Regional Traditional Cuisine -
The slow food way.

Indian cuisine and its history dates back to more than 4000 years. Traditional Indian food consisted of vegetarianism. India as a country is said to have the oldest civilisation in the world with numerous states, castes, religion and languages. Eating habits have been influenced by living conditions, geographical regions, topography, scientific practices and availability of ingredients. Cuisine and the vedic philosophy had a strong common link between the two, as primarily, food eaten had a strapping effect on one’s mind, thought process and action.

The 21st century brought about significant changes to Indian culinary art, thanks to modern urbanisation and technology, replacing traditional practices and, time, being a major constraint in today’s lives of people. Indigenous practices of eating are now almost obsolete in the modern Indian families. Significant eating practices were a normal daily routine in the earlier days, and hence there was no documentation of recipes in a systematic manner. Chaotic lifestyles have resulted shortcuts to Regional Indian cuisine is on the rise. Thus, newer generations have a higher appreciation for Western cuisines. With the intervention of the convenience food into the Indian market, eating habits among a major section of the community has taken a steep dip. On the contrast, hotels are striving hard to gratify the modern day traveller by getting back to the roots of the grandmothers kitchen, digging up old traditional recipes, looking for long lost ingredients and surprisingly all this which comes at a dear cost to the customer. Traditional recipes, trying to follow the laws of the Slow Food Revolution are now in vogue. Modern cooking techniques, local produce and its sustainability in the market is the need of the hour.

Slow food is a movement, started by Carlo Petrini which is a non profit movement, which addresses issues of fast life, eating habits, and fast foods, how it is affecting the community, and culinary interest in people and how food choices affect the rest of the world. Importing an ingredient to add a special dimension to cuisine with the involvement of high cost, which was considered to be exotic and attract more attention, is slowly taking on to the back burner. With the world and every chef’s congress talking about sustainability and responsible cuisine, “change “is on the anvil.

With careful thought, if one looks back, the concept of slow food was somewhat being followed in the earlier days. People consumed what was being produced seasonally. The “problem of plenty” arises here, while technology, media, easy access and world travel has made the common man go places, the demand for newer cuisine, new taste, culinary experience is on the rise.

Sushil Dwarkanath, Head of Department, Department of Hotel Management, Christ University, Bangalore, India.
IFCA left all chefs and students with wonderful memories, stimulating conversation and delicious food. We were waiting to receive and absorb any advice that the chefs had for us. We weren't disappointed. All budding chefs should note these, we did!

“With all this talk on the importance of room revenue, we often forget that people choose hotels for the food outlets. So in reality, food and beverage is an important component that drives room revenue.”

Chef M.S. Gill

“Food and beverage sits on a multi spring board, the heavier you jump, the higher you bounce. There are no limits.”

Chef Nimesh Bhatia

“The science behind food is extremely important. All traditional methods are backed by reason.”

Chef Ferdinand Metz

“Whether your food outlets are successful or not is down to the excitement created amongst the locals.

Creativity is required to entice the local customers into dining at your restaurant. The locals are key in influencing room revenue.”

Kripal Amanna

Akshar exclusive interviews:
What would you like your last meal to be?
Rice and dal. Simple food
What do you look forward to the most when you entire a kitchen?
Consistency of fresh produce
What do you dread?
Any mess in the kitchen!

Chef Nimesh Bhatia, Executive Chef, The Lalit south.

What is your advice to young chefs?
Never follow a recipe. That's what I have learnt, everyday we learn. So don't follow a recipe.

Chef Manish Mehrotra, Executive Chef, Indian accent.

Vishwas Badami and Anahita Girish

Photo courtesy: IFCA Logo and IFCA Facebook
Indian Federation for Culinary Associations

One vision, no boundaries.

Nine students from the BHM department, Christ university attended the fifth culinary congress at the Taj Vivanta, Yeshwanapur.

On entering the hotel, we were greeted by a sea of white coats, the best chefs across the country and globe. The celebrity list included Chef M.S.Gill, president IFCA, Chef Gissur Gudmunsson, president of WACS and a plethora of talented chefs from across the country.

The conference was characterised by stimulating conversation, mind blowing food and wonderful memories.

The expert opinion

You know you are in the right place when personalities of the stature of Masterchef Ferdinand Metz and India's Masterchef Chef M.S. Gill come together. The conference had several panel discussions discussing topics related to F&B allowing delegates to be up to date with the latest trends.

Panel discussions

Just like the guide to wine is a cork screw, The only guide to food is your palate. The explosion of the fast food industry, the emergence of the celebrity chef, the improved palate of young India and the emergence of standalones were the conclusions of the panel discussion: Food in India in the next decade moderated by Vir Sanghvi.

Chefs weren't to be left behind in the Green movement. The need for sustainable cooking has never been greater. Apart from making the earth greener, supporting the local farmer goes miles in improving India's economy.

The chef of today is no longer a mere cook, but is in the F&B managerial domain. F&B drives hotel revenue much more than it used to, reducing the strain on room revenue.

Chef Ferdinand Metz spoke about the importance of understanding traditional cuisine and on the modern buffet.

Live demonstrations

The conference also had live demonstrations by Chef Abhijit Saha and Sujan Sarkar on new age culinary techniques. Spherication, Cryo, Olive oil powder were somethings that all chefs took back. Chef Metz also showed us his take on Eggplant curry. Chef Gill dished out an ancient chicken dish, a recipe found in scriptures from centuries ago. Chef Guillermo Hidalgo showed us his native Tapas dishes. The wonderful aromas in the hall left everyone hungry, leading us to...

Food! Being a culinary summit, high expectations were on the food. The Taj Vivanta team did not disappoint. The first day had a lavish Pan Asian spread with live stir fries and sushi. Curries and rice were cooked to perfection. The second day had food from the North of India, skewered kebabs, farsans, hot rotis and curry with different rice dishes. The last day had food from the South. Live counters with appams, dosas, masala fish and spicy chicken curry. The smell of coconut filled the hotel. After every meal, we were treated to wonderful desserts on all days. Second helpings were the call of the day.

All in all the conference left everyone more knowledgeable with wonderful memories and a few added pounds.

Vishwas Badami and Anahita Girish.

Photo’s Courtesy : Meghana Murthy
Hockey Vs Cricket: The OBVIOUS Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport:</th>
<th>Cricket</th>
<th>Hockey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origin:</td>
<td>England- Tudor times in early 16th century</td>
<td>Egypt- 4000-year-old carvings feature teams with sticks and a projectile</td>
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<td>Forms:</td>
<td>20-20</td>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One day Matches</td>
<td>Ice Hockey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>Inline Hockey</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Street Hockey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>3 hours to 5 days</td>
<td>40 minutes to 1hr30minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governing Bodies:</td>
<td>ICC- International Cricket Council</td>
<td>FIH-International Hockey Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MCC- Marlybone Cricket Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Sport Of:</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>India and Pakistan</td>
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Hockey is not only India’s national sport but one of her national symbols. From the looks of it, India is on the verge of losing one of her national symbols.

The Indian hockey team has won 8 gold medals (6 of which were consecutive), 1 silver medal and 2 bronze medals in the Olympics. Yet, hockey does not ignite that kind of passion in the bellies of Indians like it used to.

What caused this change?

The answer is cricket. Cricket has become a religion in this country. The fast pace of the game, the intensity of the crowd and the fan following that each player has is tremendous. Indian sports fans have forgotten ‘that’ feeling that one gets while watching a hockey match completely.

The star status that cricketers like Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid have is nothing compared to the best of hockey like Dhanraj Pillai. There was a time when, Indian hockey players got a whopping 30$ a day and got put up in stadiums, while Indian cricket players got paid in millions with the luxury of 5 star hotels. This situation has certainly improved, but the hockey players still face the humiliation of not being recognised and treated likewise in these hotels.

‘Chak De India’ caused some stirring in the country but all was lost when Shah Rukh Khan was seen immediately after the release of the movie, ‘in Africa, watching a cricket match when the Indian hockey team was playing one of her biggest matches in Chennai. To quote the movie, ‘na darshak hai na sponsor hai na media hai..ab koun sa coach doobega is daldal mein apna career dubone?’ There is no motivation left to carry on this sport and so there are no players willing to risk their careers only to end in disappointment.

The government has definitely doubled its action in promotion of the sport but, its behaviour back in 2007 seems like a very daunting situation to overcome. After winning gold in the Men’s Hockey Asia Cup 2007, with a thumping 7-2 victory over Korea, the Indian players had to go a hunger strike to get any recognition from the government which eventually paid the players 2lakhs each.
Such instances in the history of our country lead us to doubt whether the government and public are still interested in saving our national sport. Or, is it just better to get with the times and make cricket our national sport and lose our heritage?

The IPL Vs The IHL:
If the IPL is the Indian Premier League then, it seems pretty obvious that the IHL is the Indian Hockey League. It may seem obvious but, it isn’t so. The IHL stands for only one other thing - International Humanitarian Law. So now, a few questions remain... How can we, as Indians, know squat about our own national sport?

Why is it that any layperson road can speak at length about his favourite team, player or even an owner in the IPL but not know what hockey even is?

How can a country like Argentina have the best women’s hockey team in the world, all from within four sq miles of the country, but India which is the second most populous country in the world have a women’s team that is at the bottom most rung of the ladder?

There is corruption in both the sports, agreed, but why is it that young people are given more of an incentive to play the national sport of the country that ruled us for over 300 years rather than their own?

Why are hockey tournaments of a level equal to that of the IPL starting a whole five years after the first IPL match?

Is it sheer laziness or fear of the sport that causes this lack of enthusiasm?

Answers to these questions are countless, and the theories are even more in number.

So, make the choice, obvious or not.

Mahira Alvares
(1st BHM)

Photograph Credits: India News 99

Indian Hockey team

Entrepreneur Corner

"Implementation of an idea is more important than the thought of it."

CORNER HOUSE

Ice cream (formerly and properly ice-cream, derived from earlier iced cream or cream ice) is a frozen dessert usually made from dairy products, such as milk and cream, and often combined with fruits or other ingredients and flavors. This is what Wikipedia reads out the definition as. Do we at any point even think of its manufacturing and processing. No, because generally are body goes numb, mouth starts watering and every bite transforms you to a different world from where you don't want to comeback. This is what CORNER HOUSE ice cream has been doing to its customers since its origination, which was a perfectly transcended vision of MR. NARAYAN RAO founder and icecreamisserie. With humble beginnings in 1982 its first shop was opened to a stupendous success at the heart of the city on Residency Road, Bangalore. It took experience and boldness to start an ice cream parlor, with a Degree in Hotel from Salzburg, Austria, an additional course from Canada and experiences on the way in Europe and America. Work experience at Oberoi Grand, Kolkata, a stint at Nirulas as Management Trainee and moving to Bangalore. All of which have paid off really well with a current market position consisting of 13 outlets in Bangalore and 1 in Mysore. Being part of city's Food Heritage and culture the citizens will never let any of its outlets to go empty. Its an addiction, be it - The Hot Chocolate fudge jr with extra chocolate sauce at Rs 20 with Free extra nuts Its immortal Death by Chocolate or its Malt Shake. The appeal of the parlor through its staff with blue caps and aprons and striped blue shirt behind the counters serving and the cashier handling the old cash machine. The informal seating with the city Victorian heritage photographed on the wall is a compulsory revisit. Its funny how an idea becomes a vision and a money generating machine. By Mayank Agarwal.

Photo courtesy: cornerhouse.in
Audit Files

Jameson’s India, for some of us who are unaware of this liquor company is one that makes whisky belonging to Ireland. It is part of the Parent brand Pernod Ricard - second largest alcohol distributors in the world. They have many brands under them and one of them is Jameson’s. It was recently introduced in the Indian market, currently available in metros and keeping Mumbai and Bangalore as centers, their promotion is taking place in full swing to compete with heavy weights like Johnnie Walker and Jack Daniels who have already found a liking to the Indian palate because of its BBQ like taste and spicy note it adds to the drink. It is customary to find one of these as a priced possession in a house bar.

Unlike its counterparts it is very competitively priced at a mere Rs 1665 which comes in a green bottle being an Irish decedent, wooden colored label with a gold print and red cap. It also has a red seal with a Jameson logo embedded on it.

We started our audit (is an evaluation of a person, organization, system, process, enterprise, project or product. The term most commonly refers to audits in accounting, but similar concepts also exist in project management, quality management, water management, and energy conservation) 6 weeks back on the 10th of February. Like any other brand Jameson was just trying set its foot firm on the effervescent Indian liquor culture, which was cultivated mainly by Punjabi’s and their enormous capacity and likeness towards whisky and the their greatest contribution to standard measure for a drink, the Patiala Peg (90 ml).

They blew out their marketing and advertisement strategies and all started falling in place. Things like tasting sessions, brand promotion through bars, educating on whisky to local consumer, special cocktails, special menus based on the Jameson whisky and other collateral’s like coasters, pamphlets, brochures, whisky glass with Jameson logo every time it is served. After putting in such an extensive effort and spending money to tie up with some of Bangalore City’s best restaurant bars, night spots and clubs, they decided to test the brands popularity and its actual up-selling in these places. It was shocking though all these places were Jameson’s loyalists none promoted it at the helm, it always became one of the last choices on the menu. It was not that the whisky tasted bad or inferior to any of the regular offerings, it was a very smooth whisky which dint even scratch your throat and better than some of the more drunk and famous brands.

This whole Audit brought two faults-

a) The seller doesn’t trust the brand and doesn’t want to spoil its customer base who have their standard choice. Also it is cheaper to sell than a Johnnie Walker or Jack Daniels.

b) The consumer in India doesn’t like to experiment. To be put in a position outside it routine (comfort zone).

by
Mayank Agarwal

Photo Courtesy: Jameson Whisky
Social media, our newest resource.

“Our head of social media is the customer.”
- McDonald’s

Many regard social media as a “24/7 focus group”. It is an untapped goldmine of information and connectivity. Cyberspace is now the true “final frontier”. Internet usage is a part of daily life. Social networking services expand the pool of people we have the opportunity to interact with, to near limitless possibilities. Our online selves have become real entities. We have reached a point where social networking has become a part of “real life”. Eg: Groups on facebook and twitter correlate to clubs and cliques in the offline world.

The best in the industry have noticed this and are already tapping into this new resource. Customer service is the most obvious way for the hospitality industry to use social media, and Twitter is the perfect vehicle for resolving customer issues or making a guest’s day with a simple “thanks for visiting” tweet. CoffeeGroundz, an independent coffee shop in Houston, Texas, is one of the first businesses to take to-go orders via Twitter, an effort that began in October 2008. In addition to to-go orders, the boutique coffee spot now also accepts table and event reservations via direct message on Twitter.

Online sites are designed to facilitate conversation, allowing the consumer to participate in the development and discussion of the content. Examples include review sites (TripAdvisor and Yelp), news sites (Digg), social sharing (Flickr, YouTube), social bookmarking (Delicious, Faves) and purchase/review sites (Amazon, TraveLocity). This means that conversations about businesses are taking place in many places in many languages across the globe. While this can be intimidating, it also represents a huge opportunity for hospitality companies to not only to engage with customers, but also to turn all of this social activity into meaningful, usable information.

“Social media analytics allow you to quantify information than can then be used in your predictive analytics, forecasting and optimization efforts. Trying to predict stock price? Brand reputation could be a significant variable to include in the modeling. Want to understand the lifetime value of a customer? Their ‘influence’ within relevant social networks is likely an input into the value calculation.” - Kelly McGuire, Executive Director, Hospitality and Travel Global Practice, SAS

-Sangita Abraham

Photo courtesy : internet

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AVAKAYA
A TRADITIONAL MANGO PICKLE FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

Muddapappu,avakaya with hot steamed rice and ghee is a very popular combination for Telugu people,. From Ugadi (the Telugu new year day) natives start using mangoes in their cooking. This is the day they offer God the first crop of raw mangoes in Ugadi pachadi, After one month from Ugadi day, pickled mangoes will start coming in to the market. In this Hot summer season every Telugu household look forward for Avakaya making season.

RECIPE:

INGREDIENTS:

- Mangoes -- 6 big (usually use peddarasalu)
- Salt -- 250 g or 2 1/4 cup with rice cooker cup
- Turmeric --- 2 tab sp
- Mustard power -- 250g or 2 1/4 cup
- (Dry 200 grams black mustard in hot sun for 2-3 hour or heat a deep frying pan and heat mustard until they are hot , take care that mustard does not splutter when you fry them. Let them cool for some time and grind in to a fine powder. Grind mustard seeds very slowly giving gap in between every 2 sec, otherwise the oil may come out from the mustard seeds)
- Fenugreek powder- 2 tab sp
- Fenugreek seeds --- 1 tab sp

photo credits courtesy ammala’s kitchen

By
Kalpana Naidu
Solar Power in India

A new business model for off-grid solar power could revolutionize India’s energy sector, transforming lives in the process. People with unreliable access to electricity at best, and none at worst, will soon be able to pay for off-grid solar energy ‘as they go’ – if trials of an innovative micro-credit scheme in India meet with success. The ‘Progressive Purchase’ model enables customers to make a low-cost down payment for a solar photovoltaic system, which is then topped up in installments using a mobile phone and locally purchased scratch cards. It works much like putting a coin in the meter – or its modern equivalent: top-up mobile phone tariffs. Users can determine each payment according to their means, and each goes towards the total purchase price of the solar home system, transforming energy expenditure into an asset purchase over time. In many emerging markets, the poorest are spending up to 30% of their income on inefficient energy sources, particularly kerosene for lighting. Kerosene is not only expensive relative to standard on-grid electricity but it’s a smoky health hazard with a disproportionately high environmental impact. Pay-as-you-go (PAYG) solar addresses both these concerns. “It breaks down the barriers of asking very low-income communities to pay large upfront costs”, says Caroline Howe, who has worked extensively in India with UNICEF and the Project. Mobile phone money systems are becoming the payment method of choice in several emerging markets. Not only is PAYG a system many are already comfortable with, but it’s relatively cheap to implement, and mobile ownership is widespread. It is estimated that almost 500 million people have mobile phones, but no access to a grid. The potential for PAYG to revolutionize the off-grid energy sector is clear. Simpa Networks, a venture-backed technology company based in Bangalore, is working to develop the incremental energy payment plan in low-income countries – and vying to lead the market: “There is likely a $100 billion global opportunity for small-scale distributed energy solutions, with no clear market leader. “The Indian Government has set a target for solar capacity of 20,000MW by 2020, but audit group KPMG believes that breakthrough technologies could help it to exceed this by more than three times, reaching 67,000MW by 2022. Since it’s the question of India’s population it’s high time we took actions according to the innovations of small minds put together to achieve a common goal that’s energy consumption with minimum per head cost.

By Mayank Agarwal

The words "Do you have a reservation?" take on a whole new meaning at restaurant Kiliaen in Hasselt, Holland. This is the smallest restaurant in Holland; it is only open on Saturday nights and seats only two guests. They do not take reservations. Instead, wannabe diners drop by and leave their names for a draw held once a week. The lucky winners receive a free, five-course dinner for two, as well as a complimentary limousine ride to and from their home or hotel.

Karan C.