

foodism

JANUARY 2021 | ISSUE 8

Eating with
your mind



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2021

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From The FOUNDER'S DESK

Dear Food-fanatics!

Greetings from the edge of 2021!

The dawn of the new year has brought forth a wave of optimism among everyone. With the vaccination drive commencing, the ghosts of 2020 seem to be slowly melting away into distant memory. With it begins the much-awaited resurgence of the F&B sector. If 2020 was the year of the emergence of home-chefs, 2021 will be the year of them finding a firm business footing, and Foodism's here to help do just that.

As immunity and health continue to take center-stage in all our dealings, food has emerged as a better bet than medicine in ensuring our mental and physical well-being.

With this in mind, we bring you the 9th edition of the Foodism Magazine, with the theme – Mind, Body & Soul!

Our Christmas issue saw a lot of love come its way for the sheer cheer it brought along with it, and we are hoping you will shower our first issue of 2021 with the same appreciation. With the festive season of indulgence just past, and the renewed focus on wellness, this issue is replete with information, recipes and interviews all revolving around one thing – health!

Having said that, we are not considering physical health as the only barometer here.



The January issue dives deep into conversation with nutritionists about the impact of food on mental well-being, the connection of food and spirituality and so much more.

It is also my great pleasure to introduce you to a brand new section in the magazine – Foodism Stars. Foodism Stars will be featuring some of the rising stars among home-chefs, food photographers and stylists as well as food bloggers from around the country.

We also conducted two contests in the month of January - Healthy Treats and Eat-Click-Share. Both the events have seen record-breaking entries, and have encouraged us to up the ante in the coming month. Keep checking our website, www.foodism.xyz and our IG handle [@foodism.xyz](https://www.instagram.com/foodism.xyz) to learn more about upcoming events.

In conclusion, we can only say thank you for having placed your faith in us to provide you with the best and latest news and happenings in the food industry. Rest assured, we are going to continue providing you the best that the Foodism Team has to offer.

Here's to an absolutely smashing start to 2021!

Vyom Shah
Vyom Shah
FOUNDER, FOODISM

foodism

“if it’s food, it’s foodism”

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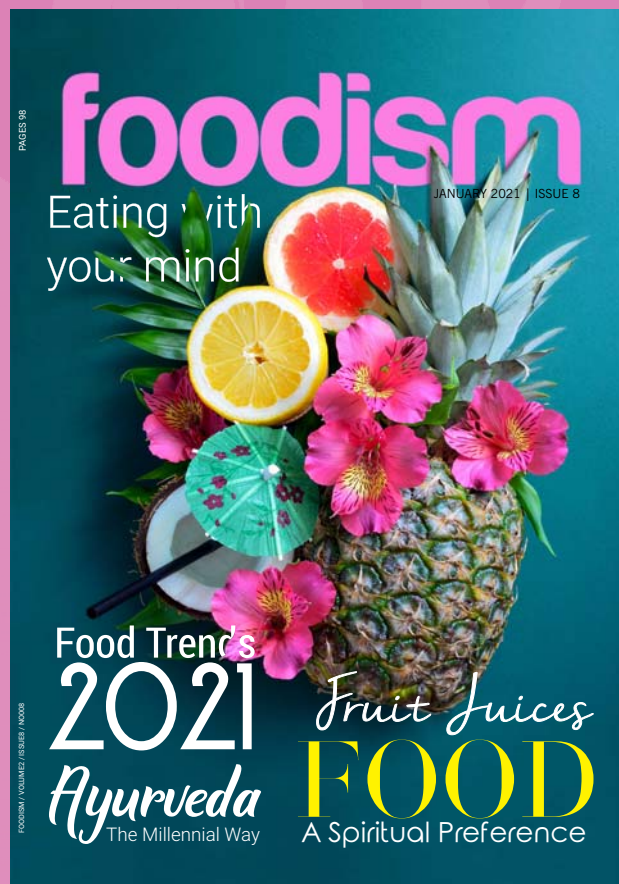


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On the Cover


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EATING WITH YOUR MIND

Food is not merely something we consume with our bodies, it is just as much about the mind and our feelings.

By Jatan Dave

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a light pink top, is sitting on a grey couch. She is holding a potato chip in her hand and looking towards the right. A black remote control is on the couch next to her. In front of her is a glass bowl filled with potato chips. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Jonah*, 14, winds up his classes and has barely an hour to finish lunch, before his virtual-tuition classes begin. He prefers watching television while he eats, and his lunch usually ends up lasting the entire hour. More often than not, he winds up the meal by whatever snacks are available on hand in order to spend that much more time in front of the TV.

Jonah is not alone. It seems our meals have become de facto moments of entertainment indulgence. Little wonder then that we are seeing a significant spike in people facing a variety of lifestyle related health issues. In fact the GOQii India Fit Report states that 62% of its participants fall under the high risk or are on the borderline of the spectrum.

“Eating is not just a mechanical process, it involves all your sensory organs, brain, mood and hormones.” Says Meghana Pandit, a Nagpur based Dietician. “There is a lot that goes into eating, rather than just digestion and nutrition. I think focusing on your circadian rhythm is very important, the more you understand your body’s cycle the better prepared you are to eat the right things, at the right time, in the right way.”

As if the distractions were not enough, we are also constantly being inundated with new diet fads that keep feeding into our body insecurities. A study by the National Eating Disorders Association (America) states that 95% of all dieters will regain their lost weight in five years. But the worst part about the diets is not just that the weight is regained, it goes to jeopardize our already shaky relationship with food.

A report suggests that over 60% of us spend a majority of our mealtimes in front of television, or other screens.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

The Impact of Diets & Distractions

There is a Zen proverb that fits perfectly with our current dietary conundrum – When walking, walk. When eating, eat. It really does not get any simpler than that.

Let's get technical for a minute here, and take a look at the phrase Interoceptive Awareness. Loosely defined, this means being aware of bodily sensations. This could be something as simple as being aware of your heart rate, or simply knowing how hot or cold you are, or more on point, how hungry or satisfied you are.

Research goes to show that people with anorexia and bulimia find it harder to identify signals from their body. In fact brain scans of individuals suffering from these diseases have gone to show that they often have trouble perceiving pain, or even counting their heartbeats. The research shows that the brain areas used for interoception are comparatively different in people with these disorders.

Distracted eating, on the other hand, can stop you from sensing your stomach's message, and may keep you from identifying that you are full. With the proliferation of various media around the world, our meals have become increasingly crowded. If you were to think back to your last five meals, how many would be devoid of a screen? Barely any, right? And that is how it is for a majority of the population these days.

"Your body is constantly telling you what you need. When a girl on her period craves chocolate, it is her body's way of asking for more magnesium, something chocolates are rich in." Says Tripti Tandon, a Gurgaon based Clinical Nutritionist. "In the same way when someone is suffering from low blood pressure, their body makes them crave a pick me up in the form of a coffee. Our bodies have signals for all that we are feeling, it is only a question of whether or not we are listening to them."

Meals are no longer just about consuming food but also about consuming content.



The Role of the Brain When Eating

Rumi once remarked, 'The satiated man and the hungry man do not see the same thing when they look upon a loaf of bread.'

For anyone who has been on a diet, walking past a bakery is an exercise in restraint. While the temptation comes naturally to the mind, the conditioning that the empty carbs and sugar are not good for you, also brings with it guilt. Our perceptions inform our mind what to think, but we forget that the mind has a primal conditioning to enjoy certain foods.

Over the years, we have descended into having a highly combative relationship with food. The incessant spate of diets that have been thrown our way are only outnumbered by the influencers who believe it is their holy duty to support one diet over the other.

In this mix, however, the only thing to suffer is our health!

"Eating right, and at the right time makes a huge difference. A lot of people have the habit of eating very fast." Says Tripti. "The faster we eat, lesser the time we are giving to our brain to send us a signal that we are full." People need to give themselves 20 minutes to finish the meal. Avoid watching the TV when you eat and focus on what you are eating. Listen to your body and focus on the signals it is sending you."



With so much information being floated out to us about the food we are consuming, it is only natural to form some strong judgements about it. The funny thing, however, is that these judgements and notions often play a bigger role in what the food does to our bodies than the food itself. And this judgement is exactly what we need to banish from our minds.

If you are about to eat a chocolate cupcake, the image and idea of the cupcake occurs in the higher center of the brain, the cerebral cortex. Information from this region is then relayed to the lower center of the brain, the limbic system, which regulates physiological functions like thirst, hunger, sex drive, etc. Within the limbic system

is a pea sized bundle of tissues called the hypothalamus which forms the bridge between the mind and the body.

Now, if your predominant feelings while eating the cupcake is that of satisfaction and happiness, the hypothalamus will communicate this message by sending signals to activate the salivary glands, the stomach, pancreas etc. facilitating fuller metabolic breakdown. If, however, your feelings while eating the cupcake are that of guilt, the hypothalamus will communicate this negative input. This may result in the food item staying in your gut for longer, and also may cause a decrease in the calorie-burning efficiency of the body.

MINDFUL eating

Mindfulness, a Buddhist concept, forms the core of the mindful eating movement. Consider this to be the complete antithesis of the way we currently eat.

Eating has become an act devoid of the mind where we are constantly distracted by one screen or another. It takes the brain 20 minutes to realize that you are full. Unaware of what we are eating, how fast we are eating, and how we are eating, we often miss our body's message saying that we are full. This means that the slower you eat the better in touch you would be to when you have had enough food.

"Eating mindfully has a number of benefits for the human body. I am a naturally slow eater, and mindful eating fits perfectly in my style." Says Maryam Juzer Berberawala, an Ahmedabad based dietician. "I think the slower and more consciously you eat, the better the results you will see in your body. On my part I have seen a lot of difference in my skin and my energy levels."

Simple things, like associating an effect with a certain type of food can have a massive effect on the way that particular food item reacts with your body. Mindful eating requires you to give your food the respect and time it deserves, and more importantly, needs you to be aware of how you are eating.

Principles of Mindful Eating

One of the most important things that is communicated to anyone looking to practice mindfulness, or mindful eating, is to make themselves devoid of any judgement toward the food that they are consuming. One of the most toxic traits that human beings have when it comes to food, is that we are never shy of judgement.

- This cake will make me fatter.
- Salt will spike my blood pressure.
- Meat will raise my cholesterol.
- Sugar will cause cavities.

We are a bundle of judgements when it comes to the food we eat, and as hard as it might sound to believe it, these judgements affect the way that the food reacts with your body.





Mindful eating tells you that there is no right or wrong way to eat, but only varying degrees of awareness around the experience of eating food. So long as you are eating with mindful intent, suspending all judgement about the food, you are on the right track.

The important thing to note is that everyone's eating experiences are unique. Mindful eating requires you to make sure you are choosing food that is not only pleasing but also nourishing. The most important aspect of mindful eating, is in the process of eating. Make sure that you have no distractions and are completely focused on the food that you are eating.

Another important factor that one must keep in mind when practicing mindful eating, is being aware of one's non-hungry cues. Apart from the

usual physical hunger, we also face emotional hunger, stress eating and multitude of other situations. Food, in a lot of cases, becomes our way out. Staying aware of these non-hunger based cues can ensure that you are not stuffing yourself.

"I was a largely mood based eater back in the day. But ever since my health scare I have begun to be more conscious about how I eat and of course, what I eat." Says Malav Thaker, an Ahmedabad based management professional. "Eating mindfully has changed the way that I approach food. Primarily because it allows me time with my food. I am more aware of when I am stress eating or when I am merely scarfing down food because I am bored. Mindfulness has changed the way that I look at food, and in the process made me much healthier."

Intuitive eating, much like mindful eating, helps you become more aware about your body's hunger cues. The polar opposite of a traditional diet, intuitive eating does not bind you with guidelines about what you should and should not eat. In fact, it is the complete opposite of conventional diets.

"Intuitive eating cannot be called a fad, and is in fact the best way to approach food." Says Niyati Naik, a Clinical Dietician based out of Bombay.

"Intuitive eating is all about being completely present to the act of eating. The body is constantly giving us cues about our hunger levels, but we miss out on them simply because we are focusing on them. Instead of forcing your body on a diet, it is always better to be listening to it."

The term 'intuitive eating' was coined in 1995 as a title of the book written by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch. Instead of purporting diets, this phenomenon focused on lifestyle changes and getting in touch with one's body to better understand our relationship with food.

"Intuitive eating is about eating what your body wants, but if you are suffering from a clinical condition you obviously cannot do that." Says Niyati. "Simple things like calling a meal a cheat-meal, can incept some pretty negative feelings about the food item in your brain. Appreciate the food you have in all its forms, and

respect your body."

Having said that, intuitive eating too works on some very basic founding principles.

Principles of Intuitive Eating

Tribole and Resch have laid down some very simple principles for those who are looking to follow the path of intuitive eating.

- **Reject the Diet Mentality**

There is no one diet that will resolve your issues for you, intuitive eating is the quintessential anti-diet.

- **Honour your Hunger**

Identify hunger at the outset, do not let it get out of hand. If you are famished you will end up overeating.

- **Make Peace with Food**

Do away with all your notions of what you should or shouldn't eat. These perceptions are exactly what change the way that your body reacts with food.



- **Discover Satisfaction**

Pleasure and satisfaction are the basic tenets of our lives. If we are to be doing away with the pleasure aspect of food, we would be missing out one of the biggest pleasures of our life.

- **Challenge the Food Police**

Say no to all the guilt-laden thoughts surrounded with eating something you enjoy. The thought that certain food will work and some won't is just your psychological food-police.

- **Honour Your Feelings**

Emotional eating is not going to make you feel better, and even if it does it is only going to be momentary. Intuitive eating asks you to deal with feelings without resorting to food-based appeasement.

- **Respect Your Body**

Do not criticize your body! Try and appreciate who you are without resorting to hurtful judgements about yourself.

- **Exercise**

Just because you are going to be eating what you want doesn't mean you don't have to exercise. Indulging in light exercise is a must in order to have a healthier mind and body.

- **Honour Your Health**

The food you eat should not only taste good but also be healthy for you.

In conclusion, your mind plays a huge role in what you eat, how you eat and when you eat it. If we continue to think that food is the answer to our emotional upheavals, we will continue to compromise on our mental and physical health.

In a day and age when our physical and mental health are at a premium, it only makes sense that we are aware of what we are eating and how we are eating it. Reducing our screen time, especially during meals is a



must, and something most of us should be putting in practice in this new-year.

With the whole world coming together in their focus on health, organic trends like intuitive and mindful eating are going to continue gaining traction. Write to us with your views if you have put in practice any of these methodologies to deal with your relationship with food.

FOOD THAT HEALS

Dr. Divolka Gyanjee, a Psychobiotic healer and nutritionist, explains the power of fermented foods and talks about how food affects our brain.

A healthy gut can make or mar your overall frame of mind and spirit. The phrase - 'gut feeling' has always been associated with our instinct and that is because the food you ingest has repercussions for your entire body. This is exactly why consuming foods that improve your gut health should always take precedence.

Dr. Divolka Gyanjee, a Nutritional Psychologist, is a firm advocate of fermented foods and believes in the connection between a healthy gut and a healthy mind. An established name in the Jaipur culinary circuit, she has also curated the biggest food fest in Jaipur. A CSO at Gyanjee caterers, her enlightening research in nutritional psychology, the science behind the correlation between nutrients and their influence on mood and behaviour, lends a unique touch to their food.

Dr. Divolka Gyanjee, Jaipur

Tell us about yourself and the beginning of your journey in the field of Nutritional Psychology?

I was always fascinated by the psychological and emotional disposition of different beings and that is how Psychology became my favourite subject. Everything we consume induces some sort of reaction, this propelled me to do my research on how different food items and edibles affects ones behaviour and responses. While working in a hospital, I got an opportunity to investigate this subject further.

How would you describe your relationship with food?

I firmly believe that we are what we eat. Food can change our moods, brain functioning and even the way we behave in our daily lives. Everything that goes inside our body has physiological and psychological effects, which is why it becomes critical to keep a check on the things that make their way into your body.

How does food impact mental health?

Latest studies show that 90% of our happy hormones are actually made in our gut which directly affects our brain. The Vagus Nerve directly connects the brain and the gut axis, making it important for us to keep our gut healthy.

Sometimes we are sensitive to certain foods as they affect our mood and mental health but are unaware of it. As we are more dependent on simple sugars and bad carbohydrates, they loop us into a vicious circle of moodiness, stress and depression. These deficiencies can lead to depression and other mental health issues. For eg: If you are low on B-12, Calcium, Vitamin D, Vitamin D3, TSH, Omega-3 due to a predominantly vegetarian diet, the lack of these nutrients may lead to mental health problems.

Are there any foods that are detrimental to mental well-being?

Every living being has a different mechanism and the reaction of their gut and brain to various foods is different. Though, it has been observed in many studies that gluten, sugar and casein can hamper our mental health in many ways, this phenomenon may not be applicable for everybody. Gluten has a tendency of sticking to the gut and making it weak and susceptible to infections. This eventually leads to stress, anxiety and depression.

How can we incorporate healthier eating into our day-to-day lives?

To maintain your mental well-being, you can include good carbs and fat, fibre-rich foods and complex sugars in your diet. Avoiding processed food is essential. Some healthy switches in our diet can

help us maintain our mental well-being.

Here are a few changes that you can incorporate in your daily diet:

- Red rice instead of white
- Avoiding processed food
- Have a wholesome breakfast
- Add more fibre to your diet

Let's talk more about fermentation, its benefits and how it is related to our mental health?

When a baby is in a womb, it is untouched and protected from bacteria or viruses from the outer world. The moment the baby comes out, it is introduced to all kinds of bacteria - good, bad and neutral. Which is why the first 100 days are crucial for the child's immunity. The more they are exposed to good bacteria, the more they have a chance of building their immunity.

Our gut essentially starts from our mouth and extends to the anus. Throughout this entire landscape the good bacteria (probiotics) are fighting the bad bacteria. This is where fermentation comes into the picture. It provides an environment for good bacteria to grow and replenish from time to time. Studies suggest that 90% of the good hormones are made in our gut with the help of these probiotics. These good bacteria keep your gut healthy. The best way to propagate this process is to have a probiotic and prebiotic-rich meal. The good bacteria feed on fibre-rich prebiotic food and that is how they flourish. Fermented food is the biggest source of probiotics and more diverse than supplements or pills.

Hence, we can say that fermentation benefits in increasing the good gut bacteria which are responsible for increasing immunity, happy hormones and keeping diseases at bay. All of this eventually contributes to your mental well-being.

What 5 foods do you feel need to be a part of everyone's diet?

Fermented food like sauerkraut, curd, idli, kombucha can help increase the diversity of good bacteria in your gut hence they are called probiotics.

Fibre-rich food (prebiotics) such as red rice, onion, garlic cold-pressed oils, sweet potato, dark chocolate (75% and above), along with lots of fresh vegetables should be a part of everyone's diet.

Any health tips for our readers for the New Year?

Always know what you're eating and what goes into the food you eat. Make a habit of reading the ingredients and the source on the label of the products that you are purchasing.

KANJI

INGREDIENTS

Beetroot 6

Carrots 2

Salt to taste

Ground mustard 2 tsp

Water 2 litres

METHOD

1. Chop all the vegetables
2. Put them in a 2.5 litres a glass jar
3. Put salt and mustard, stir well
4. Cover the jar with muslin cloth
5. Put the jar in sunlight for 3 days
6. Stir twice a day and taste twice a day
7. Sieve the liquid in a glass bottle and refrigerate
8. Serve chilled





FOOD TRENDS TO RULE 2021

At the beginning of every New Year – the wizards of culinary prognostication begin to look at their bubbling cauldrons to predict what the food on our table will look like. However, with 2020 being the way it is, 2021 is feeling the pressure making these predictions count.

2020 saw the F&B sector get hit by what can be considered its biggest crisis yet. With millions of jobs lost across the globe, everyone in the culinary industry would be looking to 2021 as their year of redemption. This hope has been given credence by the latest Dineout Report that states that India would be employing over 1 million new workers in the F&B sector in 2021.

However, despite the soon to be introduced vaccines, and the shaky economic recovery across the world, there is one thing that most food-forecasters agree upon – This is not going to be a year for frivolous food or any breakout cuisines. “What we’ve learned from 2020 is to always be prepared for the future.” Said Ankit Mehrotra, co-founder and CEO of Dineout. “Some interesting finds like the rise of shared kitchen spaces, to minimize overhead expenses, to be wary of future uncertainties have cropped up in the study. Restaurants are not more inclined towards owning consumer data, which will only rise with the changing strategy in 2021.”

If there is one keyword that everyone in the F&B industry is banking on, it is adaptability! The pandemic showed us just how adaptable the industry is, with a multitude of new ideas finding roots and gaining traction.

With that being said, let's dive into Foodism's pick of the Top Food Trends of 2021.

By Jatan Dave

DIY Meal Kits from Chefs

One of the biggest influences of the lockdown in 2020 was the way that it deepened our relationship with food and the kitchen. As more and more people took the plunge into cooking for themselves, they began to realise that eating restaurant-quality food is eminently possible at home. Add to this mix, the rise of DIY meal-kits from restaurants, and people had the pleasure of consuming haute cuisine, at home. As restaurants began to work to adapt to the changing times, they too began to understand the need for everyone to be their own masterchef.

Meal kits have proven to create far lesser waste than when one is grocery shopping. While packaging changes continue, the sheer control on the quantum of food-wastage is already a point in favour of meal-kits. Moreover, these meal kits can be customized according to your own dietary preferences. Many brands out there are customizing their meal kits to fit the vegan, keto or other dietary preferences of their audiences.

People are no longer interested in risking a trip to the grocery store. Instead, the meal-kits offer them the perfect mix of convenience, health, and most importantly, diversity. Today, the meal-kit business is worth nearly \$5 billion and is anticipated to reach around \$11.2 billion by 2022 (Statista).

Trimming Down the Waste

Thanks to the pandemic, the idea of consuming leftovers gained more traction than ever before. Leading the battle against food waste were culinary legends in the form of Massimo Bottura, and Jose Andres. With more and more people cooking at home during the pandemic, the idea of maximizing the usage of the available food has taken priority.

There have been a spate of applications and organizations that are working towards repurposing leftover food from homes and restaurants alike. 2021 heralds a brand new age in household recycling of food. More and more chefs are promoting the usage of leftovers in meals. This trend has been seamlessly adopted by home-chefs around the country as well. The trickle-down effect of this particular concept only goes to show that people are looking for ways to minimize the overall food wastage that happens in their homes.

Around 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted each year. In fact, more than 70% of the food is wasted even before it reaches the plate, with restaurants bearing the brunt of the most wastage, nearly 40%. With new technologies being implemented in the supply chain of food, innovation is

not far behind in the face of crisis. Technologies like Winnow have seen restaurant kitchens reduce food waste up to 40-70% within 6-12 months.

Menus Go Digital

The human interaction aspect of eating out has become a thing of the past in 2021. With more and more restaurant adopting digital menus and take-outs becoming the norm, the evolution of restaurant dining has seen an interesting turn.

With the pandemic making human interactions more dangerous than ever, those looking to dine out are looking to identify means to order online. With online delivery applications seeing a massive resurgence as soon as the lockdown was lifted, it has become a near mandate for most restaurants to adopt a digital menu.

"This year will go down in history as one of the most disruptive ones ever, especially for a people intensive sector like food services." Said Merrill Pereyra, Managing Director, Pizza Hut India Subcontinent. "But as they say, never waste a good crisis, and I do believe that innovations which we had to implement in a matter of days will bode us well in future. For example, contactless deliveries, and rapid digitization of several offline aspects of the business, which we executed within few days of the lockdown being announced."

The Dineout survey conducted across 20 cities revealed that in the post-COVID era 81% of the diners are looking to order from a digital menu. The report shows that 85% of those surveyed prefer a digital valet instead of waiting in possibly contaminated public spaces, and 84% prefer giving digital feedback. In fact, Dineout's latest paper shows that digital menus have already been adopted by 40% of restaurants surveyed and is set to grow up to nearly 90% this year.



Home Chefs Take the Lead

The pandemic has turned many a passionate foodie into a professional. With many home chefs taking to social media to share their creations, the process of marketing ones creations has become easier than ever.

Thousands of home chefs have already started their own businesses and brands during the pandemic itself, and many others are waiting in the pipeline to do the same.

Another thing that has added to the boom of home chefs is the rise in the number of aggregators in the field. Many home chefs have already begun the process of applying for an FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) certificate for their business. There are many home chefs out there who have already tied up with a host of logistics services to ensure their products are reaching their customers on time.

More and more foodies too, are turning to home chefs to place orders as opposed to restaurants. The simple concept of having personalized attention lavished on the food you eat is enough marketing in times of extreme hygiene consciousness. From snacks, to baked goods, to daily meals, home chefs have left no niche unexplored when it comes to catering to the highly particular Indian taste buds. With home chef products being a sight cheaper than restaurant meals and products, the Indian foodie is set to be spoilt for choices in 2021.

Local Goes Global

With global supply chains being thrown out of whack during the pandemic, local ingredients have seen a resurgence. More and more chefs, home chefs and foodies are going local in their search for the best ingredients and produce. Consumers are becoming more vocal about the fact that they want locally grown, organic produce, and their voice is being heard!



“I have always been focused on buying organic vegetables,” Says Ketaki Dave, a retired bank official from Vadodara. “During the lockdown, the only option available was locally grown produce. Thankfully I also had my kitchen garden to depend on, but the focus on local has only strengthened during this time.”

Farmers have identified the shift in trends and are slowly making

the move towards organically grown produce. More and more vegetable vendors too have leveraged the pandemic in order to create a brand new database of locally sourced produce. With sustainability and environmental awareness also becoming a huge topic of concern, locally sourced produce only increases in value considering the much smaller carbon footprint it takes to bring the produce from farm to table.





Flavour of the Year
**BASQUE BURNT
CHEESECAKE**





Flavour of the Year **BASQUE BURNT CHEESECAKE**

You've seen it on your feeds, and it is here to stay! The crustless cheesecake baked in a scorching oven that ends up caramelizing its top yet maintaining its insides' softness – arrived from Spain in the 1990s. Its popularity has continued to grow, so much so that Basque burnt cheesecake may even become the birthday

cake flavour of 2021.

This cheesecake came to fore by La Vina in San Sebastian, Spain many years back. Soon enough it got a ton of hype in the Asia Pacifics, especially among bakers. An Insta-favourite, it is definitely one of the most photographed desserts during the pandemic. More and more home bakers are trying their hand at creating their own versions of the Basque Burnt Cheesecake.

Feeding for a Stronger Gut

With the current obsession over health and immunity, gut health is bound to take a front and center role in 2021. The rise in popularity of supplements like Kombucha, which is being touted as the new soda, is a testament to how the 'biotics' trend will continue for 2021. Euromonitor estimates that 25% of global consumers suffer from digestive issues, 50% of whom feel it is severely detrimental to health. This has opened up the gates for a whole host of probiotic, pre-biotic and post-biotic food products.

Over and above the conventional probiotics, there are also new-fangled terms like prebiotics and postbiotics. To make things easier, prebiotics is the food for the microorganisms that are the probiotics. When these microorganisms, or probiotics, digest their food, they release postbiotics. Prebiotics are essentially fibre-rich foods that feed the probiotic microorganisms. Bananas, onion, garlic, artichoke, soybean and others are probiotics. Foods like yogurt, kombucha, kefir and many others are considered to be probiotic in nature as they are composed largely of gut-friendly bacteria.

Our gut contains 70% of our immune cells, and keeping them healthy is pivotal to our overall immunity and health. With the increased focus on immunity and health, gut health is bound to take position front and center when it comes to our dietary choices.




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IN A Spiritual Preference

More often than not, the nutritional customs of a religion were largely influenced by the region they emerged from.

It is often said that food has no religion, however, religions do have their own take on how food should be consumed.

“Religion and culture and worldview are all synonymous, and a big part of how we select our identity is through the foods we eat,”

said Don C. Benjamin, a faculty associate in the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at Arizona State University, in an interview with The State Press. “They remind us who we are”

Religion has always dictated the food we eat, as well as how we eat it. More often than not, the nutritional customs of a religion were largely influenced by the region they emerged from. For most people, food becomes the closest means for individuals to retain and bolster their own cultural identity.

Over and above nourishment, the food we eat, and whom we eat it with can change relationships for the better, between individuals and communities. The habits, rules and beliefs surrounding food have been a matter of great debate over the year. What we are looking to do through this article is to trace the connection between religion and food.

Popular French essayist, Roland Barthes, said food is a means of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations and behavior. India as a nation has a multitude of religions and cultures and each of them have their own particular food and nutrition dos and do-nots.

Let's take a look at some of the dietary proclivities of India's most popular religions-





Buddhism

There are several forms of Buddhism that exist around the world. These include Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana. Each of which have their own unique histories and relationships with food.

Mahayana Buddhism insists that its followers should not eat any kind of meat or fish. According to Buddha, all beings share the same spiritual essence and are closely related to one another. Therefore killing them is same as killing oneself and akin to being a cannibal. When monastics from Greater India migrated to China,

their followers provided them with money instead of food. From those days onwards, the monks cultivated their own vegetable plots and bought food from the markets.

Theravada Buddhism is the oldest form of Buddhism. There are references of consumption of non-vegetarian food in the Pali Canon. This collection of teachings from the Buddha mentions the Buddha clearly refusing a suggestion to mandate vegetarianism among the monks. The standard rule to follow non-vegetarianism is: the animal should not be seen, heard or killed purposely for the eater. This branch

of Buddhism allows the consumption of pork, chicken and fish if it was not slaughtered for the purpose of consumption. The idea being that consuming the animal is the best way to respectfully utilise it after death.

Vajrayana Buddhism's practitioners allow the consumption of both alcohol and meat. The regions where this form of Buddhism propagates, non-vegetarianism is usually the norm. This is why, many followers have migrated to Tibet and India where following a vegetarian diet is easy.

Hinduism

Hinduism is a diverse religion and is considered the fountainhead of many religions in India. Contrary to popular perception, it doesn't necessarily follow a vegetarian diet. However, some Hindus avoid meat and eggs completely, to minimise hurting other living beings.

Theology Behind a Vegetarian Diet

Hindu texts suggest that vegetarianism is considered sattvic which purifies the mind and body. Some Hindus follow a lacto-vegetarian diet which involves eating dairy products but not meat and eggs. They follow this diet because they follow the principles of non-violence applied to animals and the conviction that non-vegetarian food is detrimental for the mind and body. Many Hindus abstain from eating onion and garlic during Chaturmas period (roughly July-November).

Hinduism practiced in different parts of India, has different dietary preferences. Hinduism practiced in Gujarat, in the form of the Swaminarayan Sampraday, or those following ISKON avoid meat and eggs in all forms.

Theology Behind a Non-Vegetarian Diet

A significant proportion of Hindus follow a non-vegetarian diet consisting of poultry, fish, goat, sheep and seafood, but they do not eat beef as they consider cows as a sacred and maternal figure.

In Bengal, Assam, and south-western India, fish is a staple and is consumed in their regular diet. They prefer the jhatka method of slaughter to give the animal a quick and painless death.

Many Hindus fast on days like Ekadashi in honour of Lord Vishnu, Mondays in honour of Lord Shiva, and Saturdays in honour of Maruti, or Saturn. On these days only certain foods are eaten, like dairy products such as curd, fruit, potatoes, sago, sweet potatoes, amaranth seeds, nuts, and millet.





Islam

Muslims follow a jurisprudence which specifies the difference between halal and haram foods. Halal is the Arabic word for permissible. Halal food is that which adheres to Islamic law, as defined in the Quran. Halal meat is that which was alive and healthy at the time of slaughter and all the blood was drained from the carcass. Bismillah (in the name of God) should be uttered before slaughtering an animal.

Alcohol, pork and pork products are considered haram in Islam. As Islam prioritises life over death, the haram or prohibited foods can be consumed in a period of emergency or dire need. Muslims fast during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. During this time, Muslims take time to introspect, perform namaz, read Quran and abstain from food and water from dawn to dusk.



Christianity

Christianity does not have any particular dietary rules and customs. Jesus was Jewish and therefore, Christians stuck to the dietary norms of the Jewish people set in the Old Testament for a considerable amount of time. But with the establishment of the early Church, they soon realised that they do not need to follow the Jewish customs of not eating pork and shellfish.

Christianity does not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, but some Christians choose not to drink it. The Bible doesn't condemn alcohol but condemns drunkenness and gluttony. In fact, the Catholics, during communion, consume bread and wine which are a metaphor for the consumption of the body of Christ. During the season of Lent, usually 40 days before Easter, where Christians remember the sacrifice of Jesus and abstain from food and festivities.



Jainism

One of the central premise of Jainism is non-violence. Hence, they rigorously follow a lacto-vegetarianism diet and do not eat root vegetables like potato, onion, garlic, carrot etc.

The understanding here is that as plants have only one sense and are the least developed form of life they can be consumed. They avoid eating mushrooms and yeast since they grow in unhygienic environments and may refuge other life forms. Honey is also proscribed as they believe that eating it would be to benefit off the labour of bees and is considered to be violence against bees.

Jains fast during Paryushan where they avoid green leafy vegetables as digging them up could kill microorganisms in the soil during the monsoon. Alcohol is completely prohibited in Jainism.



Sikhism

Guru Nanak Ji, the founder of Sikhism emphasised a vegetarian diet. But as the community evolved with time, different sects emerged, each with their own dietary preferences. The Amritdhari Sikhs consume meat which is not Kutha meat. Kutha meat is meat that has been harvested using the slow-bleeding technique, and Sikhs consider this form of meat sinful and prefer to eat jhatka meat.

While Sikhism does not specify followers to fast on particular days, but following usual Hindu traditions, some older Sikhs fast during the full moon or during some holidays.

Various religions have their own diverse beliefs based on their own region and cultural preferences. The purpose of dietary restrictions in religions is usually revolving around helping the individuals with their spiritual growth. Fasting and feasting continue to be common denominators for all religions.

We are what we eat, has been an adage that is best represented by the relationship religion shares with food. In a nutshell, food is not merely nourishment for your body, but also spiritual fodder for your soul.

RECIPES



MOROCCAN HARIRA

INGREDIENTS

Rice bran oil 1-2 tbsp
Onions 2 large (finely chopped)
Garlic 4 cloves (chopped)
Turmeric 2 tsp
Cumin 2 tsp
Cinnamon ½ tsp
Red chillies 2 (deseeded and sliced)
Tomato paste 500g
Vegetable stock 1.5 litre
Red lentils 175gms
Carrots 2 (chopped)
Sweet potato 1 (peeled and diced)
Celery sticks 5 (chopped)
Coriander ⅔ small pack
Lemon 1 (cut into 4 wedges) to serve

METHOD

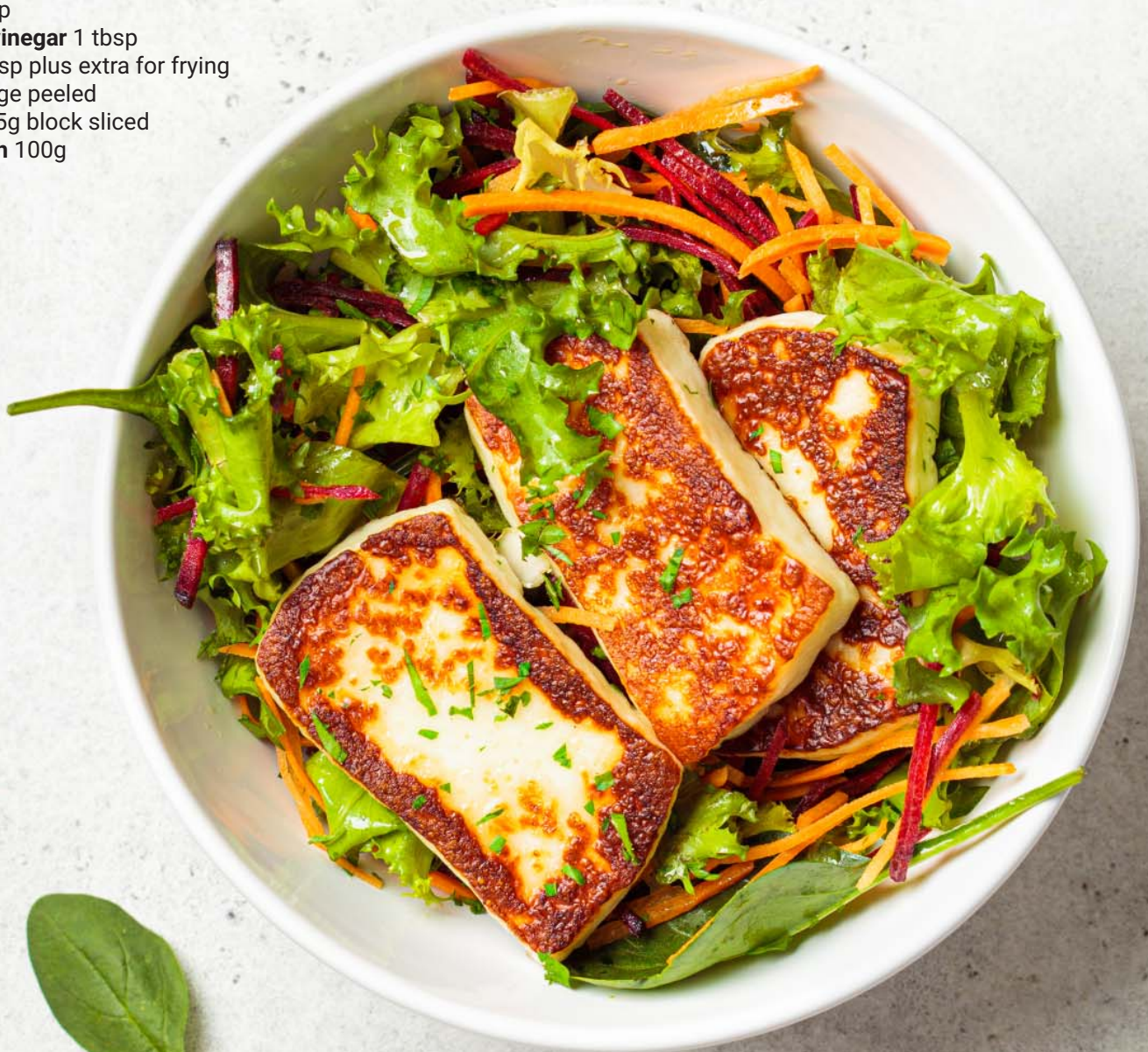
1. Heat the oil in a large non-stick sauté pan over medium heat and fry the onions and garlic until they start to soften.
2. Tip in the spices and chilli, stir briefly, then pour in the tomato paste and stock.
3. Add the lentils, carrots, sweet potato and celery, and bring to a boil.
4. Cover the pan and leave to simmer for 30 mins, then cook uncovered for a further 5-10 mins until the vegetables and lentils are tender.
5. Stir in the chopped coriander and serve in bowls with lemon wedges for squeezing over, and the reserved coriander sprinkled over.



CARROT, HALLOUMI & ORANGE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

Oranges 2 large
Wholegrain Mustard 1½ tbsp
Honey 1½ tsp
White wine vinegar 1 tbsp
Olive oil 3 tbsp plus extra for frying
Carrots 2 large peeled
Halloumi 225g block sliced
Baby spinach 100g



METHOD

1. Cut the peel and pith away from the oranges.
2. Use a small serrated knife to segment the orange, catching any juices in a bowl, then squeeze any excess juice from the off-cut pith into the bowl as well.
3. Add the mustard, honey, vinegar, oil and some seasoning to the bowl and mix well.
4. Using a vegetable peeler, peel carrot ribbons into the dressing bowl and toss gently.
5. Heat a drizzle of oil in a frying pan and cook the halloumi for a few mins until golden on both sides.
6. Toss the spinach through the dressed carrots.
7. Arrange the spinach mixture on plates and top with the halloumi and oranges.

MUJADARA

INGREDIENTS

Water 7 cups divided
Long-grain brown rice 1 cup uncooked
Rock Salt 1 1/2 teaspoons divided
Yellow onions 3 large
Extra-virgin olive oil 1/4 cup divided
Thyme sprigs 6
Ground cumin 1 tbsp
Bay leaf 1
Red lentils 1 cup uncooked
Pine nuts 1/4 cup toasted
Plain whole-milk yogurt (optional)
Chopped fresh mint (optional)

METHOD

1. Bring 4 cups water to boil in a small pot over high.
2. Add rice and 1/2 teaspoon salt, and boil for 10 minutes. Drain.
3. While the rice par-cooks, halve and thinly slice the onions horizontally.
4. Heat a medium pot or baking dish with a lid over medium-high, and then add 3 tablespoons olive oil.
5. Add sliced onions, thyme, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt.
6. Reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring often, until onions are softened and quite browned, about 20 to 25 minutes.
7. Add a sprinkle of water if needed to keep from burning.
8. Remove half of the onions (about 1 cup), and set aside.
9. Add the par-cooked rice, cumin, bay leaf, and remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil to pot.
10. Cook, stirring often, until toasted and fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes.
11. Add lentils and remaining 3 cups water.
12. Increase heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil; reduce heat to a very low simmer.
13. Cover and cook until rice and lentils are tender and water is absorbed, about 40 minutes.
14. While mujadara cooks, put reserved half of onions in a small pan, and cook over medium-high, stirring often, until fried and crisp, even blackened in places, about 5 minutes. Set aside.
15. To serve, stir pine nuts into mujadara, and sprinkle with fried onions.
16. If you like, drizzle with additional olive oil and a dollop of yogurt, and top with mint.





Dr. Preety Tyagi, Delhi

Preety Tyagi, a leading health-coach, nutritionist and founder of MY22BMI has made a habit of creating healthy and easy to make recipes. Here is her favourite winter go-to drink for you to try this season and boost your immunity.

IMMUNITY BOOSTER KADHA

INGREDIENTS

Lemons, 10 to 12 halved and juiced (reserve about 6 to 8 lemon halves to boil)

Fresh ginger, 1 large piece peeled and sliced around 200 g

Turmeric root, 1 to 3-inch piece peeled and sliced

Honey or Agave nectar 3 tablespoons

Cayenne pepper (red pepper powder) 1 teaspoon or less

Water 4 cups

METHOD

1. Place all the ingredients into a large pot over medium heat.
2. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to low and cover.
3. Simmer for 45 minutes.
4. Strain out the large pieces of ginger, turmeric and lemon rinds.
5. Once completely cooled, strain & pour into your glass jars for storage in the fridge.

Drink 8-10 ounces a day, warmed or cold to help boost your immunity.



Te-A-Me's

Strawberry Cream Infusion Tea

Imagine, you are sitting in your balcony. A light breeze washes over the freshly blossomed Flame of the Forest outside your balcony, and as you take a sip of your fragrant tea, you are transported from your apartment to the valley of flowers.

This is how fruit teas work their charm.

Foggy, chilly winter mornings are ideal for curling up inside your blanket and watching the day pass by from between the sheets. The only thing that can wake you up from your stupor is a hot, steaming cuppa. Many people don't like consuming caffeinated products but the start of the day requires something warm and soothing. A hot beverage that packs a strong-enough punch to make us less of a zombie and more of a human is what is required.

Fruit tea infusions are perfect for such occasions. The aromatic essence of dried fruits, flower petals, herbs or spices work really well without any traces of caffeine.

Te-A-Me's Strawberry Cream has a unique fruity, sweet scented tea infusion that is invigorating and refreshing. The tartness of strawberry with a subtle hint of cream will calm your nerves instantly. The fascinating reddish-pink hues of the fruit infusion tea is a sight to behold. Perfect for all kinds of seasons, the tea can be hot or cold (perfect for iced teas actually!) and is packed with antioxidants and vitamins.

What's Inside

Natural Strawberry flavour (3%)
 Apple Peel (40%)
 Rosehip (20%)
 Hibiscus (34%)
 Natural Cream flavour (3%)

Packaging

The Te-A-Me boxes are have a distinctive use of bright colours, with similarly hued tea-bags within. These standalone sachets usually come in a pack of 25.

Variants

Apart from the Strawberry Cream, The Fruit and Flower Infusion collection has 5 more variants - Apple Cinnamon, Cranberry Apple, Chamomile, Peppermint and Orange Ginger.



Aruni Jayathilaka, Sri Lanka

SRI LANKAN SERENDIPITY IN TEXAS

Aruni Jayathilaka's food blogging journey in Texas is an ode to her mother's healthy cooking and her lovely years in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Some fragrances are entrenched within memory through associations formed way back in childhood. Aruni Jayathilaka's love for food stemmed from her mother's splendid cooking from back in the bylanes of Kandy. Her belief is that there is nothing in the world that the peppery tempering of kadi patta on a spicy, creamy chicken curry can't fix.

Her Culinary Journey

What started as a necessity, turned into a lifestyle choice and a way to express herself. Aruni started cooking Sri Lankan food when she shifted to Texas. She shares, "I moved to the USA at age 26 for my PhD and I had to cook for myself. I took my mother's passion for cooking with me, and I began to treat it as a therapeutic stress

relief from my busy academic workday. I started to concoct my own dishes and recipes, and while trying to keep my Sri Lankan roots alive, I began to explore the cuisines of other cultures that I encountered in the US and started posting pictures on my blog."

Her mom's homemade food has always been her inspiration and her partner saw the potential in her kitchen experiments and advised her to chronicle her food expeditions. She elaborates, "I got more motivated to devise new recipes and capture better pictures of my food. My boyfriend gave me a "food diary" for Christmas 2019, designed for recording new recipes, with tips for creating new dishes. All this came together to make cooking and food blogging a real hobby."

Making Food Healthy at Home

The pandemic changed a lot of things for us, especially the way we consumed food. Staying at home became a necessity and that resulted in a lot of binge-eating. Aruni, however, didn't want to fall prey to this scenario. She elaborates, "I had to make sure I was making healthy food, so my boyfriend and I didn't end up obese after COVID. I found healthy alternatives to high-carb/high-sugar ingredients, used fewer fatty foods, and selected food that were rich in protein, vitamins and good cholesterol. We started a rigorous diet plan, supplemented with nuts and grains for fibre and lots of lean meat, seafood, fresh vegetables, and alternative ingredients like almond flour and flaxseed milk."

Her mom has been her pillar of strength and inspired her to keep cooking in a foreign land. She explains, "My first inspiration was my mother's cooking, which is also tied to my roots in Sri Lankan cuisine. She did her best with what she had, always trying to make us a variety of dishes so that we rarely had the same dish twice in one week. She also endeavoured to keep everything healthy so that we could have a balanced diet." A self-confessed breakfast fan, she loves gorging on healthy morning meals with her go-to recipe being banana pancakes made from almond flour and sugar-free syrup.

"I moved to the USA at age 26 for my PhD; I had to cook for myself. I took my mother's passion for cooking with me, and I began to treat it as a therapeutic stress relief from my busy academic workday."

Finding her Blogging Voice

Aruni has a unique voice when it comes to sharing her recipes and food stories. "I try my best to create dishes that look and taste delicious and indulgent, but are packed with nutrients. My grand purpose is to prove that healthy food does not have to mean boring food." She says. "I also try to capture my food shots in a way to showcase that nutritious meals can still look like restaurant ready meals that you don't have to feel bad for eating."

While her diet, and recipes, tend to be protein heavy, she makes sure to supplement these with a hearty mix of fruits and vegetables. "I like to create a variety of salad mixtures to go with my lunch or dinner dishes, in order to have a really balanced meal." Says Aruni. "My salads can include super nutritious leaves like spinach, arugula, or kale. I even added small fruits like pomegranate seeds or mango slices, and healthy fat sources like avocado or nuts."

Her food blogging style is something that she has evolved over a period of time and has her own unique signature to. When quizzed about what food bloggers could do to develop a unique style, she says, "Be true to your own style! You may take inspiration from multiple different sources, but it is important to cultivate a style that is your own and stick to it."

CRISPY ROASTED KALE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

Kale (up to ½ bag, more if needed)
Pomegranate seeds ½ cup
Honeycrisp apple ½ cup diced
Walnuts or pecans (sliced or whole) ¼ cup
Olive oil 2 tbsp
Chili flakes ½ tsp
Garlic 1 clove minced
Basil olive oil 1 tbsp
Salt and black pepper to taste



METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 400F
2. Trim the kale and toss with olive oil, salt, pepper, garlic and red chili flakes
3. Spread the kale on a baking sheet, bake at 400F for 15 minutes (or until kale is crisp)
4. Add pomegranate, apple and nuts. Dress with basil olive oil



LOW CARB / LOW SUGAR MADELEINES

INGREDIENTS

Almond flour 5/8 cup
Arrowroot flour 1/8 cup
Tapioca flour 1/8 cup
Coconut flour 1/8 cup
Unsalted butter 200 gms
Eggs 2 (large)
Erythritol powdered sugar ½ cup
Lemon Juice of one
Lemon zest 1 tbsp
Vanilla extract 2 tsp
Baking powder ½ tsp
Salt a Pinch

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 350F, Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat, until brown, then put aside
2. Whisk together the flours, salt, baking powder
3. Beat eggs with the erythritol at high speed until the mixture is creamy. (Since erythritol is different to cane sugar, it may take longer to mix than you are used to) Then add vanilla, lemon juice and zest.
4. Combine the wet and dry ingredients in a bowl and mix well with a spatula (to avoid overmixing)
5. Add the melted butter and mix until combined
6. Cover the mixture and refrigerate for 30-45 minutes
Grease the madeleine pan with the melted butter and add 1 tbsp of the batter mixture to each groove. Bake at 350F for 10-12 minutes
7. Garnish with more erythritol powdered sugar and enjoy!



WHEN FOOD'S YOUR BEST BAE

Inspired by her grandma's cooking, Aastha Gilhotra has embarked upon the journey to create a community focused on a healthy lifestyle.



Aastha Gilhotra, Noida

For many, the love of food never finds the shape that it truly deserves. And then there are some who cannot help but carve their own space, like an oversized helping of chocolate cake. "Coming from a Punjabi family, delicious food has always been a norm," says Aastha. "I am an IT professional, but food has been something I have always been passionate about. For as long as I can remember, I loved styling and capturing my recipes." It is this passion that she has managed to capture through her page, @thefoodbaesics.

Her Blogging Journey

The year 2020 has given us a number of rising food voices in the blogosphere. With time and avenues on their hand, they have finally managed to give their food passions a voice. One such voice heard was that of Aastha Gilhotra.

"I have been very mindful of what I eat and by extension, what I cook. I have always been inquisitive about finding healthy substitutes where I don't have to compromise on taste," says Aastha. She found her food-oeuvre in the rapidly growing landscape of recipes that are both highly nutritious, and tasteful at the same time.

Thanks to some timely prodding and encouragement from friends and family, Aastha finally started her page @thefoodbaesics, in June 2020. "The love and encouragement from friends and family over the years gave me confidence of pulling this off. It is very exciting to be creating new recipes that encourage the consumption of whole, organic and superfoods that will provide wholesome nourishment and energy for the body and soul!"



The Pandemic Effect

"One of the most important things I found myself practising during the lockdown and through the pandemic, is eating antioxidant loaded food." Says Aastha. "I have started eating a lot more fruits, vegetables, spices and herbs, which are antioxidant rich, and can boost our immunity."

Having launched her page as soon as the lockdown was lifted, Aastha brought to her page a whole host of learnings accrued during this period. This is why her page is replete with a number of healthy, delicious and superfood rich recipes. Not to mention, her skills with capturing and styling her food make the whole experience that much more interesting.

Cooking Inspiration From The Greats

"My grandmother has always been an excellent cook, and I think I have incorporated this skill from her." Says Aastha, talking to us about her food inspirations.

Her top-3 Instagram accounts for inspiration are:

@nutritionstripped by McKel Kooienga

@ranveer.brar by Ranveer Brar

@deliciouslyella by Ella Mills

But the best inspiration to be had is always close to home, and that was the case with Aastha as well. "The 3 most important women in my life, my grandmother, my mom and my mother-in-law are my greatest inspiration. They create the yummiest comfort meals ever!" Said Aastha.

Favourite Go-To Healthy Recipe

For someone who runs a page dedicated to creating healthy recipes, finding her favourite healthy recipe might seem like a tough task, but not for Aastha.

"Breakfast smoothie bowls!" Said Aastha, "They

are so yummy but quick at the same time. You can create pretty much any combo of flavours if you want, and then top it with your favourite fruits, and other crunchy things like cereal and nuts. It is super easy, as well as very healthy."

Her page actually has a selection of recipes right from sauces, to soups to smoothie bowls and breakfast bars. Her love for food and all its benefits are showcased in the sheer variety she manages to bring to her page.

"I want to incorporate healthy eating habits that are wholesome, easy and aligned with your mind, body and soul." Said Aastha. "My account is where you get recipes that are nutritious while also being an indulgence for your eyes. Apart from that I also share remedies for skincare, haircare as well as nutritional facts."

Staying Healthy Online and IRL

The difference between one's online and real life persona has only increased over the years. Which is what makes Aastha Gilhotra such an anomaly. She manages to practice what she preaches. "Being a vegetarian, I make sure to include protein and healthy fats in my daily diet. For example, I love having walnuts, flaxseeds, tofu, avocado, soybean, and olives in my diet." She said. "Variation and moderation are the key to a healthy lifestyle. Having a combination of different foods, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains is ideal."

Her focus on creating a healthy feed is also showcased in the way she showcases her food. Hers is a story that just goes to show that we have a number of incredibly talented food voices coming through in the last year, and watching them grow in 2021 makes for a very exciting year ahead.



QUINOA PANJEERI LADOO

INGREDIENTS

Quinoa flour 2 cups

Finely Chopped Almonds

½ cup

Finely Chopped Cashews

½ cup

Desi Ghee ¼ cup

Cardamom powder

½ teaspoon

Dates Paste 10-12 deseeded dates

Edible rose petals handful

METHOD

1. Heat 3-4 tablespoons of desi ghee in a pan on medium heat and add quinoa flour into it. Roast until it has a nutty aroma and the colour turns light brown.

2. Transfer it into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients – almonds, cashews and cardamom powder.

3. Mix it well with the help of a spatula.

4. Now add paste of 10-12 deseeded dates and you can use your fingers to bind all the ingredients together.

5. Add edible rose petals to add in some rose infused flavour.

6. Once the mixture has started to bind, then take a small portion from the mixture (around 35 grams) and press between your palms to bind it, then roll to form a round shaped ladoo or you can also use a mould to make a perfect shape.



NO BAKE BREAKFAST BARS

INGREDIENTS

Regular oats 4 cups
Roasted rice puffs 1.5 cups
Dates paste 10-15 deseeded dates
Honey ¼ cup
Chia seeds 2 teaspoons
Cranberries ¼ cup
Almond Silvers ¼ cup
Pumpkin seeds ¼ cup
Cinnamon powder ¼ teaspoon
Salt a pinch
Cooking oil 1 tbsp

METHOD

1. Dry roast the oats, rice puffs, almonds in a pan until fragrant. Keep stirring!
2. Transfer the mixture in a bowl and let it cool.
3. Add all the remaining dry ingredients – chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, cranberries, cinnamon powder, salt and mix it well with the help of a spatula.
4. Add the dates paste and honey into the mixture and mix it well, so that everything binds nicely together.
5. Take a baking dish and grease it with cooking oil. Transfer and press the mixture into the dish with the help of a spatula.
6. Place the baking dish in a refrigerator for 1 hour, let the mixture set.
7. Cut into bars and wrap them individually for snacking on-the-go.



CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF FOOD

Indrajeet Nishad's passion for food photography and styling has won a lot of hearts and created a niche in the food industry. Scroll through his page on Instagram by the handle @bombaylicious to checkout his visual wizardry.

Indrajeet Nishad, Mumbai

The food industry is a gold mine for budding photographers who want to capture the essence of different dishes and cuisines to tantalise the senses of consumers. Photography, as an art, has the ability to capture magnificent things and immortalise their beauty forever.

Indrajeet Nishad, the founder of Bombaylicious, has always been fascinated by how the right kind of detailing and styling can leave a lasting impression on someone's mind. His styling and food photography skills help him

express himself in a way nothing else can.

His Journey

Indrajeet started taking a keen interest in food styling while pursuing a course in biotechnology from Mumbai. Considering he loved trying out new dishes every now and then, he began chronicling his food journey through photographs.

Soon enough, the desire to dive deeper into food photography took over. "While the idea of blogging and photography began merely as a hobby, I took it upon myself to transform it into a profession and dedicated

all my time to it." Said Indrajeet. "The extravagant flavours and cuisines of today intrigued me and I try to capture these detailings in my own style, giving them my own touch.

It is this passion that has ensured that Indrajeet kept learning something new all the time. With food styling and photography as his forte, he has evolved his signature style of chiaroscuro photography. The result is a dark and indulgent imagery of some amazing dishes. He plays with light and shadow as well as props and elements to champion the dish in the frame.

His Inspiration

His dad has always guided him through difficult times and acted as a beacon in his journey of self-discovery.

"My dad is my biggest inspiration simply because I have always seen him put in the best efforts in everything he does." Said Indrajeet. "When I decided to pursue photography, styling, and blogging as my full-time profession, I knew it was a drastic decision to make since I do not have a degree in the field. But my Dad's dedication and ethics encouraged me to move ahead." With a positive mindset and an unflinchingly dedicated work ethic, he has managed to navigate this field to create a unique style of his own.

His Unique Approach

Indrajeet always aspired to leave his mark in whatever work he does. He believes in styling the food in such a way that the need for enhancing the image post-photography is minimal. He loves using chiaroscuro in his styling and photography.

He explains, "I love playing with contrasting colours. My go-to aesthetic theme has always been the 'moody/shady' effect that I create in my shots."

He is a one-man team but doesn't mind collaborating with other artists when he wants to up the ante and make it more creative and fun. "I am a food stylist and photographer, so I prefer incorporating my signature styles into each look." Said Indrajeet. "I do work with different clients, but we aren't a set group of people. You see, diversity is good since you get to incorporate your style in different genres, cuisines and the best part is learning new things along the way."

The Challenges

Working in the food industry and carving a niche for yourself is a

task in itself. A competitive field, tasting success can take some time, if at all you do manage to taste it. At times like these it is important to take the good and the bad experiences in your stride.

"The extravagant flavours and cuisines of today intrigue me and I try to capture these details in my own style, giving them my own touch."

"As a food stylist and photographer it becomes challenging to provide clients with an extraordinary result within the boundaries laid down by their aesthetics or brand USPs." Explains Indrajeet. "You come across a lot of individuals with varied personalities, and dealing with some can definitely be a challenge. From client meetings for shoots, or PR or even just a

bloggers meet, there are days when you can feel you have exhausted your brain to the last cell. But you have to breathe, buckle up and get back on the horse. When duty calls, you answer. It is as simple as that."

But more often than not, it is these challenges that help Indrajeet find the avenues to create something altogether new. "These challenges can make work all the more fun and interesting, because every day, every client, every assignment is a completely different story."

His Best Work

While his Instagram handle is replete with aesthetic gems, but one piece he is truly proud of is the one that actually challenged him the most.

"This shot in particular, was quite a challenge. More so since I wanted the entire setting to define itself in a certain lighting and have a whole different vibe for itself." Indrajeet said. "I had to style the drink in such a way that it would intrigue the viewer immediately and had to create a feeling the viewer would probably never have felt before." (Find the full page shot at the end of the feature)

He loves playing with contrasting colours and this image is the perfect representation of Indrajeet's oeuvre.

Photography Tips for Amateurs

"Be prepared for all kinds of challenges. You can never anticipate what's up next. The most intriguing of all challenges is the creativity." Says Indrajeet.

"The industry as a whole expects a lot of innovation and uniqueness in the work we do. From creating each photo differently to ensuring no two pictures are the same, is super challenging but this prospect is quite thrilling in itself. This is followed by sourcing props and providing satisfactory work to the client."

While every client or brand has their own work ethic and ideas, the job of a food photographer is to capture their unique essence. "I think this job does test your patience from time to time, but there is something incomparable about food photography. The sheer challenge keeps the excitement alive for, and these experiences definitely help you grow."



A DOCTOR'S CULINARY EXPEDITIONS

The motto @dr.nimrata goes by is to make food healthier and savour food guilt-free by following her passion for cooking and food photography.



Dr. Nimrata Kaur, Rampur

If aesthetically soothing pictures and healthy yet delectable recipes win your heart or rather your taste buds, Dr. Nimrata's page is the place for you. A big-time foodie, she loves to make healthy recipes and capture them. Her Instagram @dr.nimrata is filled with exquisite food photographs that are a sight to behold and make you crave her creations.

Her Culinary Journey

Dr. Nimrata describes herself as a foodie who started cooking simply because she loves to eat. Having experimented a lot in the kitchen, she wanted to add a healthy spin to her food. As a general physician and cardiologist, she understands the need to eat right and stay fit, and it is this insight that led to a lot of dishes being created that turned out to be tasty as well.

Her blogging journey started 2 years ago with the agenda of sharing her food philosophy with her friends. "It gradually developed into a portfolio where I also showcased my photography skills as I love capturing my food." Says Dr. Nimrata.

Her Perspective on Food

Food is not just an integral part of our life, it also has a huge impact on our mood and overall mental health. Having said that, our body has the capacity of processing only a certain amount of junk food, and needs regular intake of nutrition rich diet to balance it out.

"Good food = good mood as it releases feel good hormones in the body. It relaxes and puts us in a happier state of mind." Said Dr. Nimrata.

During the pandemic, she learned to make optimum use of the ingredients that were easily available. She came up with innovative dishes made out of leftovers and also began baking bread from scratch. Her focus on cooking in a sustainable fashion is what sets her page apart from other food bloggers.

An Insta-Food Perspective

Making a shift to a healthier diet from a mix of high fat/carb based diet can be a bit of a shock for your body, hence, it is important to make the shift gradually. A fact echoed by Dr. Nimrata through all the healthy recipes she shares on her page.

"I advocate small healthy changes in our daily routine," states Dr. Nimrata. "I use jaggery, honey, erythritol or stevia as a substitute for refined sugar and wheat flour instead of refined flour for baking cakes. Yoghurt is also a good substitute for cream."

She uses an air fryer to make oil-free recipes, giving fried food recipes a unique healthy spin. The idea behind this change is to make the process of cooking your favourite food, guilt-free.

Finding Inspiration at Home

Dr. Nimrata credits her mother and grandmother for her love for food. Watching them weave their

culinary magic in the kitchen is something that has always inspired her.

She said, "My foremost inspirations have been my biji (grandma) and my mother. They made home-cooked food interesting and desirable."

Much like the rest of us, inspiration for great cooking, more often than not, is pretty close to home.

Go-to Healthy Recipe

A healthy recipe she cannot do without is Greek yoghurt-marinated tandoori chicken made in an air fryer with zero oil. "Apart from this, I absolutely love the sugarfree spiced apple chutney." She said.

What Does Healthy Mean to Her

"I feel the key to healthy food is eating in moderation." Dr. Nimrata said. "I suggest that everyone should eat everything, but ensure moderation. As far as suggestions go, I recommend that milk (unless you are lactose intolerant) and fruits to be a part of your daily diet."

"Good food = good mood as it releases feel-good hormones in the body. It relaxes and puts us in a happier state of mind."

Health is all about ensuring that you are getting the ideal nutrition balance from your meals and coupling it with enough physical exertion. The same is echoed by Dr. Nimrata, "Eat well, enjoy your food and exercise 40 minutes a day for at least 5 days a week for a healthy life!" Definitely a philosophy we can get behind!

BHINDI KA RAITA

INGREDIENTS

Non-fat greek yogurt 1 cup whisked
Chopped okra (bhindi) 2 cups
Jeera powder 1/2 tablespoon
Red chilli powder 1/2 tsp
Rock salt as per taste
Oil 1/4 tsp for brushing the airfryer basket
Water to adjust consistency of raita

METHOD

1. Whisk the yogurt with desired amount of water till raita consistency is reached.
2. Airfry the okra pieces at 180 degrees for 7-8 min or till crisp.
3. Add the okra pieces, spices, salt and mix well.





SUGARFREE SPICED APPLE CHUTNEY

INGREDIENTS

Apples 2 (Medium-sized)
chopped fine
Apple cider vinegar 1/3 cup
Erythritol (or any other
sweetener of choice)
4-5 teaspoons
Dry ginger powder 1 tsp
Cinnamon powder 1/2 tsp
Cinnamon stick 1 inch
Star anise 2
Cloves 5-6
Cooking oil spray

METHOD

1. Spray a wok with oil
2. Add cinnamon, star anise, cloves and roast till aromatic.
3. Add diced apples and mix well
4. Add the rest of the ingredients. Cook until mushy.
5. Mash to get chutney consistency
6. Store in sterilised airtight glass jars for upto 1 week in the fridge!

FOOD AND PSYCHOLOGY

Food for the Mind and Body

When one deals with food and nutrition all day, it goes without saying that they have to be passionate about it. Dr. Harsha Hirdyani, a Nutrition Consultant, has worked largely with food throughout her career. In fact, her PhD of the ancient drink Ambil, has garnered her a patented recipe of increasing the shelf life of this ancient drink.

We had a long discussion with Dr. Hirdyani about her perspective on what makes gut health so important to mental health. Here are some excerpts from that conversation:

Let's start with a little about yourself and your association with food.

Food is what defines me as a person, you can say it is my Ikigai. It has always been my first love and my passion. I started as a Nutrition Consultant in AIIMS, New Delhi, but my major work has been in food research and development. I prefer to call myself a food scientist and recipe developer.

I believe that when what you do and what you love are the same thing, you tend to be happy a lot. Thankfully that is exactly what has happened with me. I have spent all my career working with food, and as a food scientist, you really get into the basics of every ingredient and understand what goes into the making of any food product, be it freshly cooked or packaged. This also helps me in developing new recipes for my passion project, my Instagram blog @cook_with_harsha.



Dr. Harsha Hirdyani, Vadodara

Could you share a little about Ambil, and your research associated with it ?

I absolutely love talking about it! "Ambil" is an indigenous health beverage, mostly used in Maharashtrian households, that's been around for ages. Something similar is also available in Rajasthan known as "Raab" made with bajra/ pearl millet, and 'Ambli' in Southern India.

Traditional kitchens still have a lot of learning in store for us which can be modernized for this generation. I strongly believe that our roots are where we should be drawing our inspiration from, and this was my inspiration to research on Ambil.

These drinks are generally made out of cereals and are rich in probiotic properties. However they also contain sugar and gluten which might not be healthy. So, for my PhD research, I developed a sugar free and gluten free, dairy based probiotic health beverage with added prebiotics.

A lot of in-depth study was done to create the product with detailed probiotic profiling. We also conducted DNA isolation which includes studying the probiotic bacteria present therein to the strain level, its nutritional quality evaluation, shelf life as well as market potential. As it is an innovative health beverage, a patent has been applied for it, which is currently in the process of final stages and formalities. People really liked the concept and the final product, something which was evident from very positive market research data. I would love to see the product on store shelves soon and am looking for a suitable company to distribute it.

How do you think food impacts our overall well-being, not just physical health?

We are what we eat might seem like an extreme statement but it is actually true.

A healthy diet can benefit physical, mental and social well-being in powerful ways. Nutrients in food give our bodies instructions about how to function. In this sense, food can be seen as a source of "information" for the body.

The connection between your food and emotions stems from the close relationship between our brain and the

gut. There is a reason why the gut is commonly referred to as the second brain. The reason behind this is the neurotransmitter (chemical substances that carry messages from the gut to the brain) "Serotonin".

Serotonin helps in regulating our mood and appetite. Our gastrointestinal tract is lined with millions of nerve cells and about 95% of this serotonin is produced in these cells. Also the production of Serotonin is highly affected by the billions of "good bacteria" that are present in our intestinal microbiome. Eating healthy, wide variety of different foods promotes the growth of "good" bacteria, which in turn positively affects serotonin production.

Diets high in refined sugars, for example, are harmful to the brain. They might give you a temporary spike in "feel good" factor but as such they worsen your body's insulin regulation, promote inflammation and oxidative stress. A steady diet of junk food can cause inflammation that hampers the delicate gut balance thus impacting our both physical and psychological health.

What changes did you make to your diet during the pandemic?

Quite a lot actually. I made a couple of conscious changes in our eating habits. One, as we were working from home mostly, I switched to a low carb diet as our movement was not as much as before. Our major focus was on eating food which builds immunity, such as citrus fruits, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, healthy nuts, etc.

Being in a positive frame of mind was an absolute must in a lockdown situation. We increased our intake of whole foods, and totally avoided processed or packaged ones which are high in unwanted additives and preservatives, that disrupts healthy bacteria in the gut and thus affects mood.

We also ate food rich in fiber, omega 3 fatty acids (walnuts, flaxseeds, chia seeds), natural probiotics (yoghurt, buttermilk), berries, green leafy vegetables etc., which helps in maintaining a healthy gut balance.

Who are your cooking inspirations?

The joy on the faces of people when they take the first bite of something delicious is one of my biggest inspirations for cooking. I have loved cooking since I was a child. When I was a teenager I was the family chef. Every birthday or occasion - I used to bake cakes and would cook some surprise recipes for my family. The happiness that those moments captured are what really matter to me till date.

I also travel a lot, which serves up some of the most inspiring moments for me. I use this inspiration to try and create fusions with my own flavors and my own ideas - preserving that authenticity but also embracing a change of times with it. At the core, I am inspired by my firm belief that everyone should be able to eat healthy. This is why I consciously try to think of recipes which are nutritional as well as tasty.

The work of great chefs around the world is a constant inspiration for me. One such chef would be Heston Blumenthal.

What is your go-to healthy recipe?

Hands down, it has to be soups and salads. This might sound boring to many people, but trust me, these two dishes can not only be tasty but incredibly beautiful as well. In fact, I experiment with soups and salads a lot. I love playing with textures, and flavours through the use of different combinations of vegetables, fruits, nuts, or choice of protein. And I always ensure I use home-made salad dressing because ready-made dressings are too full of preservatives.

Soups are absolute comfort for the soul. They are so versatile, ranging from smooth and creamy, hearty and meaty, noodle soup

and ramen, there is so much to explore. A warm soup with a slice of freshly baked home-made bun is what I truly love and relish as a weekday dinner.

What foods do you think need to be incorporated in our daily diets?

I would suggest a healthy and balanced meal that includes all the food groups in desired quantities. It should contain a healthy mix of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and protein.

“I started as a Nutrition Consultant in AIIMS, New Delhi, but my major work has been in food research and development. I prefer to call myself a food scientist and recipe developer.”

I generally recommend eating more vegetables and fruits (1/2 of your plate), as they contain most of the nutrients needed for the body, including carbs. Variety is as important as quantity. Including a variety of types and colours of fruits and vegetables not only gives a greater diversity of beneficial nutrients but also creates an appealing meal.

For grains, whole grains offer the “complete package” of health benefits. Whole grains are rich in fiber, Vitamin B&E, iron, copper, zinc, magnesium, antioxidants, phytochemicals and healthy fats. For healthy protein (1/4 of your plate) choose more from nuts, beans, fish and poultry and limit

the use of red meat, cheese, cold cuts and other processed meats.

While people generally focus on food, it is important to also be conscious of the cooking oils. Fats - such as omega-3s - are vital to physical and emotional health. Choose vegetable oils such as olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, peanut, and others, and avoid partially hydrogenated oils, which contain unhealthy trans fats.

Drink plenty of water. You can consume water as such or in the form of green tea, flavour infused tea, just don't use sugar. Limit milk/dairy to 1-2 servings per day and avoid sugary drinks.

If there was one tip you could give our readers, what would it be?

Commit to healthy eating and healthy lifestyle! Make better food choices, always choose whole grain foods over refined packaged foods, and eat more of vegetables and fruits. Opt for healthy snacking, like a small handful of healthy nuts, trail mixes, veggie sticks with hummus or yoghurt with berries. Research has also shown that those who frequently eat home-cooked meals have a better diet quality, are less likely to be overweight and less likely to have excess body fat. Keeping a food journal is an interesting idea. Just noting down what you had in the day is a powerful way to make you conscious of your food choices.

Limit your screen time and imbibe your food using all the senses. When you take time to experience food through all your senses you are likely to be truly nourished. Lastly, and most importantly, everyone's metabolism is different, a diet regime suitable for one person may not suit another. Always consult a health professional in depth before embarking on a diet.

AVOCADO CRANBERRY BARFI

INGREDIENTS

Ripe avocado 2 (peeled, de-seeded and pureed)

Cottage cheese 1 cup (crumbled)

Khoya 1/2 cup

Cardamom powder 3/4 tsp

Jaggery 1/3 cup

Chopped almonds 1/4 cup

Dried cranberries 1/4 cup

Ghee 1 tbsp





METHOD

1. Line a plate or a tray with butter paper or grease with some ghee and set aside.
2. Heat a thick bottomed or a non-stick pan, add avocado puree and start cooking on medium low for 5-7 minutes, stirring continuously.
3. Add in cardamom powder, paneer and khoya. Mix well.
4. Cook and stir continuously on a low medium flame until the mixture loses moisture and starts becoming thicker and begins to leave the sides of the pan.
5. Make sure you stir continuously to avoid

sticking and burning at the bottom of the pan.

6. Add jaggery, and cook for 5-6 minutes until it dissolves and the whole mixture starts to come together.

7. Add in chopped almonds and berries (leaving some for topping). Mix well and pour into the butter paper lined/ greased pan.

8. Top with the remaining almond and berries. Let it cool and set completely. Using a knife score it into squares and slice them. Store in the refrigerator.

SEASONED WITH HEALTH

Healthy snacking has become a necessity today since we don't take care of our body the way our ancestors did. The amount of junk and processed food we put in our system is atrocious. This phenomenon has not only reduced our quality of life but has also forced us to depend on artificial supplements.

Shruti Ruia has been working to change this pattern in her own little way. Her focus on healthy recipes and food items have earned her a healthy bit of traction in the post-lockdown blogosphere.

Her Journey

Shruti Ruia, a designer by profession and a home-chef by passion, has created an array of lip-smacking healthy dishes that look and taste fantastic. Having started this as a hobby, she was motivated by her husband to capture her kitchen experiments and post them on Instagram for people to benefit from her experience.

She shares, "I am a fashion designer by profession but I have always loved cooking. As a kid, I would tail my mother around the kitchen and make notes of how she made various dishes. After a point of time, I kept coming back to my childhood passion for solace. The entire process became therapeutic for me and I found happiness in treating my friends and family with dishes that were delectable and packed with nutrition. Being a designer also allows me a certain control over food aesthetics."

Shruti Ruia manages her profession and passion with ease. Her Instagram page, @seasonedbyshruti, is full of recipes that will entice your senses without making you feel guilty.



Shruti Ruia, Mumbai

The Pandemic Effect

The pandemic changed food trends worldwide and people started giving more importance to cooking at home. As daily activities became less dynamic, the focus shifted towards eating healthy.

Shruti also started experimenting in the kitchen more often, and her family recognized an opportunity to create an interesting blog. The focus was on how she could make drab recipes interesting for her family.

She quips, "I have two sons and making them eat nutritious food became a task. So my first challenge was to appease their taste buds while not compromising on the nutrient quotient. We all need to have a balanced diet now more than ever since the advent of the pandemic. This blog was my way of celebrating nutritious recipes over junk."

Her Food Philosophy

She also started replacing processed food with organic

ingredients as she feels they are the reason we have such low immunity.

She takes inspiration from her family and friends who've always liked her food and gave her valuable inputs. Her mother also played a pivotal role in her orientation and passion for food.

"We all need to have a balanced diet now more than ever since the advent of the pandemic. My blog was my way of celebrating nutritious recipes over junk."

She loves all kinds of rice dishes but loves gorging on some good ol' khichdi or dal rice because both these rice dishes are quite simple but if made well, can do wonders.

She shares, "I love cooking rice-based dishes. Rice is such a versatile cereal. It is easy to cook and goes well with all kinds of sauces and veggies. It is also a gluten-free item that cooks pretty fast."

What makes her Instagram page different is that her recipes are lucid as well as easy to understand and follow. She is well-versed in many different cuisines and customises the dishes so that people of all ages and backgrounds find them easier to cook.

"Cook without any fear or inhibitions for cooking has no boundaries and limitations. It is the only way you can express yourself unabashedly and your creation will win hearts across the borders." She concludes.

Having started her blog in July 2020, she continues to update it regularly with her latest creations. Shruti has managed to carve a unique niche for herself with her unflinching focus on healthy yet delicious recipes.

PURPLE SWEET POTATO BULLETS WITH TANDOORI CHICKPEAS AND TURMERIC TAHINI

INGREDIENTS

For Flat Bullet

Purple Sweet Potato 1 big or 2 medium boiled & mashed
Onion 1/4 cup finely chopped
Coriander/Parsley 1/4 cup chopped
Za'atar 1tsp
Cumin powder 1tsp
Garlic 6/7 cloves
Lemon 1 juice
Salt 1/2tbsp
Sesame seed handful to garnish

For Chickpeas

Chickpeas 1 1/2 cup drained & rinsed
Tandoori Masala 2 tsp
Avocado oil 1 tsp

For Tahini Dressing

Tahini 1/4 cup
Water 3/4 tbsp or more as per your need
Lemon juice 2tbsp
Turmeric powder 1/4 tsp
Maple syrup 1 tsp
Sea salt & Black pepper a pinch

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven at 180 C for 10mins
2. Take the boiled purple potatoes and mix all the ingredients. Keep it aside.
3. Take a baking tray, place the parchment paper.
4. Prepare the chickpeas by tossing them in avocado oil and tandoori masala seasoning. Then

keep it for baking for 15/20 mins or till crisp.

5. Prepare the dressing by blending tahini, water, lemon juice, turmeric, maple syrup, sea salt, & black pepper. Add water as needed to reach desired consistency. Refrigerate until ready for use.

6. While the chickpeas are cooking, take a nonstick pan and make small flat bullets & cook it on slow flame till brown, add oil if needed.

7. To serve, add the spiced chickpeas to platter, place the bullets & top with turmeric tahini dressing, sesame seed and fresh parsley. Enjoy!



PURPLE SWEET POTATO BULLETS WITH
TANDOORI CHICKPEAS AND TURMERIC TAHINI



SUNDUBU JJIGAE (KOREAN TOFU STEW WITH RAMEN NOODLES)

INGREDIENTS

Firm Tofu 1 Block cubed
Onion 1 sliced
Green Onions 1/2 cup
Gochujang 1 1/2 tbsp
Sesame oil 1 1/2 tbsp
Soy sauce 2 tbsp
Zucchini 1/2 cup thick slices
Mushrooms 1 cup thick slices Broccoli 1/2 cup florets
Ramen noodles 1 packet
Vegetable Broth 3 cups
Garlic 1 tsp grated
Salt 1/2 tsp or to taste

METHOD

1. Heat a medium sized pot over medium flame. Once hot, add in the sesame oil, onion & green onions. Sauté for 2-3 mins.
2. Add in the garlic, gochujang and soy sauce. Cook for 2 mins.
3. Add the mushrooms & sauté for a few minutes & then add in the broccoli, zucchini and mix well.
4. Pour in the vegetable broth. Cover the pot and leave to boil over medium high heat, around 7mins.
5. Once the broccoli, zucchini and mushrooms are cooked, taste the soup and season with salt as needed.
6. Add in the noodles, tofu and leave to boil for 3-5 minutes. Enjoy while hot.



AYURVEDA

The Millennial Way

Every morning, she solemnly greeted herself in the mirror with a swollen face and sunken eyes. Her days were filled with backaches and wearing a neck collar for support was the norm. One morning, she woke up with a weird itch in her throat. Fear had a new form, flu wasn't just a 'seasonal flu' anymore.

If you are thinking this is a description of a septuagenarian nearing the end of a fruitful journey, you would be wrong.

This is a literal description of a number of millennials in their mid-20s. The younger generation is facing a serious burnout thanks to leading a life that balances binging on junk alongside the crutch of modern medicine. The pandemic has made this situation worse than ever before by adding to the already exalted existential crisis among the people.

But in times of crisis, Gen-Z looks towards a solution, the most loved solution was Ayurveda. This ancient branch of medicine has become a millennial favourite recently simply because of the sheer accessibility of nearly all required ingredients.

Ayurveda tells you how to lead a life by aligning your lifestyle to qualities that suit your body. Some elements go well with the anatomy of your body and some don't. Listening and contemplating the needs of your body, mind and soul is vital to helping Ayurveda help you.

Giving more insight into this elaborate subject is Dr. Rekha Radhamony, a 4th generation practising Ayurvedic Doctor. She has done her Bachelor's in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery from Mahatma Gandhi University, India.



Dr. Rekha Radhamony, Trivandrum

What inspired you to research and learn the art of meditation and Ayurveda?

I hail from a very traditional Ayurvedic family and have lived all my life the Ayurvedic way. I am based out of India and Dubai, and also have an Ayurveda and Panchakarma clinic in Kerala called Acharya Panchakarma. Having been immersed in Ayurveda all my life, this felt like a natural progression for me.

How would you introduce Ayurveda to millennials?

I am a millennial myself. Even though I come from a family that has always believed in Ayurveda, growing up, I perceived it to be an ancient practice that wasn't in vogue. However, over the years, I have been practicing Ayurveda and treating people with different ailments and diseases. In this time, I have come to realise that the ancient principles of Ayurveda have a lot of relevance even today!

How is Ayurveda different from modern medicine?

Ayurveda is not a system of medicine which treats a patient based on his/her symptoms. The larger picture, that is treating the individual on a holistic level, is the idea. Healing happens not just at a physical level but also at the level of the mind and the soul. Ayurveda is a means of caring for your body in the most comprehensive fashion, making it more of a lifestyle than mere medicine.

According to Ayurveda, it is known that each person has all three doshas, but that one can have dominating physiological and personality characteristics? How do they differ?

Ayurveda mentions three elemental humours (doshas) in everybody - these are Vata, Pitta and Kapha. All three doshas are present in everyone's bodies, but the

amounts vary. If all three doshas are in balance, a person is said to be healthy. Imbalance of these doshas, according to Ayurveda, is what leads to various diseases.

The high or low quantity of these doshas in the body, also determines the "Prakriti" of a person. The 'Prakriti' is the specific mind-body type of an individual. Based on the 3, all humans fall into one of the 7 types of Prakriti which are - Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Vata-Pitta, Vata-Kapha, Pitta-Kapha, and Vata-Pitta-Kapha.

Why is it beneficial to know one's Dosha type?

The 'dosha' in one's body can help understand what kind of diseases can affect a person, the individual's mental state, as well as the type of lifestyle one has to adopt to stay healthy and prevent diseases. All of these things will help a doctor in understanding what medicines to prescribe. It also gives us an insight into how a person thinks, acts and responds to situations/people in life. Doshas can highlight a lot of things about a human being, but only a qualified Ayurvedic doctor will be able to decode and comprehend it.

What advice would you have for people who want to learn about Ayurveda?

For all those who want to understand the principles of Ayurveda, reading the original textbooks and scriptures will be immensely helpful. The best book to start with is Ashtanga Hridaya Sutra Sthana. However, if you want to dive deep into the subject you would be better off learning Sanskrit since a lot of the seminal text on the subject is in this ancient language.

How can millennials incorporate Ayurveda into their busy lifestyle?

One can choose the best practices that suit your lifestyle and start with one approach at a time. Once you are comfortable, you can follow it up with more. It is all about building a routine and repeating the practice every day so that it comes to you naturally.

Can Ayurveda be practiced at home or does one have to seek guidance?

Before you start Ayurveda, consult an Ayurvedic doctor and let him assess your Prakriti. Many people rely on internet quizzes, get misled, and incorporate wrong practices thinking they are of a particular dosha while they are not, making the entire process more dangerous than helpful.

What are your top tips for living a balanced and healthy life?

The key is to have a routine. Everything in the world works on a schedule - the Sun, the Moon, the planets, stars, plants, animals; everything in the universe has a routine. This is the first lesson we need to learn from nature. Wake up, sleep, eat, pray, meditate, and exercise on time. Every activity should have a specific time slot designated to it and the schedule must be followed every day. This self-discipline is the first and foremost step towards good health.

Towards a Sustainable Future

“The idea behind these products is to bring a sustainable change in the food industry and benefit India's farmers in such a way that the usage of imported raw materials gets reduced drastically.”



Kushal Aradhya, Mysore

Junk food has taken over our existence. So dependent are we on the carb and sugar high we get from binging on processed foods that we have started ignoring our body's warning signs. The amount of waste these food items generate worldwide is almost a third of all the manufactured products. This phenomenon in itself is abysmal.

The repercussions of agricultural waste, intent-less eating and animal husbandry have resulted in a jilted idea of sustenance that is selfish and not in the best interest of our future generations. Kushal Aradhya, CEO of Naka Foods, was understandably concerned by these issues. It was this concern that pushed him to start an enterprise that caters to solving these problems one by one. Famous for its '4pmBar', an energy bar packed with the goodness of spirulina extracts, Kushal's Naka Foods soon found its voice and a receptive customer base. These bars became the stepping stones through an arduous journey that aims to solve many roadblocks in the existing food system.

His Philosophy on Sustainability and Food

His mission towards sustainability became the cornerstone and genesis of his company. The food and agricultural industry has many botched practices that lead to wastage. Many factors add to this gap and some of them are an inefficiency in processing, storage, transportation and supply chain.

A lack of sustainable options in the market and avoiding food wastage are key obstacles he aims to solve through his enterprise. “In some countries, a lot of harvested raw materials are discarded due to the demand of polished/processed food or the unconventional appearance and flavours of certain raw materials that do not fit the status quo.” Informs Kushal. “Some part of it may be fed to animals but a lot of times it is shamelessly relinquished. This creates a huge disparity between the sheer number of people who are not receiving the required amount of food even for basic sustenance and the people with access to an unlimited food supply.”

Studies show that a third of the Indian population is malnourished. The human race has lost approximately 90% of the indigenous seeds and crops it used to grow



and that goes to show the extent of harm Mother Nature has sustained due to our selfishness.

The health factor is a significant concern as young people have become susceptible to heart problems and other major illnesses at a very early age. This situation will not be resolved unless we actively take our health seriously. These obstacles gave Kushal a lot of sleepless nights and he decided to tap into alternative food options. Certain alternative food items require very little water and resources to grow but are more nutritious and can be grown in large quantities. This is how Naka Foods came into existence.

The Challenges

In the beginning, streamlining all the processes and having a seamless manufacturing and distribution was the primary struggle. “Distribution contributed to many issues as the supply chain system is not as organised as we would want it to be.” Informed Kushal. “The bars get manufactured in Gujarat while I manage everything from Mysore so managing the distribution and supply chain on time is crucial and that is where I have faced maximum challenges. But collaborating with the right kind of people has helped me manage it in a better way.”



Future Plans

The world is turning towards vegan and plant-based alternatives and Naka Foods plans to leave their mark on the said market soon.

Along with the spirulina nutribar, Kushal plans to launch other products like a nutri pre-mix, nutrition-rich vegan biscuits, nutri coffee and other healthy and sustainable snacking options. He is also excited about their upcoming plant-based meat and fish snacks that are still under development but have the potential of winning the hearts of people by considerable margins in the market.

“The idea behind these products is to bring a sustainable change in the food industry and benefit India’s farmers in such a way that the usage of imported raw materials gets reduced drastically. These snacks will also positively reinforce the idea of sustainable healthy snacking in the minds of the people and that is what I live for.” Concludes Kushal.

It is the rise of these foodpreneurs looking to give healthy options to India’s foodies that are leading the way towards a healthier future for the populace. With the pandemic changing the general perception towards nutrition and immunity, India is a market that is ripe for a strong shift towards nutritional snacks.

About Naka Foods

Back when they started, the market for energy bars in India was making a little over 300 crore compared to developed countries that made up to 40,000 crore. “The energy bar market in India was still in the nascent stage, so it was essential to set a precedent and come up with a product that could create a niche in the sustainable health products industry.” Informs Kushal.

The journey of Naka Foods started in 2015 with the help of government-aided business incubators. “In 2016, we finally registered the company name as Naka Foods Pvt. Ltd. and six months down the line, launched our first product- a Nutri bar, in collaboration with CFTRI.” Reminisces Kushal. “The efficacy of the product was tested at 70 IT offices with Snaxsmart, a vending machine company in Bangalore. This consequently led us to the Amazon Launchpad program.”

Their 4pmBar set of ripples in the nutrition bar segment in India by providing a delicious nutrition-rich energy snack. Its main ingredient, Spirulina, a cyanobacteria algae, is the key to this healthy snack and is packed with more nutrients than most veggies and fruits. Naka Foods has engineered the bar in such a way that the putrid taste of spirulina becomes completely unrecognizable.



A Slurp-alicious Story!

“We felt that as parents we were really short of options to feed our children, and we felt like we really needed to do something to change that situation.”



Shauravi Malik (L) & Meghana Narayan (R), Delhi

Changing times have made it harder than ever to feed our children a healthy fare. With junk food becoming the staple, and processed food finding a permanent place in our shelves, it was time that we focus on children's food.

Observing this lacuna in the market, two mothers, Meghana Narayan, and Shauravi Malik, took it upon themselves to change the landscape of children's nutrition. These two foodpreneurs dove into the ancient recipes from their grandmothers, replete with whole grains and nutrient rich ingredients. The next task was to make these dishes more delicious than ever to make them even more appealing to children and mothers.

Here's a conversation with Meghana and Shauravi about their venture Slurp Farm, that has already served over 500,000 customers so far.

Tell us more about your professional backgrounds?

“We don't come from traditional business families, and we have learnt all that we have on the go.” Said Shauravi. “In fact, Meghana often jokes that our roles are really co-chaser-1 and co-chaser-2, since this is what we spend the majority of our time doing, we are both really persistent.”

Meghana grew up in Bangalore and was a national level swimmer for India and has won nearly 400 gold medals. She also received the Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford, after which she did an MBA from Harvard Business School. Shauravi grew up in Delhi and studied at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, St. Stephen's College,

Delhi and later studied economics at the Cambridge University.

“More than Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard, we really learnt by visiting umpteen number of organic food farmers and companies, raw material cooperatives and vendors, food technologists, scientists, normal farmers, machinery and equipment manufacturers, small and large food companies, packaging vendors, food retailers, nutritionists, food labs, etc.” Recounts Meghana. “Not to mention moms, babies and yummy food all along the way. The list is endless.”

It was this journey across the length and breadth of India, visiting villages, towns and cities, seeing the good, bad and the ugly side of the food industry, that truly shaped the vision of Slurp Farm.

What's the story behind Slurp Farm?

“It started very innocently. Meghana and I met at a Diwali party in London. We got along like a house on fire, from the moment we met.” Reminisces Shauravi. “We had some fun business ideas that we joked about, but we always went back to our jobs the next day. At that point, entrepreneurship seemed too risky.”

Things changed when the two had children. “We felt that as parents we were really short of options to feed our children, and we felt like we really needed to do something to change that situation.” Says Meghana. “It was not a case of taking a business model from another country, it was literally a giant-sized gap which we felt in our own lives.”



Supermarket shelves in India are choc-a-bloc full of wheat and rice products. They contain alarming amounts of trans-fats and sugar, leading one to wonder how a country with such an incredible food culture could have such a terrible selection of ready-made products. This lack of diversity in the ready-to-eat market is what galvanized the duo into action to create what is now known as Slurrp Farm.

“With 1 in 4 children obese or overweight, India is the third most obese nation in the world, and is also known as the diabetes capital of the world.” Said Shauravi. “Malnourishment occurs at both ends of the spectrum and is not only due to poverty but also due to a diet that has a high amount of sugar, salt and fried junk food with preservatives, artificial flavours and colours. The market size of the opportunity is large, but at the heart of it we felt we simply had to change things for the better and be a force for good.”

While fixing a broken food system may seem like a mammoth task, but at the heart of this change lie some simple innovations. Controlling air and water pollution might not be entirely in our hands, but exercising regularly and eating healthy most definitely are.

Could you tell us a little about your product range?

Slurrp Farm's focus has always been healthy meal options for young children and families. “We don't make niche products, and the overall quality of

ingredients we use are way above average.” Said Shauravi. “As far as products go we make everything from cereals for a 6-month old to cakes for all.”

Quality has always been *prima facie* for the duo, and it is the quality of ingredients that makes the cost factor mildly higher than usual. For instance millet cost more per kilo than rice and wheat. “Our product costs around 25% above the comparable product. I sincerely feel that people do not factor in the health impact of eating junk food.” Said Meghana. “When you price in the doctor and long-term health effects, we are sure the cost will come out cheaper.”

Slurrp Farm provides single-grain and multi-grain cereals, millet dosas, millet pancakes and waffle mixes, superfoods and a bake range.

What are the biggest challenges you have faced?

Creating a recipe in the kitchen versus creating a recipe for retail are vastly different exercises. This is something the Slurrp Farm team realized first hand. “Looking back, our biggest challenge has been to find a way to make what tastes delicious in a home kitchen taste the same way on a shelf, without adding anything to it.” Said Meghana. “We didn't know that this would be such a challenge. But we also didn't know we would have so much fun on the journey and meet so many cool people along the way who would help us figure it out.”

“We are both mothers, and that is one of the primary reasons why Slurrp Farm came into being.” Said Shauravi. “Being a mother in this competitive landscape isn't easy. As you move forward, and away from the ambitious 20s, and to the tiresome 30s and 40s, and if you patiently work towards your calling, even amidst all the noise, you will hear it.”

Practice has helped Meghana and Shauravi learn the lessons that have helped them create a better symmetry in their lives as mothers and entrepreneurs. “It takes a village to grow a business, and we've both been fortunate enough to get all the support we needed from our families, friends, and a wonderful team of talented individuals in our workforce.” Said Shauravi.



How has the pandemic affected your operations?

"As a food company, we were allowed to be operational from day one." Said Meghana.

"However, our key challenge was not dissimilar to all companies large and small, the logistics were uncertain and there were several disruptions at the start." "At the onset of the lockdown, offline retail was largely closed-off to SMEs." Recounts Shauravi. "It is an unprecedented time, and our major challenge has been to be ready to face a new, unknown challenge every day, and think out of the box."

The duo are working closely with several other SMEs to think of solutions. The Slurrp Farm team came together and worked hard to manage second and third-order impacts like raw material, packaging and credit. "We worked hard to supply our goods wherever we could. This was challenging and required meticulous approvals and permits across the country." Said Meghana. "I must commend the authorities in Delhi NCR, who helped us in record time and on WhatsApp to be operational with the passes needed."

"We didn't have anyone helping us do this, and we really saw

them come together to make the food sector be operational to the extent they could." Said Shauravi.

What does the future hold for Slurrp Farms?

The first task is to come out of the pandemic stronger. "We have been hard at work preparing for what lies ahead in terms of meeting demand. More importantly, we want to continue ensuring that we are keeping our customer at the core of all our activities." Said Shauravi.

"We have actually seen 3x growth from the time of COVID till now." Said Meghana. "Our product and brand are not impacted by COVID. If anything, we feel that health and good quality foods will be more important and this is our moment to thrive."

Healthy food in general has picked up heavily in India. And this is a niche that has been firmly tapped by the duo. With a consistent focus on quality, be it in terms of the recipes, ingredients or even packaging, Shauravi and Meghana have rapidly become examples of how a good idea can be leveraged into becoming a true movement.

COFFEE CAKE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

Slurrp Farm Coffee Cake Mix 1 packet
Raw refined sugar 1 packet
Buttermilk 100 ml
Melted butter 30 ml
Walnuts 2 tsp
Orange rind 1 tsp (optional)
Coffee essence 1 tsp
Cocoa powder 2 tbsp

METHOD

1. Mix together dry ingredients which includes Slurrp Farm Coffee Cake Mix, refined sugar or brown sugar, cocoa powder and keep aside.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together buttermilk, melted butter and a teaspoon of coffee essence (optional). Buttermilk can be replaced by hot water as well.
3. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and gently fold everything until you get a lump free smooth batter. Add a teaspoon of orange rind.
4. Transfer the batter in a 7 inch cake pan and sprinkle some chopped walnuts on top.
5. Bake at 180 degree C for 35 to 40 minutes.
6. Check the cake by inserting a fork or toothpick. Once it comes out clean, your mocha cake is done





DRY CAKE RUSKS

INGREDIENTS

For the cake mix

Slurrr Farm Vanilla

Cake Mix 1 box

Warm water 100 ml

Butter 30 gms

Yogurt 60 gms

For the fruit and spice mix

Orange peel 10 gms

Dates 10 gms

Apricots 10 gms

Black raisins 10 gms

Cranberries 10 gms

Apple juice 60 ml

Christmas spice mix 1
tbsp

METHOD

Preparation for the cake

1. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius.

Line your preferred cake mould.

2. Whisk the warm water, yogurt and butter together.

3. Then add the raw unrefined sugar and Slurrr Farm Vanilla Cake Mix (this will be part of the Slurrr Farm Vanilla Mix box) to the above liquids.

4. Whisk the batter well ensuring no lumps.

Preparation for the fruits

1. Finely chop all the fruits and soak them in apple juice for 1 hour or overnight.

2. Squeeze the excess apple juice out of the fruits and add it to the batter.

3. Sprinkle the Christmas spice mix (equal quantities of ginger powder, nutmeg and cinnamon powder).

4. Mix well and pour the batter in the prepared cake mould.

5. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Allow the cake

to completely cool and then de-mould.

6. Serve the cake at room temperature.

Preparation for the Cake Rusk

1. Slice the cake into ½ inch thick squares.

2. Preheat the oven to 160 degrees Celsius.

3. Bake the cake slices for 20 minutes on each side or till brown and crispy.

4. Store in an air tight container and serve with tea or hot milk.



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BUSTING YOUR

Nutritional MYTHS

We are surrounded by a surfeit of information on food, the challenge however, is to identify the myths from the reality.

The internet might have been a revolution in the way we consume and share information. The downside, however, is that not all the information available on the internet is true.

Scrolling through your social media feed, you come across a random post that states that chocolate causes acne. The next time you are about to bite into a delicious bar of dark chocolate, you remember that post and your hand halts before it reaches your mouth. All you can think about is the zit you may or may not get, taking away all the joy from that dark chocolate.

Much like this myth, we are exposed to a deluge of information through social media, magazines and different websites. This makes us easy prey for the misinformation and myths related to the food we eat and the diet we follow.

At Foodism, we are regularly faced with questions surrounding the various myths of food items, be it ingredients or dishes. And more often than not, we identify common misconceptions around these food items and work towards demystifying them.

In this article we have compiled some of the most common myths we have come across over our journey, and work to shed some light on the reality surrounding them.



Sugar is a slow poison

Sugar is often seen as the villain in all things food. This aversion to sugar has also sparked off a whole range of substitutes like coconut sugar, stevia, agave, etc. However, that is not exactly true. An American Journal of Clinical Nutrition conducted a study that followed more than 3,50,000 people for over a decade. They found that sugar consumption had no direct link to increased risk for death.

In an interview with Brut India, Rujuta Diwekar, a leading nutritionist states, "Sugar isn't poison, but its overindulgence surely is. Sugar doesn't cause a problem when you are adding it to your ladoos, barfi and halwa. You can eat jaggery, which comes from sugarcane and eat it with ghee and bajra roti which is a winter speciality."

Myth

Being slim means you're healthy

We are constantly being fed images of photoshopped bodies on social media, and the world in general seems to be in love with the whole idea of being skinny. The thing is that no two individuals have the same body type or metabolism. Having a common benchmark for the way that we perceive the shape of our bodies can only lead to severe feelings of insecurity.

For instance, an overweight individual who is active, may be healthier than an inactive skinny person. Research has shown that even thin individuals can get type-2 diabetes. The thing to remember is that being skinny on the outside does not mean that you are skinny on the inside. In the same way, people who are obese may be healthier if they are careful about what they eat and exercise regularly.

Myth

Ghee is fattening

Myth



Ghee is rich in omega 3 fats (DHA) and omega 6 (CLA). While many people believe that ghee is fattening, and considering the fact that it is 99% fat, there is a grain of truth to it. However, having a blanket ban on ghee is absolutely not advisable.

Rujuta Diwekar advises, "Ghee will ensure that we are not overeating and it will allow having better access to your satiety signals."

Unlike the popular belief that ghee is fattening, it has various health benefits. It allows you to digest your food better, aides the assimilation of fat-soluble vitamins like vitamin A, E, D and K. In fact, there are many out there who swear by ghee as a weight loss helper, although, just a spoonful is what they recommend. And that too, if you are not having ghee in any other form.



4 *Rice is not nice*

Myth

Rice is largely perceived as a culinary villain and its western counterpart, quinoa, is commonly considered a superhero. Contrary to popular belief, rice can be eaten if you want to lose weight or even if you are diabetic and is the easiest grain to digest.

In an interview with *The Foodie*, Pooja Makhija, a nutritionist and a clinical dietician, said, "You can consume rice after removing the starch and always limit the quantity you consume." Rice eases the absorption of amino acids and works as a prebiotic, which is the food for the healthy bacteria that reside in your body.

Myth

5

Carbohydrates are bad for you

Fad diets like Atkins diet, and the South Beach diet take the forefront in denouncing carbs. Contrary to popular perception, carbohydrates are a major source of fuel and nutrition for the human body. The importance here is to identify the ideal portion size for carbohydrates instead of eliminating them completely.

Eating whole-grains and whole fruits are a great way to include healthy carbs in your meals. While carbs may not provide energy directly in some cases, they do end up feeding the healthy gut bacteria in our bodies. However, on the other hand, refined carbs in excess can hurt our bodies as well. So when you hear someone denounce carbs the next time make sure that they are talking about refined carbs and not whole carbs.

Myth

Fad diets are effective

A fad diet, much like a fashion trend, is popular for a time. Fad diets trick us into believing that temporary changes in our diets would provide us with attaining our health and weight loss goals.

Fad diets are only effective to help you learn that they do not work and without making sustainable lifestyle changes, you will gain the weight you have lost. A lot of these diets work to eliminate the most important nutrients you may require. Diets like Atkins and Keto, have found many proponents lately, but what they fail to tell you that for every success story, there are a handful of horror stories to these diets as well.

7

Myth

*Exotic fruits
are good for you*

We are obsessed with food which is unpronounceable, expensive and doesn't grow around us. Director of the National Institute of Nutrition, Dr. R Hemalatha, in an interview with The New Indian Express, says, "Don't go for exorbitantly priced vegetables. Just locally available veggies with a small serving of rice will do good."

Our local fruits, like bananas, custard apple, and jackfruit, often pale in comparison to the promotional outbursts of exotic produce like avocado and kiwi. And with Instagram influencers taking on these fruits and veggies as their personal brand, our local grown varieties often get left by the wayside.

However, eating local fruits and vegetables has a host of benefits. For starters, local varieties are ideal for local weather conditions and can benefit your body in a number of ways. Unlike popular perception, local fruits are not full of sugar just because they have a native name. All fruits have the same natural sugar called fructose and do not harm our bodies.



Myth

Steer away from coffee

Most of the myths can be boiled down to identifying whether it is the excess of that food product that hurts you or the item itself. Same is the case for caffeine. You may have heard caffeine is bad for your health, but when consumed in moderation it does no harm to our bodies.

Experts suggest that it is best to have some food if you are going to be drinking coffee. Dr. Janaki Badugu advises, "Before having coffee have a handful of mixed nuts like almonds, cashew, walnut and groundnuts."

Research suggests that coffee can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and gallstones. It is important that you moderate your intake of coffee, especially since caffeine is an addictive substance, however, if moderated it can have a number of benefits for you.



9

Myth

Drinking honey and lemon with warm water in the morning has been hyped for several years. It's time that this myth is busted for good. Nutritionist and dietician, Jasleen Kaur states, "Honey is entirely fructose and if you drink honey and lemon together for an extended period, it can also deplete calcium from your body." She further suggests, "You can have lukewarm water with cloves or amla juice."

The popular claim that honey and lemon water melts fat, is patently untrue. The best way to reduce weight is simply through watching what you eat and exercising regularly. Lemon and honey water don't help in weight loss, but this combination makes you feel full and reduces cravings.

*Drinking
Honey and
lemon with
warm water
is effective in
weight loss*





10

Myth

Vitamin C boosts immunity

In the current scenario, we have compulsively included vitamin C intake in our diets. From lemons to oranges, we have eaten every citrus fruit available in an attempt to boost our immunity.

“Vitamin C has proven to heal us during an illness but not necessarily prevent it.” Says nutritionist Rashi Chowdhary in an interview with Friday magazine. One orange has 50mg of vitamin C and to get 1g of vitamin C from oranges we will have to eat 20 oranges a day.

Vitamin C became popular as an immunity booster after Nobel laureate Linus Pauling exalted its benefits in his books. However, these claims have not withstood the scrutiny by science. While vitamin C is crucial to the human body, the jury is still out whether it is a sure-shot immunity booster.

Just like these there are a number of food myths that are prevalent in popular perception. And with the sheer amount of information out there it becomes very difficult to separate the real from the unreal.

This makes it more important than ever for us to make sure that we are doing our due diligence before supporting any such idea. These myths only gain credence when more and more people begin purporting them like facts. If you know of any such myths, share them with us on **help@foodism.xyz**

“ Breakfast without orange juice is like a day without sunshine.”

-Anita Bryant

Fruit Juices

The Sour, the Sweet and the Nutritious

There is no argument that can ever convince us that breakfast sans fruits is anything short of sacrilege. Not indulging in these ambrosial gifts from nature, is akin to depriving your senses at the beginning of the day itself. Now, that is hardly a trend you want to set for yourself at the outset of a workday, is it?

The common argument made against having fruits regularly, is that dismantling them to reach their yummy centre is often more effort than what people are willing to make. To this, all we can say is this – get out of the habit of ripping open packets of chips and biscuits!

One of the best ways to consume fresh fruits is by juicing them. However, if not done right you are bound to lose out on the essential nutrients available therein. The best way to

juice fruits, in order to preserve their nutrients, is cold-pressing. This is a method that has gained a huge amount of traction in recent times.

Fruit juices like orange, mausambi, guava, pineapple, mango, water melon and lemon juice, are some of the most commonly known. People have been pairing these juices with their meals since time immemorial. Be it breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack breaks or parties; these fluid refreshments usually get guzzled down in a jiffy.

But where's the fun in talking about the usual fare, eh? We've decided to add a twist in the tale and have listed some unique fruit juice flavours for y'all to try this season. Be it sweet, sour or just good old nutritious, we have em all, read on!

Sour



Grapefruit Juice

The brightest cousin among the citrus fruit family, its magnificent coral colour makes it stand out. Its unique tart and sweet flavour make it absolutely delectable. It is packed with Vitamin C, antioxidants and with 92% moisture content, it is a happily low carb juice. Grapefruit also aids digestion, boosts immunity and is touted to help you lose weight. Make this juice a part of your breakfast in the winter season to make the most of its benefits!



Cranberry Juice

This tangy, zesty berry has a beautiful red hue that looks like wine in the shape of a fruit. More importantly, this juice has a surprisingly low sugar count and is an absolute wonder-drink for health. Drinking cranberry juice is also said to better your gut health and balances your sugar levels. Moreover, this juice can work wonderfully as a mixer with your mock/cocktails, or if you are in the mood, just chug this juice neat, works better that way anyway. This crimson nectar is also touted to alleviate UTIs and is one of the go-to drinks to get your fill of antioxidants and nutrients through winters.



Kiwi Juice

The chartreuse green colour of this fruit is a constant surprise when compared to its mossy brown exterior. It's unique jelly-like consistency lends a unique thickness to the juice, and coupled with the sharp, tangy sweetness, the kiwi fruit makes for some really delicious juices and smoothies. Packed with antioxidants, it is supposed to be great for your skin and the vitamin E therein is an absolute treat for your hair. As if that was not enough, people who regularly consume Kiwi juice are found to be less prone to cardiovascular diseases. This New Zealand native is also supposed to help treat asthma, boost immunity and reduce blood clotting.

Sweet

Apple Juice

The syrupy sweetness and the dazzling amber shade of the apple juice are nearly as good at keeping the doctors away as apples. This juice is rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants and helps prevent anaemia, improves digestion, cures constipation, hydrates the body and gives a healthy glow to your skin. The juice extracted from these succulent pome fruits can be consumed as it is or mixed with different cocktails/mocktails.



Pomegranate Juice

This scarlet wonder has thrice the amount of antioxidants as compared to green tea and red wine, making it incredibly potent. It helps fight prostate cancer and is supposed to also help treat erectile dysfunction. This juice has also been found to prevent the growth of Alzheimer cells. It is antiviral in nature and should ideally be consumed during winters when it is readily available.



Grape Juice

This amaranthine elixir is a sober person's sweet wine. It prevents blood clots, eye damage, propagates brain functioning, is good for your heart and reduces bad cholesterol in the body. It is packed with antioxidants and is great for your skin. So drinking this could actually give you luscious hair and supple, radiant skin. So chuck that chute of wine and grab a pitcher of yummy grape juice for a change.



Nutritious

Apart from the aforementioned standalone juices, some fruit extract concoctions knock it out of the park when it comes to packing a nutritious punch. These are a mix of healthy green veggies and sweet/tangy fruits that complement each other well and make them yummiier than ever. Add these three healthy fruit mixes to your diet to imbibe nutrients essential for a healthy life.

Beet Root - Carrot - Green Apple Juice

This ruby-red elixir has so many health benefits that it would probably require an entire article to do it justice. Also known as the ABC detox drink, it is packed with iron, lutein, beta-carotene and alpha that are good for your heart, boost immunity and increase the number of red blood cells (haemoglobin) in your body. This fruit punch is good for your eyes, kidney, intestines and has anti-ageing properties! Moreover, this drink also helps improve your nerve connections and consequently helps improve cognition and recall ability.

Mixed Berries Juice

This super juice has all kinds of wonderful popping berries that are full of anthocyanins, folates and antioxidants. Be it blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, goji berries, acai berries and more, the list is endless. This potion is tart, sweet and oh-so-delicious. Berries also have anti-ageing properties and may prevent diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. So guzzle down a glass of mixed berry juice every day and see the results for yourself.



Cucumber-Kale-Pear Juice

This refreshing green juice is a tonic for long life. Kale is a superfood loaded with quercetin, kaempferol, beta-carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin and vitamin K. Kale has a bitter after-taste which is why adding cucumber and pear to the juice makes it more palatable and pulpy. Start your day with this nutritious juice and make sure to follow it up with a healthy diet as well.



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TURMERIC SPICED AFFOGATO

INGREDIENTS

Vanilla ice cream 1 Scoop
Almond / Nut / Coconut Milk 60 ml or 1/4th cup
Vahdam's Turmeric Classic Latte Mix 2 grams
Sliced almonds for garnish
Dried rose petals for garnish
Crushed cardamom a pinch
Saffron a pinch

METHOD

1. Combine milk, Turmeric Latte mix, crushed cardamom and saffron.
2. Stir well and then beat the mixture vigorously
3. Take a scoop of vegan vanilla ice cream in a serving bowl/cup
4. Pour the mixture over the ice cream and garnish with sliced almonds and rose petals



TURMERIC SMOOTHIE BOWL

INGREDIENTS

Frozen mango 1 (Sliced)
Frozen bananas 2 (Sliced)
Honey 1-2 tsp (As per your preferred sweetness)
Probiotic yogurt 1 cup
Vahdam's Turmeric Classic Latte mix 2 grams (1Tsp.)
Blueberries 3-4 berries for garnish
Kiwis 2-3 slices for garnish

METHOD

1. Blend the sliced mango, bananas, yogurt, latte mix, and honey in a blender.
2. Pour the smoothie in a bowl
3. Garnish with blueberries and kiwi slices! Enjoy



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

ZODIAC FUN FOOD FORECAST

ARIES



2021 is your year, my friend, you can finally show the world what you are made of (and it is not just chips and dips). Start this year with oats porridge and go for a run for a healthier gut. It has already processed a lot of junk in the name of food in 2020, let 2021 not suffer the same way. Your motto for 2021 - don't shun the run!

GEMINI



Confusion is thy middle name, dear Geminis. Stop procrastinating and start eating your veggies. Do include berries in it, for the tartness will make you less cranky. What are you waiting for? Go on. Chop chop! Your motto for 2021 - A salad a day keeps the tummy-ache away!

LEO



The fiery lions need to calm down and take a chill pill this year. How, you ask? Do yoga and drink boba. Make homemade boba soy/almond milk once a week to treat yourself for all the toning your body is going through thanks to the power yoga you will be doing! Your motto for 2021 – Boba and Yoga for the win!

TAURUS



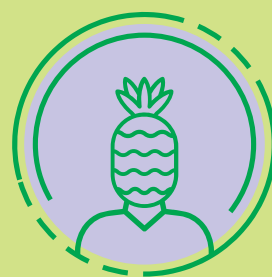
As much as you hate thinking about it, the colour pink is bound to bring you good luck this year. Try pomegranate green tea with bits of apple, which should alter the taste of the usual cardboard flavoured green tea and make it fruitier. Your motto for 2021 - fruit it till you make it!

CANCER



To eat Greek yoghurt or not to eat Greek yoghurt, that is the question. Why not, though? It is creamy, delicious, and perfect for a bowl as a fruit smoothie or as a dip. Grab a bag of baked yam chips and your emotional binging won't come with a side of guilt. Your motto for 2021 - Say yes to a healthy food mess.

VIRGO



When life makes you a Virgo, indulgence is something you should never forego! Having said that, the universe also wants you to make 2021 a year for mental health and core strength. Try planking with your face right above a plate of paneer tikka. Your motto for 2021 – Tuck into the Tikka.

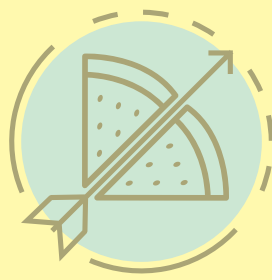
Will this month be sweet, savory or sour – let's find out!

LIBRA



You've promised to treat your colleagues but that isn't happening anytime. Your food karma is going to come calling as a bout of the trots unless you set things right soon. If you have promised someone ice cream, you better plate up. Your motto for 2021 - Clear your food karma!

SAGITTARIUS



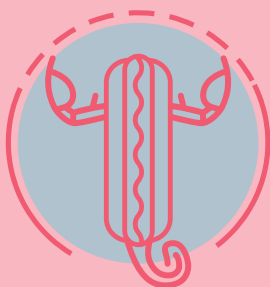
Chocolate is your soulmate but your possessiveness can land you in a soup, literally, you will be fed soup if you don't start sharing! Share it with your friends or chocolate will ghost you this year. Now that you've been warned, shower your friends immediately with 'le Chocolat' from Hersheys and make amends soon. Your motto for 2021 – Chocolate - sharing is caring!

AQUARIUS



Let's face it, Aquarius, you are in a rut and you need something to spice things up. Add 'teekhi mirchi' to your food because this year is all about being bold, sassy and fiery! The chilies will make you sweat, lose your baby fat and give you the lean look you love! Your motto for 2021 - 'Mohabbat hai mirchi sanam'!

SCORPIO



You love trying out new things but saying yes to every pani puri vendor on the streets is a sin you don't want to commit. 2021 is a year of breaking free, without allowing your sphincter that freedom. Let it be known the food gods are judging you with much prejudice and your pickiness has been noticed. Live large! Your motto for 2021 - 'Chaat chakh le'!

CAPRICORN



They don't call you the 'Ice Queen' for nothing, dear Capricorn, this is your season. Start your year with warm soups and pies that are bound to make you less of a grinch and maybe, just maybe, make you a little bit of a teddy bear. Your motto for 2021 - The warmer the soup, the warmer your heart!

PISCES



2021 has a surprise for you. Your love for food is going to turn into a profession. From free food, to tasting exotic cuisines, you are going to be spoiled for choices. However, the only catch here is you need to show your love is true! Try and be less mean in your food reviews, will you? Your moto for 2021 - It's raining food, hallelujah!

**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.*



PUCE TANGO



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Grown Locally in Mumbai

Ingredients:
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• Mizuna

At Salad Growers, we believe in freshness that can be tasted in every bite. Our produce is grown under best growing conditions every plant needs. Every variety we grow is carefully selected after extensive growing tests. And lastly every plant we harvest is washed and dried before packing so when you get your hands on our box you can start eating/using it straight away! The boxes are delivered the same day it is harvested, so you get the freshest, most nutritional produce that you can get.

That is the Salad Growers Freshness!

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