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JULY
2021

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DOORSTEP

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A Passion's
Maestro

Vikas Khanna



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*Clinical study conducted on 15 volunteers (women, aged 26-40, living in an urban area, all non-sensitive skin types, with signs of tiredness), having undergone a Spiruline Boost Smoothing Detoxifying Treatment. Self-assessment after 1 treatment (% of volunteers who agree and mostly agree with the claim).

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2021

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Dear Readers,

We have been en route to turning a new leaf, walking into the seventh month of 2021. Our world is evolving in different ways, marinading our thoughts, making our aspirations bubble with secret hopes... From cooking up creativity, and delivering compassion to passing the plate on perpetuated notions, we are stepping anew, ahead. With that in mind, we are delighted to bring to you "Bon Appétit" - our July issue, tailored to your taste.

The comfort of our home and hearth still reigns, while our favourite hospitality brands pamper our palate with specially curated home delivery menus. For our home chefs, flip through our guides mapping renowned cuisines, with unending choices to explore.

Starring none other than the gastronomy maestro himself, Vikas Khanna graces our July cover - delighting us with a peep into his golden journey, evolving aspirations, creative endeavours, and philanthropic pursuits.

Taste the culinary trends ruling the roost, explore nutritional psychiatry, delve deeper into the need for immunity boosting foods, as our ancestors did as part of legendary rituals. As always, our recipes challenge and court your culinary prowess. Tune into our fashion and beauty books for the season's freshest picks and revel.

With many more refreshing stories to keep you hooked this month, we urge you to ask yourself - what are you cooking this time around?

As always, be safe and stay healthy. Here's to making it to a newer, happier, healthier era, together!

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Parineeta Sethi

Chief Editor & Publisher

A Passion's Maestro **Vikas Khanna**

The first Indian chef to be awarded with a coveted Michelin star. The author of over 37 books. The only Indian name in Top 10 Most Influential Chefs in the world. The maker of acclaimed films. The man with a heart of gold. Vikas Khanna is simply unstoppable and is now on the brink of unveiling "Barefoot Empress". New York based chef Vikas Khanna is a treasured force in the culinary world, both in India and on foreign turf. A genius in progress for over three decades.

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IN SPOTLIGHT HOTELS

Knock, Knock! CUISINES to your DOORSTEP

NOTHING TRULY COMPARES TO SAVORING DELIGHTFUL DISHES IN THE COMFORT OF OUR HOMES WITH OUR FAMILIES. THANKFULLY, THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY HAS COME TO THE RESCUE. YOUR FAVOURITE HOTEL'S FIVE-STAR CULINARY EXPERIENCE IS NOW JUST ONE CALL AWAY. FROM JOYFULLY HYGIENICALLY PACKED MEALS OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY NUTRIENTS TO CAREFULLY CURATED MENUS PERFECT FOR TAKEAWAY AND HOME DELIVERIES, TAKE YOUR PICK!

MARRIOTT BONVOY

Introduced in 2020, Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels is a premium food delivery service from Marriott International that ensures the safe delivery of a diverse variety of Marriott's signature dishes. Available in 26 cities and spanning across a network of 76 hotels, Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels promises an authentic dining experience with a host of favourite and award-winning dishes, prepared and delivered adhering to strict hygiene and safety norms.



Considering its successful uptake, hotels rolled out Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels exclusive menus – a mix of their signature dishes and newer recipes that are more suitable for home deliveries. 'Mood Diets' is one such specially curated menu that balances the daily nutrient requirements with mood boosting food like dark chocolate, fatty fish, nuts and seeds, berries among others that directly uplift your mood. It is currently being rolled out in 13 hotels across the country largely in metro and tier 1 cities including JW Marriott Juhu Mumbai, JW Marriott Pune, The Ritz-Carlton Pune, The St. Regis Mumbai, JW Marriott Bengaluru, JW Marriott New Delhi, among others.

Order here: www.clubmarriott.in





QMIN- SIGNATURE FOOD DELIVERY FROM TAJ

With its repertoire of culinary experiences Indian Hotels Company has launched a gourmet culinary and food delivery platform called Qmin. The app delivers dishes from the group's signature restaurants to the comfort of guests' homes across 16 cities from over 65 IHCL restaurants across 35 hotels including The Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai, Taj Palace New Delhi, Taj West End Bengaluru, and Taj Swarna Amritsar. They have launched Qmin Comfort, a range of comfort food options; Qmin Subscription meals bringing wholesome home-style meals available on subscription; as well as its latest offer of immunity enhancing menus curated using superfoods – INNERgise. It also knows how to brighten your celebrations with the option Qmin Celebrations which offers customised menus for virtual weddings and conferences.

It is now taking its offering of delectable flavours closer to you with the launch of the Qmin Food Truck. Catering to the need of on-the-go meals, the food truck will service business districts and large residential neighbourhoods with comfort food bringing in global and local favourites. On an enhanced focus on maintaining stringent protocols of safety and hygiene, the delivery includes contact-less delivery and the mandatory use of protective gear for delivery executives in extremely sanitized vehicles. The packaging is also eco-friendly by utilizing bio-degradable materials, and with customized insulation boxes to preserve the food whilst being delivered.

**Order here: www.qmin.co.in
Qmin app on android and IOS mobile devices**

OBEROI HOTELS & RESORTS

Oberoi Hotels & Resorts and Trident Hotels have also introduced a Home Delivery Menu, especially for the guests who wish to dine at the comfort of their own home. Their specially curated home delivery and take-away menus include beloved dishes from their finest restaurants - boasting a wide range of international cuisines and Indian delicacies. A special section of baked treats has also been added on popular demand.



HARD PAPER CONTAINERS

Sizes: 750 ml / 500 ml / 250 ml

Used for: rice, curries, dal, raita, desserts, etc.



PAPER CARRY BAGS



Prepared and packaged using the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene, the menus have been thoughtfully curated with popular favourites from their restaurants at The Oberoi Mumbai, The Oberoi Bengaluru, The Oberoi New Delhi, The Oberoi Gurgaon, The Oberoi Grand Kolkata, Trident Agra, Trident Bandra Kurla, Trident Bhubaneswar, Trident Chennai, Trident Gurgaon, Trident Hyderabad, Trident Jaipur, Trident Nariman Point and Trident Udaipur.

Order here: www.oberoihotels.com/online-food-delivery/ and <https://www.tridenthotels.com/trident-food-delivery>

ITC HOTELS

Paying a tribute to nature On World Environment day, ITC Hotels launched an innovative and mindfully curated Feel-Good Menu focused on responsible sourcing and rich in goodness. Designed to highlight the Vocal for Local initiative, it offers flavourful recipes that have been caringly selected and mindfully prepared. With a pledge to strengthen local produce and "Made In India" artisanal products which enhance ITC Hotels Responsible Luxury Philosophy.



From healthy grains and flaxseeds, amaranth and chia muffins and croissants, to integrating the ancient goodness , the Feel Good menu lays emphasis on the ancient practice of slow cooking using local and seasonal ingredients. The menu features Kachchi haldi ka pulao, mulathi ki phirni, murgh moringa made with the goodness of drumstick leaf, amla ki launji made with Indian Gooseberries, and so much more which also helps to boost your immunity.

Order here: Zomato, Swiggy and EazyDiner, and via Gourmet Couch on the ITC Hotels F&B App



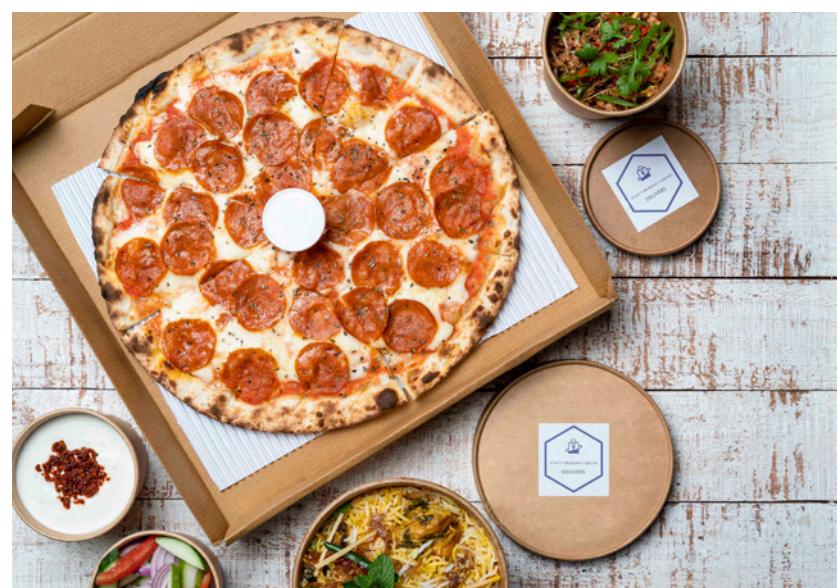
HYATT REGENCY DELHI

Following its successful home delivery initiative in 2020, Hyatt Regency Delhi has launched a new home delivery menu to amplify the already existing multi-cuisine menu. The new additions include a plethora of gourmet dishes, including an array of delicious dim sums, sushi, healthy salads and seasonal desserts amongst others.



Designed by their Executive Chef Ivan Chieregatti, the menu boasts signature specials like pizza la piazza, yellow prawn curry and gong bao chicken as well as fresh salads, wraps, Indian specialties and seasonal delights such as mango cheesecake. There is also an option of getting freshly-baked muffins, bread and cake from Sidewalk. All dishes are freshly prepared by their team with the highest standards of safety and hygiene.

Order here: Zomato, <https://athome.cathdiningdelhi.com>, or
call +91 98184 77234 or 011- 6677 1376





GRAND HYATT MUMBAI

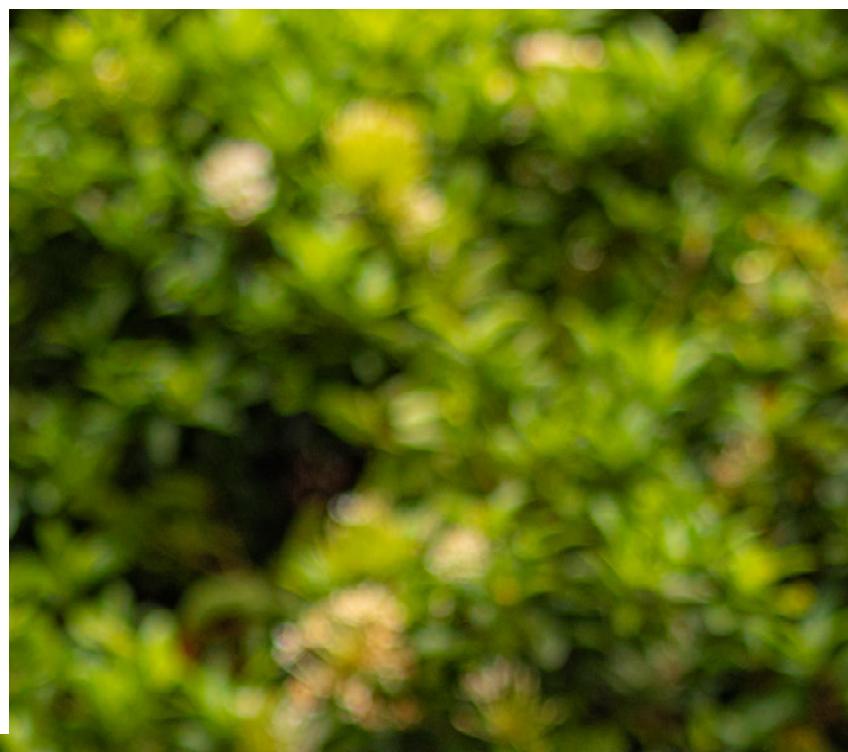
The signature outlets of Grand Hyatt Mumbai have introduced exciting new additions to their Home Delivery and Self-Pickup menu which are prepared under strict hygiene protocols, in a safe and secure environment with the freshest ingredients. Explore the flavors of authentic Italian cuisine from Celini, traditional Sichuanese curated by Chef Zhang from China House Restaurant, Northwest Frontier Cuisine from Soma and Fresh Bakes from their delicatessen, the Gourmet Store. That's not all, even freshly baked loaves of bread, meat, poultry, seafood and more are available for you. For the single diner, China House Restaurant brings you the Bento Box, a compact vegetarian or non-vegetarian meal. Be it for a couple or a family, one can enjoy the luscious flavors of their signature outlets with their exclusive Brunch at Home offering.

**Order here: Zomato, Swiggy, or
call +91 70459 50118/ 70459 50132**



GRAND HYATT KOCHI BOLGATTY

Let the festivities take over with sumptuous food, this Onam in August. With more than 30 traditional vegetarian dishes and delicious payasams, Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty offers Grand Onam Sadhya takeaway curated by Chef M. Prasad. The sadhya takeaway is perfect for small and large groups of friends and families, to savour the festival in the comfort of your homes. As safety and wellbeing of the guests is on top priority, the feast is hygienically packed in eco-friendly containers. In addition, choose from eight varieties of classic payasams delivered to your doorstep by their food delivery partners. Authentic Kerala vegetarian dishes and payasams for takeaways, it is a sure treat for the palate.



[https://www.hyattrestaurants.com/
en/dining/india/kochi/the-residence/
events/grand-onam-sadhy-in-the-
residence-grand-hyatt-kochi-bolgat-
ty-eahk](https://www.hyattrestaurants.com/en/dining/india/kochi/the-residence/events/grand-onam-sadhy-in-the-residence-grand-hyatt-kochi-bolgatty-eahk)

THE LALIT MUMBAI

Highly renowned for their hospitality and fine dining, The Lalit Mumbai has rolled out an extensive home delivery menu, paying attention to each detail. Even their packaging is eco-friendly!



Featuring Indian and International cuisine, one can choose their pick from signature dishes such as Dal Baluchi, Shahi Paneer, Awadhi Gosht Keema Biryani, The LaLiT Club Sandwich, Dum Ka Murgh, Mutton Rogan Josh, Kolkata Murgh Biryani, Caesar Salad, and sweets like Danish Pastry, and Gulab Jamun.

Order here: <https://thelalit.dotpe.in/>,
or call 77770 52330 or 99876 03117





LE MERIDIEN NEW DELHI

Savour freshly prepared exotic meals at the comfort of your home. Order your favourite cuisines, prepared in stringent hygienic conditions, from their exclusive MarriottOnWheels gourmet delivery service and get their finest selections delivered to your doorsteps. They take the highest standards of hygiene and cleanliness while preparing and delivering your food order as per your liking, directly delivered by their chauffeurs. Relish exquisite flavours of global cuisines from A la Carte or Family Feast dinner menu such as Paneer Tikka Shashlik, Handi Gosht, freshly baked Bread Rolls, Cheesecakes, and many more.

Order here: call 8447741474



RADISSON BLU PLAZA DELHI AIRPORT

Leading with its 22 years of legacy award-winning iconic restaurants like NYC, The Great Kabab Factory and Neung Roi, apart from colonial-styled Savannah Bar, Radisson Mahipalpur is now offering home delivery through its website - adhering to all safety and hygiene regulations. The hotel has designed a special takeaway menu with high-quality ingredients boasting Continental, Indian and Thai dishes.

The enhanced delivery menu encompasses a wide variety of popular items including salads, appetizers, kebabs, curries, wraps, biryani, sushi and much more. Besides, The Great Kabab Factory has even introduced Indian, Western and Asian meal boxes. For when you crave baked goods – be it bread, cakes, desserts, or pastries – The Pastry Shop can come to your rescue!

Order here:
www.radissonrestaurants.com



RADISSON BLU MBD HOTEL NOIDA

With an elaborate delivery-focused menu comprising their popular signature dishes from all the restaurants, Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida is taking extra care of your appetite - be it breakfast, salads, appetizers or desserts.

Through keen health and safety measures, the kitchens are sanitized along with regular temperature checks of all chefs, associates and the food delivery partners. The hotel has also partnered with food aggregators Zomato, eazydiner, and Swiggy, to assure contactless delivery of food to the valued customers.

Order here: Call 0120 430 0000



CROWNE PLAZA GREATER NOIDA

Presenting an interesting mix of Asian, Indian and Western cuisine, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida has introduced their home delivery menu. What's special is their Combo Meals that are not only economical but also an experience on its own - serving three course meals including starters, main course and desserts. In order to help local businesses grow, the hotel has also tied-up with two bakeries – Life of Pie and Café Connections, at a no-profit no-loss basis. Their signature dishes - Giga Chicken Burger, Tiramisu, and Gosht Dum Biryani make an excellent addition to their special delivery menu.



Order here: Call/Whatsapp 0120
6734960 or 92054 84506



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12 pm to 10 pm
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mosaic

To Place Order Call
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T: +91 120 6735000 Sales@cpgreaternoida.com
www.crownepiazza.com/cpgreaternoida

IN SPOTLIGHT HOTEL

MAJESTIC ABODE

GLISTENING WITH ITS OWN NORTHERN CHARM,
THE LEELA PALACE JAIPUR COMPLIMENTS THE
ENTHRALLING BEAUTY, VIBRANT CULTURE, AND
MAGNIFICENCE OF THE PINK CITY.

Recognized as a UNESCO Heritage Site, Jaipur reels with the best in regal and royal. Well known as a cultural hub, the place is well connected with the rest of the world, making it just another reason to not to miss the enthralling experience The Leela Palace Jaipur offers at this land of royalty and culture.

A SWEET SUITE STAY

The Leela Palace Jaipur defines royalty and elegance with guest rooms of white marble, unique leafing work on the headboard wall, and Venetian mirrors with wall sconces. The pastel-colored rooms are adorned with embellishments like chandeliers, paintings, and intricate woodwork - all paired with modern features and premium amenities to provide you a comfortable experience. All The Leela Palace rooms have one thing in common - luxurious services that include complimentary breakfast, high tea and Butler Services which takes care of all requirements during your stay.



FINE TASTES OF JAIPUR

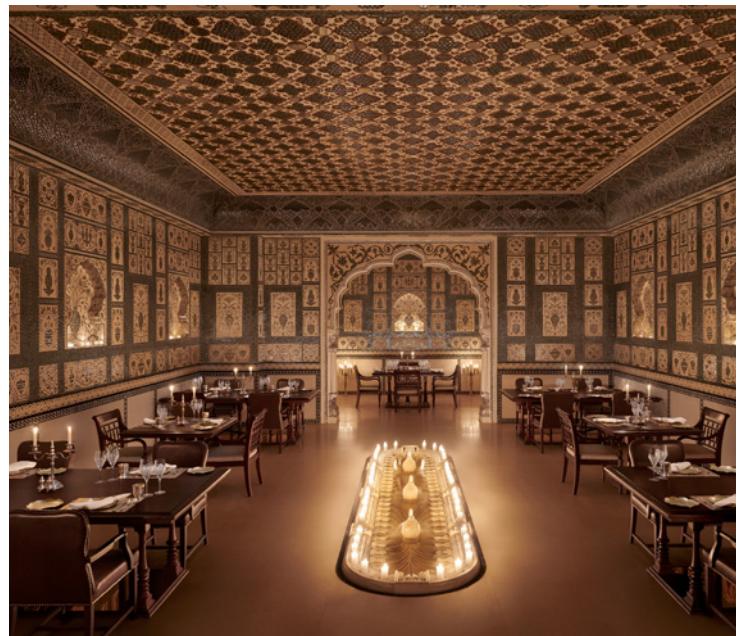
Well, what is an experience without food? The Leela Palace has a wide range of restaurants serving a variety of delights to pacify your taste buds. If you love royal cuisine, ask for Sahib ki Khaas Nalli ka Salan. A signature dish at Sukh Mahal, the taste of this bowl of slow cooked culinary perfection will linger on your palate long after you finish dining. And while you relish the dish, spare a moment to drink in the beautiful Turko-Persian blue pottery which is synonymous with Jaipur. The Leela Palace is committed to offering a fine dining experience with a dash of royalty to top it all!

ADVENTURE THEN UNWIND!

The Palace also offers a multitude of experiential activities to partake in and make the best out of leisure time. It offers team building games such as cricket, polo, passing the Hula Hoop, Tug of War, Brush the Balloon, Water Relay, Minute to Win It, and Bicycle Race. One can also enjoy traditional folk dances and puppet shows, which reflects the heritage of the city. Wellness activities include Aqua Aerobics, Cycling, Badminton, Football, Cricket, Zumba, Sunrise Yoga and Croquet.

Unwind with a morning Flute recital, Langa Party, Kukas Ki Chaupar, Diya Painting, Karaoke Singing, Tambola, Puppet Show, Bangle Making, Pottery, and Block Painting or opt for a guided walking tour to explore nature recharging sightseeing excursions in Kukas Village, Boot camp, trekking, swimming competition, cycling and farming lessons.

Is it true luxury without an exhilarating self-care session? The Leela Palace also offers a range of self-care options to pamper yourself with. It has its very own rejuvenating Spa Centre, Salon, and Gym, to feed your soul, mind and body – completing your exciting stay at The Leela Palace Jaipur!



An azure TREASURE

THE ASMR EFFECT OF THE LIMPID BLUE, THE ECOSYSTEM, AND IMMACULATE SERVICE MAKES ME FALL IN LOVE WITH SONEVA JANI, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

By Parineeta Sethi

I visited Soneva Jani in December last year when the call of the blue heightened into a much-needed break. Testing negative before and after arriving in Male means I met with the mandatory stamp of approval, before I dived into the startling spread of natural beauty that composes Soneva Jani.

The lavish two-bedroom water villa (with a barefoot butler on call!) unfurled lazily across 8,310 sq ft of sheer luxury, making me squint at the memory of many rambling penthouses back home.

This eco-chic villa designed by Eva Shivdasani, co-founder, Soneva, is the epitome of sustainability - pure and pristine. A slide from the top deck took me straight into the lagoon below and later I soaked up the sun in a private pool facing the lagoon. Add to that, a balcony deck and a sunken seating area as an extension to my villa, and it felt like unlimited decadence. Until I gazed at the star-studded sky at night while lying down as the master bedroom had a retractable roof that glided open at the push of a button. Simply divine.

The ice cream and chocolate rooms on the premises spell manna for the soul. Yes, there is an area dedicated to just these two goodies with every delectable flavour in the world thrown in to meet your little heart's desire. With a dozen dining venues to choose from, the experience just gets headier every moment as chefs curate a personalised menu round the clock.





My feet are shorn of shoes, just as my ears are rid of news. No shoes, no news is the mantra in this part of the planet where cycling around to soak up nature is a way of life. Most of the resort is built over the water which includes The Gathering – an eye popping, three-storeyed structure with the restaurant, So Fresh, a fitness centre, spa, kids club, library, the retail outlet in So Soneva, The Den and wine cellar.

The menu of Thai, Swedish, Balinese, and recently added Ayurvedic massages, and marine facials forms a therapeutic lure. I take my Balinese massage, and a hot stone therapy, in the open air champa.



A stay at Soneva would be incomplete without some adrenaline pumping water sports and my love for water made me make the most of the daring adventures. The dolphin cruise (complete with champagne and canapes) at sunset is a magical experience. It made my heart sing in delight to watch dozens of dolphins dancing in the light of the dipping orb.

The crowning glory arrived in the Over water cinema "Paradiso" - the first overwater silent cinema in the Maldives, it embodies the ethos of responsible luxury, watching a film with bluetooth headphones to ensure zero disturbance to the islands nesting wildlife. The stunning setting of Paradiso is backed by comfort in pure style where you relax on comfortable loungers with pillows and blankets, tucking in tasty treats, including a bag of mouthwatering popcorn. A surreal experience - watching the classics, beneath the stars, on a screen floating on a crystal-clear lagoon.

Soneva Jani spells the ultimate decadence, and soul pulsating with sustainability makes it absolutely exclusive.

COSMIC LOVERS COOP

My handpicked triad of special moments to savour at Soneva Jani:

Full Moon Dinner- Once a month, over the lunar cycle, a unique dining experience is savoured on a private sandbank. In celebration of the full moon, a moon-shaped seating arrangement comes alive under the splendidly lit night sky.



Private Astronomical Dinner Cruise: A date with the Indian Ocean for a stellar dining experience under the stars. Learn the secrets of the sky from the resident astronomer while savouring a handcrafted menu.

Midnight Astronomy Picnic: A secluded beach underneath the stars, moon and the expansive Milky Way. Tuck in cultural astronomy – the study of how ancient cultures used the night sky for orientation, harvesting, hunting, and distinguishing between right and wrong. Enjoy the lull, pinpointing the constellations in the clear skies.



A menu full of SATTVIC FOOD

FROM THE CRUNCH OF GREENS AND COOL DRINKS TO FULL COURSE MEALS AND DESSERTS, G.O.D CAFE BY HARRIT DAIRY FARM IS ALL ABOUT SERVING WHOLESOME SATTVIC FOOD.

G.O.D Café is a food journey back to our Indian roots. The menu is a serving of what we ate before the world became available on our plates. Each dish invokes the principles of Ayurveda and comes together as a wholesome sattvic meal that breathes with Ojas (life), reminding us of the Ayurvedic philosophy of 'FOOD is RASA,' i.e. the one that nourishes our senses and body. It is a first of a kind A2 Milk café which centres around the founder Sheetal Bhatt's aim to spread the Goodness of Dairy produced with milk reared from Gir Cows, consuming the purest form of milk. "Our food is prepared fresh on order and is alkaline in nature. Restricted use of garlic makes it light on the stomach. One of my main interests is to inculcate Ayurveda life into the younger generations. They must be introduced to the natural food of our country, and that food is medicine. They are our real influencers of good eating - natural, Ayurvedic and sattvic", explains Sheetal.



All dairy products used to prepare the food, like ghee, paneer, curd, are made from A2 milk. This milk comes fresh from Harrit Farms near Shahpur where over 150 Gir Cows are reared in its natural environment. The reason being is to serve a meal as healthy as possible. The milk has up to 90% protein and only 5-8% fats. The entire menu is free of three whites: white sugar, maida, white salt. All elements, including spices, dals, pulses, flour, jaggery, salt, fruits, vegetables, honey and sauces are sourced from certified organic and natural farmers. They make their own spice mixes too!

Tikhat coffee, Tadgola and Lemon grass cooler alkalinized with black salt, Punjabi Lassi made with date palm jaggery, Multivitamin Salad made of raw Indian veggies, A2 Paneer Protein Salad stir fried with spring onion with dash of lemon, Veg Kolhapuri, A2 Ghee Atta Sheera made from Khapli wheat, and Rajasthani Churma Laddoos, are some of the must try here.

The Most Essential Eats in PHILADELPHIA

A CROSS-SECTION OF CULINARY EXPLORATION THAT PHILADELPHIA OFFERS FROM ALL THAT IS LOCAL TO THE MUST-TRY GLOBAL FLAVORS.

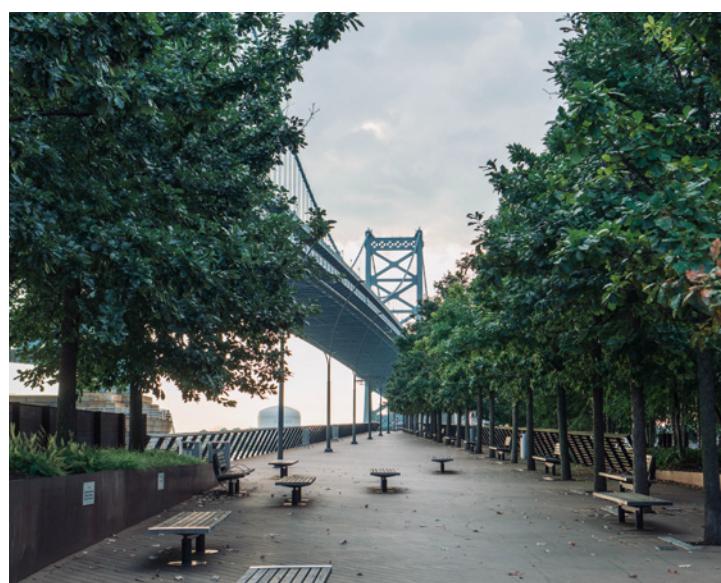
While Philadelphia is known worldwide for its rich history, this City of Brotherly Love also offers culinary diversity that is one of its best-kept secrets waiting to be unraveled by any foodie traveler. Beyond the local favorites like cheesesteaks and hoagies, the city transcends those iconic foods with a vibrant, sophisticated restaurant scene while bringing world flavors on the table.

Cheesesteaks: This is where your culinary journey in the city begins. Fresh, soft and squishy Italian rolls, typically 12 inches long, filled with melted cheese and tender pieces of beef are the main components of this truly Philadelphia sandwich. A cheesesteak is not merely a quick street-food option, it is a cultural obsession. Pat's King of Steaks and Geno's Steaks both claim to have perfected the cheesesteak. Equally famous is Jim's Steaks, South Street for a popular cheesesteak indulgence.

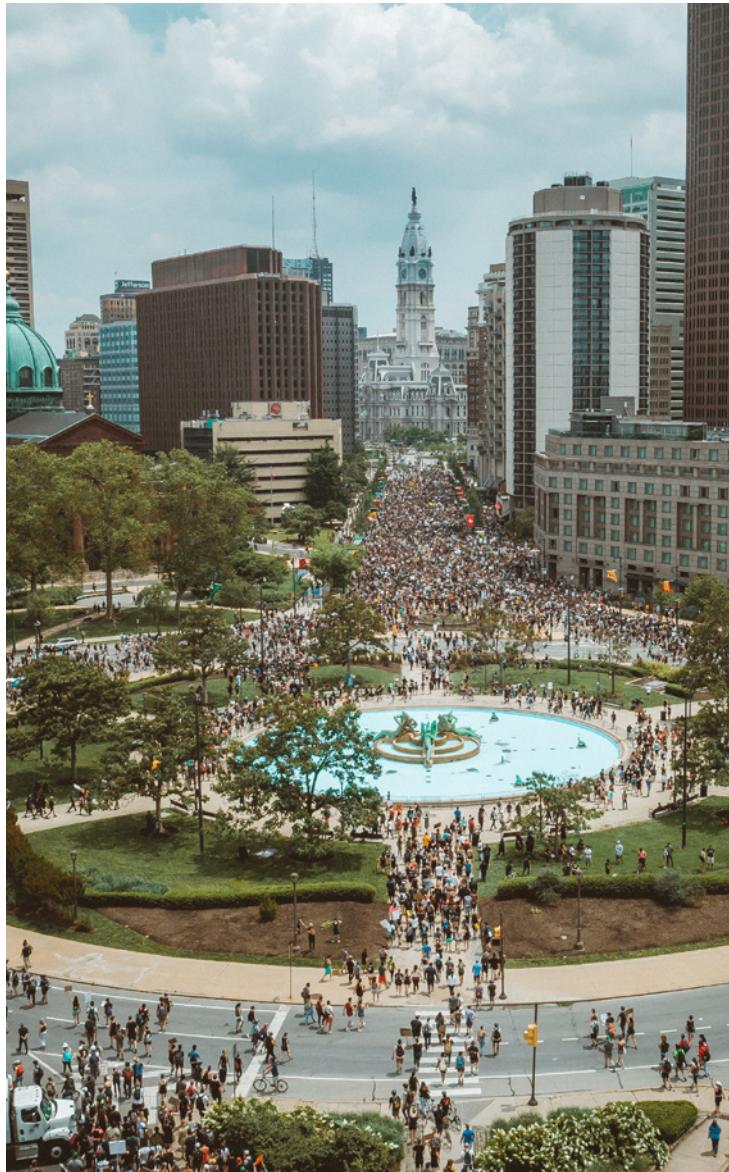
A quick tip to order your cheesesteak: Depending on if you like onions in your cheesesteak, you say a "cheesesteak wit" or a "cheesesteak witout". Also make your choice in the cheese you would like – American cheese, provolone or a cheese whiz.



Hoagies: Another local favorite and also called the "Official Sandwich of Philadelphia," hoagies are an ode to the Italian influence in the city. These mouth-watering sandwiches are stuffed with lettuce, tomato, onions, peppers, oregano, oil dressing, cheese (Provolone or American, usually) and teamed with delicious Italian lunch meats like dry salami, mortadella and capicola – hence the nickname, "Italian Hoagie." You can get these packed-with-flavor - the most authentic hoagies are at Giuseppe & Sons, Campos in Old City or at the Reading Terminal Market.



Soft Pretzels: These soft and chewy, hand-twisted baked goods rank high among the comfort food that the city offers. Try these salty satisfiers with a little spicy mustard from any local store, street vendor or the several stalls present at the Reading Terminal Market. Baked fresh everyday to perfection, these are offered by the famous Miller's Twist. Or don't miss eating a hot soft Philly pretzel at one of many Philly Pretzel Factory locations in town.



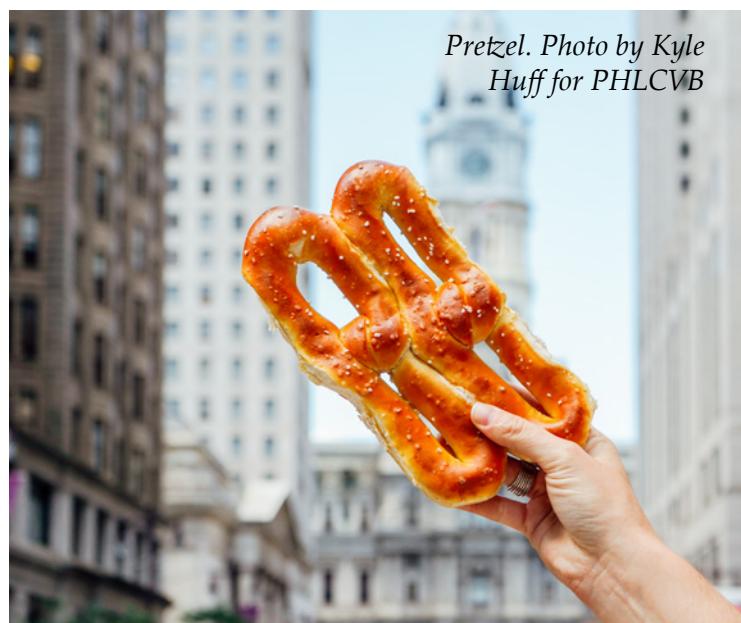
Water Ice: Nothing says summer in Philadelphia better than water ice (also known as Italian ice). This cool and refreshing frozen treat is a smooth mixture of ice, fruit juice and fresh fruit. It can be traced back to Italian immigrants like Filippo "Pop" Italiano, who started scooping out water ice from his pushcart in 1932. Pop's Homemade Water Ice and John's Water Ice are popular for water ice in the city.

Other than these local grubs, one can also indulge in international cuisine that is offered in this City of Sisterly Affection thanks to the diverse dining options offered here credited to people from across the globe who have made Philadelphia home.

Photo courtesy of Sang Kee Peking Duck House



Philadelphia also has a diverse range of cuisines from Italian, Cuban, Spanish to Japanese, Korean, and Chinese. From Vetri Cucina (named among the Best Italian Restaurants in the US) to Bistro Romano, Ralph's, Maggiano's Little Italy, there's more Italian cuisine than you can experience in the city. You may stop for tacos with house-made tortillas and gourmet fillings, like chicken in mole negro sauce and short-rib asado or sidle up to the poured-concrete bar for a full menu of margaritas at Mission Taqueria. The menu at Amada, designed by Iron Chef José Garces himself, captures the spirit of Spain. Southgate makes Korea's spicy-sweet cuisine accessible to everyone in a simple, easy-going setting. For some refined Japanese food, head to Morimoto. Philadelphia's Chinatown is the second largest on the East Coast where a must try is the thousand-year-egg congee or the Peking duck at the Sang Kee Peking Duck House.



Pretzel. Photo by Kyle Huff for PHLCVB

Menu JUSEYO!

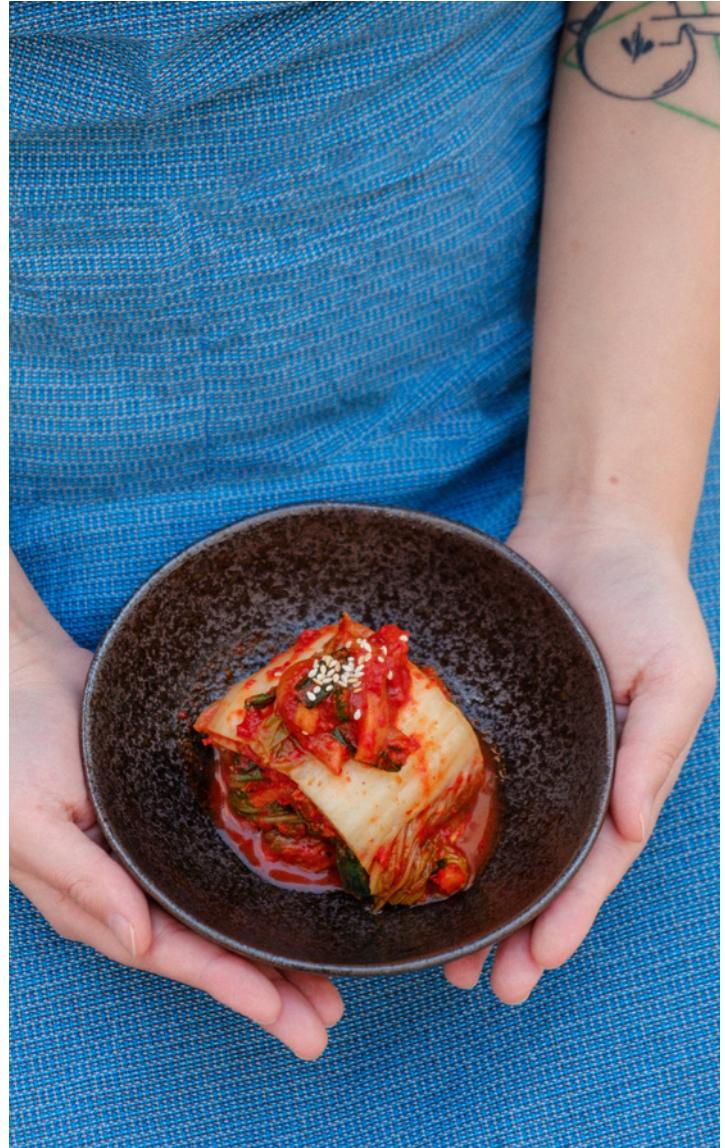
AS GEORGE BERNARD SHAW SAID, THERE IS NO LOVE MORE SINCERE THAN THE LOVE FOR FOOD, AND THE KOREANS CERTAINLY DO SEEM TO LIVE BY IT.

By Puja Talwar

K-Dramas have been a source of comfort for many during these trying times, bringing joy, entertainment and uniting people across continents and countries. The one star of every narrative, apart from the good-looking leads, is FOOD!

The shows are nothing less than mini food festivals of sorts, from the colourful 'banchan' served along with rice, to the assorted variety of stews, soups, grilled meats and barbeques that have left us craving for some Korean fare.

Korean Cuisine which has evolved through the years, follows the basic principles of eating in accordance with the seasons, using local and natural ingredients and simple cooking methods such as boiling, blanching, braising, pickling and fermentation so as to enhance the flavour of the food. Meals come with the basic arrangement of five colours or 'Obangsaek' blue, red, yellow, white and black which symbolise the five elements, wood, fire, earth, metal and water, and five flavours of hot, sweet, sour, salt and bitter.



Chef Shovan Das who currently resides in Seoul says, "The Koreans abide by a simple logic which is seasonality of food, in the summer they consume hot food, their logic being it would help them sweat it and in turn helps the body cool down. A hot summer favourite being, 'Samgyetang', which is Ginseng chicken soup, a whole spring chicken filled with glutinous rice, ginseng and apricots, or cold noodles." In the Autumn, when Chuseok or the harvest festival is celebrated, the emphasis is on fruits like sweet pear, apples, persimmons, ground vegetables like mushrooms, red beans as well as sea food like Blue Crabs, Jumbo Prawns, Gizzard which are nutrient rich for the cold months ahead. Winter is when soups are consumed and is also the time for fermentation and pickling, the same are consumed all year round. Spring is the time to consume 'namul' or edible grasses or leaves like mugwort, wild chives, wild herb bibimbaps as well as 'Hwajeon', fresh flower rice pancakes with azaleas and pear blossoms are very popular, these cooling foods help prepare the body for the hot summer months ahead".



Korean meals which are essentially served with bap (cooked rice), kuk (dishes with broth), kimchi and banchan (side dishes) are consumed together and may remind many of traditional home cooked Indian fare.

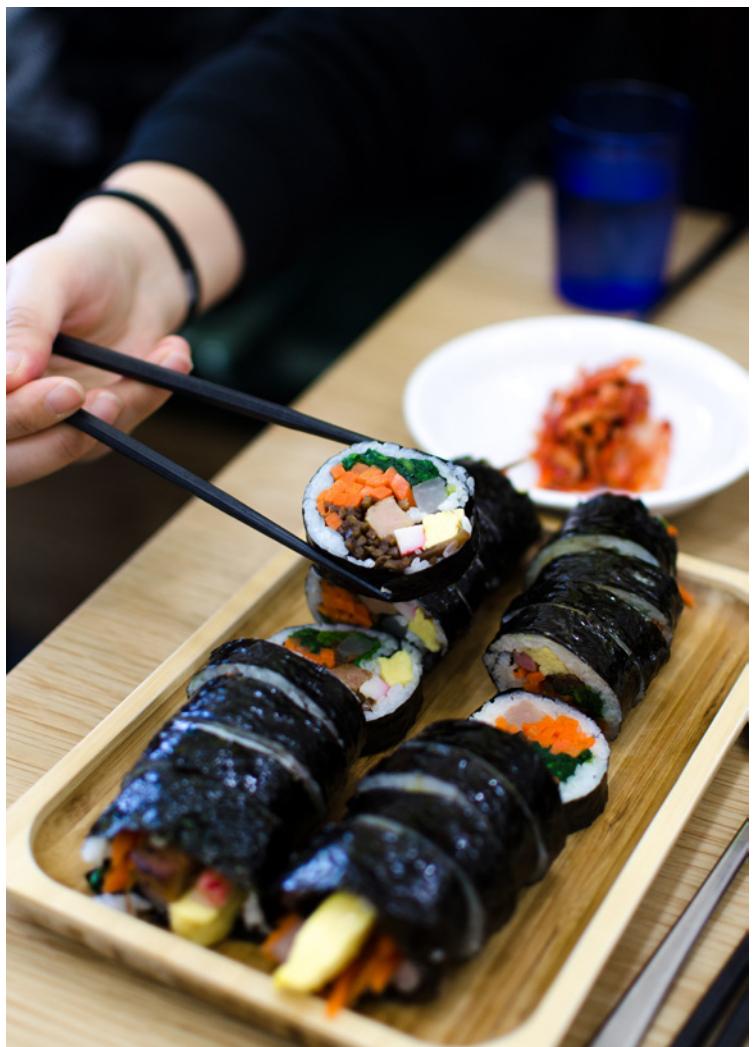
Korea has a diversity of fermented foods, Deonjang, a fermented soy paste made with soya bean and brine, is used as a condiment to make Ssamjang, a spicy paste mixed with garlic and sesame oil which is eaten with leaves accompanied by meat dishes or added to soups and stews, being a good source of plant based protein and vitamin B12. The other most popular fermented food which has achieved global status is Kimchi and a meal is incomplete without it. Kimchi has several health benefits, its inflammatory, strengthens the immune system, the healthy bacteria aids gut health and even anti-aging. Not just cabbage but a variety of vegetables like radish, cucumbers, spring onions, carrots, egg plants, scallions are seasoned and eaten all year round. Did you know Korea consumes 1.5 million tonnes of Kimchi in a year? The other popular fermented foods being Cheonggukjang, fermenting whole or ground soybeans, Gochujang, and hot pepper paste are popularly added to meals.

Rathi Jaffer, Director, InKo, 'The Indo Korean Culture and Information Centre', says, "There is an intriguing similarity between Indian and Korean food traditions, be it the seasonality of food based on particular dishes prepared with ingredients available during specific seasons, climatic conditions and related anticipated bio-rhythmic changes; immunity boosting ingredients and processes for example, Ashwagandha and Ginseng and fermentation processes that boost immunity; the traditional Korean Baekban was much like the Indian Thali- a composite meal, individually served with rice and several side dishes. While the Thali remains exactly so, a typical Korean meal is now an individual pot of rice with soup, served individually along with several side dishes that are shared collectively. Food in both traditions is synonymous with well-being, a symbol of affection and sharing and connection within communities."

Though many tend to associate Korean food with meat, grilled pork belly, fried chicken feet, bowls of ramen downed with shots of Soju, Chef Shovan Das says, "You can enjoy staple Korean food without meats as well with many turning vegan and vegetarian. Tofu is a favourite, tofu kimchi, tofu sautéed with kimchi which serves as a snack or appetiser or the tofu soya bean paste which is a healthy wholesome meal." He further adds, "Rice and grains are used in most meals accompanied with vegetables, and artificial flavour is never used in any preparation. Herbs, roots, and leaves grown in the mountains are used for garnishing."

A popular beverage being tea and the type of brew is in sync with the seasons. Dried Magnolia Berry Tea in the summer as well as Tangerine and Citron which aids digestion. Buckwheat tea in spring, whilst Hydrangea leaf tea is the favourite brew in the autumn. Ginger root and honey tea is the beverage for winter, while Barley Rice Tea is consumed all year round and is rich in anti-oxidants known for its digestive properties.

Well, no talk of food can ever be complete without dessert, and topping the list is Yaksik made with glutinous rice, honey, pine nuts, jujube fruit and chestnut which is steamed until all flavours combine. Bingsu, a Korean shaved ice dessert, includes red bean paste, condensed soy milk and fruit.



Macanese TREATS

A DELECTABLE POTPOURRI OF TASTES AND AROMAS, MACAO'S FAMOUS MACANESE CUISINE IS CROSSING BOUNDARIES AND IMPRESSING PALATES ACROSS THE GLOBE.

The Land of Heritage and Culture, Macao, is a gustatory delight for its amalgamation of different flavours and cuisines come from several regions. They say, 'there is something for every taste-bud' because of the diverse flavours in the Macanese cuisines. However, one of Macao's distinguished features continues to be its over 400-year-old culinary legacy. The city was recognised as UNESCO's Creative City of Gastronomy in 2017, and it is where Asia's 50 Best Restaurant awards were announced for two consecutive years.

Macanese cuisine is unique to Macao; it is a blend of Portuguese cuisine with significant influences from Southeast Asia and the Lusophone world. The distinctive dishes are blended with spices and ingredients which the Portuguese sailors collected along the journey to Macao in an attempt to replicate Portuguese dishes when they arrived.



Major hotels and upscale malls offer an array of cuisines, often featuring buffets, food court, Michelin star restaurants, and international dishes prepared by world-class chefs. Macao—the World Centre of Tourism and Leisure has established itself as a Michelin-starred destination to provide the world's fine dining experiences across the city. In spite of its small size, Macao boasts 19 Michelin starred restaurants.

Rua de S. Paulo, Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro (popularly-known as 'San Ma Lo'), Rua da Felicidade, Travessa do Auto Novo near Senado Square and Rua do Cunha in Taipa Village are the places to find local snacks, packed with shops selling Macao delicacies like almond cookies, egg rolls, peanut candies, roasted sliced meat and many other local specialties. Some of the snacks are cooked right in front of you! When it comes to street food, some of the more famous dishes include Egg Tarts, Minchi, Pork Chop Bun, African Chicken, Capela, and Serradura to name a few.



Peking Duck is the highlight of Peking cuisine, while Steamed Buns with Minced Pork Filling, Wontons and Freshwater Hairy Crabs are renowned Shanghainese dishes. Lovers of spicy food can also enjoy signature Sichuan soups and hotpots in Macao. With 'Yum Cha' (literally 'drink tea') devotees are spoilt for choice with many hotels and restaurants in Macao serving a cornucopia of 'Dim Sum' specialties such as 'Har Gau' (steamed dumplings stuffed with shrimp), 'Shiu Mai' (steamed dumplings stuffed with pork and shrimp) and Tsun Guen (fried rolls of shrimp and vegetables). Another famous cuisine is Guangdong dishes which include roasted meats, seafood and other delicate dishes. 'Dim Sum' is commonly accompanied by tea, particularly jasmine ('Heong pin cha') or red tea ('Pou lei').

Travelling to Macao during its events and festivities has its own charm. November in Macao is a month of festivities for all the local food lovers and visitors as they celebrate the biggest and most awaited food festival – Macao Food Festival, organized by United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao. The entire city transforms into a food paradise with delicious Asian, European, Mainland China and local delicacies with exciting entertainment and fun for everyone. The festival also has game booths, live performances and beer competitions.

If you are looking for a rich culinary experience, Macao is the perfect destination for you.



The Michelin Miracle

ITADAKIMASU! - AN EXPRESSION IMPLYING "I RECEIVE THIS FOOD" THANKING WHOEVER WORKED TO PREPARE THE MEALS. IF THIS POLITE GESTURE BEING PART OF THEIR DAILY CULTURE GIVES AWAY ANY HINT, IT IS THAT JAPANESE CUISINE IS REFINED, ELEGANT, AND GENEROUS.

By Vrinda Rastogi

With the second most Michelin starred restaurants in the world, Japan's rich food culture culminates from the term "washoku" that aims to bring harmony of taste and display to its world-renowned culinary. From tempura to miso soup, unagi eel, soba, udon, and rice balls, one of the healthiest cuisines in the world plates so much more than its iconic sushi.

The Japanese resonate well with nature, and so it unfurls the same in their meals. With an abundance of seasonal ingredients, you will be served each meal flaunting a variety of colors and portions.

The typical Japanese meal consists of a bowl of rice (gohan), a bowl of miso soup (miso shiru), pickled vegetables (tsukemono) and fish or meat. While sushi is the first word we think of, this worldwide delicacy is available in dozens of forms, namely makizushi (sushi rice and fillings rolled up in nori seaweed) and nigiri sushi (bite-size mounds of sushi rice with single slices of raw fish).



Unagi, or simply, freshwater eel, is a seafood dish commonly eaten in the summers by the Japanese to stay active. Sukiyaki is a hot pot dish enjoyed in winters, prepared by searing beef slices in the hot pot, then adding sukiyaki broth and different vegetables, noodles, and proteins.

While Japan has no less of comfort foods, some of its grandiose dishes include Mentaiko - a salty delicacy prepared by marinating the roe (fish eggs) of pollock and cod in either salty, savoury, or spicy seasonings. This traditional fish is usually eaten as a side dish with steamed rice, as a topping on ramen, or as a filling in onigiri rice balls.

Tracing the gastronomy's list of lavish, Chawanmushi is perhaps one of the most distinct specialties of Japan. A savoury egg custard made by pouring beaten eggs into individual cups filled with different meats and vegetables, the cups are steamed in a pot or steamer until they have solidified - turning into a pudding texture. Being rather sweet, Chawanmushi is often included as part of the desserts menu.

When it comes to beverages, the Japanese are soulfully in love with their teas. One such unique concoction that highlights the wonderful Japanese heritage is the Saku-ra-cha meaning "cherry blossom tea". It is a Japanese infusion created by steeping pickled cherry blossoms with boiled water. Alcoholic delights here include the most common Shochu - a distilled beverage typically created from rice, barley, sweet potatoes, buckwheat, or brown sugar, chestnut, sesame seeds, potatoes and even carrots! A healthy surprise is the Amazake, which is a drink made primarily from fermented rice. It is natively referred to as sweet porridge, and has dozens of uses to it as a dessert, snack, salad dressing or smoothie.



No cuisine would be a finesse without the sweeter half of it, and Japan's desserts know exactly how to hit that note. Termed "wagashi", it refers to the typical Japanese confections that are usually served with a beverage or side meal.

Manju and Dorayaki are two of the predominantly found beloved sweets here. Where Dorayaki is a pancake-like sandwich made from castella, a Nagasaki specialty soft cake, Manju is made with flour, rice powder, buckwheat, and kudzu. Ichigo Daifuku or Daifukumochi is a seasonal favourite served only during the strawberry season. An unmissable delicacy that cannot not be mentioned is the Yatsuhashi - one of the most popular Japanese sweets made with mochi, sugar, and cinnamon - a reigning specialty of Kyoto.

Crafted in love and authenticity, food is no different to Japan's treasure trove of heritage and culture. It is simply unmissable!



MY THAI!

BOLD FLAVOURS, FRESH HERBS AND RICH CURRIES ARE PART OF THE RICH CALYPSO THAT IS THAI CUISINE.

By Shilpi Madan

It is an unbeatable lure. I can not linger long enough in Koh Phi Phi, Phuket, Chiang Mai.. each time I wing into Thailand. My tropical paradise, that brings a melee of beatific Buddha temples, adventures in Krabi, the feel of the shingle on my bare feet as I sprint along the beach, the salty sea breeze running through my hair, daredevilry in water sports, and the lightly spiced food that composes the aromatic allure.

Nothing beats the punch that a bit of spicy peanut sauce kicks into my palate. Thai food, in all its fragrance, herbs and warm passionate smell brings in a flavorful array. With the entire world now aligning itself with a plant-forward lifestyle, the burst of colors in vegetables popping up in curries and cool concoctions is a treat. First impression counts, and Thai cuisine delivers on all points: from the bluish butterfly pea kissed sticky rice to the blushing water chestnuts to the lush green herbs darting through the dishes. The simmering coconut curries glamorise even the most boring of all vegetables, including eggplant and zucchini. Add to that a bunch of health-boosting herbs, natural spices, and a spritz of edible flowers coupled with a pile of rice.



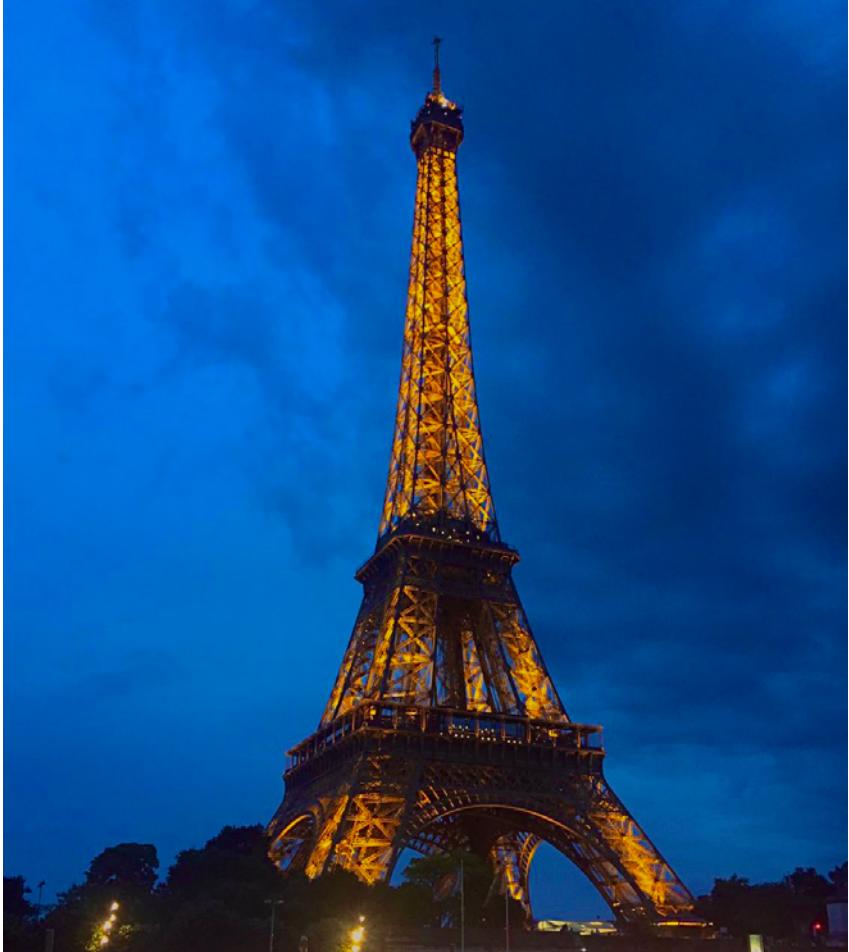
A coasting winner on all Thai menus is the papaya salad with shredded green papaya, sliced tomatoes. It makes for a complete meal with grilled tofu or any toasted protein tossed in. Simple, light, easily digestible. The hot soups fulfil at an innate level: the classic Thai sour soup that serenades the tastebuds in as a spicy broth, with plenty of vegetables, and seafood swirling within.



Delicately spiced skewers of grilled chicken satay make for a yummy snack, again zipped into a meal with vegetables and brown rice. What forms a winsome woo for the palate is the mix of aromatics that form the hero of every dish: galangal with its ginger-like goodness, the comforting fragrance of lemon grass (it fills the mouth with a beautiful spa-feel), the gentle touch of Thai basil in delicious stir-fries, and the tangy freshness of the kaffir lime leaves that elevates the simplest recipes to a new level altogether. The ruby rich jewelled pomegranate drink, Nam thabthim, is a powerful vit C glug, much like the cooling pandan juice - extremely satisfying and popular when the mercury clambers to dizzying levels.

The beauty of tucking in Thai meals is that the vegetables used rank low on the infamous starch. Brightly colored peppers; carrots, broccoli, eggplant, onions, chillies, cabbage... come packed with fibre, and the much-needed vitamins and minerals. This is important for bettering digestion and composing a good health matrix.

As for desserts, sweet notes abound in seasonal specials. Mango sticky rice and tapioca pudding celebrate the golden goodness of the fruit in fingerlicking forms. But the most delectable in sticky rice renditions is the sticky rice in bamboo. My evergreen pick is the tub tim grob, a swirling special of coconut and finely diced crunchy, water chestnuts. Crunchy, creamy, refreshing. Just like everything Thai.



TRAVEL

Teens on VACAY

WITH VACCINATION DRIVES ALL OVER THE WORLD GOING ON FULL SWING AND RESTRICTIONS BEING EASED, TRAVELLING FOR A MUCH NEEDED VACATION HAS DEFINITELY EXCITED EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY TEENAGERS. BUT WHAT EXACTLY DO TEENAGERS WANT TO DO WHEN ON HOLIDAY?

By Ananya Srivastav

To say the last year was unexpected and challenging would be a grand understatement. It propelled us into an unprecedented situation and forced us to change almost every aspect of our lives. So, after spending more than a year in lockdown, taking a vacation would be the perfect remedy for all the stress this year has caused, especially for teenagers. From shifting to online learning and being cooped up in the house all day to not being able to meet our friends and losing out on some of the most important years of school, the summer gives a much-needed chance to take a break after a taxing school year. Here are some tips that shed some light on what teenagers really look for in a vacation.

A relaxing destination: After a hectic school year, the holidays present the perfect opportunity to kick back and relax. Whether it is lying in a hammock on the beach watching a sunset or reading by the fire in the mountains, a place where you can rest and laze about for a few days is essential to a teenager.

Action and adventure: No vacation is complete without doing something adventurous. From water sports and hiking to archery and rock-climbing, there are plenty of options to choose from so do not be afraid to try something new and challenging. While some teenagers may not like this idea, most will agree that a good vacation consists of an adventure.





Good food: One of the perks of going on a holiday is getting to try different delicacies. While planning your vacation, visit different restaurants that serve famous local dishes and experiment with a variety of cuisines. Step out of your comfort zone and diversify your palette.

Explore the city: While it is no surprise that most teenagers find visiting tourist attractions and sightseeing tedious, a great way to pique their interest is to include tours and cruises that take you around and show you the sights of the city. Choose tours that are not information-heavy, as those can be monotonous and boring. Instead, incorporate adventure and let teenagers choose what they would like to see next.

Places to shop: One of the most important aspects of a vacation is shopping. Be it clothes or books or souvenirs, shopping is a way to remember your trip and is something most teenagers look forward to. Visit local businesses and boutiques to buy unique items to make your vacation memorable.



A thing of BEAUTY is joy FOREVER...

BEAUTY IS INDIVIDUALISTIC, IT VARIES FROM REGION TO REGION AND EVERYONE IS BEAUTIFUL IN THEIR OWN WAY. YET, PEOPLE ARE HAVING TROUBLE EMBRACING THEIR TRUE SELVES.

By Ruchiraa Sharma

"Truth is beauty and beauty is truth."

Penned beautifully by the great John Keats, eons ago. Cut to modern times, beauty is as far from truth as possible. Just as most of us use social media to share moments of triumph, joy and sadly in these challenging times, grief and loss too. Numerous celebrities, influencers, models and brands, use the platforms to promote themselves and the brands they are associated with. The final projected image is not only digitally altered but also filtered to perfection. So each morning, as we groggily reach out for our phones and check out what is trending on the gram or any other social media platform, it is impossible to miss the multitude of glistening, perfectly sculpted bodies and beautifully toned faces. Even as we are aimlessly scrolling and swiping through these images, our mind is secretly absorbing the images and storing them.

Tons of Instagram and Snapchat filters are magical, they make us look blemish free, supple skinned and glossy-haired. One can even opt for fairer skin, lighter eyes, well, defined cheekbones, chiseled jawlines and a delicate nose. Unfortunately, at a subconscious level, we start believing that that is the gold standard of beauty and fitness. The result is that no one feels ready to share an unedited picture and sooner or later, we all succumb to the guilty pleasure of trying out filters, some for fun. Some to magically remove our imperfections and others to gift the features which we think God forgot to give us.





So as millions of movie stars and youtubers share their daily routines on social media, we sneakily start trying out apps and filters to make our pictures appear brighter, fairer, younger and thinner. With these seemingly harmless and fun filters, we slowly slip towards the dark side of social media. It makes us think we are not tall enough, thin enough and so on. This mindless pursuit of a falsely represented, unrealistic beauty ideal unknowingly becomes the cause of stress and anxiety. According to a survey, even though, 65% girls know that the images in the media are digitally air brushed or altered yet 47% of girls aged 11 to 21 feel the way they look "holds them back" and 69% of girls aged seven to 11 feel "they are not good enough".

Due to these unrealistic and essentially unattainable beauty standards, impressionable young girls and boys are bogged down by depression, low self-esteem, eating disorders. Dr. Samir Parikh, a psychiatrist at Max Healthcare says, he has seen far more patients with bulimia and anorexia, some brought in by family members and others referred by physicians because of serious health problems that turned out to be side effects of eating disorders. He says he has encountered younger and younger girls with eating disorders. It is clear that somewhere, in this endless quest for that perfect sun-kissed acne free skin, glossy hair, six-pack abs, we lose ourselves.

On the other side of the spectrum is the business side. Due to this incessant quest for ideal beauty, the beauty and fitness industry continues to thrive. The market is flooded with a variety of products; one is spoilt for choice. People are opting for surgical and non-surgical treatments and treating them like monthly haircuts. There is botox, lip fillers, tummy tucks, laser treatments, hair extensions, permanent lipsticks. It does not end here, a nip here, a tuck there, sculpted bodies, defined jawlines, curled eyelashes, tattooed eyebrows, acrylic nails, the list goes on and on. Most of the images we aspire to resemble are airbrushed and photoshopped images and no amount of dieting, working out or surgery will make us appear the same.

It is an inescapable trap that the multibillion dollar, beauty and fitness industry has laid for us. It is great to aspire to be fit and healthy or learn makeup and hair styling hacks from the net, but to be constantly judging oneself against impossible standards leads to low self-esteem and in some cases, self-hate. The influencer, we follow might have a collaboration with the brand and waxes eloquent about the benefits of diet pills and detox teas, creams and serums while in reality, their fitness is in most cases a result of arduous labor at the gym, salon, and on the editing table. Their job is to feed onto our insecurities and aspirations in

The good news is that many celebrities are vocal about the fact they look the way they do due to an army of professionals and not just god-given natural beauty. They are also accepting the fact that their photographs are often digitally altered and their final image is the result of their large squad of makeup, artists, stylists etc. Just Imagine, what are we up against. If after all that their pics need to be altered and then for us lesser mortals to consider being worthy of platforms, we need filters.

Sonam Kapoor has urged young girls to acknowledge that it takes an army to make them look like they do, even stars do not just wake up looking perfect. She has admitted, like Sonakshi Sinha, that she used to be overweight but was a happy person. And after her drastic weight loss, has scars and stretch marks which she is proud of. Vidya Balan has admitted that people have asked her to lose some weight on her face. That is body shaming even to the rich and powerful. Sonakshi Sinha has also acknowledged to being judged harshly due to her size and now is unapologetically blocking such people on the internet as they are just a negative influence, she has said as far she is happy and confident, nothing else matters and that is how it should be

Also, in the current scenario, the leading ladies appear like doppelgangers of each other. Case in point, Katrina Kaif, Jacqueline Fernandez and Zareen Khan all look beautiful and yet alike, whatever happened to individuality. The same would not have happened with Sridevi or Madhuri, both brilliant in their craft yet unique in appearance. While Alia Bhatt, Shraddha Kapoor sport the same hairstyle, clothes and looks. Similarly, Ananya Panday, Janhvi Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan all have similar hairstyles, similar outfits and not surprisingly so as they share nutritionists, stylists, makeup artists. And it is this squad, which is responsible for their looks.

Actresses of yore were not only more talented but also more relatable than the skinny leggy lasses. Think of the charming and bubbly Juhi Chawla or the graceful and talented Madhuri Dixit in any of their movies vs a supermodel like Disha Patani in Radhe.

While one could relate to Raveena, Urmila and Kajol, it is hard to relate to these waif thin pageant beauties until one is blessed with an exceptionally gifted gene pool. These actresses have openly admitted that it was easier being a heroine in their times as the focus was less on outfits and pictures more on skills and performance.



Maybe we need more social media stars and celebrities to contribute to an active conversation about unhealthy western beauty stereotypes and unachievable ideals. One needs to acknowledge that self-love is important. One has to learn to accept who we are and what we are. One needs to aspire towards a healthy and happy mind, body and soul. Self-esteem and self-worth should not be driven by appearance alone. They are the sum of our abilities, skills and values.

Stop seeking validation in others' altered images or eyes. Next time, you encounter an unnaturally tiny waist, impossibly long legs, fake lashes and tinted eyes or perfectly arched eyebrows staring back at you, remember, the image may not be real and it is not promoting beauty but selling merchandise.

Run your own race.

Endeavour to be the best version of yourself for yourself. Aspire to feel beautiful and confident from within. Work on your personality, skills and abilities. Remember, you are unique and beautiful as God had intended you to be so.



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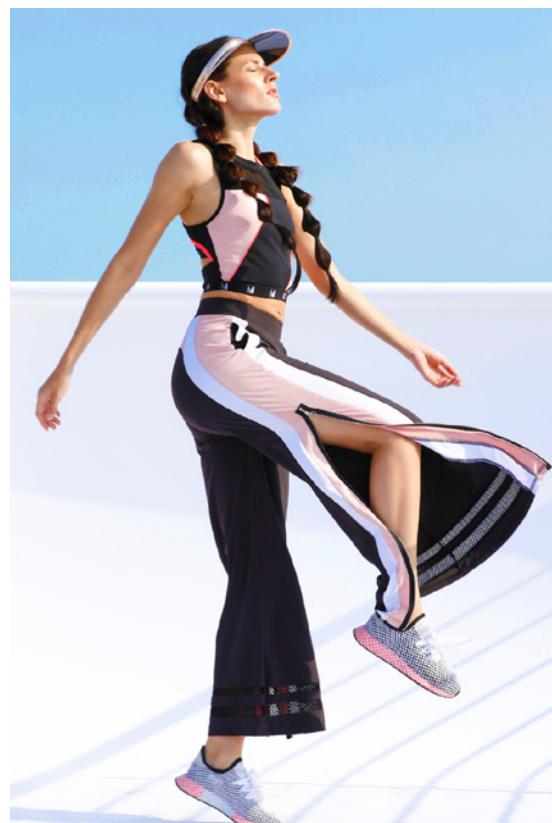
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A Passion's Maestro

NEW YORK BASED CHEF VIKAS KHANNA IS A TREASURED FORCE IN THE CULINARY WORLD, BOTH IN INDIA AND ON FOREIGN TURF. A GENIUS IN PROGRESS FOR OVER THREE DECADES.

By Parineeta Sethi

Produced by: Maximus Collabs
Co-ordinated by: Nadia Malik



Photographer: Alex Jeffries
Location: JA The Resort, Jabel Ali, Dubai

The first Indian chef to be awarded with a coveted Michelin star. The author of over 37 books. The only Indian name in Top 10 Most Influential Chefs in the world. The maker of acclaimed films. The man with a heart of gold. Vikas Khanna is simply unstoppable and is now on the brink of unveiling "Barefoot Empress", an inspiring tale of Kartiyani Amma from Kerala who decided to pursue her education and dreams at the age of 96.

Kartiyani Amma went on to become India's global face for education. "It becomes more inspiring for people when you walk the talk. While we crib over the year we lost during the pandemic, here is a woman who has lost 96 years! Yet she has the grace to accept life. This is what I call inspiration."

Few know that there is more to Vikas' multifaceted personality. While he leads with an ardent and compassionate perfection, behind that is a quick-witted personality that has a huge passion for animals, working out, and sculpting (he can make life size sculptures). "I still have a kid-like excitement because I am always creating. That is the way I deal with my mental health. There have been failures, but you can never tell the pressure and stress I am dealing with when you see me."

Extending his creative soul to each of his passions besides cooking, Vikas Khanna is the embodiment of "love what you do and do what you love".

Your love for cooking stems from your grandmother, who was a superb cook. What has been your biggest takeaway from her?

Never cook when you are angry! If you are feeling lousy, walk away from the kitchen. She always emphasized that the energy that you put in food is what people consume and take away with them. In no culinary school do they teach this basic truth of life. My grandmother thought of food so differently from everyone else.

Anything you wanted to do before you decided to become a chef?

My father had a video cassette library, and I used to deliver VHS Cassettes to people when I was young. I was a diligent delivery boy, but I never really made money because people failed to return the cassettes. Most of the time I would just stand outside the house, knocking doors in the summer, asking them to return the cassettes or else my father would pull my ears (laughs). Gradually I started working at small hotels and restaurants and earned my first paycheque, at Amritsar Club.

Photographer: Alex Jeffries

Location: JA The Resort, Jabel Ali, Dubai

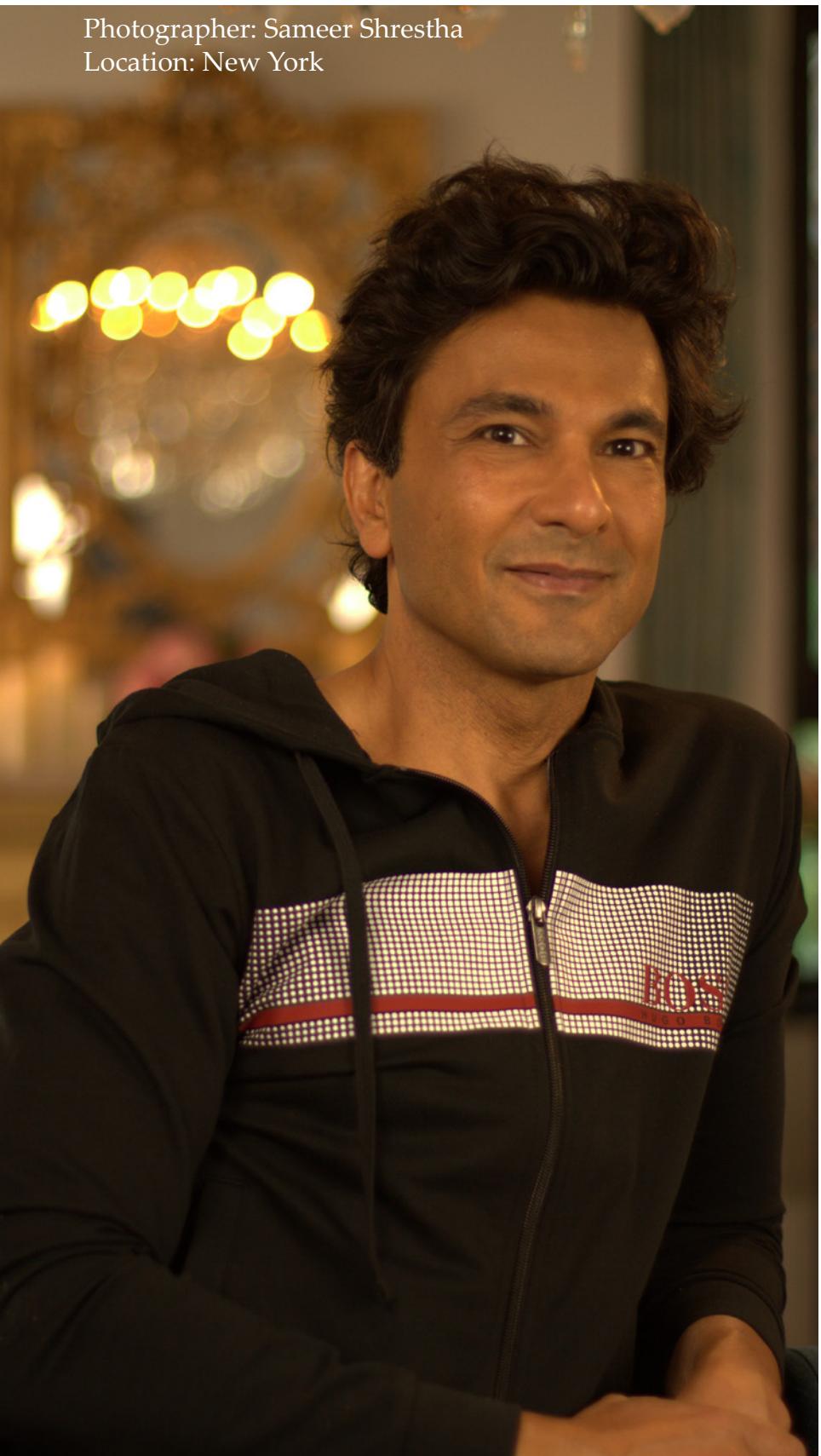


"I have never wanted to nail numbers: like open a hundred restaurants. I always do something that carries a deeper meaning. For me, it is important that as soon as you walk out of a restaurant I have created, you feel touched, in your heart."

I am blessed. Very few get a chance to have a global voice. What is the point of having this international wattage if you are unable to share the stories of your own people?

Photographer: Sameer Shrestha

Location: New York



In your mind, what is the true representation of Indian cuisine?

The true representation for me is diversity. The real power of Indian food is our diverse kitchens. It is true when we say that every few miles our food changes but putting this forward in the international scenario and showcasing these differences can be hard. Just by teaming coconut milk with curry leaves you do not arrive at a South Indian dish. Simply pairing onions and cumin does not make it a North Indian preparation. Many fascinating overlaps lead to innovations in the kitchen. I admire chefs including Vineet Bhatia for having created iconic restaurants in London. They have helped us to shape a towering benchmark.

Do share your thoughts on sustainability in the culinary world.

It is a conscious world today, compared to ten years ago. The beginning of a revolution is when we accept that a change needs to come in. The universal acceptance has finally come in now. I have never wanted to nail numbers: like open a hundred restaurants. I always do something that carries a deeper meaning. For me, it is important that as soon as you walk out of a restaurant I have created, you feel touched, in your heart. Even at the JA Resort, Dubai where my restaurant Kinara is, the sustainability practices start with no single-use plastic being used in the entire resort. As the proposal started with sustainability being the core, it is of great importance to me. I feel sustainability begins in your home kitchens. Try to consume local grains, as it is good for your system and helps with the livelihood of farmers.

Your Feed India initiative was unmatched. How were you able to manage, coordinate everything successfully from New York?

Till 11th April, the initiative was unsuccessful as we were unable to work out the tangible ways in which we could help at the grassroot level. Sitting abroad, fundraising, trying to get grains to C-tier cities in India, some of which were unheard of, and especially planning everything on a map from trucks and preparations to deliveries: it was excruciating. I confess, I had sleepless nights. The change took place when my mom got upset with me. She instructed me point blank not to take on any other project, and give this my all...That was the turning point. I called my team and apprised them of our single mindedness, our collective mission, offering them a choice to volunteer or just take a break. They stayed on, that too hands on.



During the last two weeks of May, migrant workers were dying because there was no food and water on trains. Within seven hours, we had more than 60,000 meals waiting at the station in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The moment the train stopped, we had fruits, poori, pickles, khichdi, and water bottles ready. There was one instance where somewhere on the outskirts of a remote village, we had to deliver cooked meals and we could not understand how to get the food to the people. We reached out to the local gurudwara and asked them if they could prepare rotis if we delivered them the flour. They readily agreed. At the end of the day, we had everyone's support. Even tweets by people were making a difference when they were connecting us to government officials. We got full support not just from the people but from government agencies as well because they have never seen such transparency in this kind of work before. I have to say this has been my most fulfilling and rewarding experience.

From food to filmmaking: how has the journey been?

I have been making documentaries since 2008 and my first documentary, which really helped me in America, was *Holy Kitchens*. Simple cooking and talking about understanding faith through food – these two aspects are deeply interconnected. But the real journey into film making started after the Wisconsin Gurudwara shooting in 2012. While talking to President Obama's team, we were mulling over what we could possibly do to create more awareness. That is when we came up with the idea of making the perfect documentary: When I was cooking at The White House, the documentary was played. It was heartening to have it showcased at such a prestigious platform. I was then invited to Ivy League colleges where I presented my personal experiences, continuing the documentary with Hinduism, Islam, and soon his holiness, Dalai Lama, became a part of the short film.

The real boom came when I made *The Last Color*. I was widely criticised in the beginning, but I knew this was what I wanted to do and prove all the naysayers wrong. I am blessed. Very few get a chance to have a global voice. What is the point of having this international wattage if you are unable to share the stories of your own people?

**"Never let the artist die,
because the artist is a part of
thousands of years of culture
put together."**

A few months ago, India's Culinary Art Museum entered the Limca Book of Records. How has this journey of over 10 years been like for you? What has motivated you all along?

I used to keep collecting antiques from vendors who sold Indian art from the 16th-17th century, and I would bring them to New York. I kept collecting artefacts and people really appreciated them as they are a slice of history. When I met Dr. Pai the chancellor of the Manipal University where the museum is housed, I told him what my aspirations were, and that I already had more than 10,000 artefacts. He loved the idea of making a museum and proceeded to make an entire culinary centre around it. I was in Harappa where I saw the old handi-shaped vessel which became my inspiration for creating the symbol.

What is your wellness philosophy?

During the pandemic, Feed India took a toll on me, and to top it all, listening to unfortunate news drained me emotionally. What kept my sanity was a combination of biking, running, and working out every single day. I have a commitment to myself that I will take a shirtless picture one day (laughs). To live up to my promise, I am surely going to do this soon.

All my life has been based on Indian food and concepts of Ayurveda and yoga. I am working towards getting my body fat below ten percent. I know I have a big problem though - my sleep pattern - because I have to work in many different time zones, from Europe and the Middle East to America. Yet I eat properly and follow a healthy lifestyle.

Any pearl of wisdom?

There is one piece of advice I received from President Clinton. In 2004, I asked him why Indian food is not popular in America, to which he replied, 'Vikas, remember, food and culture go hand in hand. When you are promoting the food, make sure you bring your culture with it too because there is no other country in the world with a culture as rich as yours.' I have never let that go. At that point I was just beginning to settle in America and establish myself. I feel that advice came to me at just the right time. I will always say that do not let the artist die because that artist is a part of thousands of years of culture put together.

Photographer: Alex Jeffries

Location: JA The Resort, Jabel Ali, Dubai



Though I still feel that we are not deemed as relevant as international chefs. We are new on this international spectrum of Michelin stars. Yet we are moving in the right direction as we also have cultural leaders who are coming forward to support us. But there is still a long way to go before we sleep.

Share a few fun secrets about yourself

I love animals! When God was creating the planet, he figured out that he must create one creature who will love somebody else more than himself and so he created dogs. When I visit JA Resort, Dubai, the horses always recognise me and I go to feed them. All the peacocks come too and stay during the entire time I am here. Being around animals works like therapy to me. They may not talk but they sense energies.

What's next for Vikas Khanna?

My third PhD is on its way to fruition. I have an amazing feature film coming up, with Shabana Azmi. Interestingly, I taught her to cook in the movie which is one of the biggest highlights for me. Another book up for release is "The Ceremony of Aromas" in which I have celebrated every spice, talking about how sometimes we limit a spice to a certain character. I bring out the potential of those spices and crossover between desserts, sweets, drinks, and how you can use them in many different forms and ways. Last year I signed up for many projects that will appear now in India and around the world, as the situation gets better.

Photographer: Alex Jeffries
Location: JA The Resort, Jabel Ali, Dubai



Photographer: Sameer Shrestha

Location: New York



20 With VIKAS KHANNA

FAVOURITE WELLNESS DESTINATION

Bhutan

FAVOURITE SPA

Calm Spa at the JA Resorts & Hotels Dubai

BUCKET LIST

Morocco, Kenya, South Africa

ONE PERSON YOU MISSED THE MOST DURING
LOCKDOWN

My Mom

LOCKDOWN LESSON

Do not take anything for granted

WHAT YOU DON'T STEP OUT WITHOUT
Credit Cards

CRUNCHY MUNCHIES

Roasted chana with skin

CURRENT BINGE WATCH

Ugly Delicious

YOUR STYLE QUOTIENT IN ONE WORD

Holistic

STYLE QUOTIENT

Holistic

FAVOURITE SPA DESTINATION

Dubai

ONE PERSON YOU WILL ALWAYS LOOK UP TO

Barack Obama

YOUR FITNESS MANTRA

Stay agile mentally

BINGE WORTHY

Tibetan and Bhutanese cuisines

FAVOURITE STREET FOOD

Mumbai street picks are unbeatable

ONE COOKING HACK

Understand different types of salts

YOUR GUILTY PLEASURE

Chocolates

FAVOURITE CHEAT MEAL

Chicken tikka masala

FAVOURITE WAY TO UNWIND

Painting

SOMETHING YOU NEVER TAKE FOR GRANTED IS...

My time with my family

A MANTRA YOU LIVE BY

Value your parents



“Beauty is about being Confident in your own Skin”

WITH A DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING TO THE INDUSTRY THROUGH A BRAND THAT IS PATH-BREAKING AND HOLDS STRONG VALUES AND ETHOS, DOLLY KUMAR, COSMETIC ENGINEER, FOUNDED COSMIC NUTRACOS SOLUTIONS PVT. LTD., THE PARENT COMPANY OF THE SKIN CARE BRAND SKINELLA.

Dolly Kumar founded Cosmic Nutracos Solutions in 2007 with the belief that nature, through its diversity of flora and fauna, offers us the best solutions for all our health and grooming needs. This venture into the wellness and beauty space made way for their first brand in retail-Gaia, a wellness brand offering nutritional foods, supplements, and natural substitutes. Then, after years of research she launched the beauty and skincare brand - Skinella. “When we started doing our research, we realized that the market was flooded with an endless number of skincare products and brands, but none of these were catering to the skincare needs of young teenage girls”, says Dolly, “After 3 years of extensive R & D, market survey and conceptualization, Skinella came into existence in 2017 where we offered products made using natural superfoods and fresh fruits that are free of harsh chemicals and toxins.”



What challenges did you see in the beauty and skincare market?

I think there is a lot of clutter. There are a lot of skincare brands available for the consumers and every other day there is a new brand being launched in the market. Their stories are all very similar, but the products are not that promising. However, our story is quite different and in fact unique. We offer a complete range of skincare products for the young target audience that is made with the power of superfoods and no harsh chemicals. Skinella is just like these girls – Young, Fresh, Honest, Unapologetic and Super Natural.

What exactly is Skinella Match Me If You Can?

The saying, “**Do not judge a book by its cover**” lies at the very heart of this contest. It was a virtual contest where the participants had to match ‘30 **Skinderellas faces**’ to a host of clues. All these contestants went through a series of rounds virtually, and on the basis of their scores, we selected our Top 10 who joined us for the Grand Finale. The winner gets the title ‘Miss Matchless’ and a cash prize of INR 1 lakh. The winner this year was Ananya Khurana from Delhi.



What is your wellness philosophy?

Well, my wellness philosophy is quite simple. As a firm believer in the importance of mental, emotional, and physical well-being, I begin the day with a morning yoga session followed by meditation. I make sure to stay away from unnecessary stress or problematic circumstances. I also love spending meaningful time with my family and friends.

What does beauty mean to you?

Beauty is often judged by one's outer appearance. However, at Skinella, we believe that beauty is more than a face. Beauty is about being confident in your own skin. That is why we started an exclusive property from Skinella which became the most credible property, and an aspirational pageant to look out for in India. Skinderella is a pageant which is an anti-thesis of typical beauty pageants. It is all about breaking the stereotypes and the unrealistic standards of beauty that our society has been imposing on us. Moreover, the pageant empowers young girls to question these stereotypes, get confidence and self-esteem in being who they are. It is the only pageant which does not judge a girl for the colour of their skin, their height or their weight. But for how spontaneous, and confident they are in being themselves. In only 3 seasons, Skinderella took the whole country by storm, and we received as many as 35000 registrations from over 120 colleges across India. Unfortunately, this year due to the pandemic, we took the decision to not organize Skinderella in the conventional way. But we came up with an idea equally credible and clutter-breaking with a virtual property – Match Me If You Can.

What is next for Skinella?

We have set a lot of things in this year's roadmap. Firstly, I am immensely proud to tell you that we have already expanded our presence to international markets in countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia and Myanmar. The focus will be on strengthening these markets and even expanding our global footprint beyond these countries. A lot of new product launches are in the pipeline. In June, we added 3 new products to our portfolio – Goji Berry with Vitamin C Face Wash, Green Papaya Tan Removal Peel Off Mask and Camu Camu Sunscreen SPF 40. This year we will also focus on expanding our presence in market spaces. We are already available in Nykaa, Amazon and Flipkart. Besides, we will do a lot of engagements with both the communities - Skinderella and Match Me If You Can.



STAR FOOD TRENDS in the PANDEMIC

THE PANDEMIC AND LOCKDOWN FATIGUE GAVE BIRTH TO MANY FOOD TRENDS, LET'S TALK ABOUT STARRING FOOD TRENDS.

By Rupali Dean

INNERGISE AT TAJ PALACE, NEW DELHI

INNERgise is a new range of curated meals with focus on wellbeing and strengthening your immunity. The menu features fresh and indigenous home-grown ingredients packed with antioxidants and immunity boosting superfoods. Generated in discussion with Arya Vaidya Sala - Kottakal; a period old establishment well-known for its practice of ancient health care sciences of India, the food is prepared using simple cooking techniques like sautéing, steaming and grilling to ensure that the nutrient quotient of the ingredients remains intact. "The pandemic has ushered in a wave of transformation as far as food and eating habits are concerned. There has been an increased focus on healthy living, overall wellbeing and sustainability and we realised a need for a menu that embraced all this and more. Based on various consumer insights and feedback from the users of our gourmet delivery service – 'Qmin,' we introduced "INNERgise", shares Chef Rajesh Wadhwa, Executive Chef. The response has been extremely encouraging, and with a subscription-based format, INNERgise gives diners an option to order for three days at once.



YOU CHOOSE WE COOK, PULLMAN HOTEL AEROCITY

"Farm to Table. We took this as a thought and made it into an innovative concept through our Farmers' Basket at Pluck, wherein we bring the marketplace into the restaurant with a philosophy of 'You Choose, We Cook'", states Chef Neeraj Tyagi – Director of Culinary, Pullman & Novotel. Guests can select from a wide range of fresh and organic raw materials and ingredients for dishes on their own, select the cooking and cuisine style – Indian, Asian or Continental and their team of culinary experts cook sumptuous dishes as per the guest's preference - taste, spices, preparation etc. "In our effort to encourage 'LOCAL' farmers and growers, a great amount of the produce used in the dishes is sourced from our own 5000 sq. ft. kitchen garden, local farmers, small-scale artisan producers and harvest traders; who practise hydroponic microgreens farming and vertical gardening. We have tied-up with a small association based out of Uttarakhand which supplies us pulses, grains and cereals", adds Neeraj. The hotel received some incredible reviews regarding this concept and the overall experience. Individuals find it unique and get excited to view fresh produce on display along with retailing and promoting local entrepreneurs of preservative-free products, garden-fresh veggies, herbs and spices, meat and poultry and home-produced pickles. "It is an enjoyable milieu with some wonderful interchange with our guests, people love to share their own recipes and some of their contributions even get included in our star menus", further adds Neeraj.



IN CAR DINING AT MASQUE, MUMBAI

For Masque, one clear success was in-car dining. They launched the Masque Tailgate to celebrate their fourth anniversary in September, and continued hosting them every Sunday till February. After many months of lockdown fatigue, it gave guests the opportunity to enjoy good, fresh food, in the safety of their own bubbles outdoors, "I think it came across as the best of both worlds, where you can still "step out" for a meal without the concerns that came with indoor dining at the time", shares chef owner Prateek Sadhu. What made him think of that? "Like I said, by the latter part of the year, the lockdown fatigue was real. We badly missed having our guests around; we missed the interactions, the experiences that we got to have pre-pandemic. We were celebrating our fourth anniversary, and it felt so incomplete to do that without the patrons that enabled us to get here in the first place. The Tailgate provided a safe means to have our guests with us but still maintain all safety precautions by doing it at socially distant intervals outdoors with minimal interactions outside of their own safe social bubbles". Even they were taken aback by the initial response "the first day, we were sold out by lunch and had to redo all preparations in time for dinner! It became a Sunday ritual of sorts, and was a refreshing change for our team and diners alike. We are quite keen on re-starting Tailgate once weather and safety measures permit", says Sadhu.





CRUSTWICHES AT MOON MOON, DELHI

During the pandemic, and especially the depths of the second wave, life was so tough for all of us that it became the simple joys of indulgent, comforting food. "And since our ability to move out of our homes was so limited, I think we really valued innovation and creativity! This was the genesis for Crustwiches at Moon-Moon - to give our customers a completely new product with unusual flavours to gorge on. The combination of crusty, fluffy bread, bold sauces, and really fresh fillings meant that people could get their fix for subs, tacos, or even pizzas in a completely new way - we think of the Crustwich as the lovechild of a pizza and a sub born in outer space", shares Ashwin Jain, Director Ugly Delicious. And how did it fare? "So far, so good! The brand is still really young, but we are rated 4.3+ by our customers, and there seem to be a lot of repeat orders. People are finding that our Crustwiches are totally different from anything available on the market, and that they can really get a full flavour punch with every bite, and a filling meal for a paisa-vasool price. The results have made me super happy so far", says Ashwin.



BREAKFAST MENUS AT FONCE HYDERABAD

Fonce's breakfast menu became extremely popular, especially their pancakes. These deliciously perfect pancakes are fluffy with options like classic, biscoff, Nutella, milk chocolate and dark chocolate. They became so popular that although it is available only for breakfast, guests started requesting it even during the day - for lunch etc. "Foncé did not serve breakfast however, timings during the lockdown gave birth to our breakfast menu. Since Fonce is all about chocolate and keeping the whole cafe experience in mind, we had done a brief pancake promotion last year during 'pancake day' which got us fantastic response and hence we decided to offer a similar or better experience to our guest through our breakfast menu in those 3 and a half hours window. Essential stores as well as restaurants were allowed to open for a certain time period from 6:30 am to 10 am. Suddenly, the breakfast scene which was never popular in Hyderabad became the only source of outing for most people", shares owner Deepa Reddy. It fared really well, even after the lockdown; breakfast has become a thing at Foncé. People call up to make reservations and their outdoor seating set-up, with abundant flora and fauna and rope gazebos has definitely worked in their favour. It is also a pet friendly cafe and many of their guests prefer coming with their pets for breakfast and most ask for the pancakes - biscoff has particularly become everyone's favourite. Breakfast trends in Hyderabad have finally emerged!



IMMUNITY BOOSTING MEALS, NUCROS SCIENCE & TASTE, DELHI

They ventured into providing immunity-boosting smoothies, smoothie bowls, bakery products as well as meals. Customers order these meals either through Zomato or as a part of their immunity-boosting subscription which aims to increase your acquired immunity and helps reduce inflammation in one's body. COVID Pandemic made people realise the importance of providing doorstep delivery of nourishing meals. "So we incorporated antioxidant-rich superfoods which are full of phyto-nutrients to help in boosting immunity such as spirulina, chlorella, maca, goji berry, acai berry, hemp seeds, matcha, curcumin, cinnamon and much more", shares Sakshi Bakshi, founder, Nucros Science & Taste. What really made this star food trend a success was their clients coming back to them with great reviews of how energetic they felt after the plan, how it cleansed their gut, reduced bloating, and reduced susceptibility to infections. Not only this, they heard great comments about the taste as well which led them to increase the range of products they offer under 'immunity-boosting'.



EAT THE RAINBOW

A BOWL FULL OF COLOURS FOR A HEALTHY YOU.

By Carlyne Remedios

Eating fruits and vegetables is a good thing! But did you know that if you eat a variety of different colours, it not only nourishes your body with essential vitamins and minerals but can keep heart disease and cancers away and help you live longer too!

The different colours in fruits and vegetables come from pigments or phytonutrients that have strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Each colour possesses a different phytonutrient with unique health properties. Let's have a look at these phytonutrients and their various health benefits:

Red: The main phytonutrient here is lycopene, particularly known to help prevent prostate cancer and for its role in preventing heart disease. Lycopene is found in tomatoes, red capsicum, beetroots, pomegranate, cherries, red apples and watermelons.

Orange and Yellow: Carotenoids which are converted in the body into vitamin A are the main phytonutrients here. They are famous for their role in eye health, skin health and immunity.

Carrots, pumpkins, yellow peppers, corn, pineapples, mangos, oranges, lemons are all good sources of carotenoids.

Blue and Purple: These fruits and vegetables contain anthocyanins. They have anti-ageing properties, great for brain health and prevention of blood clots. Anthocyanins are found in eggplants, black currants, prunes, blueberries, blackberries and purple cabbage.

Green: Glucosinolates are mainly found in green foods and have strong anti-cancer properties. Particularly found in cruciferous vegetables like cabbage and broccoli and green leafy vegetables like spinach, fenugreek and amaranth.



White: Garlic and onions contain allicin known for its anti-tumour properties. Quercetin and kaempferol are the other phytonutrients also known for their anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties. Radish, mushrooms, cauliflower, banana, potatoes are the other foods from this group.

Here are a few tips to make sure you get all these beautiful colours on your plate:

- The next time you are grocery shopping start by picking different coloured fruits and vegetables. Look into your shopping bag and make sure you have at least 3-4 different colours
- Plan your meals for the week. Make sure you consume a new colour every day
- Always have some veggies in the freezer for that last-minute addition. Corn kernels and peas are great options to freeze
- Have a fruit salad or fruit bowl instead of a single fruit
- While putting together your salad make sure you have at least 3 different colours in there
- Prepare soups with a minimum of 2 different coloured vegetables
- Include fruits or dry fruits as snacks

Remember to take it slow and consciously add more colour to your plate at every meal and every dish you prepare. Raw or cooked it does not matter, in fact cooking vegetables such as tomatoes and pumpkins helps increase the availability of some phytonutrients. So go on get creative with those colours and eat the rainbow!



Breakfast

Egg omelette with mushroom and spinach + fresh fruit bowl

Or Overnight oats topped with banana and raisins

Lunch

Carrots and peas pulav with spinach dal and beetroot onion cucumber salad

Or Mix vegetable paratha (cauliflower, peas, spinach) with tomato onion raita

Dinner

Tomato + pumpkin soup with stir fry vegetables (bell peppers + broccoli + mushroom) + protein source (chicken / tofu /paneer)

Or Minestrone soup + whole wheat pasta in arrabiata sauce

Snacks:

Carrot or bell pepper sticks with tzatziki

Or Roasted corn

Or Fresh seasonal fruit



Nutritional Psychiatry

GUT FEELING

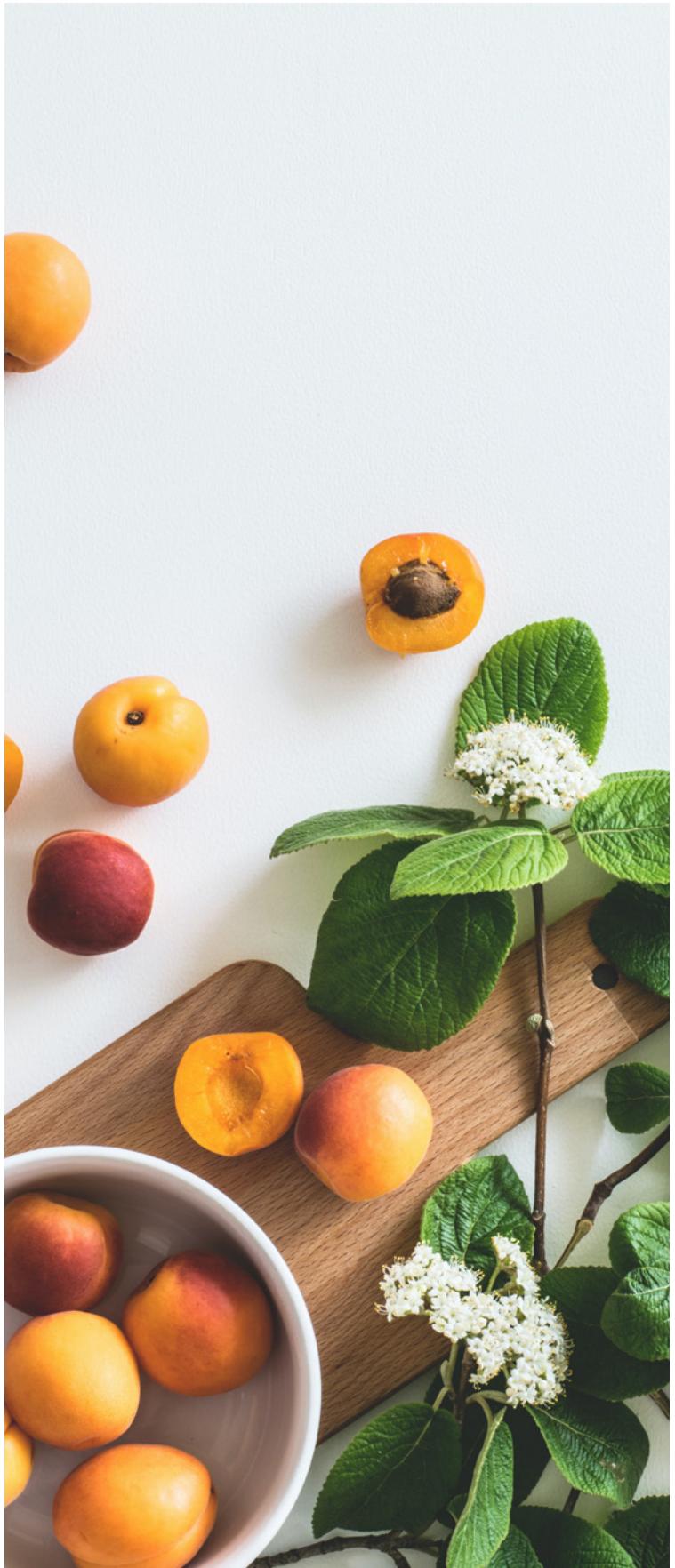
WHAT YOU EAT DIRECTLY AFFECTS THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF YOUR BRAIN AND, ULTIMATELY, YOUR MOOD.

By Shilpa Khanna Thakkar

Your brain is always “on.” It takes care of your thoughts and movements, your breathing, your heartbeat, your senses — it works hard 24/7, even while you are asleep. This means your brain requires a constant supply of fuel. That “fuel” comes from the foods you eat and what is in that fuel makes all the difference.

How do you feel after having a big bite of dark chocolate? Happiness, Bliss, Ecstatic, Orgasmic- Yes, these are all the emotions emoted by various chemicals secreted by your brain cells called Neurons. Hence, it may be right to extend, ‘your brain is also what you eat’. We often resort to sleep, music, meditation and mental workouts for the wellbeing of our brain. However, one of the equally important aspects that affect the brain is food.

The brain works in a much complex manner through the network of Neurons and neurotransmitters to communicate back and forth with each and every cell of your body. Imagine it as a complex structure of roads and cars as neurons. The most essential for smooth functioning of these cars is the fuel. Good fuel means smooth and faster transport, less pollution, and longevity. Same is the case for our brain, good food is essential for our brain, for the whole nervous as well as the entire body’s optimal functioning.





Brain and Nutrition

The brain is an extremely hungry organ. In spite of being only 2% of the body weight, it needs as much as 20% of the body's total energy requirement. So now you know where your glucose derived from your food is going! Also, DHA - Docosahexaenoic acid, often found in Omega-3 fatty acids, is one of the most preferred fat molecules preferred by brain cells. Hence more DHA during pregnancy, infancy as well as later in life enables better neuron structure and hence better brain network.

Also, micronutrients like Magnesium, Calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin E as well as Phytonutrients like caffeine, theanine, tyramine are directly involved in the production, transmission of various neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, endorphins, oxytocin, melatonin, etc. And these neurotransmitters are in turn responsible for emotions, sleep cycle, muscle recovery and response to stress.

Eat Well, Feel Well

There are umpteen research papers that establish the importance of nutrients - both macro and micro for the well-being of your health and mental wellness. However, you can also experience this for yourself. Switch completely to eating healthy and clean - no junk, no refined flour, no refined sugar, or no minimally processed food. Within a month you will see the difference in your energy and mood.

So yes, there is something called nutritional psychiatry - the way food affects our mental health and well-being. Mindful eating and healthy food habits are key to vitality and longevity not only for your body but also brain and emotional wellness.

Food Habits from Ancient INDIA

ANCIENT INDIAN RITUALS ALLOWED US TO OFFER GRATITUDE TO MOTHER NATURE IN A WAY THAT WE COULD BE CONTINUALLY NOURISHED BY HER.

By Radhika Iyer Talati

India is a country with an overwhelming cultural diversity that is layered with unique traditions. Food is considered 'Prana' - sacred energy and every meal we consume, an offering to the Supreme Divine.

The ancient Indian traditions systematically laid down rules about what to eat, when to eat, and most importantly, how much to eat. They suggested cultivating eating habits according to our 'Prakriti' or humor from a very early age. It was insisted that one must include all 6 tastes in a meal (sour, pungent, bitter, salty, sweet, and astringent) to maintain a disease-free body. It was also mandatory to include whole grains, millets, legumes, vegetables, nuts, spices, and berries to every meal. In fact, the earliest recorded evidence from several Ayurvedic texts mentions popular lentils and their therapeutic use for the body. For example, the Charaka Samhita and Ashtanga Hridayam emphasise the importance of spices like black pepper, cinnamon, turmeric etc. in everyday diet.

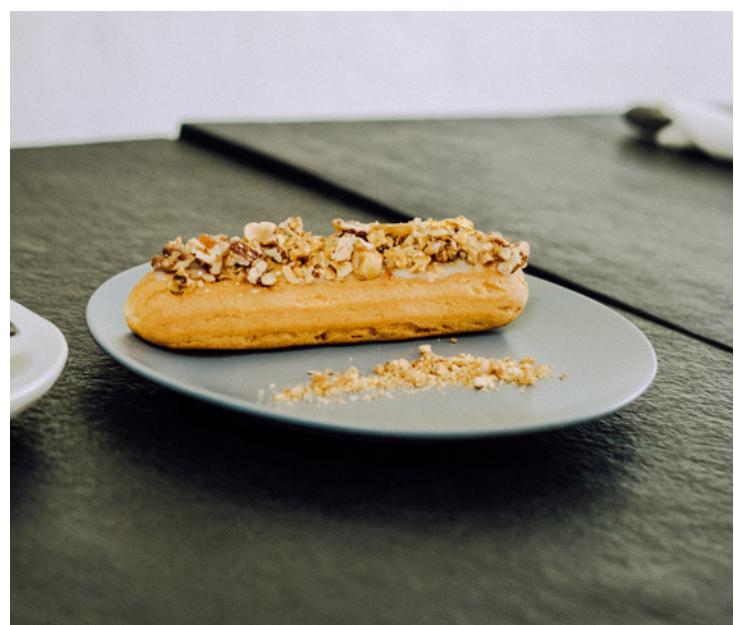
Listed are a few ancient Indian food practices that are appropriate even today:

1. Drinking warm water, preferably out of an iron or copper pot as soon as we wake up. Water stored overnight in these metal containers increases the alkaline content in the body. The Oligodynamic effect produced in these vessels is known to have antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic, and antioxidant properties, assisting in the formation of hemoglobin as well as increasing cell regeneration.



2. Sitting down on the floor and eating in silence is an age-old tradition of our country. It is said that sitting on the floor while eating food is a yogic posture called Sukhasana, which is said to massage the abdominal muscles, boosting blood circulation in the abdomen thus increasing digestion.

3. Having an after-mint or mouth freshener after meals enhances blood circulation in the body. A variety of spices, nuts, flowers, and berries are prepared as Mukhwas that contain several vitamins and minerals needed for maintaining bone health. Betel leaf is also consumed post mess as it is rich in fiber, potassium, vitamin C, vitamin B-6, and so many phytonutrients.





4. Eating your dessert either before your meal or as a snack between your meal, will do wonders for your gut health. That is simply because sweet food takes a longer time to digest.



5. Consuming seasonal fruits alone once a week does wonders for the digestive system. That is the reason our country is full of fasting traditions. Modern research suggests that weekly 24-hour fasting improves not only cardiovascular health but also helps fight certain kinds of cancer and even helps protect brain health.

6. Consuming milk infused with medicinal herbs an hour before bedtime is considered very therapeutic for the body. Not only does it increase the amount of melatonin in the body to induce good sleep, but herbs like turmeric, ashwagandha, and mulethi balance the Prakriti on the body, increasing immunity and better blood circulation.

7. Our ancient rituals reiterate engaging with your food with a positive intention and that in return will definitely improve digestion.

Practicing these simple ancient Indic sciences will increase immunity, aid metabolism, and increase the functioning of the digestive system. These habits, if practiced regularly, can affect our overall health, bringing a holistic approach to both our mind and body.

Rainy Delights

ALL YOU NEED IS A PERFECT COMFORT DISH PACKED WITH FLAVOURS TO COMPLETE YOUR MONSOON EVENINGS. HERE ARE SOME DELICIOUS RECIPES YOU CAN TRY AT HOME.

1. WHEY SOUP

By Dietitian Rajat Jain, the Founder & Director of Health Wealth Diet Clinic

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp unrefined oil
- 1 tsp Cumin seeds
- 1 small green chilly
- $\frac{1}{4}$ scoop of whey (unflavoured) (Dilute it in water)
- 2 tbsp finely chopped coriander
- Paneer (50g)
- Salt, pepper and chat masala (for taste)

Method:

1. To make whey soup, heat the oil in a deep non-stick pan and add the cumin seeds
2. When the seeds crackle, add the green chillies, whey, salt, pepper and chat masala, mix well and bring to a boil
3. Add the paneer and coriander, mix well and simmer for 30 seconds
4. Serve the whey soup hot



2. CORN CHAAT RECIPE

By Neha Mathur, founder, WhiskAffair

Ingredients:

- 2 cups Corn kernels (Boiled with salt)
- ½ cup Onion (Finely Chopped)
- 1 tsp Green Chilli (Finely Chopped)
- ¼ cup Tomato (Finely Chopped)
- ½ tsp Chaat Masala
- ½ tsp Black Salt
- ½ tsp Red Chilli Powder
- 1 tbsp Lemon Juice
- 2 tsp Tamarind Chutney
- 2 tsp Coriander Mint Chutney
- 2 tbsp Fresh Coriander (Chopped)

Method:

1. Add all the ingredients in a bowl and toss well
2. Serve immediately



3. WATERMELON, FETA AND ROCKET, HAZELNUTS, ZA'ATAR, LIME

By Chef Cesar Bartolini at Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, Atlantis Dubai

Ingredients:

- 1 small watermelon, diced and seedless
- 1 small yellow watermelon, diced and seedless
- 200g toasted hazelnuts
- 2 bunches of wild rocket
- 250g barrel-aged feta cheese, crumbled

Dressing:

- 100ml extra virgin olive oil
- 35ml lime juice
- Maldon sea salt to taste

Method:

Arrange diced watermelon on a plate. Crumble the feta cheese over. Scatter with toasted hazelnuts and top with wild rocket leaves. Dress the entire salad with lime vinaigrette and sprinkle some za'atar on top.



4. AIRFRIED BANANA CHIPS

By Chef Guntas with Conscious Food

Ingredients:

- 3-4 Raw Green Bananas
- Conscious Food Coconut Oil
- Conscious Food Spices

Method:

1. Peel the raw green bananas with a peeler or knife.
2. Slice them thin with even thickness
3. Soak the slices in a bowl of water mixed with 1 tsp of Conscious Food turmeric powder for at least 30 minutes. Pat dry with a kitchen towel
4. Toss with 2 tbsp of coconut oil, salt, and red chilli powder from Conscious Food
5. Arrange all the slices from the plantain into the air fryer basket overlapping each other. Set it to 150 degree celsius for 10-12 minutes. Flip and turn the plantain chips around every 5 minutes, so that they evenly dry out. Now Increase the temperature to 180 degree celsius and cook for 2-3 minutes, checking every 1 minute in between. If you see some chips are ready, remove them and continue to cook the others
6. Allow the chips to cook a bit as they will crisp further
7. Sprinkle a little more salt/chaat masala according to your preference and serve



5. ICED BLUE MINT LATTE

By **Totally Infuzd**

Ingredients:

- Blue Tea from **Totally Infuzd** (6 tea-spoons – very loosely scooped)
- 2 cups of milk or your favorite non-dairy alternative
- 2 tsp honey or your favorite sweetener

Method:

1. Add loose blue tea leaves into a teapot with an infuser basket. Pour in a cup of hot water
2. Allow the blue tea to steep for 5 minutes. You will see the blue color get deeper
3. Steam the milk and cool it down
4. Pour 1 part of the ice in a serving glass, 1 part of cold milk, 1 part sweetener of choice, and 1 part blue tea
5. Top it off with some milk froth or whipped cream. Give it a nice stir and enjoy



6. TAWA RAWA PRAWNS

By **Wonder Foods and Farms**

Ingredients:

- 8-10 small/ medium-sized prawns
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2-3 tsps red chilli powder
- Salt
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 cup semolina
- 1 jar of Wonder Food Farms pomodoro sauce
- Oil for tempering
- Mustard seeds
- Curry leaves
- Urad dal
- Chana dal

Method:

1. Marinate the prawns in turmeric, chilli powder, salt and lemon juice. Keep aside for 20-30 mins
2. Coat in semolina and shallow fry till crispy

For the Tadka pomodoro

1. In a separate pan, heat some oil
2. Temper mustard seeds, urad dal, chana dal and curry leaves
3. Add to the pomodoro sauce and serve along with the fried prawns



7. QUINOA PASTA IN ROASTED TOMATO SAUCE

By NAAD Wellness

Ingredients:

- 4 large tomatoes
- 3 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 Small bunch fresh Coriander Leaves
- 2 Tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil
- 4 Ps Olive
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups of Quinoa dry pasta, cooked, rinsed and drained
- 2 Spoon Grated Tofu

Method:

1. Roast tomato in oven roughly chopped in medium cubes
2. Add crushed garlic cloves, olive, salt, pepper and olive oil
3. Let it marinate for at least 1/2 hour
4. Add cooked Quinoa pasta and add grated Tofu coriander leaves
5. Toss together and serve immediately

Wellness- Secret to HAPPINESS

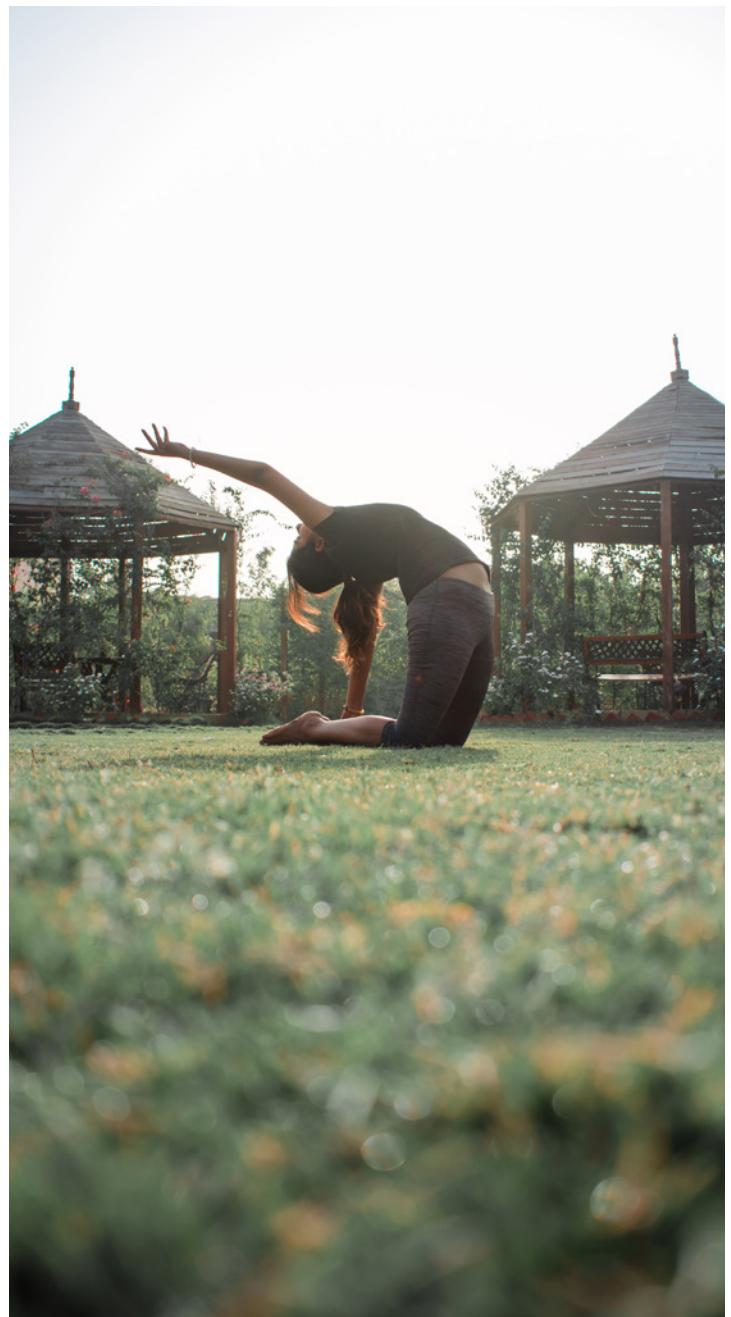
WELLNESS IS NOT MERELY AN ABSENCE OF DISEASE, IT IS A SOUND HEALTHY STATE OF PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL BALANCE.

By Dr. Vadivel

One has to keep their lifestyle rhythmic to natural law and in sync with the biological clock, to be in perfect health. When it comes to natural law, one has to understand what a basic need is and what is luxury. Basic needs will never spoil the ecosystem. It revolves around the natural food chain and is always in balance in terms of reciprocity and gives ample time to regenerate the resource to meet the needs, but luxury goes beyond basic needs and hampers the renewability. This applies to geographical resources as well as personal biological needs. Since we overclocked our biology for luxury lifestyle, our regeneration also got imbalanced in terms of optimum cell growth and detoxification. Hence, it is important to understand what is natural and what is wellness. Being healthy is natural and sustaining the same throughout our lifestyle is wellness. So, we can say wellness is a continuous sustainable practice to be healthy. Happiness dwells in physical and mental peace which is the outcome of being well, i.e. sustained health for the long run.

Collective individuals make the society, hence collective individual routine lifestyles make the social code for Health and Wellness.

Mental soundness and great immunity on a physical level starts from proper sleeping, proper dining, proper rest, proper workout and time for self-study (self-introspection or self-analysis) when all this is in sync with the law of nature, both nature and humans will have time for restoration and detoxification.



Simple three 'S' Soaking, Sprouting and Steaming according to the cooking requirements of a particular whole plant-based food is the simplest and easiest way to achieve the goal of wellness.

Law of nature for sustainable life

There are lots of laws in relation to Physics, Chemistry, Biology etc... let's understand what we humans need as per the law of nature for restoration.

The Law of Gestation: Consume what is a basic need for survival – Greed ruins the available resources faster than restoration, which leads to toxic accumulation of the environment and the individual as well. Hence, give proper time for rest, restoration and regrowth.

The Law of Cause and Effect: Give space for other beings- Interruption in ecological balance and biological chain i.e. over utilization of resources beyond the level of availability impacts particular species' life and survival, and in a long run it interrupts the chain of balances. Hence the pandemic has arisen as a storm for restoration of balance. For example, reduction of bee's count because of deforestation activity and lack of flowering plants turns down the pollination. Reduced pollination reduces the natural genetic modification of food corps by natural selective pollination. Which brings man made genetic modification in foods where it lacks nature's intellect and instinct. Hence, we are prone to consume half compatible or completely non compatible foods.

The Law of Rhythm: When we are not rushing, we are riding the wave, feeling things out, and adjusting. For example, as seasons change plant's productivity and sustainability also changes.

The Law of Transmutation: The effort of nature to bring the best into evolution has certainly some hardships during the transition. For example, a caterpillar is a messy glob of goo but transforms into a butterfly.

The Law of Polarity: Everything has an opposite and equal reaction. Be mindful to sense and feel the hidden polarity. Try to see the good in bad.

Let's understand how these laws are impacted by individuals:

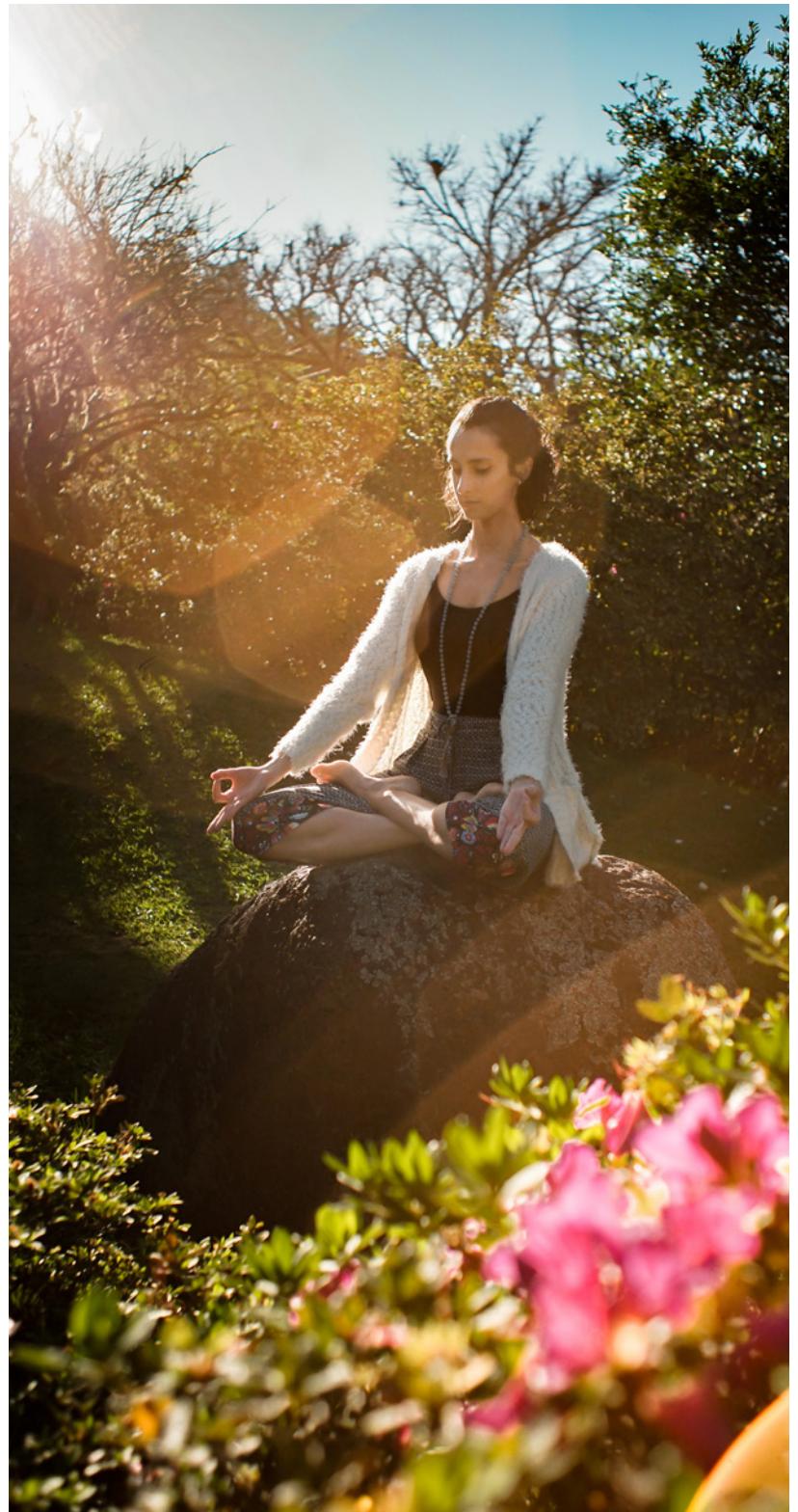
Lack of sleep impacts toxic accumulation due to inadequate time for restoration and rejuvenation. Toxicity is the breeding place for pathologic microorganisms' growth. Lack of sleep or irregularity in sleeping time happens due to the nature of job and working environment or lethargy in physical activity or ignorance which further induces chain reactions from restlessness to stress, from agitation to depression, from overeating to undereating etc... finally it impacts the health as lowered immunity. So, we are indirectly inviting the imbalance in nature's law by means of overbidding the needs.

Hence, it is important to draw a certain basic regulation for humans as per the Ayurvedic Dinacharya and Ritucharya for the betterment of individuals. Dinacharya or the Ayurvedic concept of the daily routine is one such ideal that is not only relevant today, but it is the need of the hour. Having a routine helps us be more efficient and positive, ensuring that the mind, body and spirit remain in balance.



Morning

1. We should wake up two hours before Sunrise. i.e Brahma muhurta. This time has fresh air flowing around. Scientifically speaking, there is an abundance of ozone in the atmosphere, also time for lungs as per biological clock is 3.00 am to 5.00 am. These two hours are also a good time for learning of any kind. People who are either too young or too old, new parents and certain patients are exempted from this rule.
2. Drink a glass of lukewarm water and evacuate your bowels. As per biological clock 5 am to 7 am is the best time . Long waiting for evacuation would increase the ama or toxins or poisonous substances in the body, which causes imbalances in dosha and hence diseases.
3. Cleanse your sensory organs.
Tridoshic eyewash: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. in 1 cup water, boil for 10 minutes, cool and strain.
Pitta eyewash: use cool water or rose water from organic rose petals - most commercial rose water has chemicals in it that will sting the eyes.
Kapha eyewash: try diluted cranberry juice with 3-5 drops in a teaspoon of distilled water.
4. Brush your teeth and massage your gum for at least 2 minutes and scrape your tongue. The traditional Indian toothbrush is a neem stick, naturally antibiotic and helps to build strong healthy gums. Licorice root sticks are also used. Roasted almond shell powder can be used for vata and kapha, and ground neem for pitta.
5. A coated tongue is a clear sign of ama according to Ayurveda, and should be cleared as soon as we wake up in the morning. Jala neti as per yoga or nasayam is recommended to clear your nose and respiratory channels. Traditional Dinacharya practices also include inhaling the smoke of medicinal herbs to clear the mind and various channels of the body.
6. Oil application to the scalp, forehead, temple, hands, feet and the rest of the body for the better health of organs. Abhyanga or massage can help keep your body strong and prevent you from premature aging.
7. Physical activity like light exercise, Yoga, breathing exercises etc. is important. Early morning is Vata time, it is good for exercises to increase your flexibility. Morning exercises can help to remove stagnation in the body, which recharges and rejuvenates our body and mind for a productive day.



8. Lukewarm water bathing aids in better health.
9. Self-awareness by means of meditation will help introspection.
10. Healthy, wholesome breakfast, nutritiously prepared meals will nourish the body. Skipping breakfast is not recommended. It leaves us with low energy, lethargy, grumpiness and irritation. Breakfast should be consumed warm between 7 am to 9 am which is the best time for the right assimilation . From here you can resume your daily activities - be it work, study or performing other duties.

Noon

Irregular lunch is the primary reason for many metabolic disorders. Due to strong digestive fire at noon time, one must have the heaviest lunch between 12 to 2pm. And a bit of walking will aid in digestion.

Sun down (late evening time)

This is another Sattvik time of the day. We should finish our work by this time. Meditation or light exercise restores the imbalance or lethargy. It is an important time to disconnect yourself from the external environment. Especially important time to relax.

Dinner

Dinner must be light and should be taken two to three hours before bedtime. Ideally not later than 7.00 pm. This will help in good digestion and prevents toxic accumulation.

Sleep

People who have insomnia are probably sleeping after 10 pm. Time between 10 pm to 2 am is pitta time which is a time of intense activity for the liver and gallbladder . Hence, we should sleep before 10 pm with proper dark surroundings.

With the above routine, we can include frequent fasting as per our individual's traditional way. Fasting boosts immunity and gut health by autophagy and detoxification. Different types of fasting can be followed like intermittent fasting, juice fasting, water fasting, dry fasting. You can choose any one with professional guidance to achieve the required results.

It is obvious that following our biological clock one not only becomes healthy but helps in family and social responsibility as well. For retuning the biological clock, one must undergo periodic (maybe once in three months) health retune in terms of detoxification which is widely available in any typical wellness centres. A typical wellness centre is equipped with integrated traditional medical health system like Ayurveda, Naturopathy and Yoga,

Simply give time to heal, repair and transition by adopting a phased manner of lifestyle with trying to take wellness holidays. So that sustainability ensures life and lets others live, including nature. Conquer the greed for luxury over basic need. Adhering and turning back to the basics is a way to a healthy and happy life for one and all. Our basics are deeply rooted in our culture. Bringing balance in our culture and basics meets all the laws of nature in a single attempt, which could be attained by just taking a wellness break



If it is not possible to go to a wellness centre, one can follow these principles at home by adopting healthy eating habits like consuming plant-based foods, fasting periodically, and following a routine.

Stop Chasing Happiness – Instead Build a Vibrant Caste of true **HAPPINESS**

EVEN IF THE WORLD MAY BE SAPPED OF ALL VIBRANCY, LEARN HOW TO REJOICE HERE IN THE HUES OF HOPE, FAITH, AND JOY.

By Lovina Jha

In this pandemic-stricken world, we are experiencing more sadness, anxiety and hopelessness than ever before. With lockdowns, economic upheavals, loss of human life, fragile mental health, elevated stress and a very uncertain future—it feels like the world is sapped of all its vibrancy.

As a young boy, John Lennon - one of the founders of The Beatles, learnt from his mother that happiness is the key to a fulfilling life. So, in elementary school, when children were given the task of writing what they want to become when they grow up, John wrote just one word: "Happy." The teachers said, "You do not understand the task!" and without blinking an eyelid, the future great musician replied, "You do not understand life!".

And he was right. Everyone dreams of happiness.

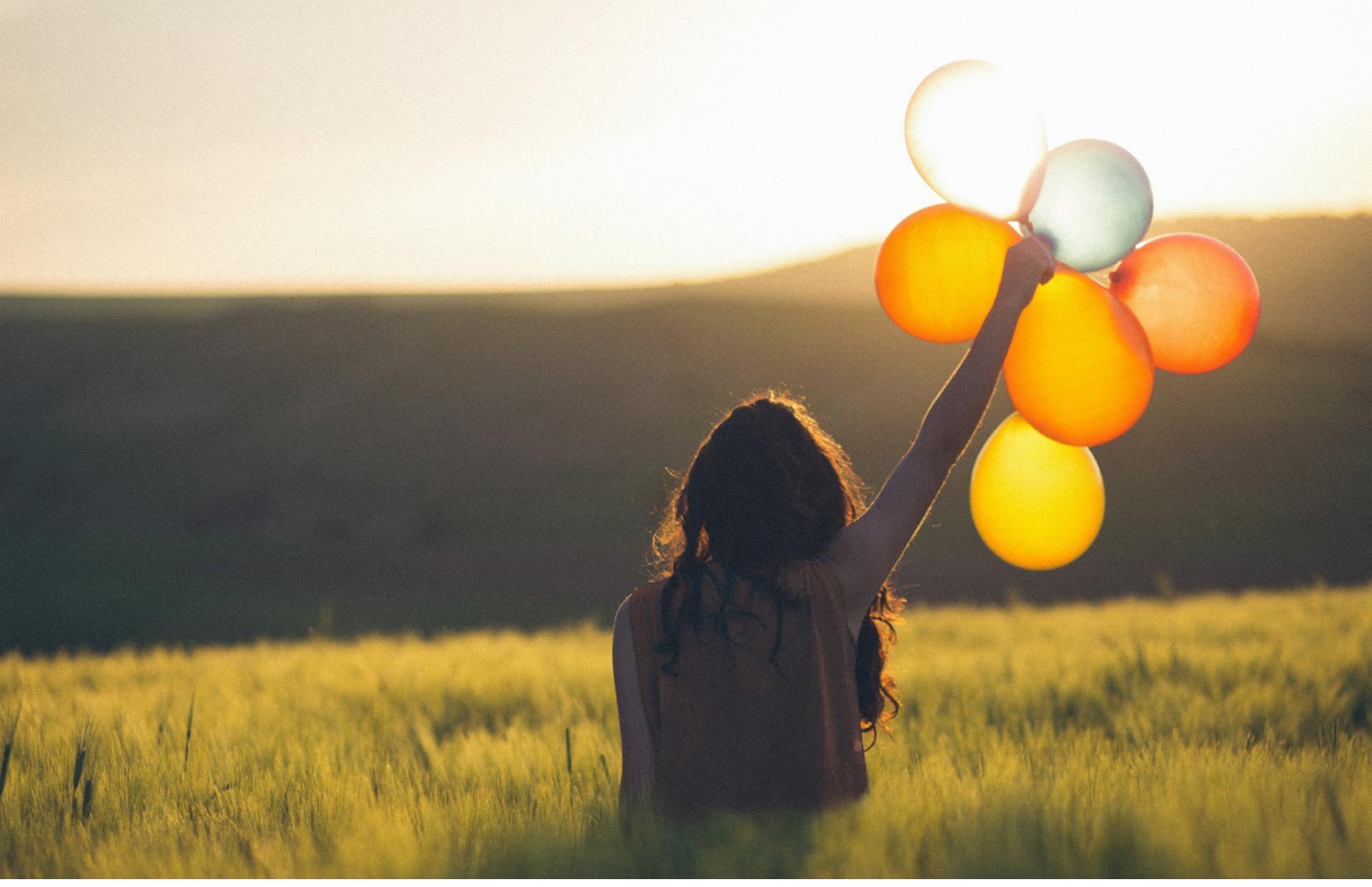
But, what exactly is happiness?

Does happiness merely mean constantly smiling? Or does happiness mean to laugh with your friends? Is happiness dancing in the rain? Or is happiness sunshine on a bright summer day? Happiness could be all of the above. Happiness can be found in the smallest of things.



On any given day, we experience a spectrum of emotions and moods, from bored to bubbling enthusiasm, from anxiety to calm, from anger to ecstasy. And sometimes our challenges seem so huge, twisting our hearts so tightly, that it feels as though all the hope has been simply wrung out.

Yet, I have seen in my life and also read real life stories about how some people despite severe challenges and continued hardships, with great ease 'always continue to look on the bright side'. What is the secret that helps them achieve this seemingly elusive state?



Being a wellness professional, a student of human psychology, and having dealt with a fair share of low phases in my life, I found myself naturally inclined to unravel this elusive phenomenon. I started researching happiness, by reading numerous positive psychology books, interviewing many people across the globe, and trying many spiritual modalities - all in the pursuit to discover and preserve more happiness. After many years, what I "discovered" is encapsulated in these words of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, who is a Japanese Buddhist philosopher, educator, author, and nuclear disarmament advocate. He says, "True happiness means forging a strong spirit that is undefeated, no matter how trying our circumstances are."

Whoa! I was wrong in searching for happiness. This seemingly elusive state of happiness did not depend on outside events, but was instead dependent on "forging a strong spirit". This was possibly also the secret of people, who always seemed happy!

This, to me, was an absolutely empowering concept. It meant that I had the sole power to prepare and create endless moments of joy. Of course, it needed taking responsibility, of a continuous creation of transformative inner experiences that would challenge all my fears, my human weaknesses and gently nudge me towards a state of deep exhilaration.

To someone, who had wasted a lot of time thinking, "I will be truly happy when I get my dream project; I will be truly happy when my relationship with my husband changes; I will be truly happy when I buy my new home;" I can admit that this way of instead tapping on true happiness by "forging a strong spirit" was not easy.

But, despite fulfilling some of my biggest desires, I was devastated to discover how every other stressful experience still had the power to completely knock me over, making me feel completely bereft of all hope and joy.



Did I want to live my life this way? Most definitely not.

It was time for some serious inner change. So, deeply reflecting on Dr. Daisaku Ikeda's words, I took the challenge of building my very own inner "castle" of true happiness which would someday house my "indomitable spirit".

I began searching for the building blocks and mortar for this project.

Where would I find these? After all, creating a castle of true happiness is different - you are building something new, something that didn't exist before.

Just as bricks, cement and water are needed to construct a home, I was in search of the building blocks of my castle of true happiness. After some unsuccessful weeks, and many unproductive months, I discovered the extraordinary building blocks and mortar for my castle.



"Life Purpose"

Purpose is the key to living life with absolute fulfillment. This purpose, when defined clearly, gives deeper meaning to your life, influences goals and makes you spring out of bed in the mornings.

A life purpose statement helps you stay focused, gives life deeper clarity, a sense of direction, and becomes a strong foundation for happiness.

Here is an example of my life purpose statement:

"The purpose of my life is to collaboratively inspire people, to move the boundaries of ageing with the lifestyle choices that will impact their health and happiness. To help them turn back the clock, stay vibrant, love life and its myriad colors."

Define your life purpose statement. This is a wonderful way of staying optimistic and motivated, even in the face of challenges. It helps channel our energies towards our life purpose successfully each day, instead of getting consumed by any negative external events.

"Present Focus"

Whether it is our peace of mind, or whether we wish to display optimal creativity, it is important to be fully present in the moment. If we are constantly influenced by our past or what may happen in the future, we end up being anxious and fearful, which robs us of the very joy of living. To bring our attention to the present moment, needs continuous voluntary effort, as accomplishing this can be difficult, but is indeed the most worthwhile.

In my quest for true happiness, I found the practice of gratitude affirmations to be very helpful. When I repeat affirmations with mindfulness, it quickly helps to bring my wandering mind into the present moment. I started creating affirmations, such as, "I am grateful for my family" or "I'm blessed to do the work I love" or "I'm thankful for a beautiful home" and repeated these several times. This helped me experience the beauty of "present moment-ism" and slowly became a habit - which to my amazement had the power to make me feel always hopeful.

"Me Time"

To build anything from scratch requires focus, determination and time. To be able to live with present focus and in alignment with one's life purpose needs something else to implement - strong determination. Schedule time each day, as if you have the most important meeting with "yourself". When you spend time alone, it gives you an opportunity to truly get a bird's eye view of your thoughts and feelings as well as your deepest inner state of well-being. This brings better focus on what needs to be done and in what order which helps prioritize your tasks accordingly.

By now, there is also enough research that establishes that having more "me time" has benefits such as enhanced productivity, more joy, gratitude and empathy.

The mortar of “Patience” and “Kindness” to hold together the blocks

So, the building blocks have been set and now need something to help stack and hold these blocks together.

In life, when we feel defeated by adversities, it is patience and kindness that can give us the strength to continually persevere without getting disheartened. If practiced each day, these two virtues can make a powerful difference between anxiety and tranquility.

I was convinced that lasting “happiness” was definitely not because of random chance or luck. If I had to be happy, I had to learn to control the quality of my inner life, so that my spirit would stay undefeated no matter what. It was patience and kindness that I needed, to hold together my inner abode of peace. So, basing my actions on more patience, both to others and oneself, I started moving away from frustrations that come from unneeded judgements.

Based on my actions, on more kindness to myself and others, and also doing more random acts of kindness for people in my extended environment, I felt my heart opening to the boundless joys of altruism. And, when the heart gets involved, everything becomes easy and pleasurable.

Today, I can say with absolute confidence that the only real happiness is the kind you are committed to creating for yourself. Please stop looking for happiness outside yourself, as that will always be short-lived and fleeting. Block by block, I put my heart into taking full responsibility for creating my own inner castle of true happiness.

Today, this is where I find my calm, if the world outside makes me anxious. And, in this castle of my dominatable spirit, I create bubbles of happiness for me that grow and grow until they can engulf others too, and partake from this joy. I know that no matter what happens now, my bubbles of happiness can never evade me forever, because I have the capacity within me to create them again and again!



WELLNESS WISDOM

RESPONSIBLE-TOWARDS SELF and OTHERS!

BEING RESPONSIBLE IS ABOUT BEING POSITIVE AND SOLUTION ORIENTED.

By Neha Bali

In many of my therapy sessions with clients, I have realised that as soon as I mention "Take 100% responsibility for yourself", my clients cringe and withdraw into themselves. They feel "attacked". I have realized that "Responsibility" has become a very heavy word. It seems to carry a lot of burden and therefore naturally, people shy away from it.

Responsibility to me is 'my ability to respond to situations, circumstances, people and feelings in my life'. The choice lies with me to respond in a mature way or in an egocentric way, in a light-hearted manner or a serious manner. We need to act in a way that eases the situation and positively leads to a meaningful solution for all - a win - win. A solution that leaves everyone happy and wholesome as far as possible.



Clearly we need to understand what exactly is 'responsibility'? Is responsibility to self as important or more important than to others?

In my years of work in the field of wellness and holistic living, I have realized that responsibility first stems from "Oneself". Responsibility starts with us and then extends to others. It is easier said than done! From the moment we are born, our parents (caregivers) take over our lives. The way we should walk, talk, behave, choose, decide etc. everything is decided for us. This goes on till we are under our parents' roof. It does not come as a surprise then, that we do not understand 'responsibility' unless we were lucky to have 'responsible' parents who let us think and act independently and make mistakes. A certain amount of freedom and autonomy is required to understand and become responsible.





What we have to understand is that "I am responsible for the way I live and NOT for the way others do". I own what I do, what I say, what I think, how I behave and all of that which is me. For me, 'responsibility' is ownership. Once we understand this fundamental fact, we will become more aware of everything we do.

Once we are accountable to ourselves, we start taking responsibility for our relationships, careers, behavior, reactions, mistakes and stop blaming others. As we will be doing things that we love in every sphere of life, we will be happier, more satisfied and aware individuals. Isn't that the aim of life?

The range of benefits of being responsible for yourself are:

- You become more confident
- You solve more problems
- You experience better relationships
- You become a role model
- Improved decision making
- Happier and satisfied individuals

Another important fact to remember is that taking responsibility has to be for positive and negative actions both. Usually, people love to take responsibility for positive outcomes but try to find scapegoats for negative outcomes. Being responsible is about being positive and solution oriented. It is not a sign of weakness to take responsibility for one's mistakes. It is a sign of supreme confidence.

Once we are habituated to taking responsibility for ourselves, we will find it easy to extend it to the societal level. Being responsible, workers, individuals, parents, leaders, teachers, etc. is not easy. It requires a sense of conviction and belief in oneself. You have to trust your own actions, but at the same time gracefully accept the faults if you fail. Stand up tall again and move on positively. Taking responsibility creates long term resilience and a sense of purpose. It goes without saying that taking on responsibility has to be done in tune with your skills and maturity.

In today's times when we see that a virus has taken over our lives, who do we hold responsible for this? If we rationalize in a cool and calm way, we will realize that it is the collective responsibility of everyone. If we had better taken care of ourselves and the planet, we would not have fallen prey to this pandemic. This requires deep introspection. If all of us had acted with mindfulness and awareness a lot of suffering and strife could have been avoided.

As J. Krishnamurthy, the philosopher has beautifully said: "Whatever happens in this field of consciousness, we are responsible for it. That is, if I am violent, I am adding violence to that consciousness common to all of us. So I am profoundly responsible: either to contribute to that violence, confusion and terrible division, or, as I recognise deeply in my heart, in my blood, in the depth of my being, that I am the rest of the world, that I am mankind, that I am the world and the world is not separate from me, then I become totally responsible, which is rational, objective, sane".

The choice lies with us. Let us act responsibly and look after ourselves with utmost care and respect. Let us be generous with our love, time, money, kindness and compassion, keeping in mind safety first in this time of need. Let us take our actions seriously, so that our children and the future of mankind remembers us as responsible and mature. Let us value this life, which is a beautiful gift and live it with grace.



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