

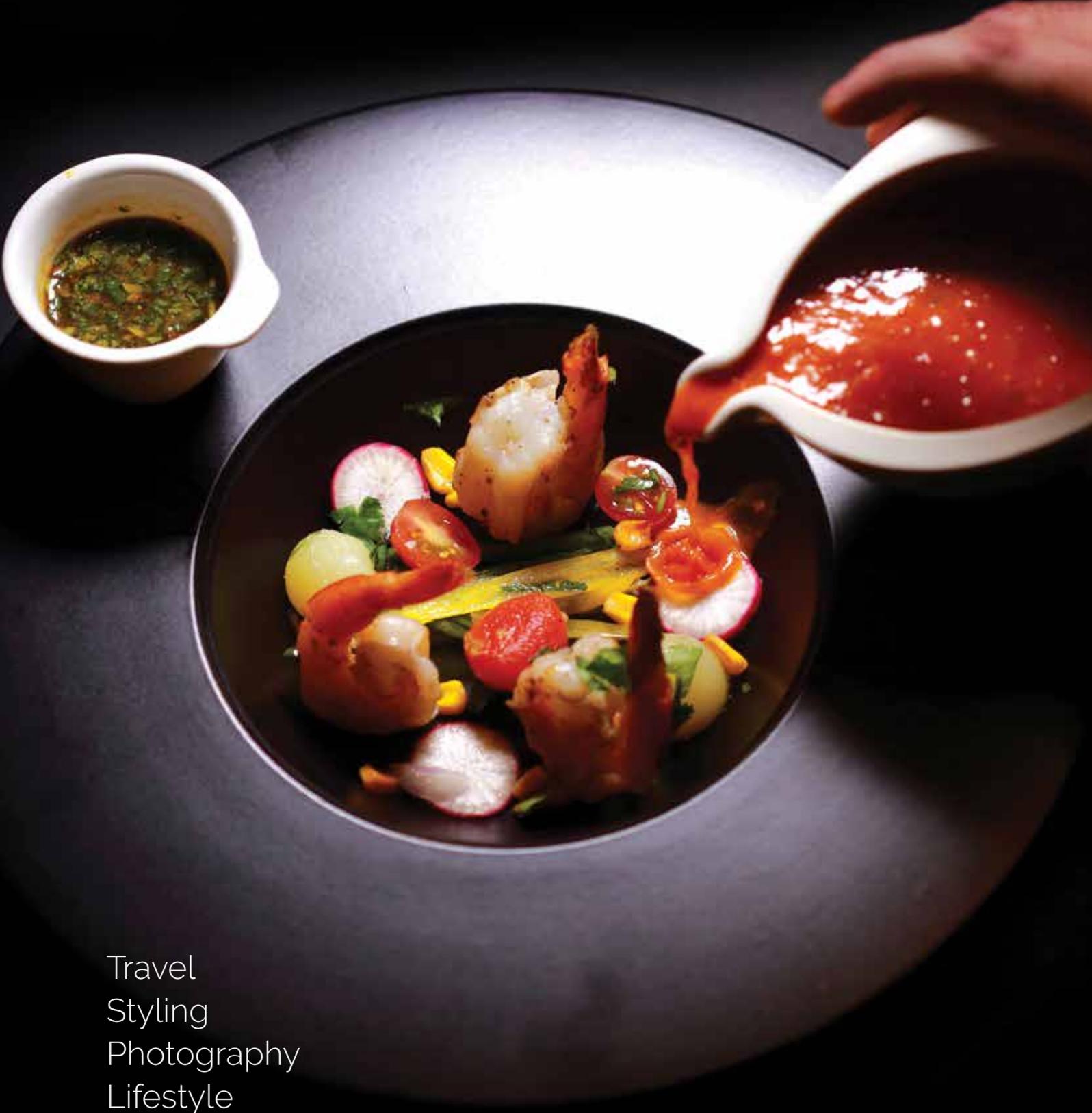
March 2023  
Vol - 1  
Issue - 1

₹200/-

INAUGURAL ISSUE

# Samyati

Odysseys with a camera a backpack a tweezer



Travel  
Styling  
Photography  
Lifestyle

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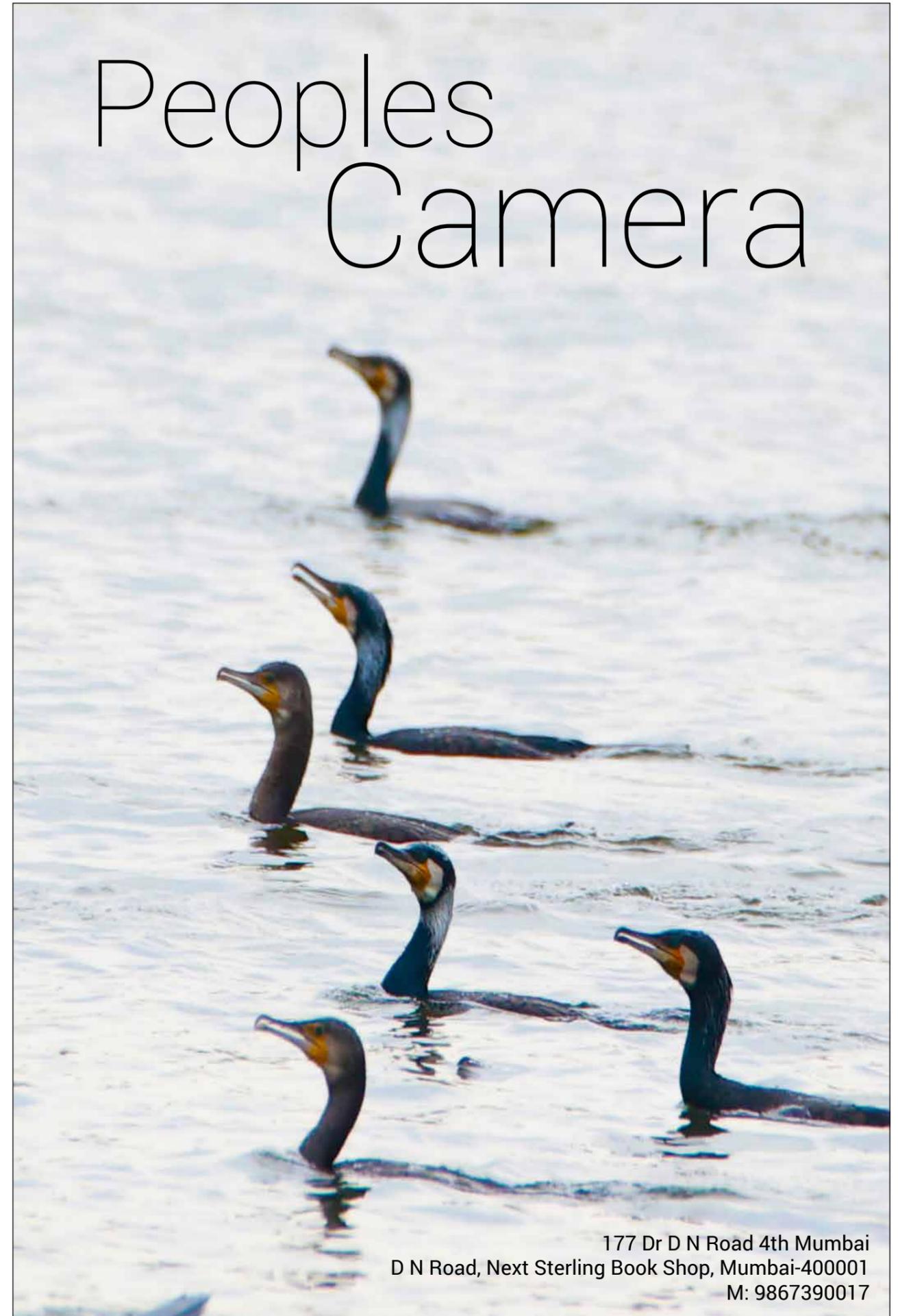
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# Embarking on an Odyssey With a Backpack, a Camera, and a Tweezer!



It all began when Michael, Deepa and I toyed with the idea of coming up with a magazine exclusively for food styling and food photography.

During the lockdown Michael had conducted an online workshop, and left the audience that majorly comprised students who were considering a career in the culinary field, enthralled and intrigued through his food styling and photography techniques. So, we knew that the art is still nascent in India and it would be good idea to encourage bright minds to consider this as their career choice.

Then there were more workshops, but I wanted something more. Something that I thought was amiss even after the love that we received for our workshops. Having handled the tourism vertical in a very popular and well-known news house, I thought that adding the travel part would make the magazine even more meaningful.

For all that we know, humans travel majorly for food, besides other experiences, and food as we know also travels from place to place, country to country, and even continent to continent, and even outer space, making food and travel an indispensable pair.

What catches the eye though, is food that appeals to your eyes, and through this magazine we intend to hero food from all places big and small, nooks and corners of the world.

And.. there's an interesting fact. Samyati is a Sanskrit word that has over 30 meanings. But for us, it's the odyssey with a backpack, a camera, and a tweezer, which has just begun, and would gather stories and anecdotes as it goes further, and beyond. Samyati is also the name of our magazine! 

Sumit Jha

# Samyati

Odysseys with a camera a backpack a tweezer

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The head conceives while the heart emotes  
from the hands that write  
to weave your stories

Events  
Social media & Digital marketing  
Content creation  
Brand building  
Bespoke communications



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Is well styled food relegated only to advertisements on a printed page or is it just to be instagrammable? As erotic as it may seem, true food is what one lives to eat and finely senses on a daily basis.

From perfecting the art of plating food, to techniques that chefs take years to master, often studying the old artists and masters of art, many have done much by way of making food more accessible through visual means.

From famous artists to chefs many have shown what it is to be eating with one's eyes all about. It's nothing more than uplifting one's senses by the way of visual appeal to tell a story.

With time, one has come to realise that it goes beyond the plate. It's about creating a visual experience. And it raises a chef from a creator to an artist.

Many of us have learnt from the works of great artists, how they saw the play of light and shadows, and how they painted food across huge canvases. So, we decided to bring about a magazine that moves away from recipes and chef talk, and focuses on the subterranean world that is hidden; the artists, the photographers, the traveller that visualises a very different culinary world through a lens and through art. S

*Michael Swamy*

Chef Michael Swamy



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### Disclaimer

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors and forum participants in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of Samyati Team Members. The photographs in this magazine are original, and have been used with due consent and willingness of the contributors.



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Sometimes I feel I have nothing to say,  
While through the snowflakes, I saw the world  
Tumbling through the streets settling onto the trees  
Gently like the tumultuous breeze  
Like the fresh snow clean and pure  
You dear sun, when you shine upon the snow,  
fills me heart, like a birdsong

# Lights Camera Action

Lights camera action 'the drama of food media' be it still photography or videography, the people behind the scenes, the magic of light and how to control and play with it to create that magic known as food media.

# Lights



TIKKIS - MARRIOTT COURTYARD AGRA

Light is an important tool when it comes to shooting food. knowing how the light plays in a room to using studio lights the magic changes from scenario to scenario.

Changes in light happen at a fast pace. Capturing light is every photographer's dream. Playing with light is every artist's emotion, within a frame or a series of frames. It excites and helps one grow as an artist when one is able to recreate or capture that scene. Most times it's the artist's journey that you see and their tales while creating a story through light and not even speaking a word, is the art of storytelling. s



SUMMER COOLER - MARRIOTT COURTYARD AGRA



MARRIOTT COURTYARD AGRA

# Camera

The camera works on the principle of light, and is an important tool when it comes to shooting food. Knowing how the light plays in a room to using studio lights, the magic changes from scenario to scenario. The right camera for the right job is essential when you want a particular result or deliverables for a client.

When freelancing, at times you are stuck without lights and tripods, and making the best of what is available to you and to capture that moment, you need the right kind of camera and lens to capture that bit of mystique.

Selecting an area of a restaurant to shoot, and you just have a table with barely any room to shoot, you have to click anyway. s

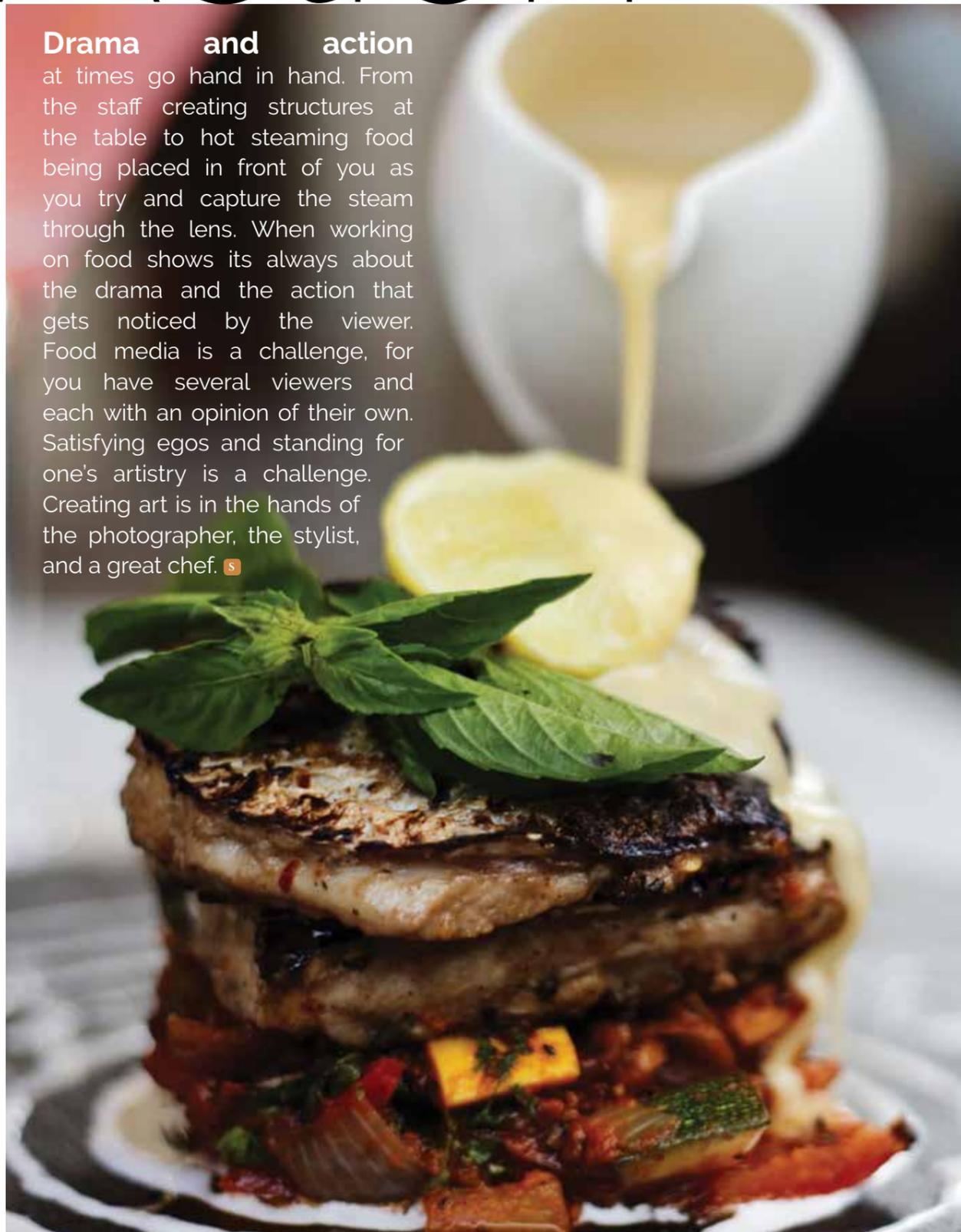


MARRIOTT COURTYARD AGRA

# Action

## Drama and action

at times go hand in hand. From the staff creating structures at the table to hot steaming food being placed in front of you as you try and capture the steam through the lens. When working on food shows its always about the drama and the action that gets noticed by the viewer. Food media is a challenge, for you have several viewers and each with an opinion of their own. Satisfying egos and standing for one's artistry is a challenge. Creating art is in the hands of the photographer, the stylist, and a great chef. 



MARRIOTT COURTYARD AGRA





Chef Anna Tongbram

## A Chef's

# Tale

Living in Guwahati, I have always had authentic momos available around the locality. When I moved to Manipal in 2017, I was mostly concerned about the availability of good momos there.

As an amateur in a new place, I was clueless as to where I could find good street food and snacks. We enjoyed the food in the mess but we got bored over time as it was a repetition of the same dishes. To save ourselves from the college mess tragedy, my friends and I had to dig up places with good but reasonably priced food (keeping in mind our monthly budget sent from home). Most of my friends were from Kerala, but who doesn't love momos? there is no replacement for the love of momos we all secretly carry.

Our college organises a cake mixing ceremony on our campus every year before Christmas. I remember Chef Prasanjit was looking for students from the North-East to make momos. He sees me inside our campus and tells me that I am supposed to be making momos with my seniors. I was so excited because I knew I could finally make (read, eat) momos. And so, we made around 550 pieces of momos, out of which I smuggled a few for my momo-hungry friends.

Living in Kamla Nagar had its perks. My shift would usually get over by 9 pm, and I'd take the metro to Vishwavidyalaya, take an e-rickshaw, and stop in front of my favourite momo stall. Buy hot steaming momo, ask for extra soup, make sure he's put the chutney, and that would be my dinner. Nothing heals better than good food after a tiring day. Now when I think about it, momos are just more than street food.

Momos were and will be one of the closest to my heart among all street food. The smell of momos when the steam comes out of the steamer, burning the tongue with hot steaming momos during winters, tearing ourselves up with the super spicy chilli sauce dip, surrounded by friends or family, merrymaking or crying over tragedies of our lives, momos are always by our side to comfort us. It makes hard times a little easier for me. S

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# MEXICAN FOOD MARKETS

Colour, Variety, Flavour,  
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Walk through the incomparable alleys and streets of Mexican markets, stacked with fresh produce in innumerable colours, hues, shades, that scream variety! Chef **Miranda Guzman, Ambassador for México best of Gastronomie international, and Directora Camara Gastronómica y Turística del Perú** strolls through these vibrant markets



**M**y hometown is full of amazing surprises and the colours and vibrancies of the markets add to all the excitement that life has to offer. The familiar Mexican Spanish that resounds through the alleys as I head to the market places.

Each season brings on a multitude of vegetables. Some are common throughout the year and others are seasonal. The varieties of potatoes to the corn and coloured corn. The local stalls making tamales and tacos and nachos, barbeques and streetfood are plenty within the market.

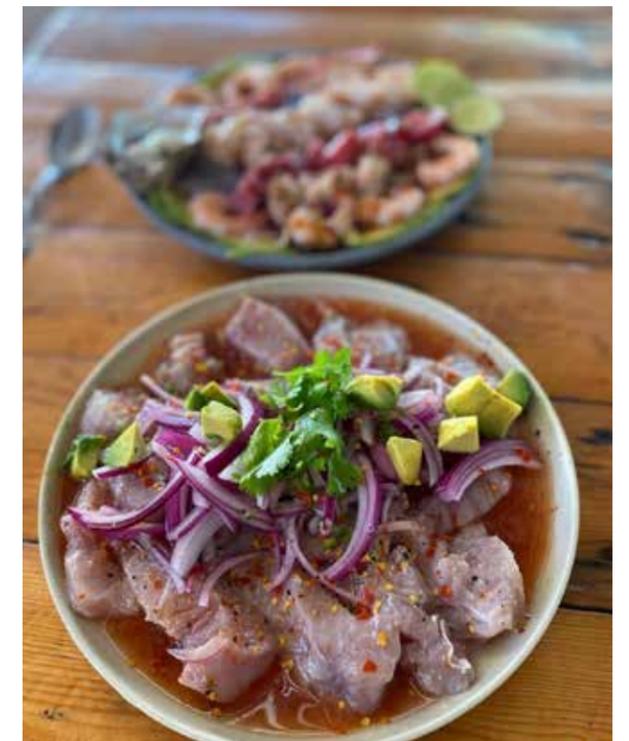
Mexican food markets are spaces that are welcoming and are defined by family service and the homemade preparation of the dishes. Diners have a wooden bar to taste the food without haste, surrounded by lit stoves and clay pots with exquisite freshly made recipes, which are part of the

gastronomic tradition of the state of Guerrero and the country at large.

Some of my favourite moments growing up and going to the markets with my family was trying out all the street food. Golden chicken tacos, beef barbecue, pozole, meat or sweet tamales, moles, chile rellenos, pork, stewed beans, chicharrón in green or red sauce, potato cake, slices of poblano chile, beef meatballs in sauce of tomato, steak prepared in eight different ways or white rice soup with vegetables at very affordable prices.

The church bells ring the hour and as you look around the local markets you notice the beauty of the people and the culture. Mexico is a country full of architecture, colours and shades, with a range of unforgettable flavours on your palate.

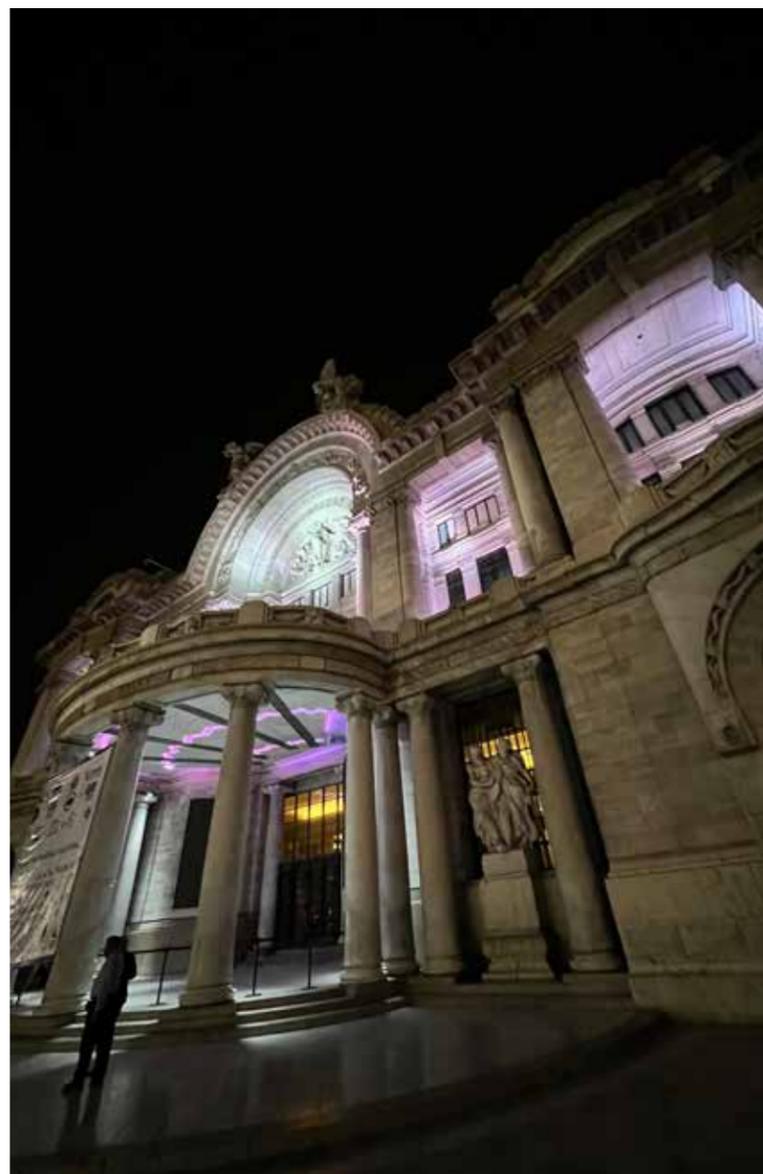
The cultural exchange of ingredients





carried across the globe from South America is legendary. Mexican Spanish is slightly different too. The fresh fruit and chillies exported from South America have seen an explosion in taste and culinary values. From being a monetary commodity many of the spices and herbs have become staple dishes across the world.

Mexican cuisine and restaurants are slowly taking shape, with many chefs now having Michelin Star restaurants and the sauces and dishes are bridging the gap of language in many homes and places. My journey of being a culinary ambassador is a long one. From education to supporting women and bringing the cuisine to a wider audience I am sharing a bit of my culture with the world and in exchange it's been a wonderful journey of food, friends and extended family. **S**



# Soam

**N**estled in a cozy part of Mumbai is Soam opposite the Babulnath temple off the busy high street. It's comfort food at its best. I make the trip there every so often to photograph the food. But it's also about connecting with one's roots and some of one's favourite street foods. The paani Puri tops the list, then the spinach and cheese samosas to the wonderful panki that's been cooked within turmeric leaves.

Its been over a decade now that I have been photographing the food at Soam first with my Canon 20D, then moving to a 5D Mark II. The current camera with which these images have been shot with is a EOS R mirrorless camera. The change to mirrorless has taken a whole new curve to the way I shoot now. Cleaner sharper images and with a 100mm macro lens your sorted in many manners of speaking.

So where is the challenge then, someone once said that when you have perfected your style change your style and perception and look at things through a fresh perspective. Through the

years shooting food within a restaurant is a whole different skill altogether and the fact that knowing the right spot in a restaurant can make or break your style is a trap one easily falls into. The magic comes in controlling the ambient light and then scurrying waiters and a non stop movement of patrons, the ability to adapt makes you grow as a photographer.

One sided and side lighting due to the bay windows makes for an interesting perspective especially in the late afternoon and early evening-s when the light is at its best within the restaurant. The brass bowls and glassware polished or unpolished all make for stunning elements to showcase what would otherwise be termed as street food from the bylanes on Bombay (Mumbai) and Gujarat dishes the restaurant has come to be known by.

Camera Gear Canon EOS R  
ISO: 100  
Manual Mode: A variety of apertures  
to get a decent depth of field



# FOOD STYLING

## AN EMERGING CAREER OPTION

Add some panache to your food, and make it ready for the shutterbugs



Chef Michael Swamy, Alumni Le Cordon Bleu, London, Culinary Designer, Food Stylist, Food Photographer, and Author, guides the future culinary enthusiasts, as he encourages them to look at Food Styling as an emerging career option.



Food styling is an art form and a specialized field for a career. It relies greatly on knowledge of food and design expertise. Associated with the gleam and style of glamour the job itself requires a great amount of skill, creativity, meticulous craft-work and patience. A stylist aims to bring out the best in a product for a client or consumer. It is more than just cooking. Communication skills are also important. It is the job of the stylist to make the food look appealing, natural and not too complicated.

As a form of media Food Styling is all about communication, knowledge of the latest trends in art and design. The process is brought about by the coordinated efforts of a good Photographer a Food Stylist and sometimes a Prop stylist or Art Director. Often the food stylist and assistants handle this role of directing and prop styling.

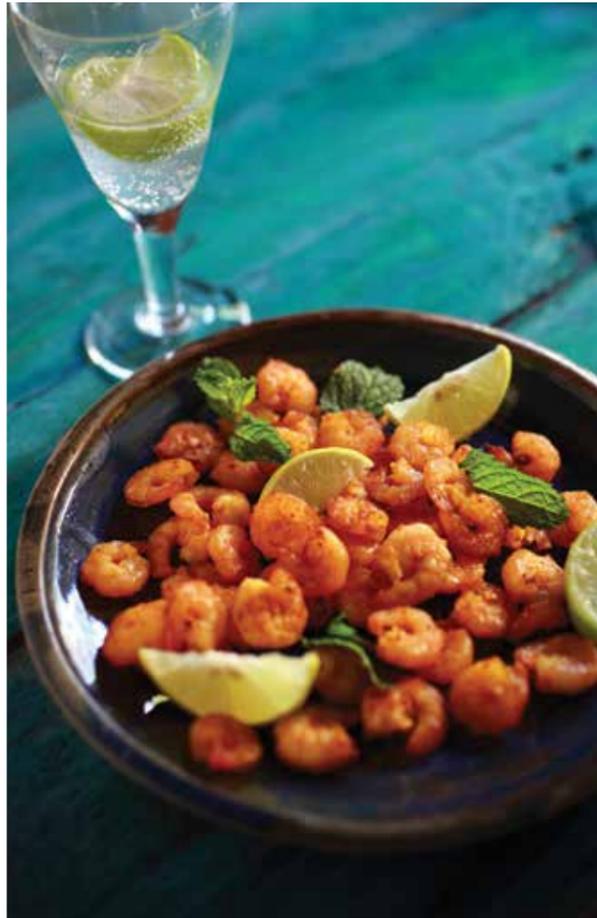
For whom does a stylist design food? Usually Styling food for print media (cookery books magazines menu cards etc), packaging, or for television chefs,

advertising hoardings or food displays at competitions etc.

It was only after a couple of years of working in the food industry that I decided to try my hand at specialization. It was at the Le Cordon Bleu in London that I stumbled across the exciting field of Food Styling and a copy of a book on styling. On my return to Mumbai, India I decided to make a break into food styling.

Apart from a few assignments and advertisement campaigns, my work has been primarily for cookery books, packaging, recipe booklets and newspaper articles and for the Internet. Styling Indian food is tough, but my experience with French cuisine and pre-plated ideas, using classical items and fabrics as props has gone a long way into "shooting" interesting photographs.

Food Styling as a profession is relatively new in India. There have been people from the Hotel Industry who dabble in it on the side but not professionally. There are only



a few food stylists in India. The field is little known here. Very often on mentioning one's profession one gets the question 'What is that?'

Till a few years ago much of the styling in India was done using fake materials such as shaving creams, boot polish. The laws with regards to food and advertising though well defined are often observed in the breach by quick-fix ad agencies etc. Speciality foodstuffs however in recent times, since the beginning of the past decade are available in greater range and variety. The arrival of coloured peppers, several types of lettuce and the humble broccoli can be found more readily now. The up-market hospitality trade has encouraged this interesting change in the colours, garnishes and styling of food.

Food Stylists are a pressured lot. Food prepared for styling remains at its optimum best for only brief periods. This is where skill and decisiveness come in. The relationship between stylist and photographer must be very close as most photographers do not understand the chemistry of food. The logistics of the job in hand should be sorted out well before the shoot.

Food styling as such is not much understood in India. Major assignments for food styling come through advertising agencies, which require for instance, the representation of say a concept that is foreign in origin for an indigenous product. Agency personnel rarely understand that the intricacies involved in obtaining good results in a studio cannot be created with ad-hoc conditions. Often the agency will send a subordinate or Assistant Art Director to supervise the operation, who is a novice in their own field. Thus, the process of organising and setting up a shoot requires much explaining and a waste of precious time. Worst of all, it seems there are too many cooks wanting to spoil the broth.

The challenge of using natural foods in styling is easy when working with a photographer who knows about food. But many aids used overseas and readily available to stylists are not available here yet. Items like fake ice, readymade sprays, smoke chips, gels and specialised props are



difficult to come by. One has to innovate, but that challenge makes the job more interesting.

I often purchase from foreign lands on my travels, or ask friends to buy them and send to me. It helps to keep abreast of what's new in the field, like the books I need on the subject of Food Styling and Food Photography.



There are stylists who have shared their secrets, for example, Dolores Custer who teaches the subject at the (Culinary Institute of America), and then we have John Carafoli's book. Then there's 'Lighting: For Food And Drink Photography Photography' by Steve Bavister. The only course I know which covers the subject is at the Culinary School of America in New York. The other great boon is the internet, which gives easy access to what's happening in the world at large and helps one keep in touch with other stylists.

Besides understanding and learning the art of styling, one has to learn a lot about styling for various forms of printing and packaging, especially by way of design and layout. Being a photographer myself, gives me an insight about lighting, colours, filters, lenses, camera angles and back lighting. These aspects to the Food Stylist, are as important as understanding food and how it reacts in the presence of light and under



studio lights and various weather conditions.

Apart from the food stuff, I've had to know about choosing of props, like cutlery, plates, flowers and decorative pieces. These qualities are intrinsic to the job. Altogether Food Styling is an expertise learnt over time working with different Photographers, and Art Directors.

Meeting with designers and producers of crockery and cutlery and shopping or browsing through markets keep the stylist in touch with the needs of customers and



clients. By way of props the arrival of a lot of Italian crockery and cutlery has increased the resources available to a stylist.

As styles go Indian, colours, though loud, tend to clash with the otherwise colourful cuisines. I like to use modern style pottery against a backdrop of antiques, blending rich Indian fabrics with plated or pale coloured food. Indian food at a time was typically presented in dishes using relatively little imagination. With a surge of everything western many are trying to just copy ideas without using their own minds. Following ideas is one thing, but improving on them is another. There is the question of ethics but often brushed aside to satisfy the advertiser who has seen an idea and wants to copy it literally. As for me I believe in originality.

Mumbai (Bombay) has always been a forerunner by way of promoting art and culture, and promoting products and services, making it relatively easy for those who work in other major cities of India. Trends are changing for the better, what with individuals specialising and creating niche markets for themselves. As for serious food magazines none have been able to sustain themselves for very long in India. There are magazines, which have supplements on food and these as styling goes, leaves much to be desired. **S**



## Bringing Alive the Streets of Mumbai

**Dinesh Khanna** is a Travel, Corporate and Advertising Photographer with over 30 years of experience. He has been involved in creating images for advertising, editorial, and corporate clients, especially in the area of food, still-life, people, travel, and interiors, and has displayed his photography projects through several popular and solo exhibitions.

During the last couple of decades, while traveling around India, one of the things I have realised is that India is like a continent 'pretending' to be a country. The diversity in landscapes, languages, clothes, and food, amongst other things, one encounters is just so enormous. It wouldn't be an exaggeration if one said that there are more differences between Punjab and Kerala than there are between Sweden and Spain. And it's this smorgasbord our nation has to offer that makes travel around India so exhilarating.

Which brings me to the point that one of the most interesting ways in which each state, even city, display their uniqueness is their street food. This photo essay is my salaam to the variety and specialties one encounters in the streets of Mumbai. Food that every citizen of the city or a traveller savours and enjoys. **S**



# Food

“Give Your audience a reason to engage” Design



RIKIN PARIKH

PAINTING BY EKTA JAIN



**“Art”** is ingrained in all of us, through people and cultures. What is rarely taught is the appreciation of art. Food art is seen in many facets from crockery to art on walls and famous monuments.

Go beyond just glancing at an image or a photograph, take a notebook with you and write down the many facets that you see. The art of seeing is difficult to do, but then gradually you see everything around you as a work of art, be it good or bad, it's easier to differentiate.

Analysing an image is a key factor to understanding the subject. Balance your spare time from work time and go spend time in art galleries and museums and get different perspectives from many artists. Watching the lights play across the room, the play of crockery and glassware all became a part of an ongoing education in culinary art.

A stunning photograph will evoke a strong emotion and make you react to it. The reaction could be positive or not, but yet it was an emotion. Finally it's important to understand and interpret that emotion before you sit down to judge the image and visualise its story.

Photography is a specialised field. It's not just about pressing a shutter but knowing when to press it. This is something that was ingrained in us growing up, by a wise Photographer.

You have to see the world around you and look for its beauty. At times the beauty is staring you in the face. 

# NECTAR

## SUSTAINABLE POLLINEATING

Interactive 3D Printed Eating Experience by Sugar and Space (India/Belgium)



### Background

Food styling has the power to go beyond just the appealing visual presentation of food. "Nectar" brings to peoples' attention the current situation of the declining pollinator population, adulteration in honey supply and the importance of bees in our food chain. We propose to present our actions for activating and creating more sustainable food systems and experiences to show how creativity and design can empower people, activate changes, create concrete solutions, and support impactful actions toward more sustainable food systems.

### The Eating Experience

Guests are served "Nectar Shots" - diluted (or spiked) multiflora honey, served with long paper straws. This disproportionate

straw-bottle ratio represents the tongue of the bees, 3x longer than their bodies as they suck nectar out of the flowers during pollination.

The host, Jashan, plates the dessert live in front of guests as they witness the edible artwork come to life. An edible tablescape, composed of carefully curated deconstructed elements delights guests. Elements include fresh edible flowers, wild honey cream, salted honeycomb shards, dark chocolate ganache, 3D printed hexagon cookies, pressed flower cookies, upcycled rose petal jam, and a lemon honey drizzle. Once prepared, guests then use their hands to "pollineat" as they reach across all the different elements to customize their eating experience and build their own mouthfuls.

## About Jashan Sippy

Jashan Sippy is a food systems designer, 3D food printing expert, and green-building certified architect, specialized in the design of spaces for food. His dissertation titled 'Gastronomy & Architecture: Multisensory Experiences' formed the basis of his unconventional current practice. Jashan has been the food and space correspondent for The Dutch Institute of Food & Design. He is the founder of Barcelona-based Food Design Nation, a platform connecting global food creatives to collaboratively design better futures of food, founding editor of FDzeeN: Art Culture, and Design For Sustainable Food Systems, and is currently the Director of the Tuscany-based Online School of Food Design.



## Results

- International research journal around bees, pollination, honey production, edible flower education, and by-product applications including beeswax, mead, etc. Triggering conversations around the use of edible flowers in the age of gastronomy and the potential of their role in taste experiences.
- Experiential marketing strategies and brand awareness for partners and stakeholders – including private, public and corporate engagement formats.
- Strategic partnerships with design studios, F&B brands, sustainable startups and community-based organizations to generate sales leads for and build customer loyalty.
- Ongoing demonstration of pressing environmental issues using food as a multisensory medium for effective storytelling using cutting-edge 3D food printing technology. Customer engagement strategies including novel 3D printed food demonstration.
- Templated experience for scalability and successful global execution through superhost community.
- Upcycling and circular economy partnerships – with flower and fashion industries. Series of products to promote hyperlocal economies. 

## About Sugar and Space

We are a food-focused design and innovation agency headquartered in Mumbai, India, and work across the globe. We transform the way you perceive food every day. By combining sensory science, architecture and technology, we create unforgettable eating experiences. By taking an education + entertainment approach to all our creative projects, we strive to establish meaningful connections for a sustainable food future.



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# Chef's Cut

Chef Michael Swamy

"There's a gypsy inside all of us. We are the storytellers, the dreamers, the wanderers and who better than us the story to tell"

Journeys are never complete without food and as a kid we traveled a lot, so much that one saw hotels from a different side, one of luxury and finesse and one rarely saw what went on beneath the surface. This attraction for food and travel and meeting people and making friends and acquaintances was more due to a camera in hand, one learnt more about light and hand holding a camera and shooting and making mistakes as one traveled. Travel is the curve ball that makes you grow up fast and learn to be independent.

The world for me has always been through a camera's lens. My earliest days were following my mum to Doordarshan and spending time with camera crew and lightmen while she was a news broadcaster in her early days. She was multi-talented and brought us up to explore the world in all its dimensions and facets. Growing up I wanted to make films and documentaries around food and it was she who pushed me to learn the medium of food first.

The artist in me grew into a chef who then perfected my skills in London and while I was at the



Cordon Bleu and also working part time in a bar and kitchen to pay my way I would spend time with many a food stylist and photographer. Somewhere along the way a childhood fondness for wildlife took over and then came coupling wildlife and food.

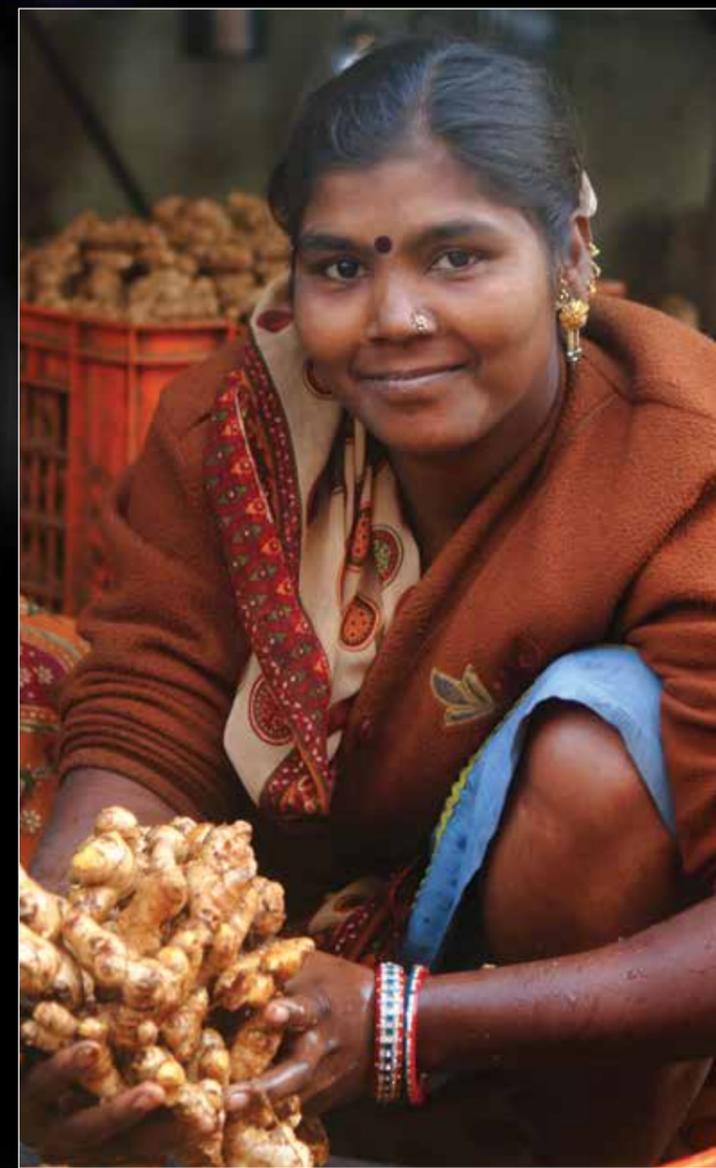
So intertwined are we with nature that we often forget where our food comes from and the respect we need to give back to nature.

The journey has been long and fun from styling food to writing for magazines and newspapers and to authoring books. The love for the camera never waned through it all, from working with a battered old Pentax to owning Nikon cameras to buying the 1st digital camera to now working with mirrorless cameras, capturing the world of food has been a story in itself.

This magazine is a result of having worked with several professionals and showcasing their work alongside mine. The many stories of writers and stylists and those who work behind the scenes while actors and chefs get famous. This magazine is about their journeys and showcasing them and giving them a voice.

While food has taught us many lessons along the way it is these tireless workers who are the substance behind all that we see in a very visual way. They are the artists and the back benchers, the creators and the subtle visionaries from whom we sometimes see things in a different light.

I feel at times they are the ones who make us into the heroes and the success stories that we are, your support for this magazine is what will keep their unseen deeds alive and give them a voice they so need. **S**



# Of Festivals & Feasts

## Gudi Padwa

Mugdha Sudhir

"We will put up the *Gudi* today!" my youngest cousin, then all of four, exclaimed to every person who passed my grandfather's house. This had also been the very statement with which she had greeted us on our arrival the previous day. Till bedtime, the *Gudi* or *Gudhi*, as it is pronounced in Marathi, was the only thing she spoke about. She seemed to have a clear idea of what she was talking about, while my sister and I were clueless, having never celebrated the festival in Maharashtra before.

For us, Gudi Padwa marked the Maharashtrian New Year and no matter where in the world we were, my mother made it a point to make a huge bowl of shrikhand and hot puris for lunch. But we had never "put up a *Gudi*".

As my grandfather returned from the temple, my cousin's anticipation grew a couple of notches, thanks to the assortment of things that tumbled out of his bag..there were multiple garlands made of a wide assortment of things -marigolds, fresh mango leaves, fresh neem leaves, even one of *batashas* (sugar discs), a small handful of freshly harvested wheat stalks, a couple of green mangoes and the first ripe mangoes of the season!



Everyone changed into new clothes and gathered at the front door. My aunt brought out her new *zari-bordered saree* and my grandparents put together the *Gudi*. The saree was pleated carefully and tied to a strong bamboo, then the three garlands were tied to it and finally, a small brass pot was inverted on it. My uncle then firmly installed the stick in the window grill, so it would stand proudly till the evening. I could now see why my cousin was so excited. I was always told that the *Gudi* symbolized the flag of Lord Brahma. But it looked almost like a primitive, but very pretty version of a doll.

The wheat stalks were tied above the front door ("for the birds to feast on the first harvest," my father explained). My parents distributed sweets to the family, along with a mandatory spoonful of an all-at-once bitter-sweet-sour-spicy-salty-astringent chutney made of neem leaves, jaggery, tamarind, chilies and salt. This was followed by a sumptuous lunch and later, the ultimate treat - the first fresh ripe mangoes of the season. Almost three decades later, that particular *Gudi Padwa* still stands out in my memory, as the first real taste of the festival. **S**

# Ugadi

## A Festival Or An Emotion

Aasha naama manushyaanaam  
kaashchidaashcarya shrunkhalaa  
Baddhaa yayaa pradhaavanti,  
muktassthishtanti panuguwat

A Sanskrit Subhashita

**H**ope is an invisible and miraculous chain; bound by it, you run, when freed from it you lose your mobility.

The light turns different within the room as the winter solstice is done. Spring is in the air and amidst it is the festival I yearn for. Ugadi is many things to many people and for me it's about recharging ourselves after the winter months, which in Ayurveda and many other cultures is a time when the body must slow down.

Spring is the culmination of many rituals around nature and the New Year also known as Ugadi is one of them and celebrated in the heartlands of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and as Gudi Padva in Maharashtra and Goa. It's the time to welcome 'Chaitra', the first month of the Hindu Calendar.

Cleanliness in next to godliness, they say, but cleanliness is the key to inviting Gods into homes, and making them walk through the doors, adorned with torans, made of marigold and mango leaves, as the divine beings admire the lovely moggus (rangolis)

drawn on the floors. Spending time doing the rangolis and the array of colours also teaches one about the art of patience.

True or ancient Indian cuisine before it amalgamated the cuisines of the world was ayurvedic in nature and many of the festival food still follow the same traditions of the six tastes defined by Ayurveda – sweet (Madhura), salty (Lavana), spicy (Katu), sour (Amla), astringent (Kashaya), and bitter (Tikta).

For me the rituals and the making of one of my favourite dishes is the "pachadi" is a festive elixir made with tamarind, jaggery, raw mango, neem flowers, black pepper, and salt.

Another dish made at home is Poornam Boorelu, a snack made with a filling of chana dal and jaggery pooran, coated with rice and urad dal batter, and deep fried till golden, is the new year delicacy for the people of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Whether people celebrate all the tastes, or just a few tastes, it's all about the vibes of the day. One has to be a part of celebrations to soak in all the positivity that the festivals of India bring in. **S**

# Easter

**E**aster is a festival of sorrow culminating into joy. A new life and a pagan festival that turned into a religious one. Religious sentiments aside, the spring festival of Easter is one of rejoicing and good food. Easter has for me always been the most joyous celebration. As kids we used to paint eggs and later on make eggs out of marzipan and chocolate. Visiting friends and the exchange of Easter eggs are cherished memories. The story of the egg takes us back to the beginning of time where it is a symbol of the creation of the world. Initially eggs

were coloured and gilded and the ancient Persians and Greeks exchanged them at the spring festivals. It's only in recent years has it become the chocolate and marzipan versions we know of.

Many have different versions of Easter in their homes, from foods shaped like eggs to chocolate or marzipan bunnies. It's about tradition at the end of the day. Easter comes from the Spring festival long held much before the rise of Christianity. A time of new life and rejuvenation after the long cold winter months. **S**



# RAMADAN

Endings can indeed be beautiful, when you break your fast, and receive a huge reward from the Almighty, in the form of Iftar!

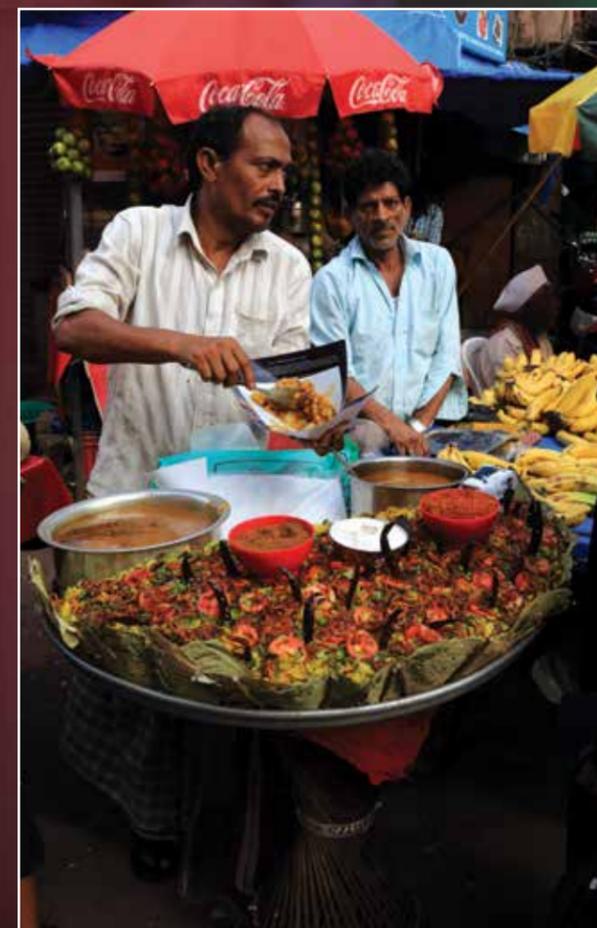


When the sun goes down during Ramadan or Ramzan, the 9th month of the

Muslim calendar, the streets of Mumbai come alive with stalls filled with colourful sweetmeats, surrounded by people emerging out of mosques after their evening prayer.

The buzz is unbeatable, as even passers by slow down to soak in all the fervour, and the aromas of delicious food, both sweets and savouries, infused in the air. Innumerable lights, bring energy into twilight, as Iftar begins.

Nalli nihari, seekh kebabs, kaleji fry, keema baida roti, and desserts like phirni and malpua, are the most sought after Iftar delights, and Mohammad Ali Road, S V Road Khar, are few of streets where one can immerse themselves, and take home the lingering tastes of Ramzan delicacies. **S**





# St Patrick's Day Parades on the Island of Ireland

**With parades and celebrations galore taking place across the island, Ireland is the best place to be this St Patrick's day!**

The epicentre of the merriment is the huge St. Patrick's Day in Dublin (16th-19th March). This year's National St. Patrick's Day parade, driven by community, diversity, youth and sustainability values, will be the most ambitious ever, featuring breath-taking new artistic, interactive and aerial elements. The theme is 'ONE', as it issues an open invite to people from all over the world to come to the city to share, to connect, to participate and to celebrate as

one. The parade will feature a new opening pageant featuring an interactive AR element for the very first time. Also new for 2023 is Suntas! (meaning take notice!) Suntas! Will feature giant creative interventions on iconic buildings around Dublin, adding layers of storytelling and intrigue, and animating the city in the run up to the festival.

Ollphéist (giant monsters) will take over some of the city's best-known buildings. They will be visible by day and illuminated

by night and on Parade Day, the pageant participants will interact with them in an epic battle between good and evil.

Every part of Ireland has been gearing up for this festival, and there are events being planned to enthrall, and entertain one and all.

Ireland celebrates Irish music, culture and creativity, and medieval streets come alive with pageantry, music and family entertainment. There is a mixture of free and paid events from live music, carnival rides, music workshops, street entertainment, a festival market, American marching bands, and the highlight - St. Patrick's parade.

Saint Patrick's Day, or the Feast of Saint Patrick, is a cultural and religious celebration held on 17th March, the traditional death date of Saint Patrick, the foremost patron of Ireland. [S](#)

[www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com)



# When the Hills Beckon, You Just Backpack, Camera and Go!

## Himalayan dreams

Like a bride through her veil she peeks  
Tendrils of ether her lines she keeps,  
Vistas of green blanketed in white  
Yet through a window her might I see



On the top of one of the highest hills sits the beautiful Te Aroha, a boutique hotel probably one of the first in the region. Nainital in the valley has plenty of hotels but this is special, for it carries remnants of my menus.

Menus crafted from the local produce and hints of a surreal cooking technique. One learns as much as one teaches the local produce of home grown pears and apples and mustard leaves, fiddlehead fern and created a magic of my own. The pears with chilli and sugar, a dash of vanilla from southern India doused with home-made wine from the hills was simplistic and creative.

The rugged mountain meat is a bit tough but when one experiences the most wonderful mountain dish of lamb curry cooked in the mildest of spices and flavours that warmed one from the inside out one can say one is near heaven. It was only

later that I realized that I was cooking at an altitude of 7,000 feet above sea level and a whole different level of cooking technique came into play. Slow cooking is the only way to do it and they do it well in these parts.

As one is land locked here, it's the river fish that is most sought after. A drive down to the market shows you much of culture in a few hours as you come across a host of greens one rarely sees. Chef Chatur Singh Farsvarn of Te Aroha has travelled quite a bit and he talks about his home style cooking, and as we shared this cucumber dish of sliced cucumber drizzled over with a chutney made of the hilly green chilli, one is introduced to new flavours and textures and one wonders as to why Indian food hasn't made it to the global plate. Rustic as it may be, its balance and simplicity take me on a trip that will create a nostalgic memory for me.

The charms of the hotel notwithstanding, for beautiful it may be to relax in, I am anxious

to explore. The reds and greens of common veggies and some not so common to me await my eyes, a host of greens one rarely sees, fresh turnips, a yam that they call geti which looks like a shiny rock. There are three types of potatoes: the colours warm in the sunlight. Fiddlehead fern is a fine delicacy that grows in the hilly regions only, lye a mustard green that is cooked simply with garlic and a hint of red chilli. Whilst wanting to try out the local potatoes which are a reddish brown and funnily shaped make for a pretty exciting element of potato chops and fried crisps. It would have been nice to try them out with the local mushrooms that the villages source through the monsoons.

It's strange that foods change, but some traditions and techniques have not. Hot corn flour based flat breads baked over a cast iron griddle. A dish made of pureed haq or mustard greens where the vegetables are cut so finely then boiled to a mash and

cooked with a few simple spices of chilli and turmeric, and a whole bunch of mixed lentils, served with thick grained mountain rice. The water offered is sweet and delicious and the home-made yoghurt turns out to be out of this world.

I've wasted years dreaming and this is living the dream. The journey uphill, though tiring, is blissful but walking down is a different feeling. My hands and legs tremble slightly while clicking innumerable images. The women are beautiful here, tall and poised, the etched lines on their faces reflect a zillion stories. I am just a waft in the breeze as I pass the ever-smiling mountain women brilliantly clad in striking colours. A long thin line of vermilion goes from the tip of their nose to their forehead. I've seen the berries used to obtain the colour grow wild in the countryside. The men on the other hand seem drab in grey coats and a cap on their heads and stick in hand. They

while away their days gossiping or drinking, not at all motivated to do something about their lot. They think the sale of land will stand them by not realizing they may become redundant like the Native Americans. Money isn't everything at the cost of one's heritage and culture and food, and that's what needs to be taught to them.

Passing by goat herders, are tiny pony caravans, the locals use for transporting their goods. The tiny ponies, a cross between donkeys and horses are called Kacchars. The hardy animals cross the terrain on their nimble feet. Along the way each misty place, each in turn is a picturesque moment. Cherubic kids and protective parents, makes one want to reach out to them. Stopping by a small hamlet, one sees a tiny room with an earthen stove.

The food is cooked in metal over wood. The stone houses are quaint and so well made that it's amazement that I wonder why some of the houses use cement. As I sit and take pictures, the Nepali caretaker of the property tells me how the local hooch is made using the fruit and plants of the area. The ingredients are first fermented in large vats and then the process of distillation begins. The men seem to live on the bottle while the women do most of the work is what he conveys to me.

Journeys are for the living, and when you stop travelling you stop living. Food is the reason that man travels. His heart and soul yearns for something new. It's a pretty complacent man who travels and expects his home fare when he travels. The sense of adventure seems lost if one doesn't sit and try the mountainous foods. **S**



# Rising Stars

Hi my name is Aryan Desai. I'm a third year student at Symbiosis School of Culinary Arts, Pune, India. I'm originally from Mumbai and have spent most of my life in Qatar. Since a very young age I not only enjoyed food but the over all experience of having and it being prepared. Food photography enabled me to capture those similar emotions and joy on people's faces when they had those experiences.

I started Food Photography in 2020, I previously only enjoyed cooking food and plating, but the element of photography helped me save those ideas which became a reality. I started off with a simple DSLR camera and a home-made soft box. Initially I learnt the basics of Food Photography from YouTube and applied it to the pictures I took, since then I had enrolled in an elective offered by our college Symbiosis School of Culinary Arts, and we're taught Basics of Food Photography and Styling. It was an absolute pleasure working with professionals like Michael Swamy & Mugdha Sudhir.

My personal style of photography is street style food being plated in a much fine dine manner, while not losing its authentic street food style. I am inclined more towards dark and candid photography as it makes me feel like the colours pop out more and the object is in focus, while the background adds to the subtlety-ness of the picture and in this way I also get to capture the true emotions of my subject. It's always better to have a plan in your mind before starting Food Styling and Photography, this is one of the most important lessons I've learnt during the elective course. This is my journey with Food Photography and it has just begun. 



Aryan Desai



Dragonfly symbolizes change, transformation, adaptability, and self-realization that comes with mental and emotional maturity and understanding the deeper meaning of life.

It says, "Soak in some bits of the gentle sun rays, as you taste the last spoonfuls of winter". Achieve **Work Life Balance.** Till it all lasts!



# The Last Spoonful of Winter

Today I licked away the last of the winter from the glass jar. It tasted sweet – a bit cloying in fact, but I enjoyed it. Its colour was a faintly glowing pale golden, like the sunlight of my childhood winters spent in the house with the porch that had a stone bench on it. It was also a bit chunky, each chunk a juicy, slightly sour, slightly astringent piece of gooseberry that had always been our favorite winter bounty. Finally, it held a faint whiff of saffron and cloves that Mom had added to the gooseberries and sugar when making the moravla (amla murabba), giving it the same fragrance that reminded me of thick, sweet basundi and fudgy halvasan that we relished in the winters.

Before starting on the jar, I scooped out the last spoonful, mixed it with ghee and smeared it on a hot phulka straight off the griddle. It took me back in time to a small kitchen where I sat on the floor behind mom, as she made petite phulkas (just the right size for my then tiny fingers to manage) and gently placed them in my plate. Back then, the jar of moravla used to be much larger and sat next to an equally large jar of spicy bright red amla pickle. Then there would be the small bowls of whole preserved amlas sent by our next door neighbour. She would stew the whole berries in sugar syrup, and even soaked whole amlas in brine. In both cases, the berries would swell till they were as plump as small



A researcher and cookbook editor, Mugdha Savkar has carved a niche for herself in the culinary academia world.

From writing and editing cookbooks, creating videos, conceptualizing food-based shows to training staff and curating menus she has explored the many ways in which food drives the world.

She also serves as guest faculty at the prestigious WGSHA (Manipal) and Symbiosis (Pune) institutes, where she introduces students to the world of food styling and demystifies what cooking for the camera is all about.

guavas. The neighbour who lived across the street would always ask Mom to keep aside a bowl of moravla for her. Thanks to the custom of never returning a bowl empty, our blue rimmed earthen bowl would come back filled with a thick coarse dark purple chutney made from fresh amlas, kokum, salt, chilies and cumin. I knew the contents of the chutney because I had seen her grinding it on a grinding stone when I went across to play with her daughter – my first ever friend! And if we happened to visit mom's aunt, we came back with a small jar of the zingy amla chutney she made by grating amlas and mixing them with mustard ground with chilies and salt. One of dad's friends too would visit, always bringing along a brown paper packet of purplish black candied amla that were carried on long bus journeys as an antidote to nausea.

But these treats were meant to be enjoyed in small quantities and had to last several months, right through the summer and monsoon. Till amlas were in season, we would enjoy them fresh. Nobody ever got in trouble for sneaking into the kitchen and grabbing a couple of amlas to snack on. It was encouraged and the elders helped make the snack tastier with their suggestions. "Get your mother to cut them into large pieces and dip each piece in a bit of salt", or, "mix the salt with chili powder – be careful not to touch your eyes" or "here's a bit of black salt... dip the amla piece in this... yummy isn't it?" My favourite of all was the grated amla mixed with ginger juice, a squeeze of lime, some salt and pinch of ajwain. This wasn't a pickle or chutney, but more a medicine given to someone who had a stomachache.

And of course, who could forget the amla sherbet. Enough of sweetened squash would be made to fill three large bottles. Given the enthusiasm for fresh sherbet, one of those bottles would be emptied within days, while the other two would find occasional patronage as the season changed and green mangoes hit the market, pushing the amlas out of the limelight till the next winter rolled in.

Just like I did today.. I emptied the jar of winter to be filled with the fresh tang of summer. **S**

- Mugdha Sudhir



I am Vishnudeep Dixit, and I hail from Central India. I have spent most of my time in Indore and Jabalpur, and I presently stay in Raipur. Since my school days I have had an affinity for wildlife and nature.

I am a Wildlife Photographer and Cinematographer, and currently work with Pugdundee Safaris as a Naturalist at Denwa Backwater Escape Satpura Tiger Reserve.

Along with wildlife photography and cinematography, I am a keen traveller with specific interest in Street and Pictorial photography, Landscape and Architectural photography, travel photography and cinematography. Understanding natural lighting conditions and creating artificial lighting setups, are the areas in which I excel.



**Here's the equipment that I have been using off late:**

- Canon 80D
- Canon 10-18mm
- Canon 18-135mm
- Canon 24mm
- Tamron 150-600mm

I personally prefer using a cinema camera for cinematography. Red Cinema camera and Arri camera are the ones that I have worked on.

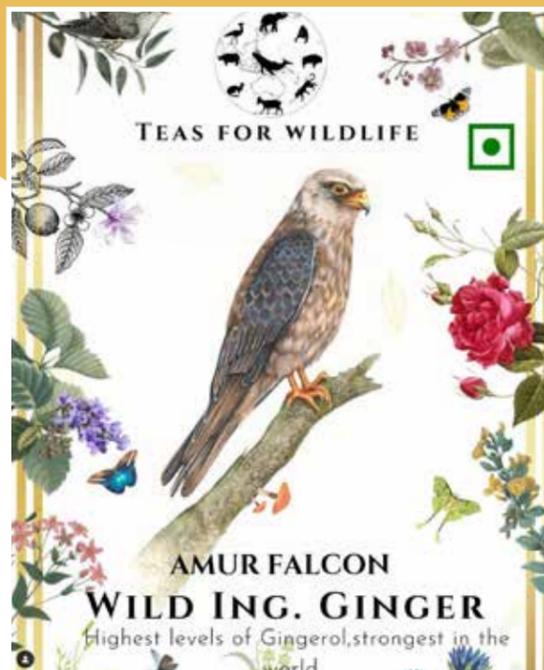
My ultimate goal is to be a wildlife cinematographer and filmmaker. Besides being an outstanding naturalist, I also aim at conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem and spreading awareness on the same. Developing a Food forest also features on my bucket list. [s](#)



# Of Teas, Tisanes, Infusions and

# Teas for Wildlife

**Deepa Natarajan**, who happily sips away a variety of teas and infusions every day, and understands the world of teas and its nuances, adds some more to her collection of teas and memories of tea times. This indeed is her 'cup of tea'.



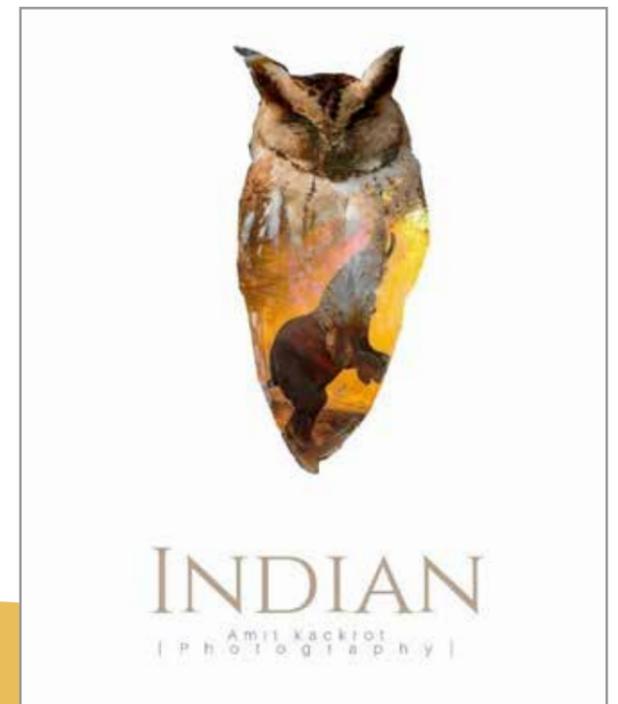
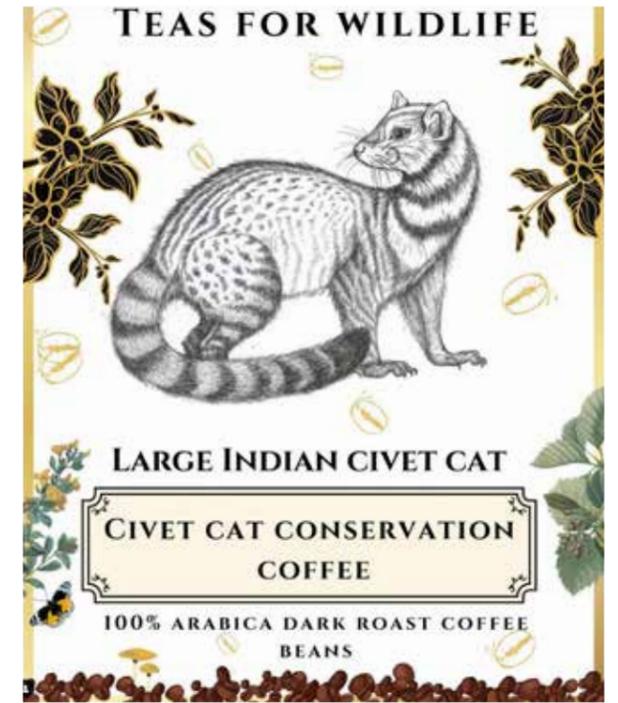
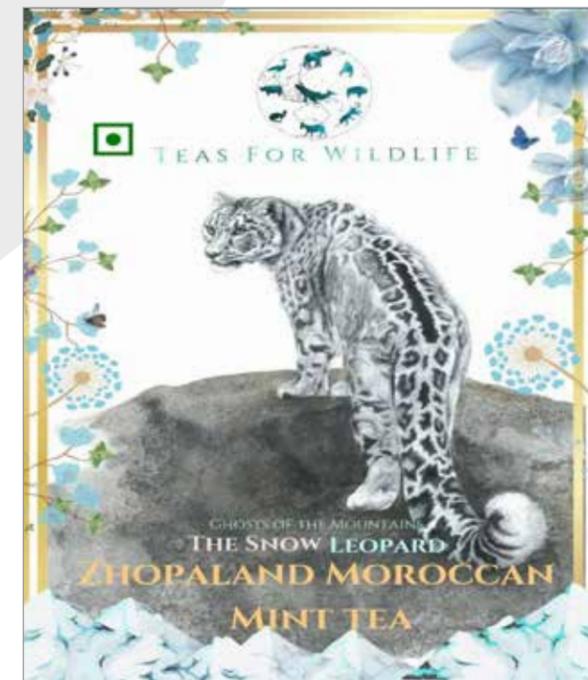
**G**ingerly walking through an event in Mumbai I spied upon a stall selling 'Teas for Wildlife'. Quite intrigued, I had to know more. My penchant for all things wildlife and coupled with food, let me discover a wonderful story. Add to that my love for tea, and my ability to understand the notes and nuances of tea leaves, tisanes, floral, fruity, spice and herbal infusions, I had to pen this down. I have always admired the teas from T2, for the mind boggling variety, and intelligent combinations. Teas that combine the flavours of popular desserts have been my favourite. So grasping here and there with not much of a response from the number on the website I decided to just go ahead and write about them.

I've been on many trips through tea plantations in Munaar and in Dharamshala and the vistas are quite scenic and beautiful. The sighting of tigers and elephants passing through the plantations and stories from old books of wildlife encounters have always held my attention. So much so I started to collect a few stories from people and stashed them away in some long forgotten dairy.

In 2016, Amit Singh and Joy Wujek started off on this journey of saving the wildlife within the tea plantations in India. Now Joy, a master tea blender, and Amit, soon realised that in order to stop the man-animal conflict it needed to come from within and from the locals themselves.

So coming back to Teas For Wildlife, Amit and a friend Ili Cohen started the brand in 2021 connecting each blend with an endangered species on the packaging. Spreading the word about the connection that plantations have and the sanctuary they offer to wildlife especially in a land greedy time we are in.

The tea blends and the herbs and spices all connect with various regions of India and create a connection with an endangered species from that region. Empowering the locals, especially the women with knowledge that will not only save their plantations but also let them co-exist with the land mafia and the forest departments. The plant in Haryana is eco-friendly in many ways and when you visit their website, you'll be quite intrigued by all the artwork on the packaging.



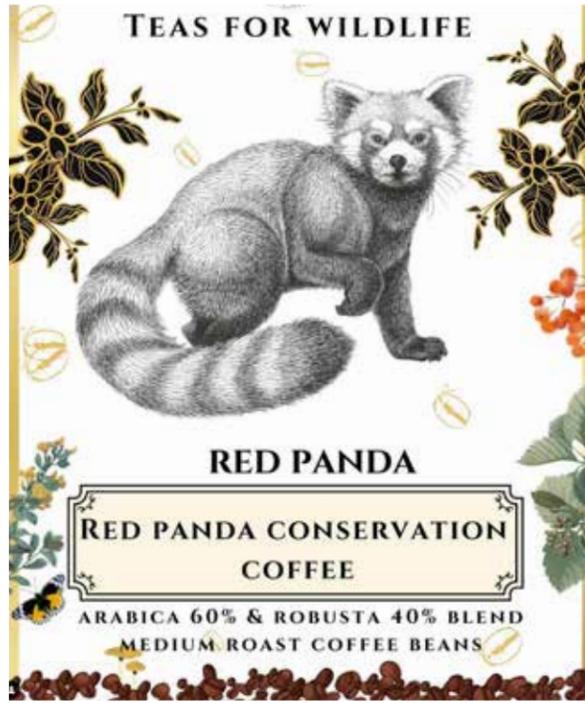
Apart from their range of teas and conservation efforts it is the willingness that some brands have to save the planet, and that is appreciated on another level altogether.

And then a lil more.. I got exploring to know the people behind the venture.

I started my journey with tea as field manager at a wildlife conservation project. Seeing the deadly conflict between human and wildlife makes me feel that the world needs to know of all the struggles that go on ground for one cup of tea .

We established the Teas for Wildlife project with the vision to help all the wildlife around the world by getting the herbs, teas and spice from the farmer and in exchange make sure they make a sustainable connection . We are giving back out of profit to all the wildlife conservation work going on, specifically for the endangered species. It's only possible to stop it if we act together for this to stop the human wildlife conflict for your cup of tea.

By going to the field to study the area and reason of conflict it's only possible to stop it if we act together for this . Tea has lots of healing properties more than that it takes people together. Hence I believe no human wants any animal to die for their one cup of tea. There are deep trenches, burning tires, acid bullets, bombs in fruits, and all the horrific things humans do here in the tea gardens result in deadly



human wildlife conflict for your cup of tea.

As 90% of the workers are women, they are the ones who die in conflict. It's my life goal to protect all animals around the farm and provide you with the best cup of tea which will not only nourish your body but heal your soul .

**Amit Singh**

Only through a child eyes we can see the beauty in nature

If we can teach children about wildlife, and that the world's wildlife can be only protected with love and compassionate hearts, we'd have taken many giant strides in this direction.

My journey started last year when I couldn't see the world, with an unexpected fear to balance our amazing world. It was questioning our behavior towards nature with our animals in it.

What are we doing and how can we change this as a collective society? As an individual, I took it on myself to help the animals around me and adopt as many as I could, in my home. I had to think about what I can do out of my comfort zone. Then I met this amazing guy called Amit who loves animals as much as I do.

We were both thinking how we can change things and come up with this idea of building a tea factory that will help to support the wildlife, help women and children to grow in places where luck is not on their side. Our tea comes from only animal approved gardens, which allow the animals to roam freely in their natural habitat.

**Ili Cohen**

# @Lodha Park, in Mumbai, We Said, "Hey Food! Say Cheese"

And the paparazzi ready food did smile!



"I am into wildlife photography, and would want to take it a bit further with food photography."

"You know, my dad is a photographer, and I want to understand what goes into food photography."

"I have been working in this restaurant, and I definitely want to know how to make food look better for photographs."

"Food Styling! Ooooo, let me explore!"

"I have my 'halwa' business and I want the halwas to look good on the website. I would want to get more involved in the photography part of these halwas for advertisements."



Myriad motives to learn, myriad ways to learn. But this learning sure, was FUNN (Fundamental Understanding Not Needed).

Did we make you curious? Intrigued? To know how you can participate in such workshops reach out to Samyati on +91 9819022738, +91 9764062266.



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