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A TIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION

lonely planet

MAY 2020

INDIA

INSPIRATION
HAS NO
EXPIRY DATE!

Eat & Drink the WORLD

DROOL NOW, TRAVEL WHEN IT'S TIME

VEGAN FOOD
ACROSS THE
PLANET

20 REGIONAL
RECIPES FROM
INDIA'S TOP CHEFS
AND FOOD EXPERTS

LOCAL SECRETS
IN WORLD CITIES

50 FOOD FINDS
IN INDIAN CITIES





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With you...

With the COVID-19 lockdown in place, Team LPMI is working at providing you with plenty of inspo to make the most of your armchair travel time. Along with our free digital issues, we've been hosting a lot of fun activities online, from an editor's AMA, to polls, quizzes, Instagram lives with travel influencers, and more. We look forward to creating more fun and engaging content, all while inspiring you to plan your future adventures. Till then, keep liking, tweeting and commenting on our social media pages - we'd love to know what you're up to!



INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE

Travel safe:
follow advisories before
planning and setting off
on journeys

editor's note



Primrose Monteiro-D'Souza, Editor
Follow me on Twitter [@PrimroseDSouza](#)
& Instagram [@primrosedsouza](#)

THIS MONTH'S COVER



PHOTOGRAPH: DARIUS DZINNIK/123RF
We've got sweet (and savoury) inspiration for you from across the globe in this issue. Tuck right in!

Let's put the planet on our plates

It's very difficult to write an editor's note from lockdown. I know I'm writing to fellow travellers who are champing at the bit to get out there, but who also know that we have a collective responsibility to stay in to make it safer out there. It's also difficult to work out what will appeal to us just now, but, judging from social media and digital media and just conversations, it's safe to say that we haven't stopped eating :) Which is why this issue is all about food – our own food, and food and drink from around this glorious planet of ours. There's a **sake trail in Tokyo**, **vegan food** in major world cities, and the **best local eats across the planet**. This is an issue packed with lots and lots of food inspiration, enough to lift our spirits in these difficult times.

We're also so proud of the variety of food that we have here in India. Dishes from different parts of this magnificently multicultural country of ours tug at our heartstrings and pique our palates in such delicious ways. That's why we have **a whopping 30 pages on regional food – with recipes!** – from India's foremost chefs and food experts. Some of these recipes are so simple that I was tempted many times, bang in the middle of editing, to slip into the kitchen and start cooking. You'll see why, when you go through the feature. **Food trails in Madurai and Varanasi** are also on the menu, and we have 10 food influencers and writers from across India tell us about their **favourite finds** – that's 50 recommendations right there!

Time, then, to drool, and dish up. To raise a **Singapore Sling** to our planet while you're at it (we have the recipe for you!). To dream of travel. And, until then, to stay home, stay safe, stay inspired!



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Explore India's cultures with regional food, pg 38



Uncover the mysteries of sake, pg 30

explore

THE BEST OF THE MONTH'S TIPS & TRIPS

PLAN NOW... TRAVEL WHEN IT'S TIME! INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE!

Dining at the Michelin-starred **Ekstedt** in Stockholm, Sweden, is as much an experience as a meal. Find leads like this as well as other culinary temptations throughout this section





Call for a variety of chutneys to go with your idlis and vadas

WEEKEND PLANNER

Discover the unique flavours of Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Words AMIT GAIKWAD @guiltyasframed
Photographs KRISHNA PRABAKAR T @krishnaprabakar

One of India's oldest cities, Madurai (formerly known as Madura) is home to and widely known for its thousand temples. But spend a day or two here and you'll realise why the city has also earned a reputation as the food capital of Tamil Nadu. There are hundreds of eateries spread across the city, in every nook and cranny. From regional specialties to its popular street food culture, Madurai has everything a foodie desires.

Begin your day with a traditional breakfast at the famous **Murugan Idli Shop** (00-91-452-234-1376; www.muruganidlishop.com; 196, West Masi Street). Steaming hot, fluffy and slightly sticky (a bit different from the regular and grainier Udupi version), these *idlis* are served with four kinds of delicious *chutneys*. If you still have room after this, don't miss the onion *uttapam* and sweet *pongal*.

While still on snacks, a must-visit is a 100-year-old establishment called **Gopu Iyengars Tiffin Center** (00-91-452-439-5750; www.gopuiyengars.com; 1, West Chitrai St, near Meenakshi Amman Temple). Located right next to the famous Meenakshi Temple, this eatery is best-known for its *vellai appam*, a traditional dish (₹20/plate). This deep-fried crispy snack, made from rice and *urad dal* (black lentil) batter is served on a banana leaf with some *sambar* and spicy green coconut →



1



3



4



4

2



5

and chilli *chutney*. Be warned, the *chutney* can be really spicy.

To combat the after-effects of the spice, head to a small coffee shop just a couple of yards from the restaurant. This is easily one of the best coffee shops in the city. The **Visalam Coffee Bar**, located at the north-west corner of Meenakshi Amman Temple, is popular for its strong filter coffee (₹20). And, for those who are not into coffee, try another local drink here. Easily available on market streets, *paruthi paal* (*paruthi* = cotton seeds, *paal* = milk) is a healthy drink made from cotton seeds, jaggery, coconut, ginger and some spices (₹15).

Thinking about lunch already? Book a table at **The Modern Restaurant** (00-91-452-234-4487; www.modernrestaurant.in); 160, Netaji Rd, near Meenakshi Amman Temple; *sadya*: ₹250). Best known for its *sadyas*, the restaurant is popular among food enthusiasts. Get here well in advance to avoid the lunch-time rush. Served on a banana leaf, the meal comprises a heap of steamed rice accompanied by *sambar*, a number of vegetarian sides, pickles and buttermilk. A traditional afternoon meal doesn't get better than this.

Next, head to the famous **Simmakkal Konar Kadai** (00-91-98486-53669; beside Thangareegal Theatre, West Veli St, Periyar). Usually functional in the evenings, this restaurant specialises in non-vegetarian fare, the *kari dosai* being the most

1. You'll find a dozen of push carts serving *paruthi paal* on the streets of Madurai

2. Soaking in oil, the *bun parottas* are ready to be served

3. The chicken *idiyappam* has its own fan following in Madurai

4. No trip to Madurai city is complete without a glass of *jigarhanda*

5. The *mutton kari dosai* is the most popular dish at *Simmakkal Konar Kadai*

popular. This three-layered treat starts with a standard *dosa* base, followed by a layer of omelette and then a topping of your favourite minced meat - either chicken or mutton (*mutton kari dosa*: ₹250). Sounds incredible? It's just as fantastic to eat!

Next, head to **Aavin Junction** for another local delicacy: *bun parotta* (*Aavin Signal*, near KK Nagar Junction; *bun parotta*: ₹150). This famous street snack is a version of the humble *parotta* - made fluffier with the addition of eggs, milk, butter, sugar, and banana. The *parotta* goes well with a serving of spicy chicken or mutton curry. The trick here is to soak the fluffy *parottas* in the curry. End your evening on a sweet note with a glass of *jigarhanda* at the **Famous Jigarhanda Shop**; this rich drink is made with milk, sugar, almonds and ice cream (00-91-98421-16684; 2A, East Avani Moola Veedhi, near Old Imperial Theatre; *Famous Jigarhanda mini*: ₹30).

So, the next time you make plans to visit Madurai, make sure you set aside an entire day, if not two, to simply lap up its flavours.

STAY: *Heritage Madurai* www.heritagemadurai.com; from ₹7,820; *The Madurai Residency* www.madurairesidency.com; from ₹2,950; *Astoria Hotels* www.astoriahotels.in; from ₹7,820.



Crisp kachoris with spicy sabzi makes for a scrumptious breakfast

WEEKEND PLANNER

Rediscover Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, with food

Words SAMARPAN BHOWMIK @sum.err.pun

Among one of the oldest continually-inhabited cities in the world, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh draws millions of faithful to the banks of the River Ganga each year. Even if you aren't big on spirituality, the ancient city has much else to offer. And, if you're a foodie, there's so much to indulge in.

Start off early in the morning with some *kachori-sabzi* (fried flatbreads with a spicy potato accompaniment). Although there are vendors across the city selling this delectable local staple for breakfast, the one we recommend is **Chachi's Kachori** near Assi Ghat (Sankat Mochan Rd, Saket Nagar Colony, Lanka; from ₹25). To wash down this delicious breakfast, hop over to **Pahalwan's Lassi** for an earthen cup full of *malaiyo* (00-91-98398-62428; B 30/2, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya Rd, Lanka Rd, Ravidas Gate; malaiyo from ₹60). This unique dairy product is a sort of cream made of saffron milk and, honestly, it tastes like you're gorging on a cloud of sweet saffron. Digest the lavish breakfast with a walk along the river bank. Once you've made space for lunch, there are a number of options by the river you could try, and, given the popularity Varanasi has among visitors from across the world, there are quite a few global cuisine options too. Try out **Bunny Café** at →

PHOTOGRAPHS: VAIBHAV MEHTA & SAMARPAN BHOWMIK



Pandey Ghat; a little hole in the wall, this restaurant is run by an Indian who is in love with Japanese and Korean cuisine (D 24/31-A, Pandey Ghat, Bangali Tola; mains from ₹220). While the menu might want for authenticity, it sure is an interesting take on these cuisines. Try the pork curry rice or the *kheema* rice. This is also one of the few places that caters to non-vegetarians in a largely vegetarian city. If you want to stick to veg food, try **Vatika Café** at Assi Ghat for pizzas, pastas or its famous apple pie; the food is great but even better is the view of the *ghat* from the cute seating area (00-91-94513-97331; B-1/178, Assi Ghat Rd, Shivala; apple pie from ₹80).

Walk all the way to Dashashwamedh Ghat along the river, and get yourself to **Kashi Chat Bhandar** (00-91-542-241-2116; D 37/49, Godowlia Rd, Girja Ghar Chauraha, Badadev, Godowlia; tomato chaat: ₹30, palak patta chaat: ₹30). Even watching the proprietors make the *chaat* is as exciting as wolfing down platefuls. It's a small store with just two tables inside that you have to share with at least another dozen patrons. What it lacks in ambience though, it more than makes up for, with the flavours served up – whether it be the fresh *palak* leaves fried to within an inch of their lives or the perfect balance of tartness and sweetness in the tomato *chaat*.

1. Street food vendors are on every corner, serving up a gamut of delicious snacks
2. Boat rides on the Ganges at dawn are very popular, especially with visitors
3. The creamy and rich lassi is so thick, it's nearly as filling as a three-course meal
4. You're bound to have a hard time choosing what to eat and take away from Bhola Bhandar

The crossroads nearby, known as Godowlia Chowk, also has rows of shops selling *lassi* and *thandai*, a Varanasi specialty. Try this creamy drink at **Badal Thandai** (00-91-93362-48240; Sonapura Rd, Luxmanpura, Godowlia; from ₹60). It offers many different kinds with fruit and various forms of milk, but, if you really want to explore spirituality in Varanasi, try the special version with '*bhang*'. The after-effects could last for hours, so be careful how much you consume.

Close by, in the lane that's one of the exits from the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, is located yet another local legend – **Bhola Bhandar** (Vishwanath Gate, Dashashwamedh Ghat Rd; from ₹20). The ambience around the shop is chaotic owing to its prime location, but you're not going to notice, lost as you're going to be in the delightful sweet offerings.

In all this, don't miss out on the street food – from *bhel* and *chaat* to *litti chokha*, there's a whole lot. Whether it's to your soul or stomach, in Varanasi, you'll make connections of all kinds. ☪

STAY: **Sahi River View** (00-91-542-236-6730; B1/158 A2, Assi Ghat Rd, Varanasi; from ₹2,000); **Ramada JHV** (00-91-542-251-0000; www.ramadajhvns.com; from ₹4,500)

DRINK ICON

The Singapore Sling

The Long Bar is a time capsule at the newly-restored Raffles Hotel – all dark teak wood, reed ceiling fans and peanut shells on the floor (the last tradition goes against the grain in this spick-and-span city). It's also the home of the Singapore Sling: hotel lore says it was created in 1915 by barman Ngiam Tong Boon, though cocktail sleuths have found holes in this origin story. The likes of Somerset Maugham enjoyed simpler drinks known as 'gin slings', often sweetened with cherry brandy, soured with lime or spiked with Bénédictine. Although pineapple is a much-loved fruit in the region, its addition (indeed domination) owes more to the later tiki culture craze than colonial-era tastes.



MAKE IT

INGREDIENTS

30 ml gin
 15 ml cherry liqueur (such as Heering)
 7.5 ml Cointreau
 7.5 ml Bénédictine
 10 ml grenadine
 120 ml pineapple juice
 15 ml lime juice
 dash of Angostura bitters

METHOD

♦ Mix the ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice cubes. Shake well. Strain into a highball glass. Garnish with pineapple and a cocktail cherry.

DRINK IT

♦ The Long Bar reopened in 2019 with a refreshed Singapore Sling recipe that toned down some of its sweetness. Also on the menu, the Raffles 1915 Gin Sling does away with the pineapple entirely, and uses a gin created specially for the hotel by Sipsmith of London. Yes, the Long Bar is a bucket-list venue now, selling 1,000 Slings a day, but their quality has never been higher (www.raffles.com/singapore).

♦ Though plenty of mixologists might roll their eyes at it, Singapore acknowledges its 'national drink' with variations including those at the Raffles's younger competitor, The Fullerton Hotel. Among the cocktail's bolder reimaginings is the 'Robbery at the Museum': a version with fermented pineapple and fizzy foam at the Smoke & Mirrors bar on the roof of the National Gallery (www.smokeandmirrors.com.sg).

EAT THE CITY

Stockholm

THE LEAST MINIMALIST ONE

KOH PHANGAN

Sweden's enduring love for the beaches of Thailand finds shape in Södermalm as an outrageously kitsch restaurant, best experienced at night. Tuck into chicken fried rice in a real *tuk-tuk* to the sounds of crickets and tropical thunder. www.kohphangan.se



One of the oldest restaurants in the world



THE OLDEST ONE

DEN GYLDENE FREDEN

Open since 1722, the venerable 'Golden Peace' is run by the Swedish Academy. Its members meet here regularly and (rumour has it) decide on many a winner for the Nobel Prize in Literature at its tables. If there were a similar prize for cookery, it should certainly go to the chefs, whose sublime offerings include civilised *husmanskost* (home-style) dishes like roast lamb with chanterelles, cabbage and country cheese, or old-school Swedish meatballs. Sit in the barrel-vaulted cellar or slightly posher upstairs rooms. www.gyldenefreden.se



THE BEST-VALUE ONE

HERMANS

This justifiably popular vegetarian buffet (from ₹1,122) is one of the nicest places to dine in Stockholm, with a glassed-in porch and outdoor terrace seating overlooking the city's glittering skyline from a cliff-top perch above the popular Fotografiska museum. Fill up on inventive, flavourful veggie and vegan creations served from a cosy, vaulted room – you might need to muscle your way in, but it's worth the effort. www.hermans.se



THE HOTTEST ONE

EKSTEDT

Dining at this Michelin-starred restaurant is as much an experience as a meal. Everything is cooked in a wood-fired oven, over a fire pit or smoked in a chimney. Chef Niklas Ekstedt's education in French and Italian cooking informs his approach to traditional Scandinavian cuisine – but only slightly. Choose from four- or six-course set menus. www.ekstedt.nu

Ways to travel from home

With lockdowns in effect not just across the country but the world, we're all at home, biding our time until this pandemic blows over. From spending time with loved ones, to nurturing hobbies long-neglected owing to hectic schedules, we're doing a lot of stuff to stay occupied. Here are a few more suggestions to add your list



HEAD TO ANCIENT EGYPT

No queuing up for hours or getting sand everywhere either. The Egyptian Tourist Board has put the **tomb of Meresankh III** in **Giza** online. Queen Meresankh III was the granddaughter of the Egyptian pharaoh Khufu, known as Cheops, for whom the Great Pyramid of Giza is believed to have been built. With the help of 3D modelling, the tomb of the queen can be interactively viewed. Aside from Meresankh III's tomb, the **Ben Ezra Synagogue**, the oldest Jewish temple in **Cairo**, the **mosque-madrassa of Sultan Barquq** and the **Coptic Orthodox red monastery** can also be visited virtually. All you need to do is create an account on the matterport website and sign in to avail the links (www.my.matterport.com).



GO ON SAFARIS AROUND THE WORLD

While humans stay confined indoors, animals are increasingly making more appearances, even in places such as cities, where you'd normally not see them. But what's happening in the jungles, forests, grasslands and various other natural habitats? Getting up, close and personal with wildlife might be out of the question at the moment, but that doesn't mean we don't have access. From gorillas and elephants to birds and even dolphins, there are live cam feeds available on many websites. **Explore** is a world-renowned organisation that has an enormous live nature cam network spread across the globe. Check out its website for live feeds and documentaries alike (www.explore.org).

CAPTURE PRECIOUS MOMENTS TO TRAVEL IN TIME

Record this time for posterity, so you can look back upon this critical period and remember what it meant for you. **Fujifilm Instax Cameras** help you do just that. Capture those precious moments – fun times with your pet, board games with the whole family, the sunset or sunrise from your window, the recipe you learned from your grandmother and finally mastered, the neighbourhood cat on the prowl on the empty streets outside. Make a wall of memories from this time of isolation. It'll be a saga of your growth through these critical times. So, go ahead, click away and build that wall! (www.fujifilm.in)



JOURNAL

TALES
FROM
THE
ROAD

PLAN NOW... TRAVEL WHEN IT'S TIME! INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE!

We love looking at the food you've got on your plates too, like this 'Summer on a plate' shot from reader Richi Choraria (@richichoraria13). It sure whets our appetite for more great food choices waiting out there



Your Photos

Your travel photos and the stories behind them

FRESH CATCH **Lake Inle,** **Myanmar**

Located in Shan, Lake Inle is a freshwater lake that is home to the Intha, an ethnic tribe whose men are known for two things – fishing and a unique, single-legged rowing technique. Watching this rowing style is an experience, without which a visit here is incomplete; I was lucky to have witnessed it multiple times. With one leg inside the boat, and the other leg steering it, this traditional rowing method is a shining example of both, balance and technique. Boats are the primary means of transportation here, and, since the Intha people live on the lake itself, most young boys are already expert rowers by the time they are six or seven years old! One evening, I was cruising the lake when I came across a fisherman rowing nearby, using a traditional conical net to fish. A more archaic method, conical nets are rather uncommon and rarely used nowadays. Eager to watch, I asked my boatman to stop and ask the fisherman if I could take some photos. Friendly as the Intha people are, he was happy to oblige; in fact, in a couple of moments, he began posing as I clicked away, just as the sun peeked out on this incredibly cloudy day!



Singapore-based
Nivedana
Jalan is a
banking consultant.



RIGHT SIDE UP
Jaipur, Rajasthan

As a hobby photographer, I'm always on the lookout for interesting frames. The Hawa Mahal definitely fits that bill. This eye-catching structure located in the heart of the Pink City is iconic. The outer facade of the palace resembles a honeycomb with a total of 953 windows. In order to create the illusion of a reflection, I used two mobile cameras to click this photo, which resulted in this interesting composition.



Vigneshwaran Krishnan is a photographer from Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu.

UP ABOVE
Florence, Italy

I chanced upon this view when the bus I was on reached Piazzale Michelangelo, at around sunset. This 19th-century *piazza* has an uninterrupted view of the entire city of Florence up to the hills, along with the Arno River. The bus ride was definitely worth it, as it allowed me to witness a beautiful Florentine sunset – one that I'd only heard and read about. It's a perfect place to end your day in Florence – watching the sun go down as it paints the city in ethereal tones of orange and purple. It's postcard perfect!



Bangalore-based **Mythrayi Harshavardhan** is a researcher.



OF SAND AND STRAW

Togo, Africa

After retiring, I found myself with an ample amount of time, which resulted in me travelling more than ever. This image is of traditional Batammariba houses that I came across while exploring Koutammakou, in northern Togo. Koutammakou is a UNESCO World Heritage site – the houses here are built entirely of clay and straw.



Bangalore-based
Shyam Kodavarthi
is a retired
software
professional.



Going Vegan

The Vegan Travel Handbook will help you discover a huge range of vegan-friendly adventures around the globe.



Whether you've been vegan for years or are travelling as one for the first time, get essential advice and expert tips on everything from where to go when and the best vegan restaurants, accommodation and cities. We also reveal unmissable vegan tours, festivals and food trucks.

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Celebrating Bihu, the *jolpan* way,
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A *Pakhala Dibasa* spread,
Jagatsingpur, Odisha
[@_vivacious_essence](#)

PHOTO CHALLENGE
On your plate
Each month, we set a new challenge for our Instagram followers – to submit photos on a specific travel theme. Here we reveal the winning images for ‘on your plate’
[@lonelyplanetmagazineindia](#)



A splash of colour, a dash of health,
New Delhi, NCR
[@psanand81](#)



Easy-peasy, lemon squeezy,
Amreli, Gujarat
[@rujvie](#)



Of chilli, cheese and cobbler fish,
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Comfort in a bowl,
Thane, Maharashtra
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FEATURES

PLAN NOW... TRAVEL WHEN IT'S TIME! INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE!

Vegan food
in world cities,
sake in Tokyo, regional
recipes from India's best chefs
and culinary experts,
and so much more...
Our Features section
is stuffed with great
food and drink

PLANT UP ANYWHERE

Veganism is now widely established, so whether you've made the leap or are vegan travel-curious, dip into this directory of ideas for worldwide inspiration



The mac pack (mac 'n' creamy cashew cheese) with truffle & mushroom, sundried tomato & olive, and garlic & onion, at Parka Food Co, Toronto

PHOTOGRAPH: PARKA FOOD CO



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- 1. A 100% organic jackfruit carnitas taco bowl at Gracias Madre, LA
- 2. Jaffa sunset surfers in Tel Aviv
- 3. Mr & Mrs Watson in Amsterdam
- 4. Vegan Pastrami with homemade sauces and fresh vegetables at Krowarzywa, Warsaw



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1. South East Asian traveller bowl from Rupert's Street, London
2. Downtown Los Angeles from Lincoln Heights

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

There are plenty of vegan offerings in Amsterdam – Vietnamese, Japanese, Caribbean – along with restaurants such as Meatless District and The Dutch Weed Burger: the latter more innocent than it sounds – it's a 'House of Seaweed'.

TOP EATS

◆ Vegan Junk Food Bar

This bar serves healthy 'junk food'. Plant-based burgers are best known, but you can also have sashimi made from tapioca, fruity cocktails and CBD-infused juice (www.veganjunkfoodbar.com).

◆ Mr & Mrs Watson

Named after the couple who coined the term 'veganism', this restaurant serves plant-based comfort food. The menu includes sloppy joe chilli burgers and *bitterballen* – 'better balls' with Thai coconut curry filling. Don't miss the signature cheese platters and fondue – it's hard to believe it's not real! (www.watsonsfondue.com)

LOS ANGELES, THE USA

LA respects all those who consider the body a temple. If Los Angelenos don't have a plant-friendly lifestyle, they're still familiar with it.

TOP EATS

◆ Crossroads

At this favourite of movie stars, dine on lasagne with almond ricotta or fried 'chicken' and waffles, or, later, cocktails and buffalo-style *maitake* mushrooms or vegan sliders (www.crossroadskitchen.com).

◆ Gracias Madre, Los Angeles

Try *chimichanga* with *tempeh* (soy) *chorizo*, or squash-stuffed *quesadilla* with cashew *crema*. Seasonal produce is from the restaurant's farm (www.gracias-madre.com).

LONDON, ENGLAND

There seem to be vegan options in easy range of every Tube stop: fancy Ethiopian, Caribbean, Asian or Japanese vegan cuisine? What about the world's first vegan chicken shop? Even

Pizza Hut offers vegan cheese at its UK outlets.

TOP EATS

◆ Rupert's Street

The Rupert's Street van changes its menu regularly, highlighting seasonal produce – you could try celeriac and potato cottage pie or beetroot and chickpea burgers. All packaging decomposes in less than 12 weeks (www.rupertsstreet.com).

◆ Gauthier

This is the UK's first Michelin-starred venue with a vegan tasting menu. Chef Alexis Gauthier turned vegan in 2016 and converted the vegetable tasting menu to 'Vegan Menu: Les Plantes'. It's been a fixture ever since (www.gauthiersoho.co.uk).

MILAN, ITALY

If you know where to look, there are dedicated outlets offering vegan burgers with pink buns or Michelin-starred haute cuisine in ultra-stylish locations, not to mention superfresh vegetables.

TOP EATS

◆ Alhambra

This no-frills place is brimming with food that's cruelty-free, healthy and delicious. The husband-and-wife team offers reinterpreted dishes from their homeland, Eritrea, like creamy lentil stew and spicy *samosas*. Pay by weight, then have a vegan tiramisu (www.alhambra.naturale.wixsite.com/alhambra).

◆ Joia

Although there is dairy in some dishes, most of the food at this one Michelin-starred restaurant is vegan. Swiss-born chef Pietro Leeman's food philosophy is Zen-like and, fittingly, his food has to be experienced to be believed (www.joia.it [in Italian]).

WARSAW, POLAND

The 50-odd vegan restaurants here include Mexican, sushi, burgers, French bakeries and Polish comfort food.

TOP EATS

◆ Eden Bistro

This is a temple of creative vegan

3. Anacronismo (bavaois with porcini and pumpkin, salad, and crust of white polenta flavoured with cumin) at Joia, Milan

4. Daddy McChik'n at Vegan Junk Food Bar in Amsterdam



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food and organic wine. Try its delicious take on *laksa* noodles. The leafy ambiance is not just for show – it sells plants and some of the artisan ceramics that the food is served on. Eden is at the back of Dom Funkcjonalny, a 1928 villa designed by modernist architect Czesław Przybylski (www.facebook.com/eden.bistro/).

◆ Krowarzywa

This burger specialist with a contemporary look and minimalist furniture serves millet- or chickpea-patty burgers with a wide variety of toppings, sides and house-made juices (www.krowarzywa.pl).

TORONTO, CANADA

Vegan neighbourhood 'Vegandale' is a dedicated block of vegan food, goods and services and its own touring festival. More than half of Canadians, and an even greater proportion under 35, regularly opt for vegan meat alternatives, and Toronto's chefs are catering for plant-centric eating like never before. →

APPS FOR YOUR VEGAN TRIP

HappyCow

App mapping vegan and vegan-friendly restaurants and stores worldwide. www.happycow.net

V Cards: Vegan Abroad

Free app with scripts in more than 100 languages explaining that you're vegan and what foods you don't eat. Select the relevant card to show the waiter. www.vegan.cards

Vanilla Bean Plant-Based Food

Free app mapping vegan, raw and gluten-free options, mainly in Europe and North America. www.vanilla-bean.com

Vegan Passport

Also available as a booklet, compiled by The Vegan Society, this explains dietary preferences in languages understood by 96% of the world's population. www.vegansociety.com/resources/lifestyle/travel/vegan-passport



1. Mushroom skewer in a pitta, Sultana, Tel Aviv
 2. Stone path, Ubud
 3. The Cinnamon Snail vegan food truck, New York City

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TOP EATS

◆ Parka Food Co.

Expect burgers made from marinated portobello mushrooms and blackened cauliflower; mac 'n' (vegan) cheese with toppings like truffle mushroom and garlic and onion; thick, flavourful soups. Everything's made from scratch using local ingredients. There are lots of gluten-free options too (www.parkafoodco.com).

◆ Fresh

You'll find all the comfort-food faves here, from tacos to burgers, plus a range of salads, juices and smoothies. Fresh has five locations across the city; Queen Street West is the original (www.freshrestaurants.ca).

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Israel has the highest proportion of vegans in the world, and plant-based is a way of life, so think beyond *hummus* and *falafels* and prepare to be wowed.

TOP EATS

◆ Sultana

For that roasted-meat-on-a-spit experience (minus the meat), head to Sultana, a vegan *shawarma* joint. Stuff your pitta with roasted *seitan* (cooked wheat gluten) or skewered wild mushrooms, plus a smattering of salads and pickles (www.facebook.com/Sultanavegan).

◆ 416

The concept is simple: take comfort food favourites and serve them with all the trimmings (without harming any animals). Expect dishes like mushroom *schnitzel* baguette, vegan *shawarma* and even juicy *seitan* steak, served in a pan with potatoes and onions. This guilt-free indulgence makes 416 popular with vegans and non-vegans alike (00-972-3-775-5060; HaArba'a St 16, Tel Aviv-Yafo).

NEW YORK CITY, THE USA

Whether you're looking for vegan restaurant chains, fine-dining, burgers, *crêpes* or doughnuts, New York City wholeheartedly

embraces your needs. Though the Upper West Side might have limited choices, other neighbourhoods have the city's go-get-'em attitude – a 'vegetable slaughterhouse', for instance – and where else on Earth would you find a café with vegan sleeping pods for when you need a nap?

TOP EATS

◆ The Cinnamon Snail

Breakfast *burritos*, French toast... it's all heavenly at this New York truck. You want a Beastmode Burger Deluxe? It's a grilled *ancho* chilli *seitan* burger with a stack of relishes and sides, on a pretzel bun (www.cinnamonsnail.com).

◆ Modern Love

Celebrated chef Isa Chandra Moskowitz's 'swanky vegan comfort food' has been received with open, watering mouths in Williamsburg. The restaurant is a lovely date spot with sultry lighting and immaculate service, while dishes include 'mac 'n' shews' (with creamy cashew cheese), truffled *poutine* and a lip-smacking Korean BBQ bowl with glazed tofu and *kimchi*. It's always buzzing; consider booking (www.modernlovebrooklyn.com).

UBUD, BALI, INDONESIA

With no shortage of tofu and *tempeh* on menus, Bali is an easy choice for vegans, but Ubud is best of all. As the island's spiritual and cultural nexus, Ubud is all about feeding your soul. There are plenty of raw food options featuring fresh, local ingredients, not to mention a lot of vegan retreats in glorious tropical locations.

TOP EATS

◆ Seeds of Life

In the spiritual heartland of Ubud, this raw vegan café serves some of the most creative vegan food anywhere: fermented veggie sliders, creamy-sour *laksa* soup with courgette noodles, beetroot 'rawvioli'. The place is also known for its elaborate health tonics with ingredients such as peony root and astragalus (www.theseedsoflifecafe.com). →

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VEGAN BLOGS

The Nomadic Vegan

Wendy Werneth has visited more than a hundred countries, collating her destination-specific vegan tips on an interactive world map.

www.thenomadicvegan.com

Vegan Travel

An aggregate blog where vegan travellers share tips from recent adventures.

Country-specific guides are divided into general posts and individual restaurant reviews.

www.vegantravel.com

Burger Abroad

The personal blog of full-time vegan traveller Amanda Burger includes illustrated destination tips covering an enviable number of cities.

www.burgerabroad.com



Khao pad sapporot
(Thai pineapple fried
rice) at Abattoir
Vegetal, Paris

◆ Kokolato

This Ubud vegan gelato company's desserts are served in restaurants across the island in flavours such as smoky vanilla, raw cacao and turmeric-ginger-lime (www.kokolato.com).

PARIS, FRANCE

Not often considered a top vegan-friendly destination, Paris has changed significantly in recent years. Since April 2017, when the city's first vegan pastry shop, VG Pâtisserie, started selling gourmet delicacies, proving it was possible to meet French standards, the scene has exploded. You'll now find more than 60 totally vegan shops selling wares of all kinds.

TOP EATS

◆ Abattoir Vegetal

Mint-green wrought-iron chairs and tables line the pavement outside the 'plant slaughterhouse' (it occupies a former butcher shop), while the light, bright interior has bare-bulb downlights, distempred walls and greenery-filled hanging baskets. Each day, there's a choice of three raw and cooked organic dishes per course, cold-pressed juices and craft beers from Parisian brewery BapBap. Seasonal veg, seeds and edible flowers are used in dishes like roast plantains with coconut milk and polenta, a black-bean-and-wild-rice burger, and roast pineapple with carob foam. Gluten-free options are plentiful (www.abattoirvegetal.fr).

◆ Raw Cakes

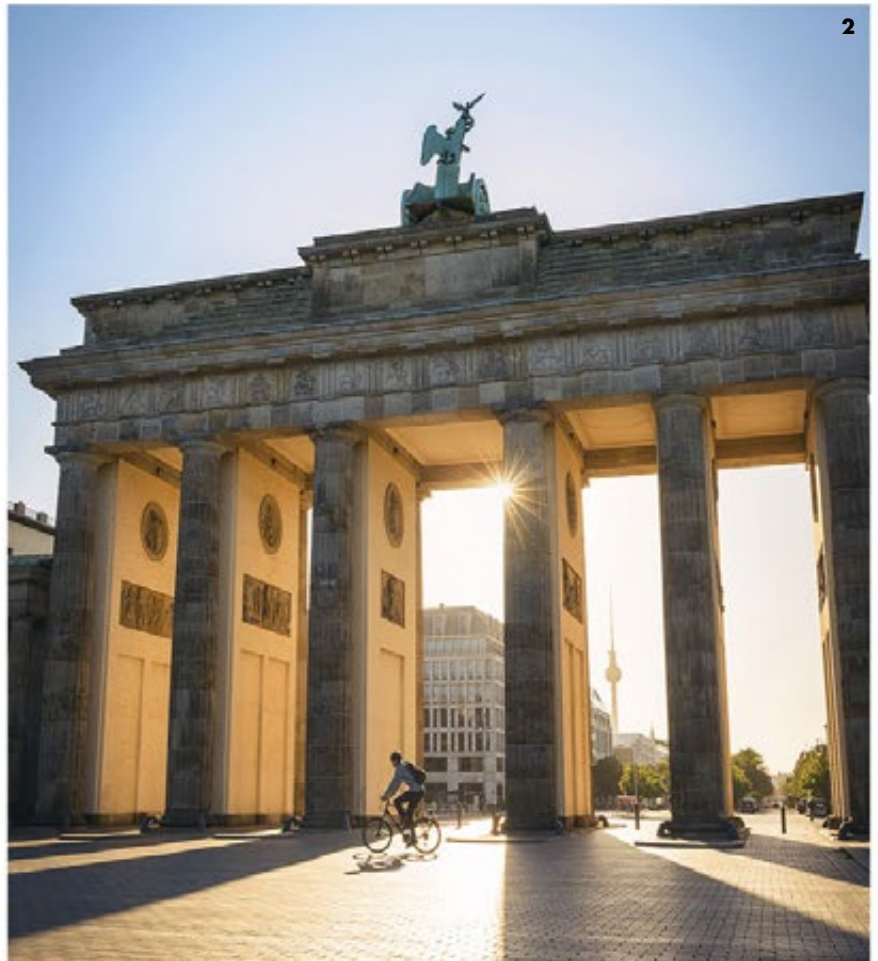
A pretty lavender and fuchsia-pink façade fronts this much-welcomed café and cake shop where everything is 100% vegan, gluten-free and raw. Enticing nut and chickpea burgers, veggie-packed pizzas and meal-sized salads rub shoulders on the menu with fresh juices, smoothies and exquisite uncooked cakes. There's always a full house for Sunday brunch (www.rawcakesvegan.com).

KYOTO, JAPAN

Due to its fondness for fish, Japan might not be top of anyone's list →



1. *Le Botaniste, Ghent*
2. *The Brandenburg gate in Berlin, 'vegan capital of the world'*



VEGAN SLEEPS

Vegvisits

This site helps you book stays in the homes of plant-based eaters, get recommendations for local restaurants and markets, or book a kitchen by the hour to cook for yourself.
www.vegvisits.com

Veggie Hotels

Website listing vegetarian and vegan hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses in more than 60 countries.
www.veggie-hotels.com



*Utopian dream pasta
(green papaya, carrots,
kale, spring onions
and broccoli pad Thai)
and sweet greens
juice at Prasad
in Portland, Oregon*

of vegan destinations, especially with *dashi* (fish broth) being used as the master stock in so many dishes. But 'shōjin ryōri' is a helpful phrase here: it's a traditional style of animal-free cooking in Buddhist temples. A modern vegan scene has grown in Kyoto in recent years.

TOP EATS

◆ Shigetsu

Try traditional Japanese Buddhist cuisine at this *tatami*-floored restaurant on the grounds of Tenryū-ji Temple. You'll get a series of delicate small dishes such as sesame tofu, soy-braised mushrooms, *miso* soup and aubergine. Lunch only (www.tenryuji.com/en/shigetsu/index.html).

◆ Towzen

A 20-minute bus ride from the city centre, in a house near Shimogamo-jinja Shrine, TowZen is famous for its robust vegan *ramen*. Two must-try varieties are *musashi* (a thick soy milk, kelp and soy-sauce broth with *sanshō* pepper, yuba slices, mushrooms and acidic plum paste), and *tantanmen*, which uses the same broth but with chilli paste and soya-meat (www.mamezen.com).

PORTLAND, OREGON, THE USA

The vegan dedication is strong in Portland. It has an entire mall that's vegan, hosts a vegan summer camp, sells vegan furniture, there's a vegan punk club, a critically-acclaimed fine dining vegan restaurant, even a vegan strip club... you get the picture. Portland also claims to have the world's first all-vegan barbecue.

TOP EATS

◆ Portland Saturday Market

Veggie lovers delight in Portland's enormous, wildly-varied farmers' market, its stalls heaped with locally-grown delicacies such as Willamette Valley hazelnuts and organic marionberries, and foraged plants such as nettles and fiddleheads (www.portlandsaturdaymarket.com).

◆ Prasad

Prasad's location inside a yoga studio tells you a lot. Healthy, hearty salads, bowls and smoothies come in every shade of green: try the Dragon Bowl (brown rice or quinoa, beans, steamed kale, avocado, sea vegetables, cabbage-apple *kimchi*, spring onions, hemp and sesame seeds and your choice of sauce) or Harvest Salad (massaged kale, mixed greens, sesame *tempeh*, rice, chickpeas, carrots, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds and sesame *miso* dressing). Breakfast options include a delicious maple-chia waffle with vanilla cashew cream. Drinks include gluten-free vegan beer, wine and cider (www.prasadpdx.com).

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

Edinburgh has become Scotland's vegan capital (only recently eclipsing Glasgow, if you're after a solid second choice in Scotland), with incredible food, drink and products to enjoy among a very supportive vegan community. You can even get a vegan *haggis samosa*, if you fancy it.

TOP EATS

◆ Henderson's Vegan

Established in 1962, Henderson's is the grandmother of Edinburgh's vegetarian restaurants. The food is mostly organic and guaranteed GM-free, and special dietary requirements can be catered for. Trays and counter service lend something of a 1970s canteen feel to the place (in a good, pleasantly nostalgic way), and the daily salads and hot dishes are as popular as ever. Just round the corner on Thistle Street is the 1005 vegan bistro Henderson's Vegan (www.hendersonsofedinburgh.co.uk).

BERLIN, GERMANY

Frequently cited as the vegan capital of the world, Berlin's strength is its thriving population of vegans: at least 80,000 and growing rapidly. This is a city where you'll find not just vegan

TOP 6 VEGAN TOURS



Intrepid Vegan Food Adventures

Intrepid Travel, known for ethically-minded, small-group adventures, has recently updated its Real Food Adventures with tours for vegan gastronomes: eight-day trips to India, Thailand or Italy. The emphasis is on food – local experiences and hands-on cooking classes. It hopes to expand to all-vegan accommodation options (www.intrepidtravel.com/uk/vegan-food-adventures).

Vegan Epicure Travel

Whether you're after a half-day excursion or a week-long global escape, Vegan Epicure Travel has plenty of choice. Would you like a cycling tour of Provence? What about a women's wellness retreat in Sri Lanka? A food tour in the French Riviera? A visit to a sanctuary of rescued animals in California? The hardest bit will be choosing (www.veganepicuretravel.com).

Samsara Vegan Travels

The best thing about Samsara Vegan Travels isn't just the range of destinations (Sweden, Myanmar, Vietnam, Nepal and Japan), but that opt-in activities and suggestions mean you can customise your tour (www.samsaravegantravels.com).

Vegan Safari Africa

For animal-friendly eco-safaris in Botswana, look no further. Whether five-star luxury accommodation or cheaper, authentic tenting experiences, Vegan Safari Africa has all budgets covered. There is a range of options for spotting wildlife in its natural habitat, from tiny white frogs in the Okavango to the famous Big Five (www.vegansafariAfrica.com).

Vegan Cruises and Tours

Though some people might think a vegan cruise impossible, Vegan Cruises and Tours uses only new ships that have met environmental guidelines and water protection regulations, and never burn heavy fuel. Choose from the Mekong Delta, Portugal, Myanmar or the Chilean fjords (www.vegan-cruises.com).

VegThisCity

Fancy a meat-free gastronomy tour of Singapore with a local? VegThisCity offers four-hour tours, from streetfood to sampling tea from several cultures. The tours are curated to highlight local communities and cultures, and to show the city's innovative vegan cuisine (www.vegthiscity.com).

restaurants but businesses thinking creatively about everyday vegan needs: animal-free butchers, hotels, bars and Schivelbeiner Strasse, a 'vegan avenue' featuring animal-friendly clothing stores.

TOP EATS

◆ Pêle Mêle

Soups, tomato and tofu *ciabattas* and spelt burgers fill the entirely vegan menu at Pêle Mêle, with organic beer or oat milk coffees to drink. Book ahead for the excellent Sunday brunches (www.pele-mele-berlin.de/cafe [in German]).

◆ Vegan Tours Berlin

In Berlin, the plant-based culinary scene is so diverse that different neighbourhoods demand separate tours. Follow Vegan Food Tours through

edgy Friedrichshain, multicultural Neukölln or join the shorter, snack-fuelled tour of Berlin Mitte (www.vegantoursberlin.com).

Ghent, Belgium

Claiming to be the first city in the world to introduce a meat-free day of the week (Veggie Thursday, funded by the Flemish government in association with Ethical Vegetarian Alternatives), Ghent is one of the most easily navigable cities for vegans. Plant-friendly locales are mapped on Ghent Tourism's website (www.visit.gent.be).

TOP EATS

◆ Le Botaniste

Chef Alain Coumante's healthy sustainable cuisine is 100% plant-based, 99% organic,

and all wines are natural. Everything containing nuts or gluten is clearly marked on the menu. The no-reservations space offers pasta with 'soylognese' sauce, Tibetan mama curry or 'make your own' bowls for which you can choose your own base, sauce, garnishes and toppings (www.lebotaniste.be).

◆ Komkommertijd

'Cucumber time' (the Flemish equivalent of 'silly season') is Ghent's vegan institution – a take away and all-you-can-eat buffet bar. It's run as a co-operative – everyone who works there earns the same hourly wage and has an equal say in how the place is run. Choose from a variety of seasonal soups and warm or cold vegan options at a fixed price, and you can eat on the terrace in good weather (www.komkommertijd.be). 🌱



THE VEGAN TRAVEL HANDBOOK

is packed with advice on Lonely Planet's favourite vegan-friendly destinations, tours and experiences (www.shop.lonelyplanet.com).



Tempeh (soya) is a vital ingredient in the vegan culinary smorgasbord

SECRETS OF SAKE

We head to **Tokyo** to uncover the secrets of Japan's national drink, and seek out the very best places to drink it

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Neon on the streets of Shinjuku



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FIRST, A CONFESSION. Before I set out on my quest to find the perfect *sake*, everything I knew about the drink could be written onto the side of a chopstick. At best, the *sake* selection on a drinks menu in Japanese restaurants at home in London provided a brief distraction from the more important business of summoning chicken *katsu*. I knew it was made with rice, but how was I meant to drink it? Like a shot? Ice cold like vodka? At the end of the meal like a *digestivo*?

Clearly, let loose on the streets of Tokyo, a crass amateur like me would need some guidance. I enlisted the help of Daniela Baggio Morano, a half Japanese, half Italian guide with a particular mission to help visitors make sense of the city's sometimes baffling food and drink scene.

We meet in the district of **Shinjuku** on a rainy night, when all of Tokyo seems on the move, scurrying through the splashy streets under transparent plastic umbrellas like a sea of giant, misplaced jellyfish. The wet streets reflect the neon signs fixed to every bit of building, flashing advertising slogans or the latest J-pop video. Promoters stand in the doorways of shops, bars and strip clubs, their sales pitches lost on the sodden, preoccupied passersby.

Resisting their calls, too, Daniela leads me into a modest basement shopping centre and into an equally modest *izakaya*, or pub: **Nihonshu Stand Moto**. Eight customers stand at the horseshoe-shaped bar, bags and briefcases neatly stacked into baskets at their feet. We take our places beside them, and conical glasses promptly appear in front of us.

"So," says Daniela, studying the menu, "perhaps something fruity and easy to drink for your first *sake*." The bartender produces a large brown bottle from the fridge, its label a swirl of elegant calligraphy, and fills my glass to the brim. "You drink it little by little," says Daniela, raising her own glass. The *sake*, a Jikon 2017, has a rich and developing flavour, rainy to start with but developing into something a little harsher. It is a bit like a dry sherry. Delicate little dishes of mountain vegetables, seaweed and sesame seeds arrive as we sip. "You must always eat something with your *sake*," says Daniela. "It is like the way they serve *tapas* in Spain, really."

Around us, the bar slowly fills, customers shuffling around the horseshoe to make room for new arrivals. All – 'salaried' pulling off their ties, businesswomen putting their phones into bags, old friends and young couples – are welcomed

with a smile and a greeting as they enter. The merry hubbub soon drowns out the Japanese vocalist crooning on the stereo. When Daniela shares news of my quest, everyone leaps in with an opinion of where we should head next. "People in this bar know about their *sake*," says Daniela. "They want to compare drinks and talk about them. In a big city, you need to find little pearls like this."

Maybe it's the *sake*, maybe it's the cheerful atmosphere, but I feel a warm glow spread through my stomach and out into my limbs, and I momentarily forget the rain falling relentlessly on the streets above.

A MORE FORMAL EDUCATION is needed, though I could quite happily return to Nihonshu Stand Moto every night to continue my *sake* appreciation. I make an appointment at the **Japan Sake and Shochu Information Center**, an association representing Japan's 1,700 *sake* breweries. My teacher is Shuso Imada, the general manager. "*Sake* has a history going back 2,000 years," he says as we take our seats in a bright, modern room lined with →

1. A brimming glass of sake

2. Sampling sake at Nihonshu Stand Moto izakaya

WHAT IS SAKE?

Sake is, essentially, rice and water, with an alcohol content of around 15%. It's brewed like beer, rather than distilled like a spirit, and there are five major types, ranging from 'ginjo', which is smooth and fruity, to the unpasteurised 'namazake', which is fresh and sweet and only available in Japan.



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1. Tasting at the Sake and Shochu Information Center

2. Old sake barrels at the Shinto Meiji Shrine

shelves of old *sake* bottles, cups and grains. “It was traditionally used to connect people to god, so it is a holy drink in a way. It is still important in Shinto ceremonies. Even today, a Shinto priest will come and purify the ground with *sake* before anyone builds in Tokyo.”

As he talks me through the process, Mr Imada pours samples, ranging from a light unpasteurised version that tastes of very little, to a creamy, mature *sake* with a good whack. “*Sake* is a drink to have with a meal or with cheese,” he says. “You enjoy it as you would enjoy wine. It is more egalitarian, though; it doesn’t have the element of snobbery wine has.”

Consumption of *sake* in Japan had been declining since the 1970s, but has recently been seeing something of a revival. “Many breweries were destroyed by the 2011 tsunami in northeast Japan,” says Mr Imada. “People found out that drinking *sake* from that area would help the people there. It started out as sympathy, but then they discovered that *sake* is far better than they thought. Before, it was only for the grandfather. After the earthquake, young people enjoy it, too. It has been a generational change.” To see how the *sake* revolution has taken

hold with Tokyo’s younger residents, I head to **Ebisu**, a district packed with bars and *izakayas*, and home to **Buri**, a definitive stop on any self-respecting *sake* hunter’s pub crawl. Buri is something of an east-west hybrid, with dried ray’s fin and leek *yakitori* on the menu, along with serrano ham and home-made potato crisps. Its love of fusion is not the most striking thing about it, though – that honour belongs to the glass *sake* jars that fill cubbyholes on one wall of the tiny bar. There are hundreds, collected from all over Japan, each with a distinctive label: bright orange koi carp, Mount Fuji and cartoon monsters among them. “This is how young people drink *sake*,” says barman Mr Tanaka, taking a couple of jars from the freezer, their sides dripping condensation. “On weekend nights, there are 50 people squashed around the bar until 4am.”

The vessels are Buri’s unique calling card – there are no bottles or cups here. I choose one with a cat on the label, pull off its metal lid and drink straight from the jar. It has a slightly sharp taste, and the chill is welcome on a clammy day. Mr Tanaka tells me to take the empty glass away with me, as all customers do, and I think this is my favourite

thing about the experience. The little jar with its graphic label will jog memories of the bar, and of Tokyo, long after the taste of *sake* has left my mouth.

MY FINAL PLANNED STOP takes me from downtown Tokyo, where locals bar-crawl until dawn, to the 40th floor of the **Park Hyatt Hotel** and the rarefied environment of **Kozue**. The restaurant is regularly named as one of Tokyo’s best, with diners flocking to experience the seasonal tasting menus created by chef Kenichiro Oe. From my table by one of the floor-to-ceiling windows, the colossal size of the city overwhelms. Tokyo is *massive*. A forest of skyscrapers stretches for unfathomable distances in each direction, Mount Fuji a faint outline on the horizon. Far below, artificial football pitches seem the size of my fingernail, and multi-lane roads no wider than a shoelace.

My slack-jawed gawping is interrupted by the soft jingle of ceramic bowl on wooden tray, announcing the beginning of the *sake* ceremony. *Sake* sommelier Hitoshi Tanabe, dapper in an immaculate suit, has three for me to try, selected from a list of 55. His colleague, →

**BOTTLE
AND BARREL**

Sake was traditionally transported by cedar barrel. It was kept this way for a maximum of a week, to prevent the liquid taking on the taste of the wood. These days, sake is kept and sold in magnum-sized bottles, to increase fermentation and, therefore, the quality.



Some of the many jars on display at Buri



SERVING SAKE

Sake can be drunk warm (max 55°C) or cold (min 5°C).

The modern preference is for the latter; premium sakes have subtleties of flavour that mean they are best served cold. Warm sake is served in thick ceramic cups to retain the heat. Once opened, a bottle of sake should be drunk within a week or two.

Beef grilling at Izakaya Genkaya, with sake in bamboo cups

Ms Kataymia Ayumi, wearing a grey and white *kimono*, decants the clear liquid into a wide bowl to aerate it, and from there into small cups.

“With *sake*,” says Mr Tanabe, “it is an art form: the cups you use, the bowls you use, how you arrange them. What I find fun is how it tastes different, depending on how you serve it.”


To demonstrate, each *sake* is poured into a differently-shaped, chilled glass, ranging from squat and bulbous to tall and thin. My favourite is Juyondai, made in a province famous for its rice. It is creamy, with hints of mango, and draws out both the saltiness of the crab and the sweetness of the fig in the dish brought to the table. The experience is one of delight in precision and tradition. “*Sake* has such a long history in Japan,” says Mr Tanabe. “It plays a cultural role in our country – it is more than just a drink.”

On my way out, I ask him where he drinks *sake* when he’s not at Kozue. “Ah,” he says with a smile. “To **Izakaya Genkaya** in Shibuya. Very traditional, very casual, *no gaijin* [foreigners].”

MY LAST NIGHT IN TOKYO, and I can’t resist trying to find the pub that Mr Tanabe visits on his night off. I set off through the streets of **Shibuya** on another rainy night, the address of Genkaya written down in Japanese in my notebook. On a backstreet not far from the city’s famous Shibuya Crossing, I spot a small sign with letters that vaguely match those on my paper. I venture up a set of stairs, and, unconvinced this is the right place, stand hesitant outside a closed door on the fourth floor. I cautiously open it and peer in – a waiter is instantly upon me, taking my umbrella

and pointing to an empty table. Before me is a grill and a menu with photos of cuts of meat on it. Japanese rock and bad covers of Sister Sledge and Chris Isaak songs play on the stereo.

A waitress lights the charcoal in my grill and I point to the menu at bits of meat that I hope are beef. Around me, young couples and groups of friends sit at benches, faces slowly turning pink in the heat of the flames. All is smoke and sizzle, chatter and laughter.

I cook my beef, dip it in chilli oil and try it with a light *sake* served in a tall bamboo cup. The verdict? Cold *sake* and beef so hot it burns the mouth – I believe I’ve found perfection. 



AMANDA CANNING is still somewhat suspicious of *sashimi*, despite spending a week in Tokyo.



Pouring sake in a ceremony at Kozue restaurant

Essentials

→ BEST TIME TO VISIT

Tokyo is great any time of the year, but March to May is popular for the cherry blossom festival.

→ GETTING THERE

Tokyo is served by two international airports, **Narita** and **Haneda**. Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and ANA, among others, fly from Indian metros into Tokyo (return fares from ₹31,000).

→ GETTING AROUND

Get hold of a **Suica** or **Pasmo** pass at the airport stations; the prepaid and rechargeable cards are valid on pretty much all transport in the city.

→ VISA

A single-entry visa for Japan takes three working days to process (www.vfs.global.com; ₹510).

→ FANCY A CURRY?

Dhaba India in Tokyo is perfect for those seeking authentic, spicy Indian food! You'll find English-speaking wait staff and quick service (00-81-3-3272-7160; www.dhabaindia.com; 2, Chome-7-9, Chuo City, Yaesu; see website for timings; mains from ₹250).

→ EMBASSY ALERT

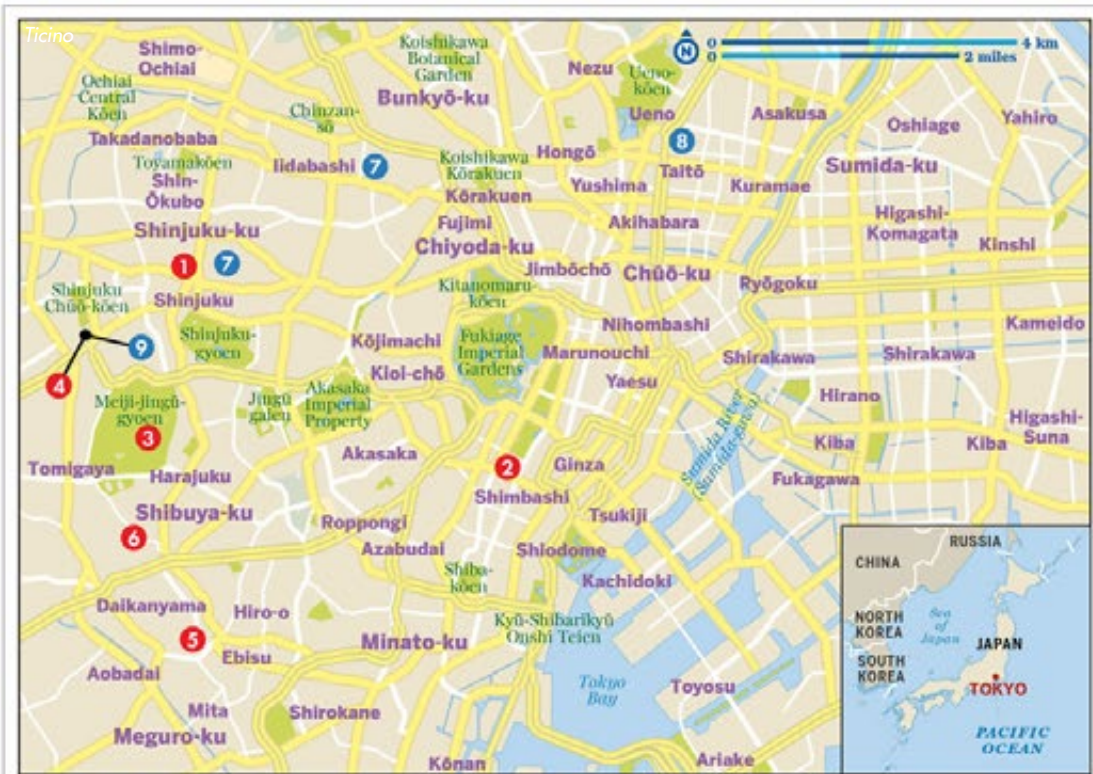
Embassy of India: Tokyo, Japan: www.indembassy-tokyo.gov.in/jp

→ CURRENCY

1 YEN = ₹0.65

→ FURTHER INFO

Pick up the Tokyo city guide for long stays (₹1,350), or the Pocket Tokyo for a shorter visit (₹750). The tourist board website is also a great source of topical information and curated advice (www.gotokyo.org).



WHERE TO STAY

Budget

A standout among Tokyo's new breed of flashpacker digs, **Unplan** offers comfort in Scandinavian wood tones. The private rooms are very pleasant, and a handy extra are the free smartphones for the guests to use. There's a common room with cooking facilities, as well as a café on the ground floor. There are two branches, one in Kagurazaka, and the newest in Shinjuku (www.unplan.jp; from ₹10,675; dorm bed from ₹2,850).

Mid-range

Opened in November 2018, **Nohga** is a stylish hotel fronted by attractive greenery and with a lovely restaurant-lounge area. The hotel's designers incorporated products from local artisans and contemporary brands (such as Tokyobike for its rental cycles) into the overall design. The rooms are comfortable, and tastefully decorated in soft greys (www.nohgahotel.com; from ₹12,450).

Top end

Channel Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson by staying at the **Park Hyatt**, the hotel where much of *Lost in Translation* was shot. The rooms are on the 42nd to 51st floors, meaning even the entry-level options have fantastic views; west-facing windows show Mt Fuji on clear days. For relaxing times, be sure to have a Suntory whiskey in the hotel's New York Bar (www.tokyo.park.hyatt.com; from ₹32,100).

The iconic Tokyo Tower looks absolutely stunning at night





The Shibuya Crossing is one of the most busiest crosswalks in the world.

YOUR OWN SAKE ADVENTURE



1 Get to grips with Tokyo gastronomy by taking a tour. **City Unscripted's** local hosts

can tailor their itineraries to your desires; ask to visit Nihonshu Stand Moto (pictured). The 'Eat and Drink like a Local' walk lasts four hours and costs from ₹8,000/ person (www.cityunscripted.com).



2 Pay a visit to the **Japan Sake and Shochu Information Center** to understand

the production and history of the drink. The centre has a small museum and a shop, and also offers tastings. A flight of three sakes costs from ₹175 (www.japansake.or.jp).



Yoyogi Park. Look out for the rows of sake barrels, used in religious ceremonies, lined up outside the shrine (www.meijijingu.or.jp).

4 For a meal you won't forget in a hurry, take the lift to **Kozue** on the 40th floor of the **Park Hyatt**, and tuck into the



modern Japanese cuisine of Kenichiro Ooe. An eight-course menu costs ₹8,000, and a sommelier will help you pair sake to each dish (www.restaurants.tokyo.park.hyatt.co.jp).



5 **Buri** offers another change of pace in Tokyo. The Ebisu establishment, on a street lined with bars, has over 40 types of sake, sold in strikingly-designed jars and served cold. Take your jar home with you

when you've polished off its contents (*Ebisunishi 1-14-1*).



6 It's quite a job to find **Izakaya Genkaya**, on the fourth floor of a nondescript block near Shibuya Crossing, but you'll thank us if you persist. Grill your meat at tabletop grills, and wash it down with beer and sake (*Udagawacho 30-3*).

Very *desi* food

Indian regional food is finally finding its true place on plates across the country, and in the world. We asked 20 chefs and food enthusiasts to share their thoughts on eating hyperlocal and a recipe (and the great travel memory that came with it)

Compiled by PRIMROSE MONTEIRO-D'SOUZA  @PrimroseDSouza







Old Bombay Seekh Kebabs

from Chef Varun Inamdar





Award-winning chef, chocolatier, food stylist and author, Chef Varun Inamdar (www.varuninamdar.com) has served over 75 diplomatic guests of the Indian president and prime minister, including Donald Trump, Barack Obama, Nicholas Sarkozy and Vladimir Putin. He is globally known as the 'Prince of Chocolates' and 'The Bombay Chef' on YouTube. He is also a Guinness World Record 2018 holder for 'The World's largest Chocolate Mud Pie' weighing 1,346 kilos!

📷 @varuninamdar 📺 @varuninamdarchef
📺 The Bombay Chef

“ Indian regional food is vast and wide, unique to not just every state but also to every home and to every hand that stirs the cauldron. As a community, we have never held on to our traditions in the wake of aping the West. Indians have only started looking up to their own hyper local cuisines and indigenous ingredients because the West has found these to be nutritious, wholesome and strikingly unique. Whatever the reason, it's time we explore our regional cuisines, dive into their goodness, and find as many ways to write about them, speak about them, cook them, feed those not in the know, and showcase them to the world the way they should be.”

“ When it comes to *kebabs*, I like the ones from Kahayam Chowk in Srinagar, Chandni Chowk in Delhi, Naushijaan in Lucknow, Peter Cat in Kolkata, Siddiqui in Hyderabad, and Buddi Galli in Aurangabad – all these really stand out. We often miss what is under our nose. One sniff 18 years ago landed me in the bylanes of Old Bombay. The taste of this melee of meat and smoke has stayed with me. What surprised me was the use of minimal ingredients – as little as salt and spices out of your kitchen pantry. ” →

“IT'S TIME WE EXPLORE OUR REGIONAL CUISINES, DIVE INTO THEIR GOODNESS, AND FIND AS MANY WAYS TO WRITE ABOUT THEM, SPEAK ABOUT THEM, COOK THEM, FEED THOSE NOT IN THE KNOW, AND SHOWCASE THEM TO THE WORLD THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE”

Serves
TWO

OLD BOMBAY SEEKH KEBABS

INGREDIENTS

2 cups minced mutton
1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
1 tsp red chilli powder
1½ tbsp salt
¼ tsp *garam masala*
Oil, for brushing
Chaat masala, to serve
Lemon halves, to serve

METHOD

- In a large bowl, mix together the minced meat with the ginger-garlic paste, red chilli powder, salt and *garam masala*. Massage the meat for five minutes until it starts feeling warm.
- Shape the meat mixture into long cylinders, and insert a skewer lengthwise through the centre of each *kebab*.
- Brush the *kebabs* with oil and cook for two minutes on a high flame to sear the meat.
- Then cook on a medium flame for 10 minutes, turning intermittently.
- Serve hot, sprinkled with *chaat masala* and drizzled with lemon juice.





Pandi Curry

from Chef Michael Swamy

Food stylist, food media specialist, wildlife photographer, traveller and three-time Gourmand Award winner, Chef Michael Swamy (www.michaelswamy.com) is also the author of *The East Indian Kitchen, Pairing Indian Food and Wine, and Masala Dabba*. He has curated the food at Eastern Sunset at the Avion Hotel, Mumbai, Anglow in Khan Market, Delhi, and at Orinoco in Bangalore, opening soon.

📷 @themichaelswamy

“Regional foods are based on eons of cultural heritage, climatic and geographic conditions, thus keeping them in perfect harmony with nature. The techniques used to cook them are also based on scientific means. Cooking in iron and storing in copper; eating off plates made of certain metals or clay – all of these aid the human system. Rediscovering these foods and techniques is important in that it’s all about returning to nature and one’s ethnic roots. Showcasing them to the world is important if we don’t want to lose touch with what is good.”

“My journey as a chef has always been about connecting wildlife and nature with food, and I found Coorg in Karnataka very exciting. On the drive there, we passed through rainforests and coffee plantations. We saw this majestic wild elephant drinking at a watering hole. Coorg also has a colourful history that’s similar to the history of my own community: the generals of Alexander settled there, made it their home and intermarried with locals to give birth to a unique culture and unusual cuisine that, over time, became legendary. On a walk through the rainforest, we met a Kodava lady who took us to her house and gave us ripe fruit and vegetables from her farm. It was a magical trip in many ways. Food is about experiences and tastes and one cannot really translate the same dish at home without being transported to the place where one ate it first. The best part of that trip was the *Pandi* Curry I learned from Chef Easo Johnson – that was one cooking lesson that became a fond memory.”



Serves
FOUR

INGREDIENTS

1kg pork with fat and skin, cut into 2-inch pieces
2 tbsp oil
2 large green chillies, slit lengthwise
2 large onions, finely chopped
Salt, to taste
½ tsp *kachampuli*

FOR THE MARINADE

1 tbsp red chilli powder
½ tbsp turmeric powder
1½ tbsp ginger paste
2 heaped tbsp garlic paste
Salt, to taste

FOR THE SPICE BLEND

2 tbsp coriander seeds
1 tbsp cumin seeds
2 tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp black peppercorns



METHOD

- Transfer the pork pieces to a large mixing bowl, add the marinade ingredients, and mix very well, rubbing them into the pork. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes.
- Heat a pan over a low flame and, separately, roast the coriander seeds, cumin seeds, mustard seeds and peppercorns until fragrant and very slightly coloured. Allow the spices to cool, then transfer to a spice grinder and grind to a fine powder.
- Add the spice powder to the marinating pork, mix very well, and set aside for another 30 minutes.
- Heat 3 to 4 cups of water until very hot.
- To prepare the curry, heat the oil in a large heavy pan over a medium flame, and add the green chillies. When the chillies splutter, add the onions and sauté till translucent.
- Add the marinated pork with a pinch of salt and cook, stirring continuously, for about 10 minutes or until the spices coat the pork, the meat is almost dry and the spices smell cooked.
- Stir in enough hot water until the meat is just covered. Allow the liquid to come to a simmer, then reduce the flame to low, and cover the pan. Allow to cook, stirring regularly, until the gravy is thick and the meat is cooked through. Add the *kachampuli*, and stir well. Cook for a couple of minutes. Taste the curry; it should have a clear tang to it, but shouldn’t be sour. If required, add ½ tsp *kachampuli* more. Serve hot with rice *rotis*.



Doodh Saar

from Chef Ranveer Brar

Chef Ranveer Brar's first book, *Come Into My Kitchen*, has a first-hand account of his growing relationship with food, which has shaped him into the chef he is today. He shares what he sees, learns and experiences with his enthusiastic social media family; his YouTube channel is a mixture of theory and practical information for recipes and dishes with special memories, while his TV shows are where he tries to make counter-based cooking as recreational as possible. He is currently a judge on *MasterChef India*.

📷 @ranveer.brar 🎥 Chef Ranveer

“Being resourceful is being Indian. Eating local and seasonal is something I've always advocated and it's truly significant in the current scenario. The very foundation of our cuisine is rooted in respecting the geographical conditions we live in. It's all there in our pantry, sadly coming back to us from the West! It's this *Hindustaniyat* aspect that I aim to showcase in my recipes, to look inward at what we already have because that's what our genes are used to.”

“When we think of Kolhapuri cuisine and its dishes, we think of fiery, spicy, non-vegetarian dishes. Travelling through the region a few years ago for a show, I visited Radhanagari, an idyllic village about 50km from Kolhapur. I was there for a couple of days and I still recall the tranquillity I felt waking up in that village, my childlike eagerness to explore the place. The population here gradually evolved through traders who frequented Kolhapur. Though Kolhapuri cuisine is famous for meat-based, Maratha-style dishes, these traders in Radhanagari started the tradition of vegetarian food. The dishes are as simple as the people and amazingly flavourful. One such unique dish is *Doodh Saar*, a very simple and spicy dish made with raw milk. I saw it being made with fresh buffalo milk, and the *malai* floating to the top was an absolutely divine sight. The *saar* is served in a glass and the potatoes, left at the bottom, are traditionally eaten with *bhakri*. Another unique feature of this dish is that no salt is added while cooking, as it uses raw milk; salt is served on the side with the dish.” →

Serves
TWO

INGREDIENTS

2½ tbsp coriander seeds
1½ tbsp sesame seeds
1 tbsp black peppercorns
2 tbsp dry coconut
2 large black cardamoms
2 red chillies
3 to 4 tbsp oil
2 onions, finely chopped
½ tsp dry coconut
2 potatoes, chopped
5 tbsp Kolhapuri *masala*
1 litre raw milk

METHOD

- Heat a *tawa* on a medium flame and dry roast the coriander and sesame seeds, dry coconut, black peppercorns and cardamoms. Transfer to a plate.
- On the same *tawa*, dry roast the red chillies. Add to the roasted spices, allow to cool, and grind them to a coarse paste, preferably on a *silbatta* (grinding stone).
- Heat the oil in a pan, add the onion and fry until it loses its raw aroma.
- Add the chopped potatoes, Kolhapuri *masala*, and the freshly-ground *masala* paste, and mix well.
- Add the milk and cook until the potatoes are done. Take care not to add any salt as that will cause the milk to curdle.
- Serve hot with Kolhapuri *masala* and salt on the side.

“BEING RESOURCEFUL IS BEING INDIAN. EATING LOCAL AND SEASONAL IS SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS ADVOCATED AND IT'S TRULY SIGNIFICANT IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO. THE VERY FOUNDATION OF OUR CUISINE IS ROOTED IN RESPECTING THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS WE LIVE IN. IT'S ALL THERE IN OUR PANTRY, SADLY COMING BACK TO US FROM THE WEST!”

Chef Saransh Goila (right) with Chef Atul Lahkar



Sunga Kukura

from Chef Saransh Goila

Chef Saransh Goila is a favourite with travel and food enthusiasts, who can find his eponymous channels on Instagram and YouTube. He is also the author of *India on My Platter*, a food travelogue over 20,000km, hosts *Roti Rasta aur India* and *Healthy Fridge* on television, and has been a guest judge on *Masterchef Australia* – contestants had to cook his version of Butter Chicken... That Butter Chicken is also the linchpin of his Mumbai restaurant chain, *Goila Butter Chicken*.

📷 @saranshgoila 📺 @saranshgoila



“ I have seen a great evolution in the regional food space in the last decade. When I started the SadakChef movement in 2012, only a handful of people acknowledged the fact that we needed to look inwards... within our country and into regional cuisines. In the last decade, a lot of chefs have opened restaurants that serve brilliant regional dishes cooked using regional ingredients. I feel proud to see the younger lot of Indian chefs taking this movement forward. It's very risky to run a restaurant based on regional cuisines and ingredients; the onus of educating the consumer is a heavy one. But, now, it has become a trend and, in my opinion, it currently sits on the number one spot. I think it's a great movement and it's here to stay.”

“ When I was shooting my show *Roti Rasta aur India*, I had the good fortune of meeting Chef Atul Lahkar in Assam. He has done more for Assamese cuisine than anyone else from the state, runs restaurants to promote local cuisine, and has written many books on the same. Atul took me from Guwahati to Sonapur, a small village on the outskirts of the city, to experience traditional Assamese methods of cooking, with local and fresh ingredients, in a unique setting. He explained that rice is very important in Assam, there are no *chapatis* in their meals. They use only a few spices – cumin, coriander and black pepper. Tribals form 70% of the population in Assam, and they cook without oil and spices, relying heavily on the natural herbs and local ingredients available in the wild. They preserve their meats by smoking them over fire. The dry meat or fish is then used as a chutney, mixed with fresh spices and flavourings. He also spoke about something that really caught my attention: the use of a hollow bamboo as a cooking vessel! He taught me how to make *Sunga Kukura*, chicken cooked in a piece of hollow bamboo. The bamboo should be fresh and rich in moisture; this helps the food inside to boil and keeps the shoot from burning. The bamboo shoot is also lightly smoked to add to the flavour. The chicken is marinated with fresh turmeric, ginger, garlic, coriander, fermented bamboo shoot water, and fermented bamboo shoots, then stuffed into the shoot, and sealed using a fresh turmeric leaf. The shoot is then put in the fire, standing up, to cook for about 40 minutes. ” →



SUNGA KUKURA

INGREDIENTS

1kg chicken, with bones or boneless
2 tbsp grated fresh turmeric root
1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
8 to 10 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 green chillies, finely chopped
2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves
1 tbsp fermented bamboo shoot juice
(see note below)
Salt, to taste
1 tbsp dried bamboo shoot (optional)
2 big pieces of bamboo, fresh, tender and edible (both sides are usually closed; get them cut at a 45° angle from the top [see photo] and you'll see the hollow)
5 cups water (divided usage)
2 to 3 turmeric leaves to seal the bamboo hollow
You will also need a wood fireplace or other set-up to burn the bamboo

METHOD

- Mix the chicken with the turmeric root, ginger, garlic, chillies, coriander leaves, fermented bamboo shoot juice, salt and dried bamboo shoot, if using. Marinate for at least two hours.
 - Roast the bamboo from outside for two minutes, so that fresh flavours are released within the hollows.
 - Divide the marinated chicken between the two bamboo hollows. Add two-and-a-half cups of water to each. Fold the turmeric leaves and push the chicken down into the hollows, making sure the leaves leave no space for steam to escape; the bamboo pieces act like a cooker.
 - Cook the bamboo pieces on an open fire for approximately 40 minutes. The outer side will turn dark grey, and you will be able to smell that the chicken is cooked. The time for cooking might vary depending on the size and quality of the bamboo.
 - Remove the bamboo pieces from the fire, unplug the hollows, and serve the chicken hot with steamed rice.
- Note: If you're not adding fermented bamboo juice, add a little lime juice or oil to mix the ingredients together.*

“WHEN I STARTED THE SADAKCHEF MOVEMENT IN 2012, ONLY A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGED THE FACT THAT WE NEEDED TO LOOK INWARDS...”

Shakkar ka Paratha



from Priyanka Deshpande

INGREDIENTS

2 cups wheat flour
Pinch of salt
1 tbsp oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup water
1 tbsp ghee
Organic powdered jaggery

METHOD

- Mix together the wheat flour, salt and oil. Add the water little by little to make

a stiff, non-sticky dough. Knead the dough lightly, and divide into five balls. Roll out into thick, flat discs.

- Roast each flat disc on a pan, applying ghee on both sides, until done.
- Sprinkle organic powdered jaggery on top of the *paratha* and top it with a little more ghee.
- Serve hot!

Makes FIVE parathas



Priyanka runs a food startup called **Authenticook** (www.authenticook.com), which provides local food experiences in 35+ cities across India. The online platform promotes authentic regional cuisines prepared by verified home chefs, offering diners an immersive food experience.

@authenticook @authenticook @authenticook

“There is no better way to experience and celebrate India’s culture and diversity than through our regional cuisines, which, unfortunately, are not easily available commercially through restaurants. This presented us with a very interesting opportunity in terms of opening up home kitchens to showcase and provide easy access to these foods. We love that our platform showcases home chefs’ culinary talents, empowers women and local communities, enables people to accept and respect the diversity that exists in India, and provides travellers with an avenue to experience our cultural heritage and diversity.”

“In November 2017, my husband and I visited Amritsar with a one-point agenda: to savour all the amazing food the city is famous for! We would have four to five meals a day to tick off all the local restaurants and dishes recommended to us. Our most favourite meal was at a local’s home! This is where I tasted the divine *shakkar ka paratha* (jaggery flatbread). So simple yet so delicious, this thick *paratha*, cooked in homemade ghee, is topped with organic powdered jaggery and some more ghee!”

“THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO CELEBRATE INDIA’S CULTURE AND DIVERSITY THAN THROUGH OUR REGIONAL CUISINES”

“REGIONAL
INDIAN IS THE
NEW GOURMET!
CULINARY
ENTHUSIASTS ARE
HEADING BACK
TO THE RUSTIC”



Hunter's Jungle Maas

from Aniruddha Patil

In 2005, Aniruddha founded PuneEatOuts (www.puneeatouts.in), a pioneering community that brings together lakhs of people to explore food and connect with restaurants, and empowers home chefs and bakers in and around Pune.

@puneeatouts @thepuneeatouts

“Regional Indian is the new gourmet! Culinary enthusiasts are heading back to the rustic. Just like rediscovering local travel, regional food is about finding something new about the food that we've always had as a community but seldom explored in detail. When we showcase regional food, we make a statement that food is beyond formal education, stereotypes, visual finesse. Regional food is about finding the culinary amalgamation of peoples, geography, weather, cultures, religions and, of course, the human spirit that survives and excels. It's food that appeals to the native and to any traveller with an open mind.”

“On our many road trips to Rajasthan, we encountered royal hunting stories and how meats were prepared with just a few, readily-available ingredients, and masterful cooking techniques. Unsure of what they would bag, the hunters carried basic ingredients with them and used their skills and patience. When cooking in a less-than-ideal setting, it's skills that matter first, then technique and then the ingredients. Less is more. Like with this Hunter's Jungle Maas. Red meat is perfect, but, for convenience, you can use chicken. The ideal is goat meat with a good amount of fat. The ingredients are few and simple, so patience and technique are very important.” →



Serves
TWO

INGREDIENTS

- ½kg meat (chicken or goat), cleaned and cut into pieces
- 150g ghee (divided usage) + more as needed
- Salt, to taste
- 2 unpeeled cloves garlic
- 8 to 10 spicy whole dry red chillies, slit
- Meat fat (optional)
- 2 medium unpeeled potatoes, cut into big cubes

METHOD

- Pierce the meat with a fork or score with a knife. Rub the salt and 50g of the ghee well into the meat, and marinate for an hour.
- Heat a thick-bottomed pan or earthen pot on a medium-high flame, add the remaining ghee, and allow to heat well.
- Add the garlic and red chillies, and sauté for a minute.
- Add the marinated meat, and meat fat, if using. Sauté for five minutes.
- Add the potatoes, and stir well. Flip the meat at regular intervals to ensure even cooking.
- Cover the pan to keep the meat from drying out. Add ghee, if required. Once the meat starts getting cooked, add salt.
- Allow to cook till the meat is tender, and serve hot, drizzled with ghee.





Alu Posto

From Iti Misra

Home chef and food consultant Iti Misra is hugely popular for her repertoire of authentic Bengali and Kolkata-style food. Proud of her heritage, Iti helps travellers discover the flavours of her favourite cuisine through home-style Bengali meals and cooking sessions. When not travelling the world in search of her next adventure, Iti curates food pop-ups, spreading her love for home-style Bengali cuisine across the country. She has collaborated and organised several food promotions with both hotels and stand-alone restaurants.

 @cheffingtonpost

“Contemporary Indian food has come to be represented by a mish-mash of some typical North Indian dishes mixed in with hybrid versions of Mughlai dishes, but there is so much more variety present in our regional dishes. These are always environment-friendly and make use of local and seasonal produce. The dishes of our various regions honour the indigenous produce, and each dish is prepared to preserve not only the food value of the vegetables or proteins, but also to emphasise the typical cooking techniques of each region. Regional food is thus intrinsically linked to the culture and lifestyle of the various regions of our country. It is, therefore, our duty to showcase and thereby preserve the regional cuisines of this vast storehouse of food treasures, which we call India. Otherwise most of these special techniques and food groups will be forgotten in the deluge of fast foods. I am fond of this saying: ‘patriotism is memories of food eaten in childhood.’”

“We should be grateful for adversity in our lives, for that is when our creativity comes to the fore. Now, while housewives are facing scarcity in the kitchen, I am reminded

of the origin of our famous *Alu Posto*. I first ate this dish as a child while visiting our ancestral village, Alampur, a tiny hamlet on the outskirts of the town of Burdwan, in Bengal. We had travelled a few days ahead of the annual Durga Puja, which was celebrated with a lot of pomp. Unfortunately, that year, the rains were late and, no sooner had we arrived, than the heavens opened, and it did not stop pouring for the next 24 hours. By the following day, every patch of land was covered in muddy water, and not a blade of grass could be seen. We children were delighted to be splashing around in knee-deep water in the courtyard, but my poor mother was worried about putting some food on the table. There was no refrigerator in the house, because fresh vegetables were bought daily from the village market. But, now, everything was inundated. The cook and Ma rummaged in the store room and found, among some lentils, a packet of poppy seeds, or *posto*. For lunch that day, we had the most delicious potatoes cooked in a creamy *posto* paste, which had a delectable nutty aftertaste as well. It was simple, it was pure in taste. I raised my spoon to toast the British East India Company, without whose mischief we would never have known this wonderful dish.”

“Now you must be thinking I’m confusing a food story with history, but a country’s culture and cuisine are inextricably linked with its history. Though, today, *posto* is extremely popular in Burdwan as also across the whole of Bengal, no one had heard of it until the East India Company started to trade in the black gold, opium! During the peak of its opium trade with the Far East, the company used every resource at its command to produce more and more of this lucrative opiate. Every village in Bengal (which then included Bihar) was pressed into the cultivation of the opium poppy. Farmers were forced at gunpoint to use every inch of their farmland to grow the poppy. Eventually, villagers who had always grown

their own vegetables were starved of anything remotely edible, except the potatoes and onions that grew underground.”

“Once the gummy sap, which would produce the opium, was extracted, the poppy pods were discarded in a heap outside the factory. A poor, desperate labourer, scrabbling in the refuse for something to cook, took home a few of the poppy pods to see if they could be eaten. Many others followed his example. They truly believed that anything that grew on Mother Earth could be eaten. Soon, several labourers found that, after the pods were washed, tiny white seeds were left in the vessel. Thinking the seeds were some kind of spice, they ground them up into a paste and cooked the potato with it to add some taste. And what a delicious taste it turned out to be. Soon the pods were being cleared as fast as they could appear in the heap.”

“The discarded poppy seeds became a life saver for the poor farmers of Bengal. From the dustbins of opium factories, they reached the rich man's table. Cooks sing their praises, long after the bugles of the East India Company have fallen silent. ” →

“IT IS OUR DUTY TO SHOWCASE AND THEREBY PRESERVE THE REGIONAL CUISINES OF THIS VAST STOREHOUSE OF FOOD TREASURES, WHICH WE CALL INDIA. OTHERWISE, MOST OF THESE SPECIAL TECHNIQUES AND FOOD GROUPS WILL BE FORGOTTEN IN THE DELUGE OF FAST FOODS”

Serves
TWO

ALU POSTO

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large potatoes
- 6 tbsp white poppyseed
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp Bengali *panch foran* (a mixture of fennel, fenugreek, mustard, nigella and celery seeds)
- 2 green chillies
- 1 medium onion, finely sliced
- Salt, to taste
- ½ cup water

METHOD

- Peel and chop the potatoes into 1-inch cubes. Keep in a bowl of water.
- Grind the poppy seeds to a smooth paste.
- Heat the oil in a pan, and add the *panch foran* and green chillies.
- Add the onions, and saute for one minute.
- Add the potatoes, and saute for a minute. Add the salt and water. Cover and cook on a low flame until the potatoes are cooked and soft.
- Add the poppy seed paste and combine with the potatoes. Stir fry until the water has been absorbed and the poppy seed paste coats the potatoes.
- Set aside to rest for a couple of minutes for the dish to reach the right consistency.

Note: This reheats very well in a microwave oven.



Meen Nellika Masala

from Chef Regi Mathew



Award-winning Chef Regi Mathew has, over 25 years, conceptualised and opened more than 100 successful restaurants. As co-owner and Culinary Director of Kappa Chakka Kandhari in Chennai and Bangalore, he returns to his roots in Kerala, champions regional food through the cuisine of his home state, and pays tribute to mothers' cooking.

© @chefregimathew, @kckfoods

“Regional cuisines are the hidden jewels of our culinary heritage, which have evolved from local cultures, traditions, climate and religious beliefs. Each has a strong emotional connect with the people of the region. Regional cooking usually uses fresh and local ingredients, along with unique cooking techniques to provide food that is not just different, but also nutritious and healthy. It's fascinating to discover the innumerable stories behind regional cuisine dishes, and it's very important to understand these stories as the knowledge and logical reasoning behind them might be of great value to us. Discovering regional food and showcasing it will enable us to return to our roots and help preserve culinary traditions that are such a critical part of our social history. It would encourage farmers to grow these local and relatively unusual ingredients, thereby creating a more sustainable ecosystem. Kappa Chakka Kandhari is built on the vision of reclaiming traditional Kerala food for a new generation, bringing the state's hidden culinary gems to light, preserving authentic flavours, and exploring new tastes while celebrating tradition.”

“To rediscover the food and local produce of Kerala, my business partners and I travelled through the state over three years, eating at over 265 homes and 70 toddy shops, tasting and collecting an overwhelming 800 recipes and mastering unusual techniques. On one visit, I visited the tribal settlement near Agasthiyar Forest near Thiruvananthapuram to understand their eating habits. They primarily depend on forest produce for their food. One of them made a river fish fry with two special ingredients – sun-dried gooseberries and green peppercorns. Paired with bird's eye chillies, these infuse the fish with floral notes, and you get a lingering sweet-tart aftertaste from the gooseberry. The fish is marinated with the gooseberry, chilli and tender peppercorns and placed, covered with leaves, on preheated river stones. The fish is cooked with the steam generated when water is poured on the stones. Interestingly, once you cook fish on the stones, they cannot be reused as they become very brittle. It's almost like the stone gives up its life to create a dish of this kind and then just disintegrates.”

Serves
TWO

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp cold-pressed coconut oil
2 darnes seerfish (*surmai*) or black pomfret

FOR THE PASTE:

20g sun-dried gooseberry (*amla*)
5g fresh bird's eye chilli
10g fresh tender peppercorns
5g sea salt
10g shallots
5 curry leaves
3g black peppercorns
2g turmeric

METHOD

- Grind together the gooseberry, chilli, tender peppercorns, salt, shallots, curry leaves, black peppercorns and turmeric to a fine paste.
- Heat the coconut oil on a *tawa* and cook the paste.
- Add the fish darnes, and grill, turning on the other side when done.
- Cook until done.



Shahi Poha

from Chef Karthikeya Ratan

With over nine years of experience including stints at The Zodiac Grill at the Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai, and A Reverie in Goa, Executive Chef Karthikeya brings her food philosophy to the three Perch wine and coffee bars in New Delhi and Mumbai, where the seasonally-driven menu showcases locally-sourced ingredients through European techniques via eclectic and familiar pairings in small and large sharing plates.

@kartkey_r

“With every travel, whether to a familiar or new place in India, I have discovered more than one new ingredient, dish and flavour pairing. With such diverse topography, seasons and produce, this isn't a surprise, and, thankfully, as a chef, I haven't had to look very far for inspiration. It's a pleasure to bring to the forefront traditional recipes to people in urban India, who have probably spotted that ingredient in the market and never known what to do with it. Often, guests relate their own childhood stories of eating something similar on a trip to their grandparents'; to allow them to relive something so treasured through a sensory experience is all a chef could ever ask for.”

“Last year, I took it upon myself to avoid my annual trip to Europe and see more of India. As silly as it sounds, I had to consciously turn down offers to travel abroad and force friends and family to take trips to different parts of the country, mostly because most of them had already visited these cities, and, unfortunately, I had not been on those trips. Out of them all, Jaisalmer was on top of its culinary game, from roadside *chaat* guys serving five different waters for *pani puri* (something made famous by certain fine dining Indian restaurants abroad), to someone selling “*kadha hua doodh*” outside the fort on chilly evenings. But this particular recipe is of a humble *poha*, a breakfast snack I've grown up eating at home. The one we stumbled upon, on our way to the actual breakfast, completely blew my mind. We even went back to the stall the next day since we couldn't stop thinking about the *Shahi Poha*, as Jaisalmeris call it, but he had already run out. So clearly more people than we thought had found this hidden gem. It had a burst of texture, flavour and aroma, and I have been trying to recreate that memory ever since.” →

INGREDIENTS

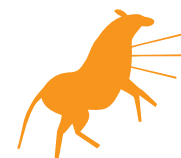
200g <i>poha</i>	2g sugar
5g turmeric	Juice of ¼ lime
15ml refined oil + extra to deep fry the <i>poha</i>	10g peanuts, toasted
2g mustard seeds	20g pomegranate arils
2g cumin seeds	5g freshly-grated coconut
20g finely-chopped onions	10g <i>sev</i>
20g finely-chopped tomatoes	2g chilli oil (see in this recipe)
Pepper, to taste	10g green chutney (see in this recipe)
	5g finely-chopped coriander leaves



Serves
TWO

FOR THE GREEN CHUTNEY

50g coriander leaves
25g mint leaves
10g ginger
5g garlic
½ green chilli
2g dry mango powder
Pink salt, to taste
1g pepper
Lime juice, to taste



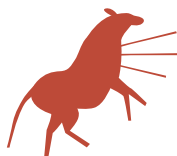
FOR THE CHILLI OIL

200g mustard oil
10 dried red chillies

- Soak three-fourth of the *poha* in a turmeric and salt brine, to soften it. Drain, wash and set aside.
- Deep fry the remaining *poha* in oil at about 180°C for it to puff. Remove and set aside to use as a garnish.
- To make the green chutney, blend together the coriander and mint leaves, ginger, garlic, green chilli and dry mango powder in a mixer grinder with a cube of ice. Season with pink salt, pepper and lime juice. Set aside.
- To prepare the chilli oil, heat the mustard oil to smoking point, add 10 dried red chillies, cover immediately, and turn off the flame. Allow the pan to come to room temperature and then strain out the chillies. Set aside.
- Heat the refined oil in a pan on a medium-high flame, add the mustard and cumin seeds, and splutter. Add half the onion and tomato, and the *poha*. Season with salt, pepper, sugar and lime juice. Give it a gentle stir to incorporate all the ingredients; don't break the rice flakes. Finish with the peanuts.
- Take off the flame, and plate in a cereal bowl.
- Garnish with the remaining raw onion and tomato, and the pomegranate seeds, grated coconut, fried *poha*, *sev*, coriander leaves, and a drizzle of chilli oil and green chutney.



“WE ARE SO MULTICULTURAL
THAT IT'S IMPORTANT
TO REDISCOVER YOUR CULINARY
HERITAGE, THE FOOD
OF THE STATE YOU LIVE IN,
THE AREA YOU ARE FROM,
AND WHERE YOUR FRIENDS
ARE FROM”



Goan Prawn Curry

from Nicole Mody

Amateur yogi, semi-professional dancer and self-taught cook, Nicole Mody thoroughly enjoys experimenting with different forms of expression, most importantly food. She has been the curator for food at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Mumbai, since 2012, and is the author and editor of *Flavours of Kala Ghoda*, a book of recipes compiled from her years as the food curator at the festival. More recently, she has written and released *From the Table of Mary S Narielwala – A Perspective on Parsi Cooking*, a collection of recipes from the Narielwala family from the 1950s and '60s, written more in memoir style than as recipes.

 @nicolemody

“ Mumbai is a city of migrants. People come here from all over the country and what they miss most of all is their food. I can't tell you how many friends I've had come from Delhi and say, 'This is not *chaat*!', 'What are these *parathas*?' and 'Your *kebabs* are laughable'. With so many people living away from home, it stands to reason that regional food is the need of the hour! We have become so enamoured of everything that is 'foreign' that we have forgotten the abundant bounty we get right here at home, in India, and, within India, in each state. Maharashtra itself has 36 districts, each with variations in its cuisine that make the taste completely different! Imagine that across the

entire country. It's time to discover our own backyard, and people are only now starting to realise that. Regional food discovery and exploration has taken on a life of its own, and I'm glad for it. We are so multicultural that it's important to rediscover your culinary heritage, the food of the state you live in, the area you are from, and where your friends are from.”

“ I was 21 years old before I was allowed to go to Goa with my friends. My parents are protective, and they didn't want me to run wild. What struck me the most about Goa was the food. Most people will say the beaches, the markets, but, for me, it has always been about the food. It's amazing that we live on the same coast, get the same kind of seafood in Mumbai that we do in Goa, but still go completely crazy over things like *rava*-fried prawns, butter garlic squid and prawn curry! I distinctly remember sitting at Britto's on Baga Beach one evening, eating plates of *rava*-fried goodness, butter-garlic deliciousness, and then tucking into a bowl of bright orange prawn curry. The rice was different (I had yet to learn that everything was not Basmati) and it added the most amazing texture to this beautiful thick curry with tiny prawns in it. It was heaven on a plate, and, even though I was completely stuffed, I had two huge helpings. Prawn curry is my absolute favourite dish, and I love the variety in the kinds of curries you can make – with tamarind, with tomato, in a mustard base and so many more from across the length and breadth of our country. Give me a Goa curry any day, though! ” →

GOAN PRAWN CURRY

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil
2 onions, finely sliced
2 to 3 green chillies, slit down the middle
500g prawns, with tails on
Salt, to taste

TO BE GROUND

1 handful tamarind, soaked in 1 cup hot water for 10 minutes
15 to 20 dried Kashmiri chillies, soaked in 2 cups hot water for 10 minutes
2 tbsp whole coriander seeds (*dhania*)
2 tsp cumin (*jeera*)
2-inch piece ginger
8 to 10 garlic cloves
1 coconut, grated or cut into small pieces

METHOD

- Put the tamarind, Kashmiri chilli, coriander seeds, cumin, ginger, garlic and grated coconut into the mixer and grind, slowly adding the tamarind and chilli water, to a smooth, thick paste. Put through a strainer, and collect the *masala* in a bowl (use force, if you have to, to push that *masala* through – I use a steel spoon and really exhaust myself with this step!). Add water to the remnants of the *masala* in the strainer, put back into the mixer, and grind again. Push through the strainer once more. Repeat.
- Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan, and sauté the onion until translucent. Add the *masala*, and stir well. Bring to a boil, and cook for 10 minutes more.
- If you are using frozen prawns, add to the curry now. Cook for a further 10 minutes. Depending on the consistency of how you like your curry, you may add water to thin it out. If you're using fresh prawns, add them now. Let the curry come back to a boil.
- Add the green chillies and salt to taste.
- Remove from the flame, and serve hot with rough, unpolished rice, fried *papad*, and an onion and coriander *kachumber*.

Serves
SIX



Chana Madra

from Neha Mathur



Neha Mathur is the blogger behind WhiskAffair (www.whiskaffair.com), which she has nurtured for over eight years with the sole vision of helping people experience food. She is known for sharing foolproof recipes, personally tried and tested, with her food following. She loves buying local and fresh ingredients, trying regional cuisines, and travel.

@whiskaffair @whiskaffair @whiskaffair

“ I’m known as a food blogger, but I also have an undying love for travel. Actually, I love to travel for food. Whenever there is a travel plan in my schedule, I get most excited about all the local food that I will eat during my trip. Yes, I do love exploring, but food is always my first priority as the taste of local and traditional food is unbeatable. From North to South, there are so many cuisines with different flavours that have an identity of their own. The variety of spices our country has is astounding, South India especially is very rich in this respect. I am always amazed at how differently you can use an ingredient and with so many different cooking techniques depending upon the region.”

“ In Dharamshala recently, I was lucky to taste the Himachali *dham*, a festive meal of the hills that is only prepared during festivals, weddings or on other special occasions. The traditional plate was filled with Himachali delicacies, and each and every dish was lip smackingly delicious. One in particular, Himachali *Chana Madra*, caught my attention for its unique taste and texture. I have always cooked *chole* or *chana* in a tomato-onion-based gravy; this *chana madra* with the prominent taste of yoghurt was something new for me. Spicy and a little tangy at the same time, this dish won my heart. And it reinforced why I love to travel, so I am inspired by all the traditional food and get to enjoy the same when I recreate it in the comfort of my own home. ”

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup *kabuli chana*, soaked in 4 cups of water for 6 to 8 hours
- 3 tbsp + 1 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp *hing*
- 1 tsp cumin
- 3 to 4 cloves, crushed
- 2 black cardamoms, crushed
- 1-inch cinnamon stick, crushed
- 2 to 3 dried red chillies
- 2 cups yoghurt
- 2 tsp *maida* (optional)
- 2 tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp Kashmiri red chilli powder
- 200g *paneer*, cubed
- 10 to 12 cashew nuts
- 10 to 12 raisins
- Salt, to taste
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

METHOD

- Drain the water from the *chana*, and pressure cook with two cups water and two teaspoon salt until well done. Allow the pressure to release. Set aside.
- Heat 3 tbsp ghee in a pan. When hot, add the *hing* and cumin seeds, and let them crackle for a few seconds.
- Add the crushed cloves, black cardamom, cinnamon and dried red chillies, and fry for a few seconds.
- Whisk the yoghurt with the *maida* (used to keep the yoghurt from splitting, but can be omitted), and the coriander, cumin, turmeric and red chilli powders, and add it in the pan. Cook for three to four minutes.
- Add the cooked *chana*, *paneer*, cashew nuts and raisins and cook for two to three minutes.
- Add the salt to taste, sugar and 1 tbsp ghee and cook for five to six minutes.
- Garnish with the fresh coriander.
- Serve the *madra* with *naan* or rice.

Serves
FOUR





Til ko Aloo

from Nandita Iyer

Nandita Iyer began writing her food blog in 2006. In time, she added an advanced course in nutrition to her earlier medical studies, and today, Saffron Trails (www.saffrontrails.com) is recognised as one of the best resources for healthy vegetarian recipes. She also writes a fortnightly food column, and conducts workshops on healthy cooking. Her book *The Everyday Healthy Vegetarian* is a treasure trove of quick and easy recipes served with practical advice on healthy cooking.

📷 @saffrontrail 📺 @SaffronTrail 📺 @saffrontrail 📺 @saffrontrail

“Probably the most wonderful thing about being from India is the chance to experience an incredible diversity in culture and cuisine. There are a number of ways to enrich ourselves with this diversity, be it via books, YouTube channels, blogs and, of course, travel. I love to experience the local cuisine of every place I travel to. I would hate to go looking for a *masala dosa* in Sikkim or for *momos* in interior Tamil Nadu.”

“Three years ago, we spent our summer holidays in Sikkim. One of our days in Gangtok was to be spent hiking in a place called Tinjurey. It was raining continuously and, during the course of our trek, both the husband and I had leeches stuck to our legs. We abandoned the trek midway, drove back to our hotel in Gangtok city to change into dry clothes and apply some soothing ointment on our painful and itchy legs. Our trek guides, who were also PhD students, took us to a restaurant famous for local cuisine. As a vegetarian, I chose the *sel roti* along with *til ko aloo* and *chambray* (a local, mildly-flavoured *pulao* dish). After all the trekking, getting rained on and being bitten by leeches, this carb-rich comfort food really hit the spot.” →

Serves
TWO

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium potatoes, boiled and peeled
- 1 tbsp white sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ to 1 tsp red chilli powder

METHOD

- Cut the potatoes into 2-cm cubes.
- Lightly toast the sesame seeds and crush to a coarse powder.
- Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed pan on a medium flame.
- Add the onions and saute for five to seven minutes until softened.
- Add the chopped potatoes, salt and red chilli powder. Stir well until the potatoes are coated with salt and chilli powder.
- Sprinkle the sesame powder in and toss to coat the potatoes. Continue cooking on a low flame for two to three minutes. Serve hot with *roti* or rice.





Mahua Flower Snack

from Suprio Bose

Suprio Bose shares his travel and food stories on his blog *The Nomad Foodie* (www.thenomadfoodie.com) and also discusses food and travel with fellow nomads on his Facebook group and Instagram handle by the same name.

📷 @the_nomad_foodie

📱 @thenomadfoodie



“IN ORDER TO FULLY SOAK IN THE CULTURE AND ETHOS OF A PLACE, ONE MUST STUDY AND EXPLORE ITS REGIONAL CUISINE. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE HOW CERTAIN SPICES AND TECHNIQUES ARE INFLUENCED BY THE GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE OF A REGION”

“ Beyond the Butter Chicken, *naan*, *dosa*, *Dal Makhani*, *kulchas* and curries, there is a bigger world in India that indulges in *Bathuye ka Saag*, *Squash ki Sabji*, *Maati Daal*, *Begun Pitika*, *Puliyogare* and *Rui Maacher Jhol*, but these dishes are hardly ever spoken of in fine-dining spaces serving Indian food the world over. That is precisely why I often chart a parallel food itinerary whenever I travel anywhere in India. I take advice from fellow nomads who, like me, love food and travel, and end up with recommendations for some unique places that are usually not listed in travel journals or guide books. Whether it is the rustic, homemade *Mati Daal*, *Squash Sabji* and boiled rice in a hut in Mawlynnong in Meghalaya, the *Palash ki Chutney* in Nagpur, Maharashtra, or the *Dal Bati* from Vyas in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh, I always try to explore local food in every single city I visit, the way the locals prefer it. In order to fully soak in the culture and ethos of a place, one must study and explore its regional cuisine. It is interesting to note how certain spices and techniques are influenced by the geography and climate of a region. Take, for example, the fatty, rich cooking of the colder areas or the spicy hot food of the hotter or drier areas, the community meals in certain places, or the extensive spreads in others. India's diversity can be seen and experienced in the expansive spread of its cuisines and food habits across the country, and I consider myself lucky to have experienced some very memorable meal experiences.”

“ My earliest regional food memory is from when I was 17 on a family holiday in Darjeeling, West Bengal. Our homestay hostess served us a local dish made with soybean chunks and potatoes. It was a simple, tomato-based gravy and yet something I had never had before. That single soybean gravy stood out against the burgers, pork chops and other delicious dishes from the region, perhaps for its simplicity and local spices. More recently, a photography expedition took me to Pench in Madhya Pradesh – who would have thought of it as a culinary destination! The hotel I was supposed to check into cancelled on me, and I ended up staying at another small resort owned by a young couple close by. The first thing that caught my eye as I entered the reception-cum-shop area was a display of cookies, sauces and spice

mixes made from little-known jungle flowers like *amaltaas*, *mahua* and *palash ke phool*. Harshita and Aditya Shakalya migrated back from the USA after completing their MBAs, decided to give urban life a miss, and settled down in the middle of the jungle to teach their children the value of nature and simple living. Harshita explained how the local Gond tribals were foragers who ventured out into the woods every morning to pick up edible roots, flowers, leaves and fruit, and make a simple meal of these. She took me to the local tribal *mela* and arranged for me to sample not only the ubiquitous *mahua* spirit, but also a tribal meal made with *mahua*, *palash*, green *tuvar* and *amaltaas*. The simplicity of the food, the subtle rusticity of the spices, and the freshness of the local flour... it was a divine meal, the kind one could never find in any fine dining restaurant ever! I'm happy to share this recipe from Harshita of a snack made with *mahua* flowers. ” →

MAHUA FLOWER SNACK

Serves
TWO

INGREDIENTS

Oil or ghee, for frying
1 green chilli, slit
1 onion, sliced
1 cup dry *mahua* flowers
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted
Salt, to taste

METHOD

- Heat a little oil or ghee in a frying pan, add the chilli and onion, and saute.
 - In a separate frying pan, roast the dry *mahua* flowers and continue to stir until they get crisp.
 - Add the roasted *mahua* to the fried chilli and onion.
 - Add the garlic and sesame seeds. Take off the flame.
 - Add salt to taste.
- Lemon juice and other spices can be added to suit your taste buds.*

With over 20 years in the culinary field in India and abroad, consultant and writer Chef Amit Pamnani specialises in Italian, Continental and European cuisine. Having worked under Michelin-starred Chef Raymond Blanc in the UK, he now recreates classical French cuisine in India. He is currently based out of Indore, where he does pop-up dinners of curated menus, and hosts a “Stay with a Chef” experience, taking his guests on food tours to hidden gems in Indore and conducting workshops with them (www.staywithachef.com).



Bhutte ki Kees

from Chef Amit Pamnani

📷 @chefamitpamnani

“ India is a vast country with a whole lot of regions which, in turn, have their own micro cuisines. The dishes in these cuisines are made with seasonal, local produce and do not depend on foreign ingredients, thus making them sustainable and healthy. This also provides economic stability to local farmers. The ingredients are plentiful, with different colours, tastes and textures, and can be married with each other in countless ways to produce astonishing and delicious dishes. It makes sense to cook with ingredients that are locally and seasonally available; they are tastier and cheaper as compared to imported ingredients.”

“ Corn grows abundantly in Madhya Pradesh, so you will find a lot of corn dishes on the restaurant menus in Indore. *Bhutte ki Kees* is a streetside snack that is made by grating corn, cooking it in milk, then garnishing it with grated coconut, fresh green coriander, a squeeze of lemon and a sprinkling of *jeeravan* (Indore’s version of *chaat masala*). The only spices used are green chillies and cinnamon powder. I first mistook *Bhutte ki Kees* to be *poha*, but, on tasting it, I realised it was something else. At first, it tasted creamy, then a bit sour, then a bit salty and then a bit sweet too. It is an Indori specialty, and you can find it on the streets, especially on 56 Dukan, which specialises in various types of street foods, and Sarafa, the night food market; one of the best versions is sold by the street vendor who sits outside Joshi Jewellers. ”



Serves
TWO

INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp ghee
1 tsp cumin seeds
½ tsp hing
½ tsp chopped green chilli
½ tsp turmeric powder
5 ears of corn (on the cob), grated
Salt, to taste
1 cup milk
Juice of 1 lemon
Pinch of cinnamon powder
Chopped green coriander
Pinch of *jeeravan* (optional)

METHOD

- Heat the ghee in a pan.
- Add the cumin seeds and *hing*, and let it splutter.
- Add the green chillies, turmeric powder, grated corn and salt. Cook for a minute.
- Add the milk gradually until it is well incorporated into the corn. Let the corn cook in the milk. The mixture will thicken, keep stirring all the time.
- Add the lemon juice and cinnamon powder, and mix well.
- Serve hot or warm, garnished with the coconut, green coriander and a sprinkling of *jeeravan*, if using.





Chennai-style Prawn Masala

from Chef Sumera Bhalla



Chef Sumera Bhalla began her culinary career at the Dadar Catering College in Mumbai, then passed out of The Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development as valedictorian; her first working assignment was with The Oberoi, Mumbai. She then worked with Royal Caribbean Cruises, rising to the position of Executive Chef. Deciding to turn entrepreneur, she is now chef-owner at the acclaimed Amavi restaurant in Goa.

@amavigoa

“India has such a wealth of cuisines. Every state, region and geographic area has a dish to boast about. I find it amazing that, even though people use almost the same ingredients, they end up with such different results in terms of taste and textures. As chefs, we are invariably trained about foreign cuisine and Indian cuisine gets put on a backburner. Now, however, Indian regional cuisines are showing up centre-stage and elbowing out Butter Chicken, *sambar*, *samosas*, and the like.”

“Our family moved every few years or so all over the country, so I was lucky enough to get to eat dishes from all over the country, and each one in its authentic, unadulterated form. Back then, restaurants were far and few between, but meals at homes where you made friends were common. So the delight of eating food cooked by loving moms has stayed with me. This simple dish was often cooked at my close friend’s house in Chennai. It evokes such sharp memories for me that it was honed by my hubby who hails from

Chennai. He managed to get the flavours bang on. This dish holds such centre-stage that it features on our menu at Amavi, alongside other regional dishes true to my tummy. ”

Serves **FOUR**

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp oil
- 3 cloves
- 10 black peppercorns
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- Salt, to taste
- 2 tsp chilli powder (medium spiced)
- 1/8 tsp *haldi*
- 1/4 bunch fresh coriander, chopped (don't skimp on this)
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 500g fresh medium prawns, cleaned, heads removed and reserved
- 1/4 tsp dark roasted cumin powder

METHOD

- Heat the oil in a pan over a medium-high flame. Add the cloves and peppercorns and saute until fragrant.
- Add the onion, and saute well.
- Add the ginger-garlic paste and saute until the raw smell dissipates.
- Add the salt, chilli powder and *haldi*. Once it starts sticking, add the coriander, and stir until fragrant.
- Add the reserved prawn heads and cook off.
- Add the chopped tomatoes and cook until the *masala* slowly starts to release oil.
- Add the prawns, and cook until done.
- Finish with the cumin powder; cook for only about one minute after this addition.
- Serve hot with white rice or *chapatis*.

“INDIA HAS SUCH A WEALTH OF CUISINES. EVERY STATE , REGION AND GEOGRAPHIC AREA HAS A DISH TO BOAST ABOUT. I FIND IT AMAZING THAT, EVEN THOUGH PEOPLE USE ALMOST THE SAME INGREDIENTS, THEY STILL END UP WITH SUCH DIFFERENT RESULTS IN TERMS OF TASTE AND TEXTURES ”



Sweet Potato Dangar

from Chef Hussain Shahzad

Executive Chef Hussain Shahzad brings a unique energy and passion to O Pedro in Mumbai, where he showcases local produce using contemporary culinary techniques to stunning effect. Experience under his belt includes stints at Frangipani at the (then) Oberoi Towers, Mumbai, a year at Eleven Madison Park in New York, and with The Bombay Canteen, Mumbai.

@chefhussains @opedromumbai



Serves
SIX

“The culinary repertoire of our country is laced with innumerable techniques and ingredients that haven't had any mainstream use in restaurants or been a part of the narrative that surrounds Indian food today. Researching regional food then becomes important as it helps unearth these techniques, break them down respectfully and give them a relevant contemporary perspective.”

“This recipe for Sweet Potato *Dangar* is extremely special as it was something

I came across in someone's home kitchen on one of our research trips to Goa. Widely eaten in the Gowd Saraswat Brahman community in Goa, the versatility of the *dangar* is what makes it accessible and unpretentious. It can be made with a variety of ingredients including clams, fish, corn, peas, mushroom and potato, it works well as an appetiser or as a side. At O Pedro, the *dangar* features in a new avatar on every menu based on the season.” →

“RESEARCHING REGIONAL FOOD BECOMES IMPORTANT AS IT HELPS UNEARTH THESE TECHNIQUES, BREAK THEM DOWN RESPECTFULLY, AND GIVE THEM A RELEVANT CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE”

SWEET POTATO DANGAR

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp sunflower oil + extra for frying
 ¾ cup finely-chopped onions
 ½ tsp turmeric powder
 1½ tsp *garam masala*
 ½ kg sweet potato, baked until soft, peeled
 ¼ cup *poi saag*, blanched in hot water and chopped
 2 tbsp coriander leaves, finely chopped
 1 tsp black sesame
 1 tsp white sesame
 ¼ cup flour (*maida*)
 ½ cup water
 1 cup semolina
 ¼ cup rice flour
 Salt, to taste

METHOD

- Heat 3 tbsp of oil in a heavy-bottomed pan on a medium flame, add the onions, and sauté until translucent.
- Add the turmeric and *garam masala* powders, and allow them to bloom.
- Mash the baked sweet potato and add the *poi saag* leaves, coriander, black sesame, white sesame and spice-sautéed onions to it. Gently combine to form a homogenous mixture, and season with salt. Shape into *tikkis* of 25g each, and set aside in a cool place.
- In a bowl, mix together the flour and water to make a batter. Season with salt.
- Combine the semolina and rice flour in a shallow tray with lofted sides.
- Dip the *tikkis* in the batter, and coat with the semolina-rice flour mix. Set aside in a cool space for at least one hour.
- Heat oil in a *kadai* on a medium flame. Sprinkle some leftover batter to check the temperature; if it rises quickly after touching the base, your oil is ready.

- Add a few *tikkis* to fry at a time. Repeat until all the *tikkis* are fried.
- Drain on kitchen towel, and serve hot with raw mango chutney and *kachumber* (see below).

RAW MANGO CHUTNEY

INGREDIENTS

1 cup coriander leaves
 ¼ cup coarsely-cut raw mango
 2 to 3 medium green chillies
 ½ tsp *chaat masala*
 ½ cup sunflower seed oil
 Salt and sugar, to taste

METHOD

- In a large blender jar, grind together the coriander leaves, raw mango, green chillies and *chaat masala*.
- Once the mixture starts to form into a paste, start adding sunflower seed oil, little by little, from a height until it starts forming a smooth fluffy paste. Season with salt and sugar.
- Refrigerate for a while before serving.

KACHUMBAR

INGREDIENTS

½ cup finely-chopped onions
 ½ cup deseeded and finely-chopped tomatoes
 ½ tsp chopped green chillies
 ½ cup finely-chopped raw mango
 1 lemon, halved
 Salt, to taste
 Sugar, to taste

METHOD

- Mix the onion, tomato, green chillies and raw mango in a mixing bowl.
- Squeeze in the juice of one lemon, and season with salt. Add sugar to balance.
- Sprinkle this mixture over the *tikkis* and serve along with the chutney



Swayampurna Mishra is an ex-private banker now channeling her inner domestic goddess as she explores her love for food and culture. She's the owner and face behind LaPetitChef, and the author of *My Indian Kitchen*.

@Lapetitchef @Spicesnme

“ Like the best things in life, especially in a vastly diverse country like India, it's the simplest that thread us together. To me, that equating factor is food. For me, the best part about travelling is trying out the local dishes and visiting local homes to learn their style of cooking. One would think it's just food, but, for me, recognising, collating and remaking those regional gems is a way of letting our forefathers live on long after they have passed. It's our way of highlighting a culture, a slice of our tradition, and saving it to pass on to our next generation.”

“ My earliest memory of this fire-roasted eggplant is of my grandma and our village in Odisha. It's a dish that the people of Eastern India are very familiar with. Be it my home state Odisha, or our neighboring states of West Bengal and Bihar, *chokha* is a classic example of a simple, rustic dish that can be the perfect accompaniment to your meals. Here's how you do it, my granny style – rub mustard oil all over large, purplish-black aubergines and throw them over an open flame. Let them char, and I mean really char all over, until all that's left is blackened skin. Then you remove the inner, softly-roasted, gorgeously smoky flesh, throw some garlic and green chillies in, and mash it all together. A final drizzle of organic mustard oil, chopped cilantro, and a squeeze of lime, and you have yourself a perfectly delicious side dish that takes barely three minutes to make. The good part: the hard work, the actual work, is all done by the flame. You simply sit back and revel in the smokiness of it all. ”



Desi Baingan Chokha

from Swayampurna Mishra

“FOR ME, RECOGNISING, COLLATING AND REMAKING THOSE REGIONAL GEMS IS A WAY OF LETTING OUR FOREFATHERS LIVE ON LONG AFTER THEY HAVE PASSED”

Serves **FOUR**

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large purple aubergines, whole with stems intact
- 2 tsp cold-pressed organic mustard oil (divided usage)
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 green chilli
- Salt, to taste
- 1 small red onion, chopped fine
- 2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves
- Juice of half a lemon

METHOD

- Rub mustard oil all over the aubergines. Place them on an open flame and let them char completely; keep turning using tongs for about 10 minutes. Remove from the

flame, and set aside for five minutes. Remove the charred skin and place the flesh in a bowl.

- Using a mortar and pestle, pound the garlic and green chilli together with a pinch of salt.
 - Add to the aubergine flesh, with the onion, salt to taste, and a little mustard oil. Mash together.
 - Sprinkle with chopped coriander, drizzle a little mustard oil on top, and squeeze some lemon juice over. Enjoy this with stuffed chickpea *parathas*!
- Note: You can grill the aubergines too; just make sure the skin is charred well.*

Akuri

from Roxanne Bamboat



Known as The Tiny Taster, Roxanne Bamboat enjoys reading, movies, travel and is obsessed with food. She expresses her love for all things edible in her food blog (www.thetinytaster.com). She also writes on food and travel for various publications and lifestyle websites, and leads local food tours as well as culinary tours to South Africa and Morocco.

@thetinytaster thetinytaster

@roxannebamboat roxannebamboat

“There is a deep sense of comfort when it comes to the culinary traditions you’ve grown up with; Mum’s cooking or your grandmother’s recipes will always evoke that warm fuzzy feeling apart from delighting your taste buds. But, in today’s turbulent times, regional food has become more the need of the hour than just a bringer of nostalgic bliss. For one, as many nutritionists have been advocating, incorporating locally-grown produce into your diet is extremely healthy, but it also helps reduce your carbon footprint (yep, I’m looking at you, avocados flown in from half way around the world at a ridiculous price).”

“Udvada is a sleepy town in Gujarat, a pilgrimage centre for the Zoroastrian community. While a long road trip to visit our holy fire temple held no real appeal to a young child, it was the pit stop on the highway at a lovely little *dhaba* called Ahura Hotel for its incredible breakfast that always had me bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. I remember fluffy clouds of deep-fried eggs with soft *ladi pavs* to help mop up the runny yolk, plates of spicy *kheema*, and my absolute favourite: Parsi-style, runny scrambled eggs that we call *akuri*, full of *masalas* and green garlic (when in season). That perfectly runny consistency that only the Parsis seem to pull off makes it a proper *akuri* and not the roadside egg *bhurji*, which is far more clumpy. In the recipe here, the eggs **MUST** be a runny consistency; do not overcook them. They cook very fast and often will harden and cook even when you’ve served them. If they do harden, it is not a classic *akuri*; you’re eating a *bhurji*. ” →

“REGIONAL FOOD HAS BECOME THE NEED OF THE HOUR; INCORPORATING LOCALLY-GROWN PRODUCE INTO YOUR DIET IS EXTREMELY HEALTHY, AND IT ALSO HELPS REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT”

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tomato, finely chopped
1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
½ tsp turmeric powder
½ tsp cumin powder
½ tsp coriander powder
½ tsp red chilli powder
Salt, to taste
4 eggs
¼ cup chopped fresh coriander
2 to 3 cloves fresh garlic, finely chopped

METHOD

- In a wide pan, heat the oil and fry the onions and tomatoes until they turn slightly pink or translucent.
- Add the ginger-garlic paste and stir well.
- Add the turmeric, cumin, coriander and red chilli powders, and salt, and keep cooking this *masala* mixture till it’s all incorporated and cooked well. Usually you’ll find the oil separating or coming up slightly – that’s when you know it’s cooked well.
- Turn the heat down to the lowest setting – this is most important. The eggs need to be cooked on a very low flame. You can crack the eggs in another bowl and beat them, or crack them directly into the pan with your *masalas* and scramble them. Either way, keep cooking on a low flame and stirring constantly.
- If you feel the heat is too much, lift the pan off for a bit and then put it back on the flame, but keep stirring. After about two minutes, turn off the flame and keep stirring for a bit.
- Garnish with fresh coriander and serve hot.

Serves
TWO





Gahat Dal with Garhwali Laal Bhaat

from Chef Himanshu Taneja

Currently Culinary Director for South Asia, Marriott International, Chef Himanshu Taneja has 20 years of experience under his chef's hat. He works on talent development and training, keeps a close eye on the pulse of market demands, and curates concepts that are both innovative and trendsetting to ensure the best position of the hotel chain's F&B reputation.

 @chefhimanshutaneja

 himanshu.taneja.10048

“As prescribed by Ayurveda, nature has a way of providing nourishment and sustenance for people living in a geographic location through the produce of that place. Following from this ancient Indian wisdom, the modern concept of sustainability seems like a derivative. What grows around us, governed by seasonality and grown using absolutely natural and traditional methods of farming, is the best possible nourishment.

#Local is not just a tag, but the way forward in the culinary world. Regional cuisines are a wealth of traditional recipes made with fresh, local produce. It becomes important to showcase regional food, as it not only represents the food of people from the region, but has emotions attached in the form of food that is specific to a season. Cooking food meant for a particular season with the season's fresh produce is logically the best way to provide nourishment for the body. Regional food is not just food, but a representation of the culture of the region; it binds us to our roots. Retaining these recipes and showcasing them is cultural pride.”

“Mussoorie in Uttarakhand is known as the Queen of the Hills. Blessed with natural beauty and nutrient-rich ingredients that are unique to it owing to the terrain and climate, it is definitely the best place in Garhwal to explore food and culture. I particularly enjoyed *Gahat Dal* with Garhwali *Laal Bhaat*: slow-cooked horse gram lentils paired with local kidney beans served with steamed Himalayan red rice.” →

“ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA, NATURE HAS A WAY OF PROVIDING NOURISHMENT AND SUSTENANCE FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN A GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION THROUGH THE PRODUCE OF THAT PLACE. THE MODERN CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY SEEMS LIKE A DERIVATIVE”

GAHAT DAL WITH GARHWALI LAAL BHAAT

INGREDIENTS

1 cup *gahat dal* (horse gram), soaked overnight
 ¼ cup Garhwali *rajma* (Himalayan kidney beans), soaked overnight
 2 tbsp *desi* ghee
 1 tsp *jakhiya* seeds (Garhwali mustard seeds)
 ½ tsp *hing* (asafoetida)
 4 to 5 cloves garlic, crushed
 1 large red onion, chopped
 1 large tomato, chopped
 ½-inch piece ginger, chopped
 2 green chillies, chopped
 Salt, to taste
 2 tsp chopped fresh coriander
 Fresh white dairy butter, to top (optional)

FOR THE GARHWALI RED RICE

9 cups water
 1 cup *laal bhaat* (Himalayan red rice), soaked for one hour
 2 tbsp *desi* ghee
 Salt, to taste

METHOD

• To prepare the *gahat dal*, place the soaked horse gram and kidney beans with water in a thick-bottomed utensil on a medium-high flame. Bring to a boil and simmer for three to four hours until the lentils become soft and begin to release starch. Do not drain. Set aside.
 • In a separate pan, heat the ghee, add the *jakhiya* seeds, and allow them to splutter. Add the *hing* and garlic, and saute until the garlic turns golden.

• Add the onions and saute, stirring, until golden.
 • Add the tomatoes, ginger, green chillies and salt, and cook until the tomatoes are well mashed and blend with the onions.
 • Add the boiled horse gram and kidney beans, along with the reserved boiling water, and simmer for an hour over a moderate flame for flavours to mingle and infuse.
 • Finish with the chopped fresh coriander. Serve, topped with fresh white dairy butter, if using.
 • To prepare the red rice, bring salted water to the boil. Add the soaked rice, and bring again to the boil. Reduce the flame, and simmer for about 40 minutes until the rice grains become soft, yet retain their shape. Drain, and stir the ghee into the rice. Serve with the hot *gahat dal*.

Serves
TWO





Raan Rogan Josh

from Chef Thomas Zacharias

Executive Chef and Partner at The Bombay Canteen, Chef Thomas Zacharias began his culinary journey early, inspired by his grandmother's home-cooked food. An alumnus of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, New York, he worked at the three Michelin-starred La Bernardin in NYC, returning to India to helm the kitchen at Mumbai's Olive Bar and Kitchen. He has travelled extensively across 18 Indian states to immerse himself in the different elements of Indian home cooking. The Bombay Canteen offers a seasonally-changing menu inspired by regional cuisines across India.

📷 @cheftzac 🍷 @thebombaycanteen

“As a chef, I want to showcase regional Indian cuisine in a new and contemporary avatar, celebrate local and seasonal Indian ingredients, and create memorable food experiences around Indian cuisine. For most people around the world, including a lot of us Indians, our exposure to Indian food is limited to the food we grew up eating in our own homes, and the cookie-cutter generic fare like Butter Chicken, *Palak Paneer* and *Dal Makhani* you find in every Indian restaurant. However, the diversity of the cuisines across our country is incredible, but seldom showcased or celebrated beyond the regions or communities in which they exist. A lot of these recipes, techniques, ingredients and traditions are at the risk of getting lost in a few generations, and perhaps one way to mitigate that is to get more and more people to be aware of and to appreciate our regional Indian food culture. Food travel and documentation is a wonderful catalyst that enables this.”

“In the last six years, I've been exploring Indian regional cuisines, and one of my favourite #ChefOnTheRoad trips was through Kashmir in 2018. Although I was certain that I would learn and be inspired by traditional Kashmiri recipes, I'd decided before I even got there that the last recipe I would think of bringing back and onto our menu would be the *Rogan Josh*, one of the most bastardised popular recipes found in Indian restaurants across the world. But I was blown away by the two versions I tasted while in Srinagar — the Muslim version I tried at Kareema restaurant and the Pandit *Rogan Josh* I learned to make in the Wanchoo family home. It was so uniquely delicious and unlike any I'd tasted before, that I realised that it was imperative that I introduce it on our menu at The Bombay Canteen.”

“A LOT OF RECIPES, TECHNIQUES, INGREDIENTS AND TRADITIONS ARE AT THE RISK OF GETTING LOST IN A FEW GENERATIONS; ONE WAY TO MITIGATE THAT IS TO GET MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TO BE AWARE OF AND TO APPRECIATE OUR REGIONAL INDIAN FOOD CULTURE”

Serves
SIX

RAAN ROGAN JOSH

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp mustard oil
2 tbsp mutton fat, rendered
1kg mutton shoulder pieces
3 to 4 bay leaves
3 to 4 cloves
1 cup *hing* water (1 tsp *hing* dissolved in 1 cup water)
5 tbsp Kashmiri red chilli powder
5 tbsp fennel powder
2.5 tbsp dry ginger powder
½ cup yoghurt, blended into 2 cups water and 2 tbsp rice flour until smooth
1kg mutton shoulder pieces
Salt, to taste
¼ tsp black cardamom powder
¼ tsp cinnamon powder
1 tsp *shah jeera* powder

METHOD

- Heat the mustard oil with the mutton fat in a pressure cooker on a medium flame.
- Add the bay leaves and cloves, and allow to bloom.
- Add the *hing* water and the Kashmiri red chilli, fennel and dry ginger powders, and cook on a low flame for a few minutes.
- Add the blended yoghurt and the mutton. Season with salt, and pressure cook until done.
- Remove from the pressure cooker and add the black cardamom, cinnamon, and *shah jeera* powders. Adjust the seasoning.



EAT LIKE A LOCAL

(IN THE WORLD'S TOP FOOD CITIES)

From local produce markets to the finest gastronomic experiences, eating a city's food is guaranteed to get you straight to its heart

Chefs at work at Copenhagen's Kadeau

Sharing plates
at Fes Turkish
Barbecue, Berlin



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIE LOUISE MUNKEGAARD, EZGI POLAT



CAPE TOWN, *South Africa*

A coming-together of cultures, cuisines and landscapes, there's nowhere quite like Cape Town. It's a wonder that Capetonians look so svelte on the beach, because this is a tasty city to dine in – possibly the best in Africa. There's a wide range of cuisines to sample, including local African and Cape Malay concoctions, superb seafood, and chefs at the top of their game.

If you want new African cuisine...

Abigail Mbalo, a self-taught cook and former contestant on SA's *MasterChef* TV show, will produce it for you at her restaurant **4Roomed eKasi Culture** (above).

Expect African food with a twist: delicious wedges of *pap* (maize porridge) mixed with butternut squash and nutmeg, a rich lamb curry and a red velvet cake made with beetroot. The whitewashed courtyard is delightful, with one wall lined with bathtubs turned into planters for vegetables and herbs used in the cooking (www.4roomedekasiculture.com).

If you want the freshest sustainable seafood...

You won't find it on the beach. Fish from Kalk Bay Harbour is served at seafood café and fishmonger **Ocean Jewels**, which supports the South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI). It does a mean tuna burger with wedge fries, and, despite being in the

industrial-styled Woodstock Exchange, the vibe is as relaxed as the seaside, with painted wooden tables and food served on rustic enamel plates (www.oceanjewels.co.za).

If you want a braai...

You couldn't find it in a more obscure spot, within a business park in an industrial part of town – but barbecue restaurant **Hog House Brewing Co** is always busy. The creations of chef PJ Vadas include smoked meats so tender you could cut them with a spoon. The veggie side dishes are just as impressive – you've never eaten cauliflower and aubergine this good (www.hhbc.co.za).

If you're after something casual...

The Kitchen will fit the bill. Of all the swanky restaurants in town, it was this little charmer that Michelle Obama chose for lunch, proving the ex-First Lady has excellent taste. Tuck into superb salads, sandwiches made

with love, and sweet options with tea served from china teapots. Although it has recently expanded its space, The Kitchen is still as popular as ever, so come before 11.30am or after 2pm if you don't want to wait for a table for lunch (www.lovethekitchen.co.za).

If you want to escape the city for a bit...

Head out to the wineries in the southern suburbs. **Buitenverwachting** means 'beyond expectation', which is certainly the feeling one gets on visiting this Cape Dutch estate (above). It's a lovely winery with an unusual late 18th-century manor house overlooking verdant lawns, as well as the Quaffee coffee roastery, Coffee Bloc café, a restaurant and gift shop (www.buitenverwachting.com).

If you want to push the boat out...

Greenhouse is a fine place to do it. Chef Farrel Hirsch's culinary imagination runs riot in this elegant restaurant, one of the Cape's top dining venues. The finest local produce, from octopus to springbok, features on the 12-course tasting menu. Desserts are served on petrified wood to remind diners of the circle of life and death (www.greenhouserestaurant.co.za).

SAN FRANCISCO, *The USA*

Consider permission to be outlandish granted permanently: other towns may surprise you, but, in San Francisco, you will surprise yourself. Good times and social revolutions tend to start here, and that applies to food in the city, too. San Francisco has the most restaurants and farmers' markets per capita in North America, all supplied by pioneering local organic farms. Other US cities might have bigger monuments, but San Francisco packs more flavour.

If you want to be surprised...

Outstanding in the Field (left) will deliver. Dinners with this Bay Area-based crew and guest star chefs like Alice Waters pop up in the unlikelyst places – strawberry fields, sea caves, sand bars, Coachella desert oases – to bring diners to the source of their food. Sign up online when dinners are announced (usually) in March; California feasts are usually held in May, June, October and November, with sites out of town over the summer (www.outstandinginthefield.com).

If you don't want to be surprised...

Wing it at **Hot Sauce and Panko**, an eccentric hilltop corner store stocking hundreds of versions of its two namesake items, plus 30 variations on chicken wings. House hot sauce gives a slow burn and lime-chilli fish sauce is a flavour bomb – but housemade *gojulang* (Korean fermented-chilli sauce) will have you licking your lips for hours (www.hotsauceandpanko.com).

If you want some of the city's best Mexican food...

Follow the applause to **La Palma Mexicatessen**, and the sound of *tortilla*-making in progress. You've found the Mission District's mother lode of *tamales*, *pupusas* (tortilla pockets) with potato and *chicharones* (pork crackling), *carnitas* (slow-roasted pork), *cotija* (Oaxacan cheese) and La Palma's own tomatillo sauce. Get takeout or eat at sunny sidewalk tables (www.lapalmasf.com).

If oysters make you happy...

You'll find heaven at the **Swan Oyster Depot**, which delivers superior flavour without the superior attitude of too many seafood restaurants. Justifiably famous since 1912 for signature oysters and crab salads, there's almost always people waiting for the few stools at its vintage lunch counter – but the upside of the high turnover is incredibly fresh seafood. Arrive before noon for a spot inside or order takeout to enjoy on sunny days in George Sterling Park (1517, Polk St). →



WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SIMON RICHMOND, JAMES BAINBRIDGE, JEAN-BERNARD CARLLET, LUCY CORNE, ASHLEY HARREL AND ALISON BING. PHOTOGRAPHS: ISHAY GOVENDER, GARETH WEEKS / SHUTTERSTOCK, ANDREW MONTGOMERY

COPENHAGEN, Denmark

Beneath Copenhagen's galaxy of Michelin stars is a number of places serving innovative contemporary Danish food at affordable prices. Keeping them company are venerable city institutions producing classic Danish dishes. Tucking into classics such as *frikadeller* (meatballs), *sild* (pickled herring) and *smørrebrød* (open sandwiches) is a key part of the Copenhagen eating experience.

If you can't get a table at world-famous Noma...

Don't worry – Copenhagen is not short of world-class restaurants serving New Nordic food. **AOC** and **Kadeau** have two Michelin stars and are firmly established in Scandinavia. Fermentation, smoking and pickling feature on menus, and dishes combine many flavours, smells and textures. **Geranium** is the only restaurant in town sporting three Michelin stars. Its tasting menu of edible artworks comprises around 17 dishes (www.restaurantaoc.dk, www.kadeau.dk, www.geranium.dk).

If you'd like to eat at a Danish institution...

Try **Schønnemann** for its *smørrebrød* and *schnaps*. The restaurant's current fan base includes revered chefs like Noma's René Redzepi. Try the *smørrebrød* named after him: smoked halibut with creamed cucumber, radishes and chives. Other standouts include King's Garden (potatoes with smoked mayonnaise, fried onions and chives). Order both, a beer and a glass of *schnaps* to wash it down (www.restaurant-schonnemann.dk/en).

If you like sugar and spice...

And all things nice, you'll find them at **Meyers Bageri** (right), a tiny organic bakery owned by the founding father of the New Nordic food movement, Claus Meyer. Sample *blåbærsmørrer* (blueberry twists), *kanelsnægel* (cinnamon snails) and golden apple croissants. There are shops across the city; our favourite is at Store Kongensgade 46 (www.meyers.dk).

If you want hygge (fun)...

You'll find it at **Pixie**, a boho café with festoon lights, mismatched furniture and soulful tunes. Grub is fresh and unfussy, from organic scrambled eggs with *pico de gallo* to salads, an organic-beef burger and home-baked cookies (www.cafepixie.dk [in Danish]).





PARIS, France

The inhabitants of some cities rally around local sports teams, but, in Paris, they rally around *la table* – and everything on it. Pistachio *macarons*, shots of tomato *consommé*, decadent *bœuf bourguignon*, a gooey wedge of camembert running onto the cheese plate... food isn't fuel here, it's the reason you get up in the morning.

If you'd like to see what the fuss is about neobistros...

You'll be spoilt for choice. In recent years, a new generation of chefs has emerged, pushing the boundaries of traditional tastes, and downplaying the value of Michelin stars and formal dining. One of our favourite neobistros is **Le Servan**; its menu might include sweetbread *wontons*, cockles with chilli and sweet basil, and roast pigeon. Dining at **Cllover** is like attending a private party: the galley-style open kitchen adjoining the 20 seats is part of the dining-room decor, putting customers at the centre of the culinary action. Light dishes range from tomato *gazpacho* with pea sorbet to cabbage leaves with smoked herring *crème* and chestnuts (www.leservan.fr, www.clover-paris.com).

If you'd like a whiff of old Paris...

Head north. **Le Petit Château d'Eau** in the 10th *arrondissement* has scarcely changed in a century.

With lemon- and lime-tiled walls, a horseshoe-shaped zinc bar and burgundy banquettes, this neighbourhood treasure endures in defiance of the post-industrial co-working cafés that have sprung up around it. Classical cooking ranges from duck with honey sauce to beef *entrecôte* with roast garlic potatoes. You can also just stop by for a morning coffee or afternoon *kir* (34, *rue du Château d'Eau*, 10e).

If you'd like to take something home...

Strike out to the magnificent food hall of department store Le Bon Marché. **La Grande Épicerie de Paris** (above) sells 30,000 rare and/or luxury gourmet products, including 60 different types of bread baked on site and delicacies such as caviar *ravioli*. Its fantastic displays of chocolates, pastries, biscuits, cheeses, fresh fruit and veg and deli goods are a sight in themselves. Wine tastings take place in the basement (www.lagrandeepicerie.com).



If you're looking to impress someone...

Take them to **Le Grand Véfour**. With two Michelin stars, this jewel on the edge of the Jardin du Palais Royal has been a favourite since 1784. Expect a voyage of discovery from Chef Guy Martin: dazzling flavour combinations include snails with black garlic chestnut purée, pan-fried sole with roast celery leaves, and artichoke *crème brûlée* with almond sorbet (www.grandvefour.com/en).

If you want a picnic...

Any *boulangerie* will sell you a French stick and any wine shop will sell you a bottle of red, but, for an exceedingly fine spread, head to **Ladurée Picnic** (above) and carry away your gourmet goods in the patisserie's signature peppermint-green packaging. Luxury salads include lobster

or salmon; there are flavoured waters like ginger and coriander; and the rainbow of cakes and *macarons* are out of this world. The lunch menu (from ₹ 1,000) includes a salad, drink and giant *macaron* (www.laduree.fr).

If you want to chase down a food truck ...

Check online for the locations of **Le Camion Qui Fume** (burgers); **Cantine California** (burgers, tacos and desserts); **Le Beau Caillou Accras** (Caribbean fish, *roti* and rice and beans); **KimPop** (Korean *bibimbap* and *kimbap*); and **La Cabane de Cape Cod** (fish and chips, gravlax and *tataki*). For a stationary option, try **Beaupassage**, where chefs and artisans – with 17 Michelin stars between them – occupy this district in the 7th *arrondissement* (www.beaupassage.fr/en). →



BERLIN, Germany

Berlin is a multicultural metropolis but, deep down, it maintains the unpretentious charm of an international village. Locals and expats follow the credo 'live and let live' and put greater emphasis on personal freedom and a creative lifestyle than on wealth and status symbols. That extends to the city's enjoyment of food: Berliners are always onto the next hot thing when it comes to cuisine. The organic, slow-food and seasonal movements are the current obsession; sometimes, it seems as though the city's chefs want to outdo each other with just how locavore they can be.

If you want meat-free dining...

You'll find it at much-celebrated **Cookies Cream**. In 2017, this perennial local favourite became Berlin's first flesh-free restaurant to enter the Michelin pantheon, on its tenth anniversary no less. Its industrial look and clandestine location are as unorthodox as the compositions of head chef Stephan Hentschel. The entrance is off the service alley of the Westin Grand Hotel (www.cookiescream.com).

If you plan to skip straight to dessert...

You won't be out of place at **Coda Dessert Bar**. Hidden between graffiti-scrawled apartments in Neukölln, Germany's first

dessert restaurant serves six-course tasting menus paired with cocktails. A sweet tooth isn't necessary here though – Chef René Frank favours *umami* (savoury) notes, and labour-intensive techniques for well-rounded flavour. Dishes are satisfying but light, intended to jump-start hedonistic Berlin evenings (www.coda-berlin.com).

If you want to eat in the toilet...

There's only one place to head. **Burgermeister** is green, ornate, a century old and... it used to be a toilet. Now, it's a burger joint beneath the elevated U-Bahn tracks at Slesisches Tor. Get in line for plump all-beef patties

(try the Meisterburger with fried onions, bacon and barbecue sauce) tucked between a brioche bun and paired with thickly-cut cheese fries. Fast-food heaven (www.burgermeister.de).

If you like a DIY approach to dining...

Give **Fes Turkish Barbecue**, an innovative Turkish restaurant in Kreuzberg, a try. Perhaps borrowing a page from Korea, patrons cook their own slabs of marinated chicken, beef fillet and lamb on a grill sunk into the table. For total happiness, pair your food with a jug of *raki* (anise brandy). Book ahead on weekends (www.fes-turkishbbq.de).

If you mainly want beer...

Have dinner at **BRLÖ Brwhouse** (above). The house-crafted beers flow freely at this shooting star among Berlin's craft breweries. Production, taproom and restaurant are all housed in 38 shipping containers fronted by a big beer garden with views of Gleisdreieckpark. Sharing dishes are mostly vegetable-centric, though the meat is prepared

to succulent perfection in a smoker (www.brlo-brwhouse.de/en).

If you like farm-to-table dining...

The stylish country flair and top-notch cocktails at **Katz Orange** will deliver a grand slam. The 'Orange Cat' will have you purring for such perennial favourites as Duroc pork that's been slow-roasted for 12 hours. The setting in a castle-like former brewery is stunning, especially in summer when the patio is open (www.katzorange.com).

If you want a good old old-fashioned schnitzel...

Berlin's oldest beer garden and beer hall will make you very happy. **Prater Garden** has seen beer-soaked days and nights since 1837 and is a charismatic spot for guzzling a custom-brewed Prater pilsner beneath the ancient chestnut trees. For modern German and regional dishes, including a *schnitzel* as enormous as it is delicious, pop into the Prater Gaststätte beer hall next door (www.pratergarten.de/en).

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ANDREA SCHULTE-FREYERS AND ANDY SWINGINGTON. PHOTOGRAPHS: NANA-SCHA-GASS/@BRO BRWHOUSE, BUFFET

SYDNEY, *Australia*

Sydney's cuisine rivals that of any great world city. Australia's largest urban centre truly celebrates the country's place on the Pacific Rim, marrying the freshest local ingredients with the flavours of Asia, the Mediterranean, the Americas and Sydney's own colonial past. Those making the case for a distinctly Australian cuisine might point to 'bush tucker' or a degustation menu of pavlova, lamingtons, Vegemite sandwiches and Anzac biscuits. Patriots might suggest eating the coat of arms: kangaroo and emu, with a crocodile starter. A more reasoned approach has been taken by Australia's more innovative chefs, reverting to convict stereotypes: eyeing the surroundings, determining what to steal and weaving it all into something better than the sum of its parts.

If you want views of Sydney Harbour Bridge...

Pair it with modern Australian food at what many say is Sydney's best restaurant: **Quay**. The peerless bridge view is paired with brilliant food. Chef Peter Gilmore never rests on his laurels, consistently delivering exquisitely-crafted, adventurous cuisine. Book well in advance (www.quay.com.au).

If you want views of Anzac Bridge...

Take a water taxi and pull up outside **Boathouse** (left) on Blackwattle Bay in the neighbourhood of Glebe. It's one of the best seafood restaurants in Sydney. Offerings range from oysters so fresh you'd think you shucked them yourself, to a snapper pie that'll go straight to the top of your favourite-dish list (www.boathouse.net.au).

If you'd like to eat vegetarian...

Yellow, a sunflower-yellow former artists' residence, is a top-notch contemporary option. The tasting menus, which can be vegan, take the Sydney meat-free scene to new levels and the service is not too formal. Weekend brunch is also a highlight, as is the wine list (www.yellowsydney.com.au).

If you want a quick meal...

Waddle along to the **Bourke Street Bakery**. Queuing outside the teensy bakery is an essential Surry Hills experience. It sells a tempting selection of pastries, cakes, bread and sandwiches, along with near-legendary sausage rolls. There are a couple of seats inside, but, on a fine day, you're better off on the street (www.bourkestreetbakery.com.au).

If you want to understand why Australians are the kings of breakfast...

You'll get an education at **Le Monde**. Some of Sydney's best breakfasts are served within the demure dark-wood walls of this small café. Top-notch coffee and a terrific selection of tea will gear you up to face the world, while dishes such as matcha hotcakes, truffle-poached eggs, morning muffin specials or brilliant sandwiches make it worth walking up the hill for (www.lemondcafe.com.au). →





BANGKOK, Thailand

Nowhere else is the Thai reverence for food more evident than in Bangkok. To the outsider, the life of a Bangkokian appears to be a string of meals and snacks punctuated by the odd stab at work, not the other way around. Sampling Thai cuisine is an intense sensory mix of the base flavours – spicy, sour, sweet and salty. The city is a giant cauldron simmering with oddball dishes and ingredients, and, until you've eaten noodles mingling with the smell of car fumes on a Bangkok street, you haven't eaten Thai food.

If you want to eat the world's best pad thai...

Join the queue at **Thip Samai**. This institution reputedly serves the definitive version of *pad thai* fried. Scores of eager diners line up on the pavement and wait for a table – the queue moves fast, so don't walk away in despair. Your patience will be rewarded with the most delicious plate of the iconic Thai dish (313, Th Mahachai).

If you want street food...

Head to Chinatown. **Jék Pûi** (above) is a table-less food stall incredibly popular for its Chinese-style Thai curries (try the *gaang kĕe-o wăhn lôok chin plah grai*, a mild

green curry with fish dumplings). At **Mangkorn Khăo**, delicious wontons and – if your stomach can manage it – *bà-mèe* (Chinese-style wheat noodles), are the order of the evening. The reward for locating hole-in-the-wall **Nay Hong** is a tasty plate of *gôo-ay đĕe-o kôo-a gài* (flat rice noodles fried with garlic oil, chicken and egg).

If you fancy something from the neighbours...

Switch to Vietnamese food at **Tonkin Annam**. The retro-minimalist interior here might be a red flag for hipster ethnic cuisine, but the restaurant serves some of the best

Vietnamese food in Bangkok. Come for *phó* (noodle soup), tart and peppery banana blossom salad, or dishes you won't find elsewhere in the city, such as *bánh bèo* (cups of rice flour topped with pork), a specialty of Hue back home (69, Soi Tha Tien).

If you want to dabble...

You should head to **Eathai**. The expansive food court spans Thai dishes from just about every corner of the country, including those from famous restaurants and street stalls. It's one of the best places to sample the whole gamut of flavours, tastes and textures of Thai cuisine without venturing out of the comfortable environs of a shopping mall (1031, Th Phloen Chit).

If you like your food served with a Michelin star...

Be sure to dress smart and book ahead for a table at **Saawaan**, its name meaning 'heaven'. Two exceptionally talented

female chefs run what can easily be called one of the finest Thai restaurants in the world. The seven-course tasting menu features dishes that are inherently Thai but executed with the fancy, finesse and flair worthy of its Michelin star. Expect dishes conjured from sea urchins, wild betel leaves or rice paddy crabs, and unusual desserts, such as bitter chocolate with a hint of durian fruit (www.saawaan.com).

If you fancy a cuppa...

Sit at one of the jade-green marble-topped tables at **Mitramit** and order a flask of your preferred brew, which comes with a complimentary serving of desserts. A superb modern interpretation of a classic Bangkok teahouse, this tiny atmospheric shophouse serves delectable blends of premium tea sourced from China and other regional tea-growing centres. The owner is a trove of Thai cultural information (32, Th Phra Sumen).

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

With talented chefs experimenting in kitchens across the city, Buenos Aires's food scene is increasingly dynamic. Many visitors go straight for the classic pleasures of steak and wine at the *parrillas* (steakhouses) that sit on practically every corner; and there are few better meals than a *bife de chorizo* (sirloin) and a bottle of malbec from Mendoza.

If you want the city's best steak...

It's worth booking ahead (or being prepared to wait for a table) at **Don Julio**. Classy service and a great wine list add an upscale bent to this traditional – and very popular – corner steakhouse. The *bife de chorizo* (sirloin steak) is the main attraction here, but the baked goat cheese provolone, *bondiola de cerdo* (pork shoulder) and gourmet salads are a treat as well (www.parrilladonjulio.com).

If you fancy sharing...

Arrive early at no-reservation **Proper** (pictured). At this rustic eatery in a former car-repair shop, chefs cook excellent meats in a wood-fired oven. Order several small plates to share and delight in dishes like lamb chops and sweet potato with blue cheese,

almonds and kale (www.properbsas.com.ar/en).

If you want a quick pitstop...

Order a slice of thick *muzzarella* at the counter at **Pizzería Güerrín**. Add a portion of *fainá* (chickpea flatbread) and wash it down with beer. This much-loved pizza joint on Avenida Corrientes has been feeding the masses since 1932. There are also tables with waiter service where you can choose pizza from a larger menu (www.pizzeriaquerrin.com).

If you want ice-cream...

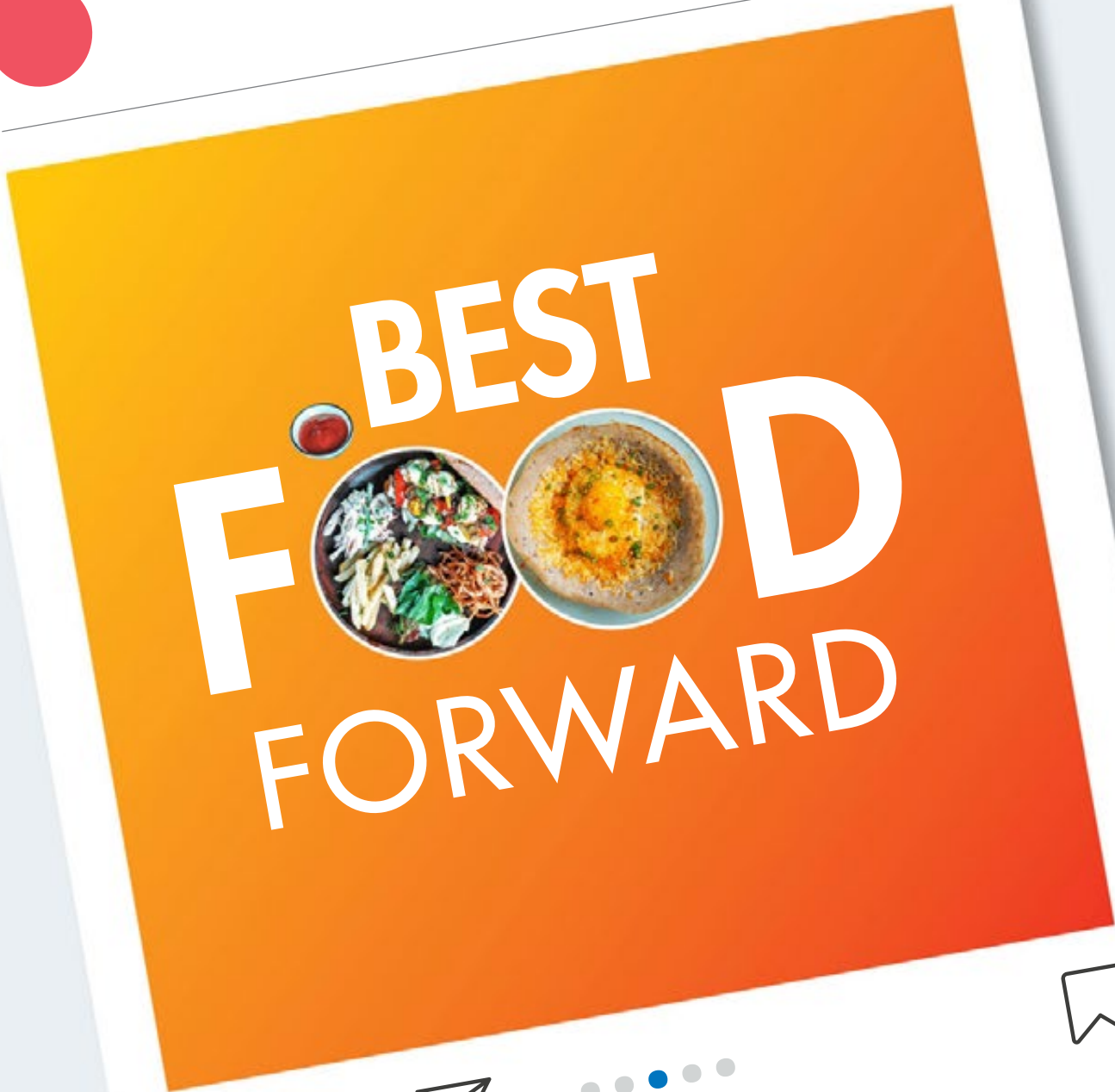
Try it with *dulce de leche*, a milk-caramel sauce.



Because of Argentina's Italian heritage, Argentine *helado* is comparable to the finest ice cream anywhere in the world. Some of the best *heladería* chains are **Persicco**, **Freddo** and **Un'Altra Volta**, but many smaller independent shops are excellent too. **Cadore** is one of BA's classic *heladerías*, famous for its *dulce de leche* ice cream (www.heladeriacadore.com.ar).

If you're over meat...

Make a beeline for **Bio**. The light-filled corner eatery specialises in vegetarian food, and is the first certified organic restaurant in the country. Try the quinoa hamburgers, couscous or lentil Milanese, washed down with refreshing ginger lemonade. It caters to coeliacs, vegans and raw foodists too, and runs cooking classes (www.biorestaurant.com.ar). 



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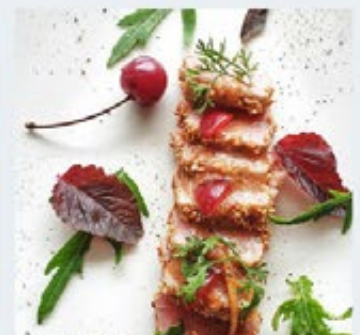
We asked food influencers and writers across Indian metros to share their coolest food finds in their city with us. Inspiration for when we next travel... Start making your lists!

Compiled by PRIMROSE MONTEIRO-D'SOUZA @PrimroseDSouza

view all comments

2 DAYS AGO







Rinkel Arora

Dine Delicious Food

@dinedeliciousfood
 @DineDelicious
 @DineDelicious
 @DineDelicious13



Pune

RINKEL'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN PUNE

“ I've been a foodie since childhood. My world revolves around food. I've always loved cooking, experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen, and exploring new dishes in restaurants. That's the way I get to understand new cuisines and learn more about them. I come from an IT background; but, after my marriage, I decided to go ahead with my blog and make a profession of it. Since then, work is no more like work for me; it has become my happy place.”

“ Pune-kars know their food and are extremely passionate about bringing in new cuisines and dishes for people to try. I know many owners and chefs who have put in their life savings just to introduce the people in Pune to good food. This is what makes this place special. From street food to fine dining, from Indian to Italian, French, Japanese and Arabic, Pune has it all.”



Bhuna Kathal Wrap at Kalinga Veg Gourmet Kitchen

“An outstanding dish that won my heart. Each morsel was done with magical spices to flavour *kathal* (jackfruit).”
TASTE IT: 00-91-70309-38645; www.takshashilahotels.com; 1st to 3rd Floor, House of Nosh, CTS 1365, Gulawani Maharaj Road, Swaroop Society, Vakil Nagar, Erandwane; 11am – 11pm



Healthy Pizza at Sante Spa

“This pizza has a *ragi* base and veggie + fruit and nut toppings... This place is simple yet classy, basic yet fancy, healthy yet delicious. Basic ingredients are sourced directly from the farm and converted into super delicious food.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-82379-02020; www.santespacuisine.com; Mint #11, 1st Lane Koregaon Park, Sunderban Resorts, next to Osho International; 7.30am – 11pm



Turnip Cakes with Burnt Garlic and Chillies at Wicked China

“Crisp and gooey turnip cakes; the simplest ingredients get such a fancy makeover.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-93268-51111; Unit 11, Pub Town, Creativity, Yerawada; 12pm – 12am



Cannoli of Baby Leaves at Paashh

“Cannoli filled with soy beans, salsa and lemon yoghurt in a bowl of *jowar* puffs. Loved it.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-89830-02039; www.paashh.com; Plot E1 & E2, near Orange IVY School, Hiremath Park, Kalyani Nagar; 11.30am – 10.30pm



Vegetable & Pesto Sandwich at Level 5 Bistro & Bar

“Wish I could start each morning with such a king-sized breakfast to keep me going...”
TASTE IT: 00-91-70309-33061; www.takshashilahotels.com; 5th Floor, House of Nosh, Gulawani Maharaj Path, Erandwane; 11am – 11.30pm





Devashree Sanghvi

The Crazy Indian Foodie

@thecrazyindianfoodie | thecrazyindianfoodie

Mumbai

DEVASHREE'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN MUMBAI

“I’ve always had a strong passion for cooking and exploring new places and flavours and, four-and-a-half years ago, I converted that passion into The Crazy Indian Foodie, which has now grown into a huge platform of 3,60,000+ people who visit for food, travel, hospitality and lifestyle recommendations.”

“Mumbai is a melting pot of cultures, flavours and unique cuisines like no other city. No matter where in Mumbai you are, you will always find good food at any hour of the day. From the humble *vada pav* to spicy *misal pav*, exciting street-food joints full of delicious *chaats*, *dosas* or fusion dishes to top-of-the-line, fine-dining restaurants, century-old bakeries and food joints to home-dining experiences, this incredible city is a culinary paradise. I was born and raised here and, every day, there’s something new to discover in this mega city for gastronomy. It’s the perfect spot at which to satiate all your food cravings.”



Misal Thali at House of Misal

“Puneri + Kolhapuri + Varadi *misal* made fresh, warm and spicy, when had with soft *pav* + some lime and onions, makes for a heartwarmingly delicious meal! This *misal thali* also comes with some *kharvas!* House of Misal serves over 50 kinds of kickass *misals* and is an absolute must-visit.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-93721-66413; www.thehouseofmisal.com; Shop no 329A, N C Kelkar Road, near Plaza Cinema, Kasaravadi, Dadar; 9am – 9pm



Royal and Keser Falooda at Badshah Cold Drinks

“A classic Badshah *falooda* will always make your day a happier one! Every Mumbaikar’s favourite place for *falooda*, Badshah has been winning hearts for a long time. Its *faloodas* come in different flavours with rich ice cream on top. Complete value for money.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-2342-1943; 220, Lokmanya Tilak Marg, opp Crawford Market, Zaveri Bazaar, Kalbadevi; 7am – 12.30am



Pani Puri at Amrut Sagar Restaurant

“I love spicy, tangy, Mumbai-style *pani puri*, and it’s great here!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-2640-6665; Rizvi Place Society, 31, Hill Road, opposite Marks & Spencer Showroom, Bandra West; 8am – 12am



Cheese Pav Bhaji at Lenin Pav Bhaji Centre

“Spicy *pav bhaji* + cheese with fresh, buttery bread = absolute heaven.

An absolute must-visit, Lenin Pav Bhaji serves some of the best and most pocket-friendly *pav bhaji* in Mumbai.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-98927-43407; Churchgate Khau Galli, behind SNTD College; 9am – 10pm



Chura Vada Pav at Ashok Vada Pav

“There’s nothing quite like some hot, crisp *chura* with delicious *vada* + *pav* + *mirchi* and dry garlic chutney!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-99205-55113; Kashinath Dhuru Marg, Dadar West; 11am – 9.30pm Mon – Sat



Nolan Mascarenhas

Nolan's A Twit

@nolansatwit @nolansatwit @nolansatwit



Goa

NOLAN'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN GOA

“Growing up in a family steeped in hospitality deterred me from the food industry earlier. Then, during my stint in corporate life, I started entertaining clients, and the allure of a well-plated dish captivated my senses. With my love for photography intact, I started documenting a few dishes along the way and now, a decade later, I find myself placed here, photographing my life and palate one destination and plate at a time.”

“Goa has an innate charm, attracting people from all over the world. Some come here and never leave. Food plays an important role in the lives of the many expats and Indians spreading their roots across the state's culinary canvas. Global influences are strong, but many long-lost Goan traditions are also being revived by stalwarts. The intrepid traveller will get a taste of everything global with a local influence. There's vibrant local street food (read: comfort food) like *Ros Omelet* and *Cutlet Pao*, and everything from Italian to Thai here. Goa is unique in its ability to cater to one and all, thus making it a foodies' paradise, with sun, sand and the sea for company.”



Seared Tuna with Sesame and Arugula Leaves at Grand Hyatt Goa

“The Seared Tuna with Sesame and Arugula Leaves went fabulously well with the sour cherry and coconut dressing.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-832-664-1234; www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/india/grand-hyatt-goa/goagh/dining; 7pm – 11.30pm



Neuri with Dark Chocolate Gianduja at Cavatina

“Chef Avinash Martins presents the *neuri* (a crescent filled with coconut and Goa pyramid jaggery) with dark chocolate gianduja, tender coconut ice cream and jaggery treacle, coconut crisps and *dulce de leche*. In this adaptation, the oozing chocolate romances the tender coconut ice cream in every spoon...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-832-277-0607; *Taj Hotel Road, near Joecons Beach Resort, Benaulim*; 12.30pm – 3pm, 6.30pm – 11pm Tues – Thur, 6.30pm – 11pm Fri, 12.30pm – 3pm Sat – Sun



Choo Chee Goong Laiseua at Banyan Tree, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa

“The *Choo Chee Goong Laiseua* (grilled tiger prawns with red curry sauce and kaffir lime) blends perfectly with Thai green curry with Jasmine Rice for the right hit of tangy afterburn.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-832-664-5858; *Candolim Road, Dando, Candolim*; 12.30pm – 2.30pm, 7.30pm – 11.30pm



Shaptra at Little Tibet

“The *shaptra* is a stir-fry of meat (succulent marinated beef, in this case) tossed in oyster sauce, celery and fresh chilli, served with *tingmo*, a knotted steamed bun.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-99216-20922; *Main Beach Road, Umtav Vado, Bardez, Calangute*; 9am – 11pm



Ros Omelet at Sandeep Ros Omelet

“In my opinion, Goa's most-loved street food is the *ros omelet*: eggs in an onion-laced chicken curry, with fresh lime squeezed over for extra zing, served with butter-toasted *pao*. Yummy! There are various ways to enjoy the egg itself: some like it sunny-side up; I prefer mine double fried. Best consumed at 1am...”

TASTE IT: *Panjim Square*





Parth Kothari & Sagar Rupani

Munchy Mumbai

@munchymumbai www.munchymumbai.com



Mumbai

PARTH & SAGAR'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN MUMBAI

“Coming from Gujju households, we are big foodies. We started MunchyMumbai to share our love for home-made food and street food, and slowly graduated to exploring restaurants. Back in 2015, all this was new, but we can say it has been an unforgettable journey. We love being food influencers, and wouldn't have it any other way!”

“Mumbai is the city of dreams and a melting pot of cultures. It's one of the best places for anyone who wants to explore a little bit of every cuisine; there's so much love in the food you eat in this city! There are innumerable options to choose from – be it street food like *chaat*, *pav bhaji* and momos or gourmet restaurants, swanky breweries and legendary cafés; this city has it all! Mumbai is known for its culinary treasures, and you can try something new every day! The city that never sleeps also never fails to surprise you with delicious food at every corner.”



Vada Pav from Surbhi Sweets & Snacks

“How can you crave *vada pav* and not end up at Surbhi? Our pick out of this tempting lot would be the Schezwan Vada Pav...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-93721-01032; Prasad Shopping Centre, opposite Goregaon Railway Station; 8.30am – 11pm



Legendary Mexican Panini from Raju Sandwich

“You must try this super-famous Mexican panini from Raju Sandwich! This outlet is located in Churchgate, right next to HR College, and the sandwiches, paninis and rolls here are great!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-90223-24899; behind Samrat Hotel, near HR College, Churchgate; 9am – 9pm



Pepperoni Pizza from Mangii Ferra

“Expect truly hearty Italian fare at Mangii Ferra... Our picks would be the Pepperoni Pizza (pictured), Truffle Mascarpone Fettuccine, Jerk Chicken and Tiramisu...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-98921-42877; Ground floor, Om Satyadeep Apartments, Gulmohar Cross Rd, Number 7, JVPD Scheme, Juhu; 12pm – 1.30am



Baked Cheesecake from 145 Café & Bar

“Yummy, creamy cheesecake with a fresh fruit compote...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-6233-9595; www.145cafeandbar.com/, 101, HSBC Building, 1st floor, Pali Road, off Turner Road, near Golds Gym, Bandra West; 12pm – 1.30am



Mac & Cheetos from Episode One

“Hot Cheetos + gooey Mac 'n' Cheese is da bomb!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-75068-13554; Delphi B Wing, Orchard Avenue, Hiranandani Gardens, Panchkutir Ganesh Nagar, Powai; 1pm – 12.30am Mon – Thur & Sat – Sun, 1pm – 1am Fri





Ritika Jaiswal

Kolkata Foodie

@kolkatafoodie f Kolkatafoodie K Kolkatafoodie



Kolkata

RITIKA'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN KOLKATA

“It all started when I discovered the Instagram app during my graduation days. I had always had a keen interest in food, so I started Kolkata Foodie just to put my city on the radar. Within a year, it had gained popularity, and people started talking about it. Brands and restaurants started approaching me, and the audience seemed to enjoy my content even more.”

“With an array of local foods, Kolkata has an abundance of classic yet modernised flavours, and that's what makes this city an ideal location for foodies to feast at. From the popular *puchkas* to the delicious *kathi* rolls, from *Malai Curry Risotto* (a classic Bengali dish with an Italian twist) to the *Mangsho Burger* (another scrumptious dish with a mutton curry twist), we've got it all covered!”



Big Bong Burger from My Big Fat Belly

“The Big Bong Burger is mindblowing. I mean, a *kosha mangsho* lamb burger with fried egg and cheese sauce... it definitely doesn't get any better! One just can't get over that burger, I swear. The flavours are something I've definitely never tasted before, simply whoa!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-89610-44222; 22, Sarat Bose Road, Sreepally, Bhawanipur; 12.30pm – 2am Mon – Thur, 12.30pm – 3am Fri – Sun



Kolkata-style Biryani from Elahi Luxury Dining

“Elahi Luxury Dining should be on your food list for not one but many reasons – best *biryani*, mind-blowing *galouti kebabs*, a good variety of Awadhi, Mughlai and North Indian delicacies, fine-dining ambience, great value...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-62897-70036; www.facebook.com/elahiluxurydining; 85, Fazlul Haque Sarani, Lower Range, Beck Bagan, Ballygunge; 11am – 12am



Pakodi Puchkas in Barabazar

“Pakodi *puchkas* are so freaking delicious and definitely worth trying!”

TASTE IT: Outside Jalan School, Ram Mandir



Mutton Momos from The Blue Poppy

“The Blue Poppy offers a delicious menu, including options featuring vegetarian, mutton, chicken, and pork. The decor is pretty nice, but you won't be noticing it much as you'll be busy scarfing down all that tasty grub!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-85839-92714; 4/1, Middleton Row, Russell Street, Kankaria Estates; 12pm – 4pm, 5.30pm – 9.30 pm Mon – Sat



Ghugni Hummus and Wood-Fired Kulchas from The Salt House

“Part of a lovely meal: zesty *ghugni*-infused *hummus* and *kulchas* (Ed's note: Black gram, dried yellow or white peas in gravy, *ghugni* is popular in Eastern and North Eastern India).”

TASTE IT: 00-91-98367-32154; 40, 6th Floor, Shakespeare Sarani, Shakespeare Point, 12pm – 11:30pm Mon, 12pm – 12am Tue – Sun





Mohd Zubair Ali

Hyderabad Food Diaries

@hyderabad.food.diaries



Hyderabad

MOHD'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN HYDERABAD

“ I was first exposed to the F&B industry while studying hotel management. I was spellbound by the culinary skills of chefs in Hyderabad, inspiring me to explore food further. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by people who love to eat; Hyderabad Food Diaries was started to update enthusiasts on what was happening in Hyderabad on a daily basis. It is now a one-stop destination for food-related queries, reviews and videos, and nightlife recommendations.”

“ The *nizams* of Hyderabad were serious connoisseurs of food and appreciated slow-cooked, flavoursome food. Even today, food is one of the reasons why Hyderabad has been declared the best Indian city to live in. Deccani cuisine is a beautiful amalgamation of the local Telugu and Muslim cultures. Slow cooking is a vital element in recipes, and the preparation differs according to the event, whether weddings, parties, festivals or family gatherings. The cuisine is often perceived to be majorly non-vegetarian, but there are enough options for a vegetarian too. ”



Zarb at Levant

“Zarb is prepared the old-fashioned way by sealing the earthen pot filled with boiled rice along with mutton and spices, and cooked in the oven. It is served at your table covered in fire. It has three pieces of lamb cooked to perfection; they just melt in the mouth. The peppery rice goes very well with the lamb.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-90001-11543; Road No 3, UBI Colony, opposite Season Express, Banjara Hills; 12.30pm – 3.30pm, 7.30pm – 11.30pm Mon – Sun



Chicken 65 at Akbar Fast Food Centre

“Akbar Fast Food Centre near Charminar has a limited menu, but the fried *tandoori* Chicken 65 is unique in taste. This juicy and spicy chicken is awesome with *warqi paratha*. It comes with gravy and chutney, and it takes the dish to the next level.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-63057-00561; Shop 20, 4-14, Charminar Road, beside Mecca Masjid, Charminar; 1pm – 12am



Mutton Juicy Mandi at Gazebo

“With origins in Yemen, this rice dish has tender meat, less *masala* and comes in a good quantity. Try the Mutton Juicy Mandi, Madfoon Mandi, Kabsa Mandi and Fish Mandi here.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-79955-76405; 4th floor, Uptown Banjara Complex, Qmart Building, Road Number 3, Banjara Hills; 12.30pm – 3.30pm, 7.30 – 11pm



Biryani at Biryani Ghar

“Not having *biryani* in the land of *biryani* is considered a sin. Visitors to Hyderabad have to taste it and, if possible, take a parcel back home.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-80087-99112; www.facebook.com/biryaniharhyd; Zahara Nagar, Banjara Hills; 11am – 2am



Irani Chai at Nimrah Cafe

“Your visit to Hyderabad is incomplete without a visit to the Charminar; and it’s a must to sip Irani *chai* at Nimrah Cafe overlooking the monument. They serve amazing sweet and savoury Osmania biscuits to go with your tea.”
TASTE IT: 00-91-98480-89343; #20-4-1238/39, beside Mecca Masjid, Charminar; 4am – 11pm





Karan Dua

Dil Se Foodie

@dilsefoodie f dilsefoodieofficial v dilsefoodie



Delhi

KARAN'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN DELHI

“Dil Se Foodie has 390k followers on Instagram and 1.2M on YouTube, but it all began with one follower and one subscriber respectively. My mother taught me the initial, very important principles of cooking. The effect of social media influenced me to start posting pictures of my home-cooked everyday meals on Facebook, which was later converted into a Facebook group. I've realised it's only food that provides comfort, brings us together and unlocks new experiences. I don't worry about followers because being yourself is more important than worrying about a high number at the top of your profile.”

“As capital of India, Delhi attracts travellers, businessmen and politicians and you will find a wide range of food items to cater to everyone. You can sample cuisines from all over India at the state Bhavans, and take on some of the city's iconic food trails. The weather also allows different foods to be available at different times of the year. Here, the flavours are all exceptional, authentic if you want them to be, customised to your palate if you so desire.”



Butter Chicken At Havemore Restaurant

“Butter chicken is love.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-11-2338-7171;
Pandara Market, 11-12, Barda Ukil
Marg, Pandara Flats, India Gate;
12pm – 12am



Afeem Wale Chole Bhature at Sharma Bhature Wala

“This is one of the best *chole bhature* in Delhi! It is called ‘afeem wale’ not because it contains opium (*afeem*), but because it is addictive!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-78385-42854; B-81,
Galli Number 8, Kanti Nagar South,
Seelampur, Shahdara; 7am – 12am
Sun – Mon, 7am – 9pm Tues – Sat



Chicken Seekh Tawa Masala at Amariyoti Restaurant

“Amariyoti Restaurant serves unlimited Chicken Seekh Tawa Masala with Masala Tandoori Rotis at just ₹ 349!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-11-2467-3304; Shop No 186,
Lane E, Sarojini Nagar Market, Sarojini
Nagar; 10.30am – 10.30pm



Chole Kulche at Kashi Ram Ke Chole Kulche

“Had this amazing *chole kulche* at Kashi Ram ke Chole Kulche...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-70111-28130; E-195,
E Block Road, Block E, Naraina Vihar,
Naraina; 10.30am – 4.30pm



Chole Kachori at Fateh ki Kachori

“At Fateh ki Kachori, *chole kachori* is only available between 11am and 3pm...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-88604-20011;
4, Raj Niwas Marg, Ludlow Castle,
Civil Lines; 10.30am – 3pm Sun – Wed,
10.30am – 3.30pm Thur – Sat





Kalyan Karmakar

The Finely Chopped

@TheFinelyChopped | Finely Chopped by Kalyan Karmakar



Mumbai

KALYAN'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN MUMBAI

“ I came to Mumbai from Kolkata two decades ago. I was fresh out of college, living alone for the first time; eating out formed a big part of my adventures. I became someone whom people would reach out to for restaurant recommendations. My wife suggested I start a food blog in 2007 when I was feeling a mid-career ennui. It became a diary of my life with food as an anchor, building the platform for me to move into a freelance writing career. The commissioning of my debut book followed and I've never looked back. My latest project is called Foodocracy India, where I urge people to give their favourite eateries a shoutout to help boost the morale of the people behind our food in these tough times.”

“ Mumbai's food reflects the values of warmth, inclusivity and creativity that made me fall in love with the city. Mumbai allows you to be who you are, shorn of any pretence, and the food and eateries that have become a part of the city's fabric reflect this. Mumbai is the closest India has to having an international food city. ”



Samosa Chhole at Guru Kripa

“Having the *samosa* freshly fried at Guru Kripa elevates the movie-theatre *samosa* experience a million times... Try it with the home-like *chhole* and the combination matches the chutzpah of a majestic multi-starrer of the 1970s. Also try the *Sindhi Kadhi Chawal*...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-2409-8122; 40, Road Number 24, near SIES College, Sion West; 8am – 11pm



Puri Bhaji at Prakash Shakahari Upahar Kendra

“Unlike food which is ‘styled for instagram’, the *puris* here remain hot even after you suddenly stand up and take a flatlay, much to the indulgent bemusement of those around you, and then sit down to eat. Don't miss the *sabudana vada* here either.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-2445-6095; 9/10, Horizon Building, Gokhale Road North, Dadar West; 7.30am – 9.45pm Sun – Thur, 7am – 10.15pm Sat



Pan Fried Noodles, Black Pepper Crab at Ling's Pavilion

“A Chinese journalist on assignment in Mumbai told me that Ling's food is like the good old-fashioned food back home. Ling's has spoilt me for most other Chinese restaurants around.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-2285-0023; 21, MB Marg, Apollo Bandar, Colaba; 12pm – 3pm, 6.30 – 11pm Mon, 12pm – 11pm Tues – Sun



Pav Bhaji at Ashok's Pav Bhaji stall

“I have frequented Ashok's stall for the last 10 years. His *pav bhaji* has to be my favourite in town. There is a certain sense of purity to what he serves. The flavours are consistent. The seasoning too... But don't be in a hurry; you might singe your mouth otherwise.”

TASTE IT: In the lane parallel to the former Strand Book Stall, Fort



Fish Fry Plate at Raju's Malvani Corner

“I was hypnotised by the food I had at Raju's cart... The freshly-fried *vade* (multigrain *puris*), *bangda* (mackerel) and *bombil* (Bombay Duck), the fish *rassa* (gravy) and the *kolambi* rice (prawn *pulao*) were all memorable.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-22-2446-2405; Sarvodaya Bhuvan, A10, Gokhale Road, Dadar West; 7.30 – 11.30pm Mon – Sun





Anindya & Madhushree Basu

Pikturenama

@pikturenama Pikturenama @Cook with Pikturenama



Kolkata

ANINDYA & MADHUSHREE'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN KOLKATA

“ Food has always connected us. With work experience in a five-star property and running a couple of restaurants of our own, conversation over a meal in a restaurant was always around food, decor, presentation and service. We started documenting our experiences across social media platforms and our audience liked our content and asked for more. We have reviewed 500+ restaurants in Kolkata; the journey has been enriching.”

“ Kolkata is a smorgasbord of cultures due to the several invasions down the ages. When the East India Company settled down at Calcutta port, it opened the doors to traders from all over. The food influences remained; even today, you'll find all kinds of street food, small mom-and-pop restaurants, as well as 100-year-old cafés and eateries, serving up a slice of history through their food. Most of the dishes have a local adaptation and are a brand in themselves – Kolkata *biryani*, Kolkata *phuchka*, Kolkata *kathi* rolls... In Kolkata, you will get everything from *biryanis*, rolls, *kebabs* to European classics, Bengali food to Chinese, Mughlai cuisine, and more. ”



Mutton Chaap and Galawati Kebab at Royal Indian Hotel

“It was supposed to be a quick conversation with the owner of the outlet, but our greed got the better of us. Ended up loading ourselves with calories – indulgent and delightful ones indeed! Bliss! The *biryani* here is great too!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-99033-69147; 147, Rabindra Sarani, Bortola, Barabazar Market; 10am – 11.30pm



Nepali Sel Roti, Nepali Aloo Dum and Mulo ko Achar at The Blue Poppy

“Nepali food works with us so well because it's not too rich, it's spicy and *chatpata*, and it has flavours we are comfortable with. It's all lip-smackingly delicious! Try the *Sungur ka Masu* and momos too.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-85839-92714; 4/1, Middleton Row, Russell Street, Kankaria Estates; 12pm – 4pm, 5pm – 9.30pm



Josephine's Noodles at Eau Chew Restaurant

“Made by Josephine herself at a legendary Chinese eatery, these noodles are packed with vegetables and proteins in a light sauce. Also try the spring chicken and roast chilli pork.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-33-2237-8260; 12, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Esplanade, Chowringhee North, Bow Barracks; 12pm – 3pm Mon, 12pm – 3pm, 6.30pm – 10pm Tues – Sun



Devilled Crabs at Mocambo

“At Mocambo, the menu is vast, but one dish that stands out is the devilled crabs. Two crabs stuffed with crab meat in a white sauce, then covered in cheese, and baked; who could resist that? Also try the Fish a la Diana, Bekty Mell Meuniere and the Chicken a la Kiev.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-33-2229-0095; Ground floor 25B, Park Street; 11.15am – 11.15pm



A Bengali meal at Hotel Siddeshwari Ashram

“We've been fans of the early Bengali hotels, where one ate freshly-cooked food for very little. We tried *Badhakopi* with *Machher Kanta* (cabbage with fish bones) and *Rui Kosha* (*rohu* slow cooked with spices and potatoes)...”

TASTE IT: 00-91-33-2265-2103; 19, Mirza Ghalib Street, Esplanade, Dharmatala, Taltala; 9am – 3.30pm, 7pm – 10.30pm





Ronak Rajani

Mumbai Foodie

@mumbaifoodie



Mumbai

RONAK'S GREAT FOOD FINDS IN MUMBAI

“ I started Mumbai Foodie six years ago out of a passion for food and as a way to capture and record my culinary journey across Mumbai. When I started gaining a lot of followers and a lot of digital engagement overnight, I realised the potential of making it bigger by helping people answer an everyday question: 'Where do I go today and what do I eat?' Mumbai Foodie is now a tastemaker for a lot of its followers.”

“ Mumbai is home to various communities from all across India and has a thriving cosmopolitan culture, and Mumbaikars aren't snooty about loving local cuisines like Malvani, Koli, Parsi, Sindhi, Goan and Gujarati. These two aspects, combined with the city's vast population and its varied income levels, pushes chefs and restaurateurs to innovate and offer something unique. In addition to this, the city's entrepreneurial spirit pushes not only our street vendors but even home chefs to create food experiences in terms of pop-ups and at-home dining experiences that really showcase the true culture of the cuisines. ”



Egg Chilli Cheese Hopper from Hoppumm

“It's not always that food that looks good tastes good as well, but this Egg Chilli Cheese Hopper was made for Instagram and tastes great too. Can't go wrong with those elements coming together!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-99308-25268; Shop no 8, Rafi Mansion, 28th Road, Bandra West; 11am – 11.30pm Tues – Sun



Samosas from Gulati Sweets and Snacks

“These samosas have the perfect crunch and the chutneys elevate the meal perfectly. Yes, samosas can be a meal!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-91360-77666; Shop No 3, Ambika Apartment, Mahakali Caves Road, Subhash Nagar, Andheri East; 8.30am – 9.30pm



Pork Tonkotsu Ramen from Izumi

“For me, the ramen at Izumi is as good as it can get in the city. You will not get a better tonkotsu broth than this – rich, velvety and packed with flavour!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-86574-55585; Ground Floor, Sunrise Bldg, Road Number 24, Linking Road, Bandra; 12.30am – 2.30pm, 7pm – 11.30pm Fri – Wed



Haleem Pav from Pack-a-pav

“Usually served during Ramadhan, the Haleem Pav is a rich mutton stew with lentils, served with fried onions.”

TASTE IT: 00-91-99202-30240; www.facebook.com/Pack-a-Pav-888986777802679/; Pali Hill; 12pm – 1am



Mutton Stew from Tanjore Tiffin Room

“Mutton stew with an appam is the definition of comfort food. Tanjore does it really well; the meat is cooked perfectly!”

TASTE IT: 00-91-98200-50591; Jewel Mahal Shopping Center, Seven Bungalows, Ratan Kunj, Versova, Andheri West; 12pm – 1am



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