorge on food that is comforting and delicious.



Vyom Shah  
FOUNDER, FOODISM








# *The Colours of* SUMMER

*“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”*

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*



It was the summer of 1996. The sun was about to set, the roads were bustling with people heading towards home from a busy day at work. The hot winds of April heat could still be felt on the skin and you could see people furiously wiping off streams of sweat trickling down their faces and necks. The summers had finally arrived. But what was so different about the summer of 1996? It was the first time I'd had a 'gola'. The mind of a 5-year-old kid had just been blown by a treat that was icy-cold, sweet and gob-smackingly delicious.

Cool winters represent the hues of steely blue silence and tranquil greys. But summers stand for everything vibrant and brightly lit. The sunny mornings, the scorching afternoons and the peaceful evenings- invigorating warmth scattered all around.

Summers are also about gleaming, vibrant treats that entice the senses and give a pleasant brain freeze. These cool nibbles have made our childhood memorable and added colour to our tongues and life.

Today we will go down memory lane and reminisce all those technicolour treats that made our adolescent years unforgettable!

## Golas

As a kid, the only thing more colourful than a rainbow were the beautiful bright colours of **'baraf ke gole'**. 'Kalakhatta', Orange, Rose, 'Kacchi Keri', 'Faalsa', Chocolate and many more such delightful colours would be on display in those fluorescent glass bottles. Choosing the desired flavour was a mighty task in itself. The first taste of the icy cool gola with a generous sprinkle of chaat masala on the lips and we would be transported to summer wonderland!



## Popsicles/Ice Candies

Does anyone remember Pepsi-Cola? The icy cool treat that we bought while coming back from school? The eye-catching tubes of ice left a lasting impression on our minds during our pre-teens. In those days, it came for a mere rupee and gave us so much joy. The home-made versions of these ice candies were even better. Made from natural fruit juices like orange, watermelon and berries with tangy fruit bits like mango, kiwi or candied lemon; these iced candies made our vacations extra 'chatpata'.



## Ice Creams

Picture this. You are at Nani's home, coming back from an exhilarating session of cricket with friends and the need to have something cool and sweet takes over your mind. The fridge is filled with evergreen treats like mango dolly, orange candy, chocolate cone, choco-chip ice cream and chocobar. The only way you can have them is by finishing your meal quickly. Our adorable nascent years were a gateway to ice cream heaven. While we are at it, how can we forget the home-made ice creams made with condensed milk and cream. They were a treat like none other. Creamy, pulpy mango ice cream, crumbly cookie and cream, tangy strawberry ice cream or nutty roasted almonds - the love for summers was epitomised with these saccharine delights.





## Sorbets and Fruit Slushies

Fruit sorbets are a really cool way of eating fruits in summers. They are hygienic, easy to make and perfect for hot summer afternoons. Just freeze some blueberries, mulberries, sweet lime, grapefruit, oranges, pineapples and other such juicy fruits and grind them in a blender with a dash of honey and lemon juice. This icy dessert is perfect for summer parties, get-togethers and slumber parties.



## Premixes

The iconic copy - 'I love you, Rasna' has been etched in our minds forever. Rasna was probably the first premix formula that became the face of summers instantly and catapulted the country with its tangy flavours and easy-to-use techniques. If we have to talk about famous summer drinks, the list would be incomplete without the top contender - Frooti. The handy, green-yellow box changed the way people looked at party drinks. The drink was durable, mobile and oh so delicious. No other drink can come close to how Frooti made us feel - the perfect cure for hot summers.



## Sharbat

'Sharbats' were the perfect welcome drinks for all Indian households, still are and will always be for years to come. The syrupy concentrates come in colourful long bottles and an array of flavours like khas, mango, orange, strawberry, blackcurrant, jaljeera etc. The father of all the sharbat syrups will always be - the rose flavoured 'Roohafza'. All of us have either liked it a lot or disliked it with all our might but there's no denying the fact that we've all had it at least once in our lifetime. Be it with cold milk, water or with some delectable 'falooda' ice cream, this syrup has won hearts across the world with its rosy taste.

These effervescent delights have added a lot of happiness to our childhood memories and summers would be incomplete without these dazzling concoctions. Relive those gleeful times and have one of these enchanting treats this summer!





# As Real As It Can Get

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WORLD'S FIRST  
EPICUREAN WATER

Whiskey Water

The  
MACALLAN

World's First Epicurean Water

**foodism**  
RECOMMENDS

# 5 Must-Have **BAKING** **TOOLS** for Beginners



## **Sifter**

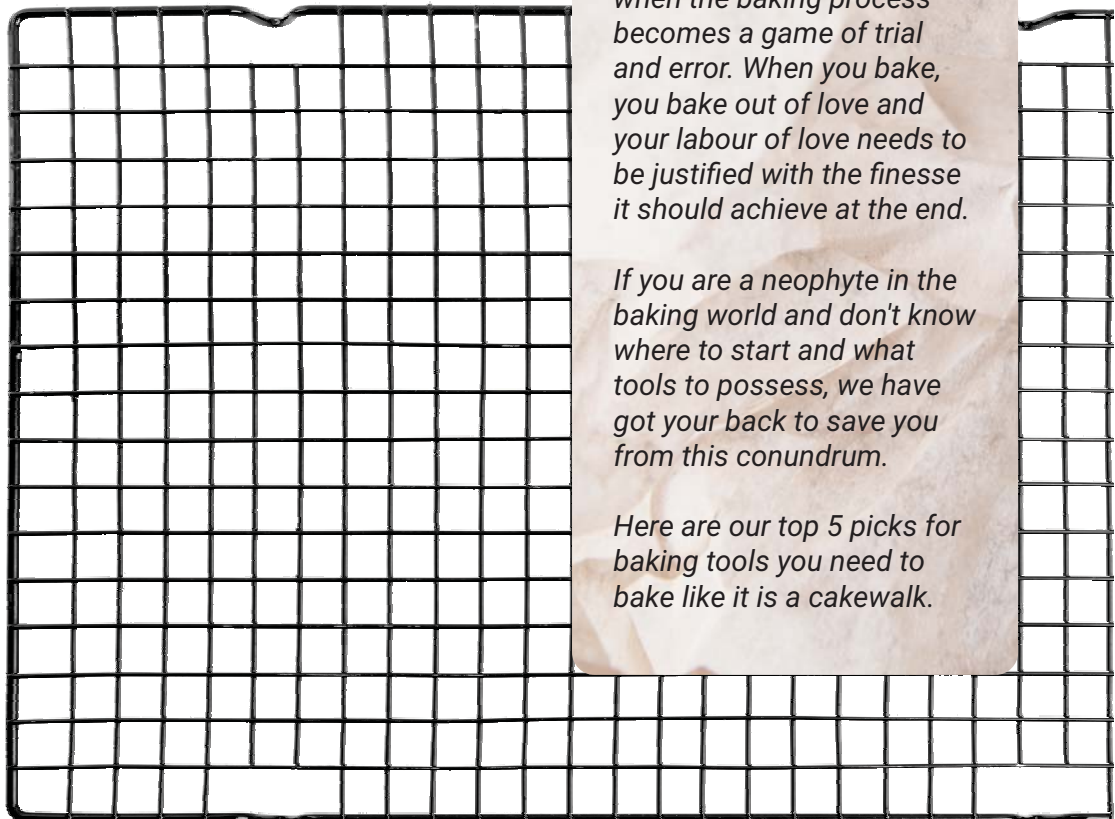
Some recipes require sifting the dry ingredients like flour, sugar, cocoa powder. This process aerates the ingredients and gets rid of any lumps so that the dish turns out to be smooth and lump-free. Sifting flour helps to evade impurities and makes the flour lighter to make light batters.

You can also use a fine-mesh sieve due to its versatility. It can be used to sift dry ingredients or add a dusting of powdered sugar on desserts like baked brownies or cookies.

## **Cooling Racks**

All of your baked goods need to be cooled down after getting them out of the oven. By doing so, your baked items will not become soggy. Baked goods like cakes, muffins, cupcakes should never be left in the pan set to cool as the bottom part doesn't get enough air and cools incredibly slowly.

Cooling racks are essential as it helps to cool the items evenly. Just like baked goods cook on racks, they need to be cooled on racks as well.



*Cooking and baking are both physical and mental therapy- Mary Berry.*

*Cooking can be a disaster if you are not equipped with essential instruments. If you are aware of the know-how of working in the kitchen and use the right tools for cooking, then you have unlocked the first phase of cooking.*

*It becomes exhausting when the baking process becomes a game of trial and error. When you bake, you bake out of love and your labour of love needs to be justified with the finesse it should achieve at the end.*

*If you are a neophyte in the baking world and don't know where to start and what tools to possess, we have got your back to save you from this conundrum.*

*Here are our top 5 picks for baking tools you need to bake like it is a cakewalk.*



## Oven Thermometer

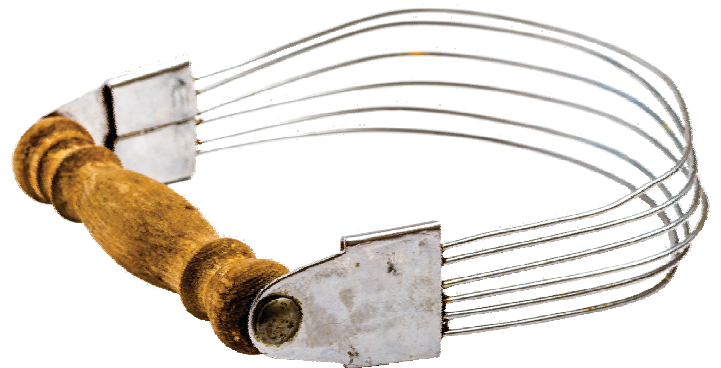
While baking in an oven, the degrees of the oven may vary from what is reflected on the dial. For example, if you set your oven to 180°C, it might not actually be 180°C inside. It could differ by 10 degrees or so.

The inexact temperature may either overbake or under bake the dishes and you don't want the ingredients, time and effort to go wasted. To save you all of these issues, you need to invest in an oven thermometer, and all you need to do is just place it in the oven to know the exact temperature.



## Baking Pans

You can get a variety of baking pans in various shapes, sizes and material. There are aluminium, silicon, glass and non-stick cookware for the same. It is advisable to use heavy-duty pans. A square, a rectangular, and a circular pan are deemed enough for beginners, and you can keep on stocking the pans as per your requirements.



## Pastry Blender

It comes in handy to break the cold butter into tiny pieces when you want to make biscuits, pie crusts, scones, and other items. A metal pastry cutter will keep the butter cold instead of using other tools or hands that might warm it. And as a beginner who is just preparing to make a pie crust, a pastry blender is a must-have inexpensive investment.

# Disrupting the Status Quo with Innovation

*Sandipan Mitra and Uttam Kumar always wanted to cause positive disruption in the food industry by breaking the status quo and innovating in such a way that they carve a niche for themselves. Their brainchild - HungerBox, is a living, breathing example of the same.*

Starting your own venture takes a lot of courage and gumption. You come across several roadblocks, some easy to tackle and some, with a lot of uphill battles. But the only way to move forward is to not look back. Sandipan Mitra's prolific career is an example of how hard work and patience help in creating milestones and building pioneering business models.

He is the Co-Founder of HungerBox, which launched India's first Digital Cafeteria in the month of September 2017 at Firstsource. Today he will talk to us about his flagship business and how it all happened.

## The genesis of HungerBox

Sandip and his partner, Uttam Kumar have been in the food-tech space for a number of years now. He explains, "Uttam and I were the ones who championed the concept of online food ordering in India 12 years ago with a business that was later acquired by Just Eat India. (Just Eat India was later acquired by Foodpanda)." The idea of building a B2B Food Tech firm originated when they noticed an untapped profitable Food Tech opportunity. There was tremendous potential for a tech-led, disruptive solution that comprehensively addressed the B2B food tech

space and that is what they decided to focus on. HungerBox is exactly that and much, much more.

Sandip believes that our work experience is the best teacher out there and helps us in dealing with various challenges. When quizzed about his professional training, he shares, "To be honest, the only professional training I have undertaken is the one that I experienced on the job. While the MBA degree that I earned from XIME did help in understanding the business concepts and other fundamentals, I was never prepared for the challenges that came with starting something new."

## Product Range

What HungerBox offers is quite unique in its approach. Instead of focusing on a particular product, they have a well-organised system in place which runs on innovation and science. He elaborates, "The core of our offering is Technology which plays a central role in providing value to all the stakeholders. HungerBox's Technology platform connects the Food Vendors, end-users and the facility/administration teams seamlessly. HungerBox leverages the latest technology advancements like lot to



Sandipan Mitra, Bangalore

connect the vendor side hardware (designed by HungerBox) and the users, to communicate in real-time."

They have also adapted to the current situation and offer solutions that take the pandemic into consideration. He shares, "We have also developed a COVID-safe suite which includes social distance adherence tracking, cafeteria congestion monitoring system, a 100% contactless food vending machine, workstation booking and more."

When quizzed about his favourite product range, he quips, "It's hard to pick a favourite as each of the products solve specific problems faced by the stakeholders in the ecosystem. If I have to pick one, I would say the connected cafe platform that seamlessly integrates all the stakeholders and enables a delightful experience would be my favourite."

### The Industry Trends

The entire food industry went through a metamorphosis but there were certain sectors that didn't show a lot of progress and Sandipan wanted to change this scenario. He explains, "While most of the sectors underwent rapid changes, the cafeteria and food courts somehow were frozen in time. No significant innovation happened to improve operations and experience. This is where we saw an opportunity and the clients we have managed to serve so far is a testimony of the market need and how HungerBox has managed to address these needs effectively. In recent years, we have seen clients more interested in partnering with us to improve their F&B operations and this has also resulted in many new companies trying to replicate what we do."

When asked what makes HungerBox unique, he remarks, "Our Technology platform is our USP. Our Technology platform reflects our decade long experience in the Food Tech space to provide value across the ecosystem. Not only do we provide a seamless ordering experience to the employees and enable a safe cafeteria experience for them, but we also help our vendor partners to reduce their cash pilferage from the 15-22% mark to 0%."

He further adds, "We empower the cafeteria owners/managers with real-time access to data helping them make data-led decisions. No other player in the market has been able to provide such benefits across the ecosystem with such efficiency and consistency."

### The Challenges

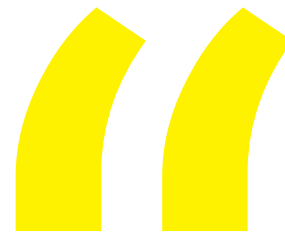
He came across a lot of roadblocks but with constant hard work and determination, he faced them all with aplomb. He shares, "The challenges faced initially were convincing the clients of the need for a solution that we offer and to trust a new company with a new concept to manage one of their most important functions, the F&B. However, with the significant impact we showcased and the clients we on-boarded in a short span of time

since inception, helped us surpass these challenges."

### Future Plans

Sandipan and his partner, Uttam Kumar plan to take their venture forward and leave a substantial mark in the food industry with HungerBox. "We plan to expand to go global very soon. We are proud of what we have built and are confident that our product is a great fit for similar sectors in other geographies," he concludes.

### Words of Wisdom for Aspiring Entrepreneurs



**Validate assumptions by studying the market well. Build a team that shares your vision."**

# paper boat

## kokum



The streets are embroidered with the rose-tinted bougainvillea, draping the row houses like a beautiful satin veil. You've just come from a game of hide and seek and hop-scotch and your mom calls you and your friends for a quick drink to cool you down. All of you sit in the garden under the breezy shade of the neem tree when your mom brings some chilled glasses filled with a ruby red drink.

Lo and Behold, it is '**Kokum sherbet**' time! You have the first sip of this scarlet beverage and the 'masaledaar' tang quenches your thirst and fills you up with energy. You are ready for the scorching summer afternoon again and run towards the street with your bat, ball and stumps.

Paper Boat's drinks are the embodiment of summer holidays spent well while climbing trees and playing all kinds of games with friends. The beverage brand has positioned itself in an endearing way by choosing nostalgia as its de facto brand imagery. Their ads and social media are filled with evocative and sentimental campaigns and the kind of beverages they offer, go hand-in-hand with childhood memories and the good ol' innocent times. Their goal is to make different summer

indigenous drinks that are being consumed in different states, famous across the country. They have variants like Panakam, Neer More, Jaljeera, Aamras, Aam Panna etc that accurately represent vibrant and sunny summers!

### PRODUCT

This delicious tart drink has kokum juice as the main ingredient along with some water, spices and condiments. It has a very unique pungent flavour and has been sourced from the interiors of Maharashtra where it grows in abundance. It works well if you need a light and breezy drink to keep yourself hydrated. It keeps you cool in summers, aids digestion, acts like a delectable welcome drink and is loaded with potent nutrients that are essential for your body.

### PROS

The drink is famous for its zingy flavour and comes in cool packaging that is easy to carry and spill-proof.

### CONS

The only con is that it gets over too quickly and we can't get enough of it. So keep a pack of 6 handy.





Magnificent  
**MANGOES**  
to Try This Season







**T**he aroma of mangoes tantalise the olfactory senses, its smooth texture allures the vision and its sweet and tart flavour entice the palate. A fruit so protean that it scintillates all our senses, making it irresistible.

Come summers and everybody is eagerly waiting for mangoes. We have to wait one whole year to savour this delicacy of fruit. Summers and mango are a pair that is loved by all. No haters, just pure love. The king of fruits has its lovers all over the world due to its mellow sweetness and subtle tartness which isn't overwhelming at all. One whiff of mango transcends us to our childhood memories and we are immediately hit with nostalgia.

Children eagerly wait for their summer vacation to rejoice in the richness and

deliciousness of this fruit. They devour mangoes in their ganjis and shorts, stained with the mango juice dripping from the sweet fruit.

The mango lovers might have faced some villains in their lives who would have created obstacles from making them incapacitated to pursue the mangoes. But like every lover defeats the villain, the crazy mango lovers go to great lengths to find the mangoes from the most inaccessible places like the attic (maliya), which is cluttered with the hoarding of miscellaneous things.

When you can eat the hidden mangoes, you have tasted success which is sweet and worth the exertion. The joy of eating mangoes gets doubled when you steal them or are successful in finding the hidden fruit.

## Cultivation of mangoes

India has a huge collection of mango cultivars and ranks first among the mango producing countries. It contributes to cultivating 50% of the world's total mango production. Mango is cultivated in states like-

Andhra Pradesh  
Gujarat  
Maharashtra  
West Bengal  
Karnataka  
Bihar  
Uttar Pradesh  
Uttarakhand  
Punjab  
Haryana

Mango grows	An annual production	Varieties of mango	Grown commercially in different states
1.2 million hectares	10.99 million tonnes	1500 approximately	30 varieties

### The Ever-versatile Fruit

Mango madness is real in India as this fruit is eaten in varied ways. Apart from eating its slices, a myriad of dishes can be prepared out of mangoes.

First and foremost, **'aamras'** in Gujarati and Maharashtrian households are a summer indulgence and the season is incomplete without it. Preparing the golden juice and eating it with puri in lunch is pure bliss.

There are so many ways mangoes get devoured all over the country. It is consumed in the form of 'aam panna' - a refreshing drink that makes the summer tolerable with its cool, sweet, tangy and mildly spicy taste. Other delectable items like 'aam papad', 'keri no chhondo', 'lassi', ice cream, smoothies and more have immense cultural significance.

Mangoes are savoured in their ripe and raw form with equal zest, where slices of green mangoes are coated with the masala. India's love for pickle is immense and every region has its own version of mango pickle, and the world can't get enough of this tangy meal accompaniment.

With a deluge of mango varieties available in the market, here's our list of ten magnificent mango varieties that you should try this summer season.



### 1. Alphonso

Grown in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka, Alphonso is called the king of mangoes. The saffron coloured aromatic mango with a tender texture and non-fibrous pulp makes for the most expensive variety of mangoes. It is available from May to June.

The culinary uses of Alphonso are in making sorbet, lassi, soufflé and ice cream.



### 2. Kesar

Kesar is grown in Gujarat, where the Nawabs of Junagadh cultivated it for the first time. It got its name Kesar due to its distinguished aroma, similar to saffron (Kesar), the spice.

Its popular use is in making aamras and kulfi.



### 3. Safeda/Banganapalli

This variety of mango grows in Andhra Pradesh

which has a bright yellow hue with a slightly sour taste. It has a meaty texture and fibreless with edible skin. It is available from April to June and is one of the earliest varieties of mango available in the market.

It is majorly used to make preservatives.



### 4. Langra

Langra is primarily grown in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It has a tinge of green colour even after ripening. The name of this variety of mango is langra because its cultivation was first done by a lame man in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. It is available from mid-July to August.

It is best to relish this variety by cutting slices and eating it raw.



### 5. Badami

Badami is grown in Karnataka and is known as the Alphonso of Karnataka. This fruit can be recognised by its distinct features like thin skin, pale yellow colour and softness of the flesh. You can find its best batches between April and July. Its pulp is often used in making juices.

### 6. Pairi

Pairi, grown in Maharashtra, can be easily identified with a distinct reddish tinge on its skin. It is not sugary sweet but has a sour taste hidden in the sweetness. It is available from May-June.



It is great to make aamras after Kesar.



### 7. Totapuri

Totapuri is cultivated in Karnataka. It gets its name Totapuri because of its shape, which resembles a parrot's beak. It's not as sweet as other varieties and has a mild taste.

It tastes great in salads and is used in making mass-produced mango products in India. It can be eaten raw by sprinkling little salt and chilli.



### 8. Raspuri

Known as sweet mango, this variety grows in Karnataka and is famous for its sweet and slightly tart taste. A ripe Raspuri has an amalgamation of colours like green, red, and yellow. It is usually available from the end of May until the beginning of June.

The pulp of Raspuri is used to make jams, yoghurt, smoothies and jellies.

### 9. Chaunsa

This variety is said to be originated in Multan,

Pakistan. Sher Shah Suri defeated Humayun at Chausa and to commemorate his victory; he named his favourite mango, Chaunsa. It is cultivated in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and has a golden-yellow colour, juicy pulp with an aromatic and sweet flavour. It is available between July and August.



This variety can be used to make shrikhand and several other desserts.



### 10. Dasherri

Malihabad, Uttar Pradesh, is the largest producer of Dasherri. It is a sweet and fragrant variety grown in North India and Uttar Pradesh. Dasherri, Uttar Pradesh still has the mother plant, which supposedly belonged to Late Mohammad Ansar Zaidi. This tree gives fruit every alternate year. These mangoes are long and oval-shaped with a light green or yellow colour.

Dasherri mangoes are table mangoes that can be eaten fresh, straight out of hand, or sliced into long strips. It can also be used to make a spongy mango loaf cake.

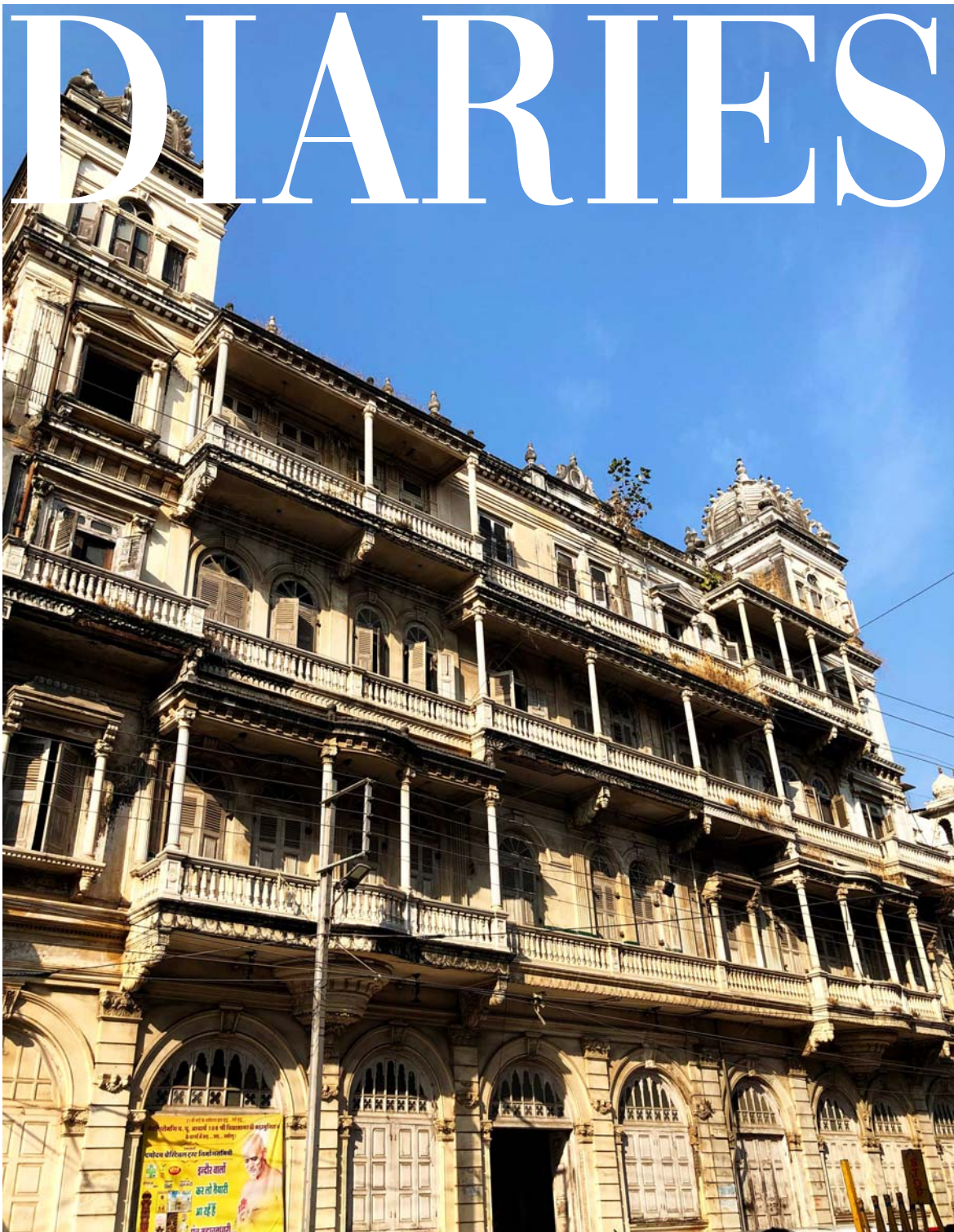
Other varieties of mango that you want to include in your list when trying different mango varieties can include Himsagar, Mulgoba and Imam Pasand.

We all can relate to Mirza Ghalib when he said:  
**"(I) Would eat them (mangoes) until my belly was bloated and I could hardly breathe."**

—Mirza Ghalib, Ghalib: **Life and Letters**

# INDORE

# DIARIES



Indore is famous as “The Street Food Capital of India.” Being a crazy foodie and as my name says, “Gourmet Musafir”, Indore was on my checklist for many years. Luckily I had two of my best friends in Indore. One was studying at IIM & one was working in the corporate world. One night, I was exploring some food videos on YouTube and I came across “Sarafa Bazaar”, also known as heaven for food lovers in India. I just couldn’t resist and the same night, I made a plan for Indore. It was spontaneous. The next night, I left for Indore by Bus.

I was pretty excited, like a little kid, to explore the streets of Indore. I reached Indore at 6 am. I got down at Navlakha Stop, a trendy place in Indore and my friend welcomed me with a big smile. It was his last year at IIM, and finally, I made it to Indore. So, we both were equally happy. Just beside the Navlakha bus stop, there was a Poha place. Growing in Nagpur, Tarri Poha (a popular delicacy of Nagpur) is in our blood. But when I tasted Indori Poha, it was very different. Little sweet with a special masala on top. Later, I came to know about that Masala.

I have a rule in my life. Whenever I visit various cities in India, I want to experience the local public transport to get the essence of the city. So we took an iBus, a Metro like Feeder Bus, Rapid Transit Service in Indore. We took the bus and left for IIM Indore. We got down at the last stop of iBus & then took an auto from there. The campus was humongous, just like my VNIT college campus. It was a beautiful lush green place on a hill with a mesmerising view of the city.



We took some rest at the campus and got ready for **56 Dukan**, located in New Palasia, Indore. It's like a Big Food Park and looks even more beautiful at night. My first stop was “Johny Hot Dog”, the most Iconic place in 56 Dukan. They have a record of selling 100,000 Hot Dogs in just 92 Days. They had vegetarian options, Egg Benjo & a mutton variant. I tried the vegetarian hot dog and trust me; it was spectacular. It was a veg patty between a soft bun with chutneys and some onions and boy, was it good. Our next stop was Sam Momos, popular for their momos and rolls. Their veg and paneer steamed momos are a must-try.



**Sumedh Kanade** is the founder & Chief Eating Officer at Gourmet Musafir @gourmetmusafir, a food blog.



We then headed towards a shop that was 37 years old - Madhura Sweets, to try their "Shikanji", Indore's popular sweet drink. Shikanji is an eclectic mixture of Rabri & Milk with loads of dry fruits. It is served chilled to beat the heat in Malwa Region. This was something very new for my palate and was really good. Our next stop was Vijay Chaat house, with a legacy of 50 years, popular for its Khopra Patties. Basically, it's made up of boiled potatoes stuffed with grated coconut mixture and then deep-fried. You can also try their Kachoris & Chaat. 56 Dukkan is a very food arena with so many food varieties. I couldn't explore all the shops but attempted to cover the famous places. Our last stop was Koffee King & I must say their Cold Coffee is worth trying whenever you're around.







Around 8:00 PM, we headed to "Sarafa Bazaar", the place which brought me to Indore. My other friend joined us directly at Sarafa. So Sarafa is basically a lane full of jewellery shops. After the jewellery shops close at 8:30 PM, the street food vendors start setting up their stalls in front of Jewellery Shops' closed shutters. We went a little early so that we could experience the entire transformation of Sarafa. So the first stop at Sarafa was 'Garadu Chaat'. Garadu is basically Desi yam. It is deep fried and tossed with Special Jeeravan Masala (the same spice mix sprinkled on the poha in the morning). I loved the texture & taste of the Garadu Chaat. Then we went to try "Flying Dahi Vada" at Joshi Dahi Vada House. It's super-viral and you can find its video on almost all the social media platforms on the Internet. Joshiji is a lovely person. He tosses Dahi Vada plate in the air and then catches it without spilling a single drop of dahi, it's definitely worth watching. He also puts five different spices in Dahi Wada with a single pinch. It was INSANE! It tastes so good and you will definitely end up having more than two plates minimum. Their Bhutte Ka Kees, another popular delicacy of Indore, is a must try. Our next stop was Coconut Crush, made with natural coconut water & malai. It's very refreshing. Other exciting food stalls I loved were 22 Flavour Katori Chaat, 10 Flavour Pani Puri, Cheese Sweet Corn, and Exotic Fruit Salad. I came across one stall that serves Jamun shot; it was unique and tasted damm good.







After relishing all the savoury dishes, it was time for some desserts. So the first thing I tried was Jaleba, a large version of your regular Jalebi. And when I say large, I mean humongous. Luckily we met some local people around and we finished it. Then we went to Yadav Sweets, a 53 years old Shop, to try "Malpua with Rabdi" the most popular dessert of Sarafa. It was the best Rabdi Malpua I had in my life. The marketplace gets even livelier after 11 PM. It is usually open till 1 AM. Our last stop at Sarafa was a paan shop where we tried Fire Paan & Smoke Paan. There are many more food stalls but we tried to cover some of the best delicacies there. The entire experience at Sarafa Bazaar was "Paisa Vasool". It was really worth visiting.



The next day, I had to leave. Indore is famous for its "Dal Bafla", a trendy local dish. We had 2 Options: Hotel Rajhans & Nakoda. As my friend had already visited Rajhans many times, we decided to explore Nakoda. We ordered Dal Bafla Thali. It is more like Dal Baati but the Texture of Bafla is grainier and more prominent in size, served with lots of Ghee. Then we headed to Ghamandi Lassi. Yes, you read it right! The name of the place was Ghamandi Lassi. We tried both their sweet and savoury Lassi. I loved the Dry Fruits Lassi the most. One big glass of Lassi & you're done for the day. The taste was so good that "Ghamand (pride) Toh Banta Hai." It was really worth it. I had to leave in the evening and had very less time left. We explored the local streets of Indore and went to Vijayanagar, a beautiful locality with big roads, malls and hotels in Indore.

In just one and half day, we tried to cover the crux of Street Food in Indore. It was a lifetime experience, and I really can't wait to visit it again.





Bijay Thapa, Delhi

# AMBROSIAL FLOWERS FROM HEAVEN

A cake decorator, baker and sugar flower artist, Bijay Thapa makes one of a kind cakes that enamours and captivates his customers. His sugar flowers look so real, you wouldn't believe they are made of saccharine edibles, such is his expertise in creating his masterpieces. You can look at his beautiful work [@sugardaddybakes](https://www.instagram.com/sugardaddybakes)

Bijay Thapa has been in the profession of baking for 9 years. He began his professional life as an engineer and worked in the corporate sector for 10 years before bidding goodbye to earn his livelihood by baking cakes. Apart from baking, he extensively teaches across the country and post-lock-down, he conducts classes digitally.

## His Inspiration to Become a Professional Baker

Bijay comes from a small town, Kohima, in Nagaland, where he grew up in nature's lap as it was surrounded by fruit trees, flowers and kitchen gardens. His city has always offered a variety of dishes and he was inclined towards cooking from the very beginning.

Upon sharing his escapades in baking, he reminisces, "I don't know a time when I did not cook, but I was yet to try my hands at baking. I would go to a bakery near my house and watch the workers bake as a kid, and later when I was in class 7th, I forced my folks to buy an oven and baked my first bake – a pumpkin cake, which was so dense that I had to throw it away. That's my first memory of baking."

He left his desk job, where he was deprived of his sleep and had an overall hectic lifestyle and no time for himself. After taking a one year break and travelling to look for better job prospects, he couldn't find anything compelling and didn't want to continue in that field. During this time, he got an attack of Bell's Palsy where the left side of his face was paralysed. That was his final wake-up call to do something that made him happy.

"I had auditioned for Master Chef India Season 3 and made it to top 20 but quit as I got the confidence to marry my love for food and design. That is when Sugar Daddy Bakes was born." he shares.

### His Love for His Work

Baking and decorating cakes demand absolute perfection and knowledge about baking science and pastry, colour, design, and proportion. Bijay uses his engineering expertise more in his baking than he used in his corporate life.

“Honestly, if you make a profession of what you love, it does not feel like work. I love everything about it, making something delicious that also looks like a dream, seeing the birthday boy/girl/bride and groom gasp when they see their cake, when they cut it, and sink into the deliciousness – nothing compares to that feeling. I get to create these moments every day and I am grateful for each day.”

He shares excitedly when asked about what he loves about his work.

### His Tutelage

He is not trained and likes to call himself a self-taught baker as his skills were built on the knowledge and experience of others in his field. He gives credit to his cooking skills, engineering knowledge, and interest in design that prepared him for the baking profession.

He had joined a pastry institute where the class was taught by a Le Cordon Bleu trained chef. He quit the class after two days as the chef disregarded him for asking too many questions and titled him as the internet type.

He has learnt everything by himself; from blogs, cookbooks, the internet and his failed cooking attempts became his teachers. This kind of self-guided learning takes a long time and a certain temperament is required to pursue such a career.

“10 years ago, there were hardly any good pastry schools in the country, but now we have some good ones to get trained professionally. If I were starting today, I would 100% join one of the pastry schools to get my fundamentals cleared before venturing into the business. It is no longer enough

to just know how to bake as there is too much competition in the space and you have to put your best foot forward in everything you do.” He shares.

### His Skills

He believes that every day is an opportunity to learn and develop something new. He likes exploring new recipes, techniques, flowers and reusing old materials. Apart from learning new things to enhance his culinary skills, he also invests his time learning the nuances of technology, social media and photography.

“You have to explore and evolve each day, or else you'll soon be dead. But in this exploration, it is

sometimes easy to forget why you started and it happened to me. My work became all about decoration, but I soon realised that this is not what I wanted to do. The proof of my success in making a pudding lies in its taste. My core focus is to make delicious products. Every technique, decoration and ingredient I learn has to pass the taste test. My products just do not need to be beautiful but delicious as well and it should look timeless and elegant.” He shares elaborately.



### His Focussed Project

“For the last few years, I have been working on developing Indian design vocabulary using techniques in Indian crafts,

surface ornamentation, fabrics and how to translate them onto the cake. You can see a lot of Indian elements in my work like block printing, carvings etc., but again everything should pass the taste test.” He shares about his project.

### His Favourite Recipe to Make

He likes to make vanilla pound cake, raspberry coulis and macerated berries and buttercream.

Talking about his favourite combinations, he shares, “I like making desserts with berries because I feel cake and berries are a match made in heaven.”

## His Passion for Sugar Flowers and Cake Decoration

He has an obsession with flowers in general and grew his own garden in his adolescent years. He had a melange of plant and flowers from across the world and also studied Botany as a part of his pre-university years.

“When I discovered sugar flowers, I was thrilled as flowers and cake decoration are my passion. They are the perfect example of a marriage made in heaven. I love sitting down with simple sugar paste/gum paste/rice paste and the whole process of turning it into beautiful masterpieces is invigorating and meditative for me as I completely lose myself in it.” He states.

Cake decoration is 50% baking and 50% design, arts, architecture, Botany and carpentry. You must really enjoy making and creating things and be moved by colour, texture, and details for decorating cakes.

“One of the things that I constantly talk about in my sugar flower classes is that I perceive better now. When I pick up a fallen leaf, I admire its colour, its texture and its details. Unless you are moved by these things or learn how to see these things, you will always struggle with decorating. You will always be copying people, their creations and it is the quickest way to creative death.” He talks about the prerequisite to learning the skill of cake decoration.

### His Creative Process

As a custom cake maker, he puts everything on the table. Once he knows a budget, he asks his customers about some inspiration sources like the invite, décor, outfit, and the occasion. Once he knows the mood and references, he starts sketching the cake. His goal is to make the decoration minimal and the cake should be light as he feels nobody would like to eat a cake that is hard, dry and buried in a decorative paste that is never eaten.

Apart from the taste, he likes to keep it light, minimal and impactful. He follows two thumb rules.

“**1.** My Personal Style and Voice: I want each cake to be immediately identified as mine. It takes years to come to this place, but I feel I am there. I design cakes keeping in mind my signature style –

tasteful, elegant and timeless - I want the bride to look at her cake 20 years from now and feel the same. Many trends come and go, but elegance and grace are timeless.

**2.** More décor is more cost and more labour for something that is ultimately a waste because if no one wants to eat it, for me, it's a waste. So I design for the impact. Instead of using 20 colours, 300 flowers, I will use two colours and a few well-made and placed flowers. It saves time for me, saves money for the customer too.”



### His Advice to Aspiring Bakers

“Work hard, train well, practice, practice and practice. You are only as good as your last cake. You will have to constantly be on your toes and learn. And most importantly, charge fair prices. I want each one in the community to start charging living wages/sustainable wages.” He advises.



# THE HEALTHY AND SCRUMPTIOUS COOKING DIARIES

A self-taught baker, Rishita Thalluri is a creator and curator of simple yet exquisite and absolutely delish recipes. You can check her artistic feed with yummy dishes [@rishita.thalluri](#)

For Rishita, food is a beautiful means of expression, for its sole purpose is to nourish and nurture the body, mind and soul. It is not bound by the humdrum laws of physics, for it has the power to transport instantly to a hot summer's day in our childhood with a mere lick of a popsicle and every bite of Maggi is reminiscent of cold winter nights in the Himalayas, comforting you in its warm motherly embrace.

She has always drifted towards the alchemy of cooking and the power it has to leave one entranced in its aura, but she had never considered it an obvious career path.



Rishita Thalluri, Delhi NCR

## Her Relation With Food

She was born in Ranchi, in a house with a beautiful fusion of cultures. Her mother, a Bengali and a fantastic cook and her dad, a Telugu and a rock and jazz enthusiast. It was probably the entwining of these beautiful cultures that brought about a creative mindset. But like most of her peers, she too believed that cracking the engineering entrance exams was the ultimate goal and that academics were the only successful career path one could have.

"I used to love art as a kid and some of my fondest childhood memories are of baking delectable cakes with my mother, assisting her in the kitchen as her little helper and my sister assuming the role of the food critic or as I'd call her, my little guinea pig!" She reminisces about her adventures in the kitchen during her childhood.

She pursued engineering but realised that it wasn't her cup of tea and when she met her now partner, then friend, he gave her the courage to do something that didn't feel familiar. They both started a graphic design company called Bluup which they both are still a part of. As for food, she feels it was always her calling.

"Food is not just a life source; it is an emotion that connects us all. I feel good food can transform a grey and cloudy day into a bright one beaming with sunshine. While I was always inclined towards gastronomy, I came in close quarters with it during the lockdown and have fallen in love with it." She shares.



### Her Blogging Journey and Focus Point

She had infused bad lifestyle habits due to living in the hostel and eventually found herself at crossroads to either evolve or repeat. In her attempt to start afresh and eliminate the latter, she started leaning towards fitness and mindful eating.

“Since I have always struggled with weight issues, fitness made me feel liberated. In order to eat healthily, I started cooking with healthy replacements, each time getting innovative and exploring my creativity. What bothered me most was the idea of “healthy can't be yummy”. Well, I'm glad to say that creating mindful recipes that are both equal parts healthy and delicious is what truly gives me joy. I've become the official patissier for family dinners and friend's parties. They absolutely love the food I cook and urged me to spread the love and start blogging.” She quips gleefully.

As a curator of food, all the recipes she makes are to nourish the body and the mind as well. She believes that there's a brouhaha about eating healthy. Everyone's following fad diets and dare we say that most of us might be doing to fit in a dress or impress someone. All of these are not strong enough motivations to convert it into a lifestyle.

“The mind, you see, is complex yet simple. And when it comes to eating healthy, years of conditioning has taught us to misinterpret it as boring, bland and even tasteless food. So, every time you think to start eating healthy, the brain associates it with everything uninteresting! This, you see, is the heart of the problem. What if I told you that you could eat your cheesecake without the guilt? What if there was no compromise on the flavour or texture of the food in front of you? This is where my core focus is. I want you to eat that cake with a smile on your face instead of having a constant cloud of guilt looming over your head. When you empower yourself with that knowledge is exactly when you accept you are invincible!” She shares her core-focus while cooking.

### Her Cooking Inspirations

It's marvellous how a couple of ingredients put together can create enigmatic chemistry of flavours and have you enchanted under its spell.

Sharing about her cooking inspiration, she shares, “It's because of my mother that I developed a fascination for the culinary arts. Needless to say, she's a phenomenal cook. Christmas has always

been special in our house and I remember her preparing a lavish spread with delicious kebabs and curries and desserts so decadent. I'd love to help her make the cake only because the incentive was the opportunity to lick the bowl at the end.

Sharing further about her inspiration, she elaborates, “Every recipe I create is inspired by nature, the changing seasons and what is available locally. Mama earth paints a beautiful canvas. Look around, for there is magic in the mundane!”

### Her Go-to Comfort Recipe

She feels there's nothing like biting into a buttered toast and chasing it with a sip of piping hot chai on a cold winters day. It is her comfort-recipe as butter toast, for her, is love at first bite.

### Her Strengths and Skills to Master in the Future

We count greasy food to be delicious, which is loaded with empty calories. This bubble needs to be burst as the flavour of the food should be in the spotlight. If your food is flavoursome, you'll forget the concept of a cheat meal and embrace a lifestyle without restrictions. Making clean wholesome and nutritious food is her forte.

When asked about which skills she would want to acquire, she says, “As for skills that I want to master in the future, I believe there's a constant evolution taking place and learning is a continuous process. I can't put a finger on what exactly, but I'm always up for grasping just about any skill I come across.”

### Making Her Stand Apart

Her culinary expeditions cater to a broad audience and are for everybody to savour.

“My Instagram is more like an opera; there's something for everyone. It's a blend of art, food, cultures, nostalgia and its got mouth-watering guilt-free recipes.” She shares.

### The Food She Enjoys Cooking

“My food is an extension of me and I'm all about making a hearty meal. Anything that I create absolutely must check these boxes- it has to be simple, quick, hassle-free and most importantly, it has to be delicious. All my recipes are meant to nourish not just the body but the soul as well. My core focus is, of course, to create clean and healthy food.” She shares.

## Food, Photography and Everything in Between

Food styling is an important aspect, especially today as everything sells at face-value. It makes her food relatable on Instagram as she tries telling a tale with her pictures.

“Food styling is such an important aspect of what I do. It is what makes my food relatable to you when I put it out on Instagram. Each photograph tells a tale and each element helps me weave a story. I mean it when I say my food has character and it’s almost like getting it ready for the runway! That said, most of my photography is also inspired by nature and the Potterhead in me is bursting to say- “It’s important to remember that we all have magic inside us.” She shares excitedly.

### Some Tips for Our Readers

If you’re contemplating pursuing something that makes you truly happy, your mind is already made up. It’s only about taking the first step; imagine the possibilities that await you.

“As for those who want to make the switch to eating healthy, I’d suggest not thinking of this as a mammoth task. Start by making small changes and incorporating them into your lifestyle.” She advises.

## RASBHARI SALSA

*Note: feel free to tweak the flavours as you please.*



### INGREDIENTS

**Rasbhari** 150gm  
**Tomato** 1 medium size  
**Olive Oil** 1 tsp  
**Onion** 1 (finely chopped)  
**Green Chilli/ Jalapeno** 2 (finely chopped)  
**Coriander** 2 tbsp (finely chopped)  
**Red Chilli Powder** 1 tsp  
**Cumin Powder** 1/4 tsp  
**Salt** to taste  
**Garlic** 3 cloves (finely chopped)  
**Lemon Juice** 1 tbsp

### METHOD

1. Roast the tomato over a medium flame till charred. Let it cool, peel it, chop & set aside.
2. Add goldenberry, tomato, 1/2 of the onion, 1/2 of the garlic, 1/2 of the chilli to a food processor.
3. Add spices, oil, lemon juice & salt.
4. Coarsely blend.
5. Pour into a bowl & add the remaining onion, garlic, green chilli, coriander & mix.
6. Serve with nachos or use as a chutney.

## YOGHURT & STRAWBERRY JAM CHEESECAKE

*Note: I suggest you set the cheesecake in 2 small pie tins. To hang yoghurt, use a large strainer, place muslin cloth on top & a large bowl at the bottom (for the whey to collect).*

*Ensure you give the yoghurt enough time to hang (in the fridge) so all the whey is drained out. Twist the muslin cloth & squeeze out any excess liquid if required.*



### INGREDIENTS

#### For the Crust

**Mixed Nuts** 1 cup  
(I used pecans, walnuts & almonds)

**Granola** 1 cup

**Flax Seeds** 1 tbsp

**Salt** Just a pinch

**Dates** 4 (pre-soaked & puréed +1 tbsp water)

#### For the Filling

**Yoghurt** 1 kg

**Honey** to taste

#### For the Jam

**Strawberries** 400gm

**Jaggery Powder** 1-½ cup

**Chia Seeds** 2 tbsp

**Lemon** 1 (juiced)

**Water** 1 cup

### METHOD

1. Heat a pan, lightly toast nuts, seeds & granola.
2. Add ingredients for the crust in a food processor and pulse till roughly chopped.
3. Put the mix into a pie tin, spread evenly, press & pack tightly.
4. Freeze for 10 minutes.
5. Add all the ingredients for the jam to a pan.
6. Cook till thick. Set aside to cool completely.
7. Hang the yoghurt overnight

- in a muslin cloth in the fridge.
8. After 8-9hrs, twist the muslin cloth & squeeze further to remove any excess water.
9. Mix the yoghurt & honey. Whisk well.
10. Spread the mixture evenly on top of the crust.
11. Add jam on top & freeze for 2-3hrs or till entirely set.
12. Serve cold.

# LIFE WITH A DASH OF CHILLI



Fiona Lobo, Mumbai

Her quick and easy recipes with aesthetically pleasing food photographs [@chilliesnguava](#) are sure to make you crave her succulent food.

Fiona Lobo is an adventurer and has a keen interest in sports. She went on to pursue a management degree in operations, after that, she worked at KPMG. She quit her corporate job to be at home with her two little munchkins. She owes it to her husband for supporting her all through her decisions and has been largely instrumental in strengthening her blogging journey when she had a conundrum about whether she should start blogging or not.

### **Her Relation with Food**

For Fiona, photography and cooking have always been a passion. She used to cut recipes from the newspaper and stick them in her diary as a kid. And whenever she got an opportunity to be in the kitchen, she would try making those saved recipes. The kitchen has always been a place where she loved to spend her time and try cooking different recipes.

"My mom always says that I cook with my heart and not my mind. I follow her simple

rule of enjoying the cooking process. But my children are on my heels; therefore, I have to finish my cooking hurriedly."

### **Her Blogging Journey and Focus Point**

Last March, when the country went into lockdown, all the restaurants were also shut down. To cook her and her family's favourite dishes, which they would otherwise order, she started cooking them at home.

"I started clicking what I cooked and posted on my private account on Instagram. My friends loved what I posted and how I captured food. It always kept me motivated and I never missed posting even a single day, with some exceptions, of course. Everything I cooked, I set it up on my kitchen platform and clicked with my phone. This simple beginning of my blogging journey gave me immense happiness. My focus point when I started the blog and till now is to maintain the consistency of my posts and sustain the quality of the pictures." She shares gladly.

### Her Cooking Inspirations

Cooking for kids is not just about ingredients; it's about imagination and creativity. For all the kids, their mothers become their role models as they have seen their mothers as Wonderwomen, balancing professional life and household chores.

Similarly, for Fiona, her mother is her journey. Sharing about her cooking inspiration, she says, "My mom is my biggest inspiration. Despite being a busy woman with her hands always full, she would always make time to cook our favourite meals and pamper us with the best dishes. Since we are Goans, we simply relish the Goan delicacies she prepared and to date remains a favourite and that's where my love for food comes from. As a kid, I would spend hours in the kitchen with my mom, making a mess but learning delicious, traditional and authentic Goan recipes. My mom would surprise us with some amazing baked goodies. Whenever I recreate any of her cake, cookie or bread recipes, it always takes me back to those carefree childhood days. I feel that the sense of nostalgia brings out the best of creativity when I cook and capture."

### Her Go-to Comfort Recipe

Cooking makes her happy and is therapeutic to her. Whenever she feels exhausted, she blends a quick smoothie of berries, oats and dry fruits that is wholesome and satiating. A green smoothie also does the trick for her. When her family is famished, she prepares a simple one-pot Alfredo Pasta, which her children also love.

"I've always been an avid baker and a perfect baked dish always makes us feel content. Whenever I get leisure time, I try quick bakes like some cupcakes, tea cakes, doughnuts, stuffed bread or buns. As a family, we love our desserts, especially ice cream and during the lockdown, we mastered the art of making some yummy homemade ice cream and it has become an essential addition to our menu. Like every Mumbaikar, we love the vada pav and misal and make it at my home when we crave some snacks" She shares about her go-to comfort recipes.

### Her Strengths and Skills to Master in the Future

She always had a knack for creativity. She loves all creative art forms but capturing her food gives her immense satisfaction and liberation. Food styling and composition is like a blank canvas which she fills up with her vivid imagination and makes her subject look even more appealing.

Her strength is in the realisation that one cannot reach success in a day or a month. If you are social media savvy, then the numbers on the post shouldn't affect you and you can post in intervals. If you put eminent work on your handle, you will draw attention and engagement even if you post on an interim.

Food photography and styling is her newfound love and she has been on a quest to learn something new each day. She often gets complimented for her photography and styling, which can be due to her eye for detail and clicking aesthetically pleasing pictures that look bright and fresh.

"I sure do want to master the art of food photography and learn to edit like a pro. Each day is a learning curve and I learn watching my fellow ace creators. There are many types of photography styles, but the best photographers have a distinct and unforgettable photography style. Therefore, I want to discover my own style and stand out." She shares about mastering her photography skills.

### Making Her Stand Apart

As a novice in the food blogging industry and an amateur photographer, her food handle- Chillies and Guava, portray aesthetic frames, moody and breezy styling that would make you crave the presented food.

Enlightening us further upon what makes her account different, she shares, "Cooking simple, easy, tasty food and trying to make it as innovative and pretty looking as I can is my motive. In today's fast-paced world, we all need something that gets done in minutes and I am someone who loves one-pot meals, which are healthy and can be done within 5 minutes. I love posting those as I know my audience will love such recipes."

### The Food She Enjoys Cooking

"Indian & Italian is something that's mostly cooked at home, so I've learnt a lot of Italian recipes like meatballs, sauces, homemade pasta etc. The art of cooking Indian food is inherent, but a specific region's cuisine can sometimes be challenging and when it turns out perfect, my joy knows no bounds." She shares with thrill.

### Food, Photography and Everything in Between

Food styling can sometimes feel like a full-time job- cook, style, capture and write a mini write up for the blog. To not make your picture look flat, you can add layers to it for making it more enticing.

"I love to watch beautiful food photos. It is said that we eat with our eyes first, and I cannot agree more. I love the feeling when gorgeously styled food lands in front of me on the table, which I only want to eat with my eyes because I do not have the heart to break and leave it in a mess. When I need inspiration, I hop on to Pinterest as it's full of beautiful pictures, which helps me get an idea of what I should cook. Food must look appetising to draw my attention and based on that rule; I make sure that I capture my food that looks tempting. If your food looks great, everything else is cakewalk." She shares.

### Some Tips for Our Readers

"One can't drive cross-country on a single take of fuel. In the same way, one needs to frequently renew their source of inspiration and drive. Often, this requires solitude for a period of time. Take a break if you feel like you've reached a creative mind block. Learn things, rejuvenate and do things that satisfy you." She advises.

Furthermore, she shares four tips for food photography with our readers:

- 1.** It's all about great light and natural light is the best. It's amazing how utterly different food can look in different areas and at different times. With the right lighting, the photos will start looking better.
- 2.** Learn post-processing, you might have clicked a great photo styled & composed well, but there's always something you can improvise with editing. For me, editing makes a big difference to most of my pictures.
- 3.** Always set your shot before your food is ready; I always set up at night and click first thing in the morning before the kids are up. It's easier doing so as you tend to spend a lot of time thinking of composing & style otherwise.
- 4.** Decide if you want to be a food photographer and stylist, recipe curator or social media influencer. Being all of it will be great; however, focussing on multiple things can cause weariness and you won't be able to enjoy the work you do. If you choose to do food photography & styling, you can hone your skills by doing regular practice.





## CHOCOLATE & GRAPES CHIA PUDDING

### INGREDIENTS

**Milk** 1 litre  
**Grapes diced** 1 cup  
**Honey** 5 tbsp  
**Cocoa powder** 3 tbsp  
**Custard powder** 3 tbsp  
**Castor sugar** 3 tbsp  
**Chia seeds** 3 tbsp  
**Berry powder** 2 tbsp  
**Chocolate & grapes** as a topping

### METHOD

1. Boil 500 ml of milk. To the other 500 ml of milk, add cocoa powder, castor sugar, custard powder and mix well till all the lumps dissolve. Stir continuously till the consistency thickens. Take it off the heat and let it cool.
2. To the boiled 500 ml of milk, add chia seeds, berry powder and honey. Mix all the ingredients well and refrigerate for an hour.
3. To assemble, take a medium-sized dessert bowl, jar or a glass, scoop out the chocolate pudding and add it to the glass as the first layer, add the diced grapes or any other fruits you like as the second layer, and finally, add the berry chia pudding mix. Top it up with some chocolate, grapes & drizzle some honey if you like.

# MEXICAN GREEN SPAGHETTI WITH CREAMY SAUCE

## INGREDIENTS

**Spaghetti Pasta** 500 mg

**Capsicum** 2 large

**Jalapeno roasted**, de-seeded & peeled 3

**Chicken stock** 2 cups

**Onion** finely sliced 1

**Processed cheese** 1 cup

A handful of **coriander leaves or parsley**

**Garlic** 5 to 6 cloves

Few **cherry tomatoes**

Few **black olives sliced**

Few sliced **baby corns**

**Greek yoghurt** 1 cup

**Fresh cream** 1 cup

**Butter** 2 tbsp

**Salt and pepper** to taste

## METHOD

**1.** Roast the peppers on a grill pan or directly on the gas flame. You will need to flip them constantly until they're evenly charred.

**2.** Cook the spaghetti as per the instructions on the package. Once cooked, drain it and keep it aside.

**3.** Blend the roasted bell pepper, coriander leaves, garlic cloves, yoghurt & cream. This is your green sauce.

**4.** In a hot skillet, add butter, onion and fry till translucent; add tomatoes, baby corn & olives and stir fry for a few minutes.

**5.** Add the sauce, chicken stock, 3/4th cup cheese, salt and pepper. Give it a mix and let it simmer over low heat for 5 to 7 minutes till the sauce thickens

**6.** Add the spaghetti; give it a good mix to coat the spaghetti evenly with the sauce. Switch off the gas.

**7.** Sprinkle some grated cheese, parsley and serve.



# ENCAPSULATING CHEESY MEMORIES

Monika Mahajan's cheese and gift platters will make you drool and crave for them. You can check her beautiful and delicious platters [@curatedcuisinesbymonika](#).



Monika Mahajan, Mumbai

The goal that Monika Mahajan is looking to achieve is to plate cheeses for connoisseurs and combine them with a personalised story. Her working process is to speak to her client and then add personal photographs to bring memories back or create new ones, add poems, flowers, spreads, favourite flavours etc.

Her objective to create personalised recipes is to bring smiles and laughter to the dining table without compromising on food quality.

## Her Relation With Food

Food has always been a very integral part of her life. Growing up in a Punjabi family, she was taught to respect food and never waste it. She was always surrounded by aunts and grandparents who dissected recipes and tried to replicate them.

She further shares, "Post my marriage, I realised the same values were translated by my mother-in-law, which in turn I have inculcated in my children to respect food and not waste it."

## Her Focus Point

She doesn't identify herself as a blogger and uses Instagram as a means to portray her work.

Talking about her focus point, she shares, "I am not a blogger but like to share appetising pictures of what I cook. I only cook what I like to eat myself and believe in the known adage that you eat with your eyes first. Hence for me, it is very important that the food is presented well."

## Her Cooking Inspirations

She has mastered her cooking skills by taking short cooking courses worldwide and recognises herself as a home chef.

Talking about her cooking inspiration, she says, "I am very inspired by Nigella Lawson and like her, I take great pride in cooking from my home."

## Her Strengths and Skills to Master in the Future

She believes in Socrates' quote, "I know that I know nothing," which means that she can learn and inculcate new skills beyond the horizon and considers it her strength.

"I am very interested in Japanese food; their subtle flavours and basic rules of food presentation really intrigue me. Therefore, I want to master the art well." She shares.

### Making Her Stand Apart

"I always attempt to develop new & innovative concepts like Breakfast in bed, date night platters and other themed meals. I can say with all humility that my creativity & original ideas make my account different from others." She shares about what makes her different from the rest.

### The Food She Enjoys Cooking

"My favourite cuisines to cook are traditional Indian & Punjabi food made in every Indian home. I also love Thai, Mexican & Chinese food." She shares gleefully.

### Food, Photography and Everything in Between

Food photography is an essential part of showcasing your culinary creations on social media platforms.

"I get inspired by the beauty nature has to offer and manifest it in my food styling in some form." She shares her inspiration behind food photography.

### Some Tips for Our Readers

Lastly, she shares a simple yet efficacious adage, "Do what you love & love what you do."

## HUMMUS DIP

### INGREDIENTS

**Cooked chickpeas** 3 cups  
**Garlic cloves**, minced 1-2  
**Ice cubes** 3-4  
**Tahini paste** ⅓ cup  
**Kosher salt** ½ tsp  
 Juice of 1 **lemon**  
**Hot water** (if needed)  
**Extra virgin oil**, a generous drizzle  
**Sumac**

### METHOD

1. Add chickpeas and minced garlic to the bowl of a food processor. Puree until a smooth mixture is formed.
2. While the processor is running, add ice cubes, tahini, salt and lemon juice. Blend for about 4 minutes or so. Check the consistency and if the consistency is too thick, run the processor and slowly add a little hot water. Blend until you reach the desired consistency.
3. Spread in a serving bowl and add a generous drizzle of extra virgin oil. Add a few chickpeas to the middle, if you like.
4. Sprinkle sumac on top.
5. Enjoy with warm pita wedges and your favourite veggies.





## GUACAMOLE DIP

### INGREDIENTS

**Avocados**, ripe 3  
**Small onion**, finely diced ½  
**Roma tomatoes**, diced 2  
**Cilantro**, finely chopped 3 tbsp  
**Jalapeno**, seeds removed and finely diced 1  
**Garlic cloves**, minced 2  
**Lemon**, juiced 1  
**Sea salt** ½ tsp

### METHOD

1. Mash the avocados with a fork.
2. Add all the ingredients and mix well.
3. Give it a taste and add a pinch of salt or lime juice if needed.



Manisha Gupta, Dubai

# EXPERIMENTS IN MONA'S FOOD LAB

Cooking came naturally to Manisha Gupta, and she has mastered the art of igniting the chemistry of spices and flavours. You can check her culinary voyage that is filled with colourful and ravishing recipes [@monasfoodlab](#)

Manisha Gupta was born in Kolkata, studied BSc in Home Science (Nutrition), is a Montessori trained primary school teacher and a food blogger residing in Dubai. With so many feathers in her cap, she has become an expert in preparing enchanting food that is quite easy to make.

## Her Relation With Food

In all of her professional and personal roles, places visited, people interacted, there has been a strong connection with food.

"I started cooking when I was studying Nutrition but had an affinity for confectionery. For a very short period of time, I was selling cakes and puddings in Kolkata. I savour different cuisines and then try my hand at them. I can easily say that cooking is my passion." She shares naturally.

## Her Blogging Journey and Focus Point

Before fully starting her blogging venture, she used to post her culinary creations on Facebook or shared them with

her family and friends. During the lockdown, her husband persuaded her to make an Instagram account and start an endeavour with food blogging. And that's how on 20th April 2020, her blogging started as [@monasfoodlab](#).

"A delicious dish needs to be even more deliciously decorated as seeing is equally important as tasting and smelling. Hence, my focus is on the taste of the food for sure and the way it's served." She shares.

### Her Cooking Inspirations

The soul of a recipe is the cook himself/herself and what sets a recipe apart is the skills to combine various flavours.

Talking about her cooking inspiration, she shares, "I guess most of the cooking enthusiasts are inspired by family role models. Similarly, for me, it's my mother, a vegetarian, who to-date cooks amazing non-vegetarian food without tasting it."

### Her Go-to Comfort Recipe

"Chocolate cake is what I can bake with my eyes closed. My indulgence is anything confectionery, especially carrot cake." She shares elated.

### Her Strengths and Skills to Master in the Future

Her strengths lie in making desserts, presenting dishes in innovative and out-of-the-box ways.

"I am learning every day with each dish that I cook and with each dish that I eat and I am trying to become proficient in patisserie and food photography." She shares diligently.

### Making Her Stand Apart

The core focus in her cooking expedition has been to cook a variety of cuisines and make them easy and uncomplicated for her audience to

follow, which is her USP and makes her stand apart.

### The Food She Enjoys Cooking

"I enjoy cooking everything under the sun, but nothing beats my love for baking." She shares excitedly.

### Food, Photography and Everything in Between

With food being the hero, it's essential that the aesthetics get captured flawlessly.

Talking about her style of food photography, she says, "Clicking food photos with a backdrop of flowers or plants with same contrast colour elements gives it a uniform look. Apart from this, including different plating techniques enhances food photographs.

### Some Tips for Our Readers

She shares two utilitarian tips:

1. The more you cook, the more you learn about cooking. For example, to learn a dish, you need to cook, observe the mistakes, and correct them.
2. Listening to instinct is important.

## BUTTERFLY PEA FLOWER CHIA PARFAIT

### INGREDIENTS

**Chia seeds** 5 tbsp  
**Coconut milk** 400 ml  
**Honey** 1 tbsp  
**Pea flower powder** (depending on the colour you want)  
**Fruits** of choice for topping

### METHOD

1. Soak the chia seeds in coconut milk mixed with dried pea flower powder (depending on the colour you want) and honey.
2. Leave it overnight or for a minimum of 4 hours.
3. Top it with your favourite fruits and enjoy it as a delicious dessert or mid-morning snack.



## GULAB JAMUN TRIFLE

### INGREDIENTS

#### *For Victoria Sponge Cake*

**All-purpose flour** 140 gms

**Cocoa powder** 30 gms

**Castor sugar** 170 gms

**Butter** 170 gms

**Eggs** 3

**Vanilla essence** 1 tsp

### METHOD

1. Whip the butter (at room temperature) and sugar together.
2. Then add 1 egg at a time.
3. Fold in the flour slowly. Then add the vanilla essence.
4. Bake the cake at 180 degrees Celsius for 30-40 minutes in a preheated oven.

While the cake is being baked make the frosting.

### INGREDIENTS

#### *For Frosting*

**Cream cheese** 224g

**Unsalted butter** 1/2 cup

**Confectioners' sugar** 360g

**Pure vanilla extract** 1 tsp

### METHOD

1. Whip all the above items together until you achieve the perfect consistency.
2. Add Gulab Jamun, as many as you want.
3. Once the cake is done layer it with gulab jamun and frosting. Your yummy dessert is ready. Enjoy



# FINDING THE HAPPILY EVER AFTER WITH FOOD

Follow Simran Tandon's beautiful creations on Instagram by the name **@baked.happily.ever.after** and get mesmerised by her aesthetic work.

Art has no boundaries. When life gives you a chance to tap into creativity and quench the thirst of your intellectual curiosity, you grab it with all your might and start something new, something bold and something close to your heart. Simran Tandon's culinary expedition is an excellent example of the above-mentioned notion.

## Her Journey

For Simran Tandon, the founder of Baked Happily Ever After, food is a memory, a strong emotion and a way to heal. Food gives meaning to her life. It helps her form a unique identity and create her own space in the world. It has very much become her narrative. She has developed recipes that have become her own stories. When quizzed about her culinary journey, she quips, "I'm a self-taught baker and a blogger. I completed my graduation from Lady Irwin College Delhi in B. Sc Food Science. For me, baking is as natural as breathing, and food is my art. It's my sweet medium. I use food to tell my stories, and I believe that food forms our strongest memory, memories that will live forever."

## Her Aspirations

We all have certain dreams and aspirations that become our mission for life. For Simran, her goal was to find a supportive partner and start something to give her life purpose. She shares, "I completed my graduation from Lady Irwin College Delhi in B.Sc Food Science, worked for a few months. And during that phase, I was lucky enough to find the love of my life. We got married, had two beautiful kids, thinking that now we will live happily ever after. But I longed for happiness, I wasn't sad but it didn't feel like I had found my happily ever after."

There are multiple ways we learn important lessons throughout the journey of life. Simran

learnt that there is no such thing called a happily ever after. It is all in mind. "But that's when it hit me. There's no happily ever after- Life is a journey where we need to fight every day for our happiness. We need to find something in our daily routine that gives us happiness. And I didn't have to go far; my happy place was my kitchen. Baking is what makes me happy and keeps me going. And I started posting on Instagram whatever I baked; ever since then, I'm just growing, learning and dreaming. Now I have my website, and I soon plan to start my YouTube channel." She adds.



Simran Tandon, New Delhi

### Her Inspiration

Simran believes that food can connect people from different walks of life. She shares, "I believe that food forms our strongest memory. My memories of my father are my inspiration. Losing him was a turning point in my life, and like any daughter, I always wanted to make him proud. He always told me not to waste my talent and that's what I am doing now. Working towards my goal to make him proud." She also takes inspiration from a world-famous chef that is known for her unique style and charisma. She quips, "If you had asked me this question a year back, I would have answered Nigella Lawson. It's my dream to become India's Nigella Lawson. She's inspired me since I was a little girl. Watching her shows, noting down the recipes in my old tattered books, full of scribbles, dog-eared pages, cooking stains and spills."

### Her Love for Food

Being the mother of two hyperactive children means many exciting recipes that would keep her kids and the entire family happy. "My go-to comfort food is baked chicken. My entire family loves it and I can bake the same chicken in so many ways. It's all about marinating and putting it in the oven. Then you forget about it, till you have to serve. If I could convince my Punjabi husband to switch from butter chicken to baked chicken, who knows I could even change the world."

She loves a good pie and vouches for the versatility of this baked dish. "When it comes to going all out and indulging, then it's always a pie for me. It could be a chocolate pie, a fruit pie, or even a savoury pie. I love how multifaceted pies can be, you can make them as intricate or as simple as you fancy."

### Her Strengths and Weaknesses

Her dreams are her source of creativity and inspiration. She draws a lot of good vibes and energy from them. "I dream about recipes with technicolour. Most of my beautiful creations were visions from my dreams. That's the reason why my plating or food styling is like art. I can cook, bake, plate, and make my food look like a painting but capturing all of that is where I lack. Food photography might look easy but it's not. There's a lot that goes behind a beautiful picture you see on Instagram or any food blog. Learning how to manipulate light, using a camera, and editing the images is a whole new ball game. And that's what I want to master now." she solemnly shares.

### Her Food Story

She believes her food represents how she is as a person and helps her convey her story. She remarks, "Included in the depths of my page are a collection of recipes that tell the story of who I was, who I am now, and who I hope to be. That's what makes my work different because it's my story through my recipes. I don't consider myself as a baker or a food blogger I consider myself as an artist and when you enter my page, you will feel the same."

Her core focus while cooking is to bring out the best from seasonal and local produce. Creating recipes through all the memories that she has and turning them into art has always been a part of her mission. "I love experimenting with different flavours, ingredients and techniques. I cannot cook a simple meal; even if it is a simple salad, I have to add different layers to it. And just like me, my cooking is a little extra. And that's what I enjoy the most."

### Styling 101

We eat with our minds and eyes as much as our stomachs. And that's why she feels food styling and food photography is equally important. It doesn't matter how good the recipe is till you catch interest through the pictures. She writes, "We only get a few seconds to attract the audience's attention, so I make sure I make it count. Earlier, I would post whatever I ate or cooked every day but soon, I realised it is not just a number game. I might get 10k followers who are only following me but I'm not influencing them. That's when I brought a change to my page. I didn't post often but every single post was styled and photographed properly."

Her biggest recommendation will be to go back to the basics of design tools. The most basic tool that she uses is a colour wheel. When you know how different colours relate to each other, you can create beautiful images through your food. She comments, "I always start with an aim, I decide my mood board and what am I trying to depict and then plan accordingly. If I want a bright image, I go for complementary colours and use ingredients with colours that complement each other. Similarly, if I want to create a moody, romantic image, I go for monochromatic colours. I feel the colour scheme is a potent tool to create an aesthetically pleasing food picture. Apart from that layering the image with different textures to create interest."



**Tips for the Readers**

"I strongly believe in honesty without fear. We should not be ashamed of our flaws. Don't we have enough examples of perfection we've looked up to. That's what makes us self-conscious. So if you make mistakes, share them with the world. I share all my recipe failures and fumbles. So that others can learn from my mistakes and come back to me for my honesty. And always be willing to learn; the moment you will feel you know it all, you stop growing. Never hesitate to learn from others at any age. There's an ocean of knowledge that we can still absorb and learn."



## WINE BRAISED CHICKEN WITH MASHED CAULIFLOWER & POTATOES

**INGREDIENTS**

**Pieces Chicken breasts** 2  
**Onions** 2  
**Carrots** 2  
**Mushrooms** 10-12  
**Sticks of celery** 2  
**Chopped mushrooms** 1/2 cup  
**Olive oil**  
**Fresh bay leaves** 2  
**Sprigs of fresh thyme** 2  
**Port wine** 4 Tbsp  
**Dried berries** 2 Tbsp  
**Maple syrup** 1 Tbsp  
**Plain flour** 2 Tbsp  
**Tomato purée** 1 Tbsp  
**Light soy sauce** 1 Tbsp  
**Organic vegetable stock** 1.5 litres  
**Salt and pepper** to taste

**METHOD**

1. Prepare the chicken breasts, wash, clean and pat dry them. In a heavy bottom pan add 2 Tbsp butter (or 1 Tbsp butter + 1 Tbsp refined oil) .
2. Once the butter is hot add chicken add sear till you get a nice brown colour. It will take about 1 minutes of one side and 30 seconds on the other. Take out the chicken on plate and keep aside.
3. Peel the onions, wash the carrots, then roughly chop with the celery and mushrooms.
4. In the same pan add all vegetables and the herbs. Fry for 25 minutes, or until turning golden, stirring occasionally.
5. Add the maple syrup (or honey) and the berries, and cook.
6. Add the wine and cook for 5 minutes, or until sticky and caramelised.
7. Stir in the flour, then the tomato purée and soy sauce (no dark soy sauce, only light soy).
8. Pour in the stock, then bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer for around 10 minutes, or until thickened and reduced to the consistency of your liking.
9. Strain the sauce, squishing out all the juices from the vegetables.
10. Now place the chicken back on the add some of the sauce and save rest for later use.
11. Cook on low heat or bake at 200 C till the chicken is cooked.
12. Serve over mashed potatoes or cauliflower mash and sautéed Swiss chards.

# FENNEL SEED AND SEMOLINA CAKE

Soaked In Fennel Syrup

## INGREDIENTS

**Eggs** 3  
**Semolina** 1 cup  
**Plain flour** 1 cup  
**Oil** 1/2 cup  
**Sugar** 1/2 cup  
**Yoghurt** 1/2 cup  
**Milk** 1/2 cup  
**Vanilla** 1 tbsp  
**Baking powder** 1 1/2 tbsp  
**Fennel seeds** 1 Tbsp

### For the syrup

**Water** 3 cups  
**Sugar** 3 cups  
**Fennel seeds** 2 Tbsp

## METHOD

### Syrup

1. Add the sugar, water and fennel seeds in a pan.
2. Boil for about 5-10 minutes over medium heat until the sugar has dissolved and the syrup has slightly thickened.
3. Remove the pan from the stove and set aside to cool.

### For the Cake

1. Prepare your mould by greasing it with oil and dusting some flour all around. Tap off the excess flour.
2. Beat the eggs and sugar first with a pinch of salt to a fluffy and foamy light yellow cream. Blend well for 5-6 minutes.

3. Add in the oil and the vanilla extract and beat for another 1 minute.
4. Beat the yogurt and milk in a separate bowl to make sure there are no lumps. Now add it to the egg mixture and beat.
5. Mix the flour, semolina and baking powder together.
6. Stir in the flour mixture and mix until you get a smooth batter. Add the fennel seeds and gently fold it in.
7. Pour the batter into the baking pan and bake for about 25 minutes

- at 180-185 degrees until the top gets golden brown or a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.
8. Once you remove the pan from the oven, drizzle the cool syrup all over the cake slowly using a large spoon and let it soak in.
9. When you've used up all the syrup, cover the cake with foil and let it cool down to the room temperature.
10. Sprinkle crushed pistachios on top and serve.



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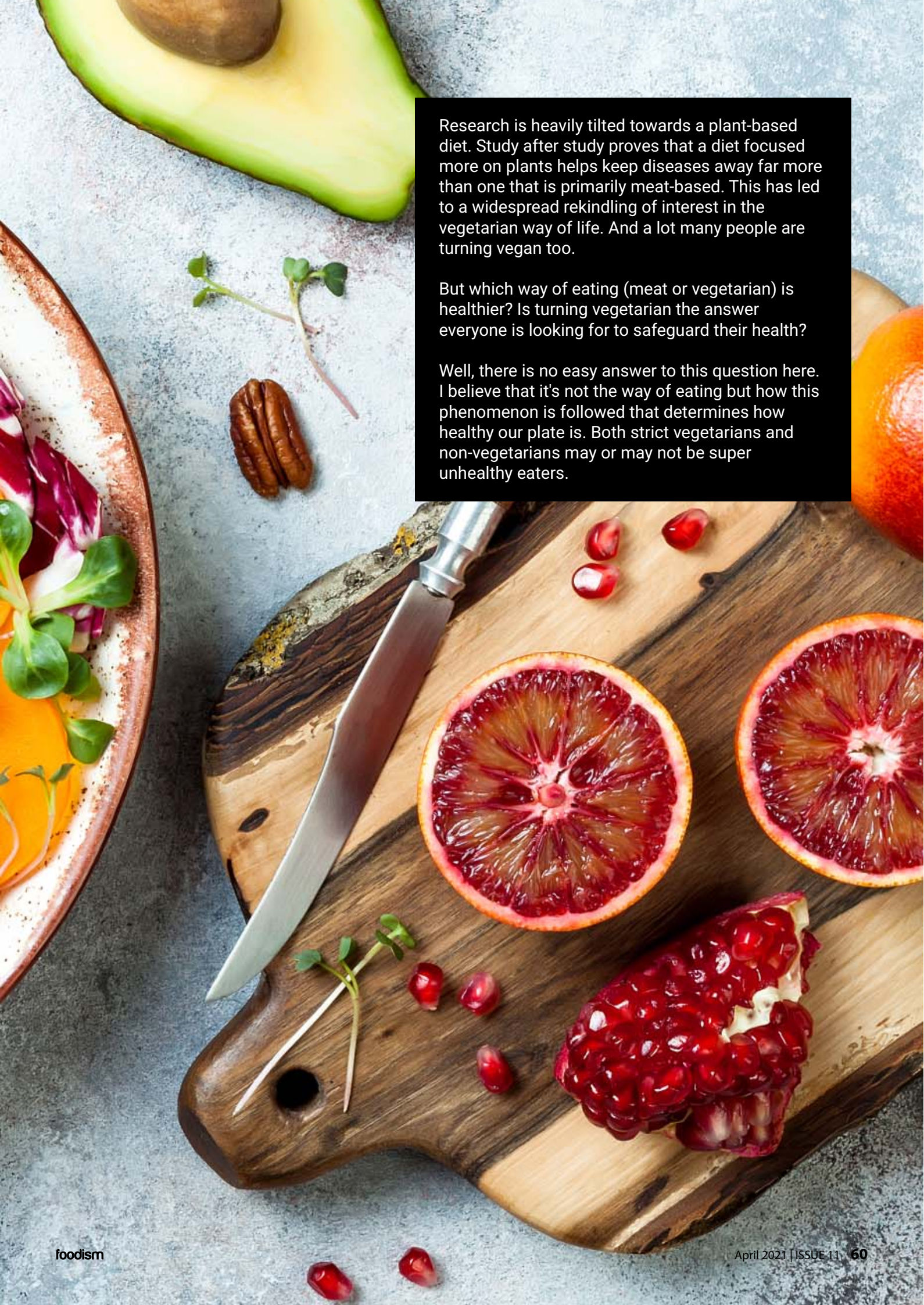
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**PLANT-BASED**

**DIET**

**IS THE FUTURE**





Research is heavily tilted towards a plant-based diet. Study after study proves that a diet focused more on plants helps keep diseases away far more than one that is primarily meat-based. This has led to a widespread rekindling of interest in the vegetarian way of life. And a lot many people are turning vegan too.

But which way of eating (meat or vegetarian) is healthier? Is turning vegetarian the answer everyone is looking for to safeguard their health?

Well, there is no easy answer to this question here. I believe that it's not the way of eating but how this phenomenon is followed that determines how healthy our plate is. Both strict vegetarians and non-vegetarians may or may not be super unhealthy eaters.

## Vegetarian Conundrum

If you are a vegetarian but are not meeting your protein requirements and missing out on certain nutrients that only meat foods can provide, you are definitely in trouble. For example, getting enough iron for vegetarians can be troublesome as most good sources tend to be non-vegetarian. Iron from plant foods (nonheme) is not absorbed as well as iron from meats (heme), so you need to consume a lot of good sources consciously:



sprouts, beans, seeds (sesame, sunflower and pumpkin), mushrooms, iron-fortified cereals, nuts (cashews, almonds and walnuts) and make sure you get enough vitamin C to help boost the absorption of iron from the food. Omega 3 can prove a challenge as there are just two good vegetarian sources - flax seeds and walnuts.



So does vitamin B 12 as it is found mainly in fish, dairy, meats and eggs, so it is essential to have enough dairy and soya or pop in a supplement. Similarly, creatine (found only in fish and meat) helps increase muscle mass and endurance, and carnosine. This amino acid helps prevent a range of diseases like diabetes, cataracts, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's, both need to be sourced and added to diet or alternatives found. Vitamin K2 (that helps transport calcium into our bones) and Vitamin A can also prove quite elusive in vegetarian diets, so we must factor these in somehow.



### The Non-Vegetarians Dilemma

Diets that are primarily non-vegetarian (read go overboard with meats) tend to be higher in calories and steep in saturated fat, trans-fat and cholesterol, all serious priming-up-for-disorder factors. Low consumption of vegetables might just pack up our gut because of a lack of fibre and enzymes. So this can have a lot of challenges too.

### The Balanced Diet

So what does one do? Ideally, all food groups should be well represented in our diet, and for me, meat is a part of a balanced diet. So I follow a 70:30 diet (veg: non-veg). But then that's me! Everyone can/must find their balance and eat wisely. That's how I usually like to end this debate.

### Get Smart About It

Just turning vegetarian alone cannot help us get and stay healthier; instead, we need to look more closely at the kind of vegetarian foods we are eating in this quest because it is the quality of the

food that matters - not just whether it is plant or animal-based.

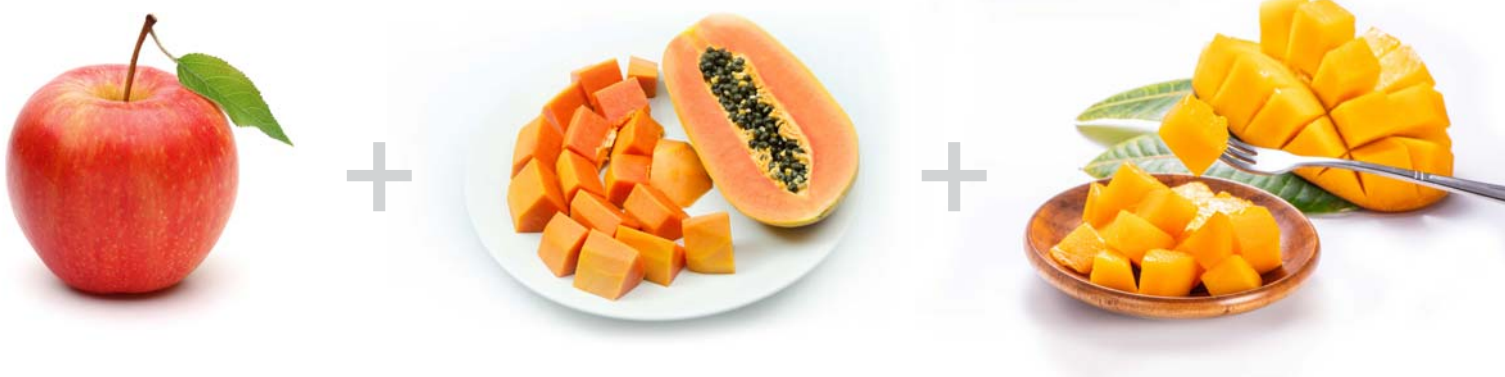
The fact is that eating plant junk is as bad, probably worse than eating animal-based foods for our health. Consider this: eating potato/jackfruit fries instead of a grilled fish salad will only worsen your fitness instead of helping it. Similarly, eating from a can or digging into preservatives laden strictly vegetarian or vegan foods all the time will just take our toxin levels to a new high and override whatever good those plant foods could do to our body.

The fact is that for optimal benefits, just turning vegetarian or cutting down on animal produce is not the answer - we need to follow the WFPB diet - Whole Food Plant-based Diet.

We need to be smart about the vegetarian options we choose to eat. Only then plant-based can help us reach our health goals.

*so do it right*

How difficult can it be to jack up the colourful roughage in our diets? All this means it is 3-4 servings of fruits



**(say 1 apple at breakfast + 1 plate of papaya mid-morning + 1 mango after dinner)**

and two bowls full of vegetables form both lunch and dinner, and a quarter plate of salad or a bowl of soup too. A glass of green juice now and then will be a good idea too. What makes it easier for us is that the researchers did not find any difference between the protective effects of cooked and raw fruit and vegetables.

The fact is that we have always known how essential vegetables and fruits are for us to stay healthy, and every new research only adding to this common-sense knowledge. But if you find doing this hard, I say begin slowly, one extra portion at a time. One thing I want you to do, though, starting today, is to swap one of your delinquent mid-meal snacks for a piece of fruit. Do it for your brain!

### For the environment

Reduce your meat intake to cut your diet-driven carbon footprint massively. Livestock production leaves in its wake a considerable carbon footprint. A big reason for this is that meat is disproportionate in its thirst for water: beans and lentils require five gallons of water per gram of protein produced, chicken nine gallons, and beef 29.6. So try to get your protein more from protein-packed vegetables and legumes. No one is asking you to go meat-free, but just toning down portions and frequency is good enough.

### It Must Be Done Right

1. Suggestions, not directives and bans
2. Widespread healthy eating education; an awareness drive where the right information about the right foods is spread, especially among children, as I feel they are the most receptive.
3. Winning the minds of people
4. Making policies that help those who decide to follow these suggestions (for example, easy availability of pure, fresh plant-based foods; laws for proper labelling of packaged meat-based foods; education about sustainability, carbon footprint and other food-related environmental issues etc.)



*Kavita Devgan is a nutritionist, health writer, prolific speaker and author of three best sellers.*

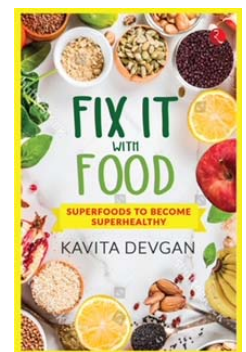
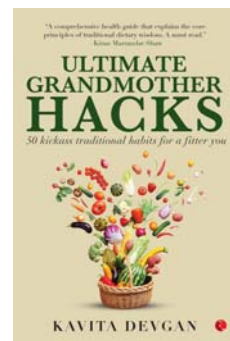
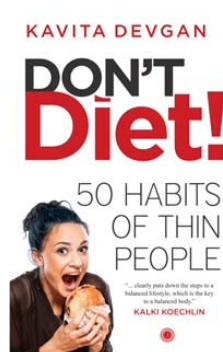
### Should the state get involved?

Some countries have taken matters into their own hands to convert people towards the vegetarian way of life. Belgium, for example, in 2017, issued new food guidelines that put tofu, legumes, oils, vegetables, and grains at the top of the pyramid as foods to prioritise in the diet. These new guidelines moved bacon and salami in an outside circle along with cakes, cookies, French fries, alcohol, and soda with a directive to be eaten as little as possible. Chicken, eggs, dairy, and fish moved down the pyramid too, with red meat and butter all the way down at the bottom. These guidelines reflected the 2015 World Health Organization's directive, which had classified red and processed meat as carcinogens.

But Belgium isn't the first country to do so. The Netherlands too, had released dietary guidelines even earlier in 2016 recommending that people eat just two servings of meat a week. Their unique advice is to consume no more than 500 grams of meat a week. Similarly, in 2016 the Chinese Ministry of Health, the government body responsible for health care services and guidelines for health-related laws and regulations, also began urging its citizens to limit meat and egg intake to only 200 grams daily (from 300 gm average). They advise people to eat more fish and chicken and less red meat. These guidelines are directed towards reducing the country's consumption of meat by 50 per cent to reverse the trend of skyrocketing obesity and other diet-related diseases.

Maybe it's time to take a leaf out of other countries, already on the right path and get proactive in our country too.

After all, the stakes are too high, and proactive steps taken by authorities can actually go a long way to help keep our present and next-generation healthy and help cut the burden of obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCD's).



Follow her on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @kavitadevgan



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Orika understands the importance of good health for leading an active life. Therefore, we came up with the idea of a drink that not only boosts our immunity, but is also appetizing. Our Turmeric Immunity Mix contains the perfect mix of the best aromatic herbs with medicinal properties. Enriched with the goodness of Turmeric, it also contains Saffron, Rose-petals,

**Our Immunity Mix helps the body to fight against Bacterias, Viruses and other disease causing pathogens, even Covid-19, which makes it an indispensable asset in the current scenario**

Cardamom and Nuts. This drink is complemented by the anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anti-cancer properties infused in the herbs. In addition to these properties, the herbs are known to cure skin diseases and improve the ability of human body to fight illness. It also contains water soluble curcumin, which enhances the bioavailability of food by 100 times. Bioavailability refers to the proportion of nutrients absorbed and utilized by the body.

But just talking about it's ingredients and their properties is not enough. Our Immunity Mix helps the body to fight against Bacterias, Viruses and other disease causing pathogens, even Covid-19, which makes it an indispensable asset in the current scenario. So, relish on

the taste of best aromatic herbs sourced from their authentic regions, and keep boosting your immunity for a healthy lifestyle. **Choose Orika's Turmeric Immunity Mix for a healthy living.**

### BRING HOME THE AUTHENTIC FLAVOURS OF ORIKA

#### SEASONINGS & MARINADES

- Mint Seasoning
- Peri-Peri Seasoning
- Schezwan Mix Seasoning
- Hyderabad Biryani Seasoning
- Tandoori Marinade
- Smokey Garlic Marinade
- Amritsari Marinade
- Fiery Chilli Seasoning

#### FLAVOURED LEMONADE MIXES

- Jaljeera Lemonade
- Masala Lemonade
- Portuguese Lemonade

#### AUTHENTIC SPICE MIXES

- Kitchen King Masala
- Shahi Paneer Masala
- Dal Makhani Masala
- Chana Masala
- Meat Masala
- Chicken Masala
- Rajma Masala
- Pav Bhaji Masala
- Sambhar Masala

#### PREMIUM GRADE SPICES

- Garam Masala
- Kashmiri Chilli Powder
- Salem Turmeric Powder
- Hot Red Chilli Powder
- Coriander Powder
- Malabar Black Pepper Powder

#### WHOLE SPICES

- Kasoori Methi Leaves
- Coriander Whole
- Cumin Whole

#### HANDY SACHETS

- Italian Seasoning
- Red Chilli Flakes
- Peri-Peri Seasoning



# GORBBLE UP

*Ice creams*

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

ALMOND  
 ANJEER  
 CASSATA  
 CHOCO-CHIP

COCONUT  
 COFFEE  
 CUSTARD-APPLE  
 KESAR PISTA  
 MANGO  
 STRAWBERRY

The way a dish is presented may make it more appetising to the viewer or customer. In the age of social media, where Instagram has opened doors for food bloggers and home chefs, food plating has become a bait to attract followers.

# Plate It Right

Plate it Right is a segment that will enable you to ace your plating game and make your food more inviting.





## THE PERFECT PLATE

The plate on which you're serving your food is also important. If the plate is too large, the food will look scarce and if the plate is too small, then the food will look congested. The easiest way to start plating is to select lighter shades like white, cream or ivory. A plain-Jane white plate can be interesting if it is in an interesting shape and a darker or bright coloured plate can create contrast with the food.



## RUSTIC FEELS

Using organic materials like wooden platters, cheese boards, slate or stone as a plating apparatus can give a rustic, edgy and back-to-the-nature feel to the dish as well as to the person who is going to eat it.





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“if it’s food,  
it’s foodism”

# Talks

Foodism Talks is a segment where we bring excerpts from the interactive live sessions conducted on our Instagram page with several renowned faces where they talk about their love for food and share interesting food stories on our social media platforms.

Foodism Talks unfolds the excerpts from the live session hosted with Chef Gautam Mehrishi as he shares his food stories and experiences.



# CHEF GAUTAM MEHRISHI

Chef Gautam Mehrishi talked about colours and their importance, shared a kitchen hack and gave information by sharing anecdotes.

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Talking about his recipe, “Colours on the crisp”, he says that food is all about colours and life must be vibrant. Talking more about colours, he says, “When I was riding in Ladakh every 10 kilometres, the colour of the sky changed to orange, violet, black and even plain white. That’s the day when I realised that the sky has only one character yet has so many colours.” Every colour has its own significance and we need to realise it.

Upon asking which dish he makes perfectly, he humorously replied, “You should ask which dish I do not make with precision.” He further shares, “Whenever we cook, we should have a clear intention and thought because when we cook, we put that energy into the food and the food will taste delicious even if it is a simple dish. Our personality and energy will get reflected through the food.”

Talking about which food is difficult for him to prepare, he replies with an acuity that simple things are tricky to make. To solidify his answer, he gives an example, “While making a chapati, there’s pressure to make every chapati round thus a simple task of making chapati becomes tricky.”

Speaking about kitchen hacks, he says that there’s a myth about kitchen hacks that make the task easier. But a kitchen hack breaks a pattern in which we work, it doesn’t change the authenticity of a dish. “When making biryani, many people complain that their biryani doesn’t give an aroma. So you cover the biryani with the lid, rub some ghee with a sprinkle of saffron in the inner layer of the lid covering the biryani. This gives an aroma to the rice.” He shares a valuable kitchen hack.

While playing food fire, he shared a memory revolving around gulab jamun. “We had two Pekingese dogs whose staple lunch and dinner consisted of gulab jamun with rice. Everybody says that making dogs eat sweet causes shedding of hair, but nothing happened to them and they lived healthily for 14 years.”

He further reminisced about his childhood when he was asked to react about false ka shorba. “We had a black currant tree in our backyard and my grandmother used to make its soup when we used to have a sore throat. False ka shorba is effective to cure a cold and cough.”

Departing, he shared that he likes lettuce as it’s a wholesome vegetable packed with nutrients.



# Monthly Event

# THROW back

We've had a very action-packed month so here's a roundup of all the events that were conducted by Foodism in March.

## Contests

Fun cooking *contests* that Foodism hosts allow food enthusiasts to create and share their delicious recipes and stand a chance to win big.

1.



*Cook for Your Wonder Woman*, in collaboration with **Masala Tokri**, was a contest that was held to honour our women on Women's Day and submit delicious recipes. This event was sponsored by Masala Tokri.

2.

*Gobble Up Challenge* was a word search contest where the participants had to submit their word search entries from the magazine's previous issues.

3.

*What's Your Favourite*, in collaboration with **Sprig Gourmet**, was all about submitting recipes of the participants' favourite dishes and win a goodies hamper sponsored by Sprig Gourmet.



4.

*Festive Sweets With Foodism* was a Holi special contest where the winners were awarded cash prizes.



## Games

*Fousie*, a Holi special edition where the participants played Housie not with numbers but food, garnered a lot of traction. The participants had to present the food items according to multiple colours. The winners won big cash prizes.



## Live Sessions

Foodism conducts several *live sessions* with homechefs to showcase their best recipe to a live audience on Instagram and Facebook.

1. Sharadha of @my\_petite\_appetite made delectable *fresh fruit jelly with tender coconut water* on Instagram live.



2.

- Kavita Bardia @foodandpassionbykavitabardia prepared *baked boondi rasmalai custard pudding* on Facebook live.



3.

- @howaboutcooking's Ruchika Singh made *thandai* on Facebook live.



4.



- Jyotsna Parashar @jyotsna.parashar.73 made *Choco-chip cookies* on Facebook live.

# ZODIAC FUN FOOD FORECAST

*Will this month be sweet, savory or sour – let's find out!*

## ARIES



Have you been trying to eat healthy veggies but with loads of cheese and butter? Well, maybe cut down on the intake of butter and switch the slab of processed cheese with some home-made cottage cheese? That way, your guilt will reduce and your protein intake will increase. Remember, more greens means more fibre means good gut health!

## GEMINI



When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade with chaat masala because summers are here, finally! It is time to bring out the ice candy moulds and make some delicious, fruity popsicles with berries, juices and citrus fruits. Have a gala pyjama party on your terrace and have some fun!

## LEO



The angry, lazy Leo is about to get hangry soon. Why, you ask? Because someone is going to start with a diet that includes salad greens, legumes and boiled chana. Is it a very tasty option? No. Will it benefit you? Yes. So eat up your anger and go green today! Some burpees would help as well. So make up your mind and aim to get fit again!

## TAURUS



You love hosting parties at home and making drinks for your guests. The mercury levels are increasing day by day so here's your chance to make some refreshing summers cocktails like mojito, sangria, margarita and martini for your wild friends and some fun mocktails like fruity kombuchas, minty coolers and floral sparklers for your sober friends.

## CANCER



You will have the best taco of your life this week and that will inspire you so much, you will try to recreate it for your entire family. The catch? Your taco shell is going to be 'kaccha' and your filling, too spicy! We had nothing to do with this prediction, this one is on you! The best way to make amends? Mango Ice Creams! Loads of it. For all the survivors. For life.

## VIRGO



Virgos may be the deity of agriculture mythologically but in reality, you are a really weird cook. Who serves pasta with chaas? Or Maggi pani puri? Somebody call the police now. We need to report a food freak. If you are planning a date with your SO then make sure you don't order a pineapple pizza or add strawberries to your biryani. Don't. Do. It.

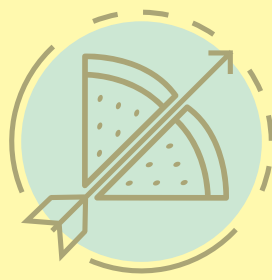
Will this month be sweet, savory or sour – let's find out!

## LIBRA



The love of your life will meet you once again. Your life will get immersed with yellow and fill you up with sweetness. We are not talking about your wedding, silly. We are talking about mangoes! Now is the time to gorge on 'aamras', mango milkshake, ice cream, 'aamrakhand', mango cheesecake and many more such mangolicious desserts! Mango mania it is!

## SAGITTARIUS



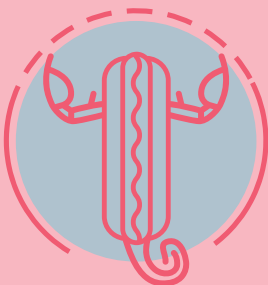
Your love for food is so big that you have decided to name your first born - wada paav and your dog, pizza. Well, interesting choices but just imagine what happens when your kid grows up and questions your bad name choices? Stick to simple names but make sure your kid turns out to be a foodie like you. That way, you get the best of both worlds.

## AQUARIUS



You live to eat and a lot of people have a problem with it but guess what! Pizza is bae and it will never break your heart or be a bad friend. It will always stay by your side and fill you up with happiness and cheese. Maybe, just maybe, you can sneak in some salads once in a while and have some green smoothies but never say never to Pizza, okay? Okay.

## SCORPIO



You are the most misunderstood zodiac out there and your love for all things chicken has led to a lot of issues with your partner who is vegan. Do one thing, strike a balance between both the branches and try soya chaap. Your mind will be blown by the gob-smacking taste of 'afghani/tandoori soya chaap nimbu maarke'. A happy partner means a happy life.

## CAPRICORN



When was the last time you had some tangy, cool Baraf ka gola? 2-3 years ago? Revisiting your childhood is so important. Have some mango dolly sometimes or kaala khatta chuski and make the most of summers. Don't forget to drink rose milk made with roohafza to keep your body cool when the mercury levels rise.

## PISCES



You've been confused when it comes to getting married to the right kind of person. Well, don't worry. We suggest the person should be like daal makhani - intense, dreamy, reliable and 'masaledaar'. So now you know what kind of qualities you are looking for. Be the naan to his/her daal makhani and your pair is made in heaven quite literally!

*\*This is a fun writeup that our edit team has put together and must not be considered as authentic forecast. The content of this article is not targeted towards any profession or individual and is meant to be taken with a humorous pinch of salt.*



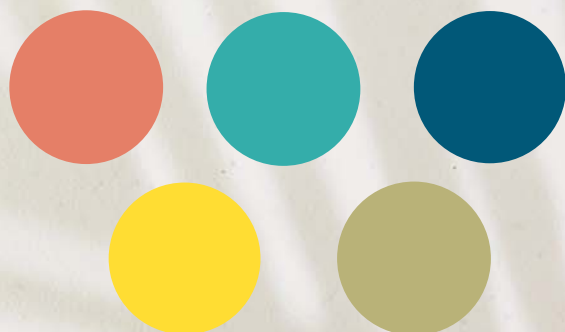




# # Summer Vibes

"Lyric night of the lingering Indian summer, Shadowy fields that are scentless but full of singing. Never a bird, but the passionless chant of insects, Ceaseless, insistent. The grasshopper's horn, and far off, high in the maples The wheel of a locust slowly grinding the silence, Under a moon waning and worn and broken, Tired with summer." -Sarah Teasdale

by Anushka Shah



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