

Lalana and Manish say that they enjoy living in the City
Page 2



Take a peek into comedian Sundeep Rao's life
Page 3

Holiday indulgence



HEALTHY CHOICES This festive season, consume food that is high in protein.

Styling cuisines

The food does the talking

Most people today have travelled the world. Even if they haven't physically been to some places, thanks to technology, they are abreast of the culture and lifestyle there. This has brought the international experience closer home, especially when it comes to food, and more importantly, the way it is presented.

The popular saying 'Don't judge a book by its cover' is almost never true in terms of food. If it looks good, we jump to tasting it. So food stylists from around the City are experimenting with various lightings, props and composition to present the food as beautifully as they can so that it almost feels like you can taste the food by just looking at the pictures.

Faseeulla, a food stylist and the co-founder of Slurrp Studio says, "People have lot more demands these days. If they don't think the dish looks good, they don't even want to try it. So as stylists, we use everything in our power to make them look their best so that the first test of the look is passed and then move on to the taste part of it." He prefers to photograph his subject in such a way that the final outcome gives a rustic feel or a nature-imbibed look.

One of the most important aspects about food styling are the props. Few of them even have their favourites. Farrukh, a full-time food stylist, loves working with her wooden bowls that provide a rustic look and other crockeries that she purchased from Australia. "I'm someone who believes that you eat with your eyes first, and once the food comes in front of you, the smell will touch your palate before your tongue does. So it's very important that one presents the dish in such a way that you'll want to grab it from the screen itself," she explains.

But is the trend moving in such a way that the presentation is more important than the final taste? To this, Ambica Selvam, another food stylist says, "There have been instances where clients ask me to add a particular element to the final picture through photo-shop. They would ask in such a way that they know the food is bad, but in order to sell, you make it look good. But I don't take up such work because it's not fair on my part to deceive the customers. However, if everything is done right, the food will also taste as good as it looks," She also



ATTRACTIVE 'Blue lagoon-purple cabbage consome' by Ashwin.



Ashwin Iyer



Farrukh



(Above) 'Sulaimani chai' by Ambica and (below right) 'Chicken curry' by Farrukh.



Ambica Selvam



Anila Kurian

A slice too many

The festive season is upon us and calories are smiling at you from everywhere in the form of attractive cookies, appetising cakes, wines and other lip-smacking drinks. Leftover pie-slices and tasty tarts in the refrigerator keep inviting you to indulge. With food a big part of the Yuletide season, one tends to binge a tad bit more. However, health and wellness experts are there to help one keep away from excessive holiday eating and keep an eye on their health.

Anamika Gonsalvez, a young professional, says that it is difficult to stay away from sweet treats of the season like rose cookies and plum cakes. "I keep my family and friends informed that I follow a particular diet so that they do not bring sweets or thick concentrated wines as gifts. Also, whenever I go for a party, I watch whatever I eat," she says. She stays away from dinner parties and attends events which have games and socialising.

"There is dancing, talking and games, so the concentration on food is minimal. Also, if it is a potluck dinner party, which I cannot avoid, I make it a point to take healthy snacks for everyone," she adds.

Health experts like Dr Priyanka Rohatgi, chief clinical dietician with Apollo Hospitals, says that keeping oneself hydrated is important during the festive season. "When one binges uncontrollably, one should remember to drink a lot of water. If you are hydrated enough, you will binge less. It is also important to exercise regularly," she says.

She adds that it is important to keep a tab on the number of

footsteps one takes through a day during this time.

"There are so many apps that one can access to keep a tab on this. An average human needs to walk 10,000 footsteps which can be monitored on a pedometer app. So, when you closely monitor it and find that you've walked only 2,000 or 3,000 steps, you will make an effort to do the same," she says.

When headed to a party, "it is always better to eat something and go. When you are hungry, you end up eating much more and consuming anything that is available," she says.

Priyanka adds that "one should concentrate on foods that are lesser in sugar content. Don't skip the meal and jump to the desserts directly. Always pick up some healthy snacks and then the main course meal, after which one can have minimal desserts. Portion control should also be adhered to. Also, remember to hydrate oneself throughout the meal with lime juice or fruits," she says.

Protein-rich food like chicken or 'paneer' dishes, which are not visibly greasy, would be good options to have and avoid consuming 'maida'-based



Priyanka



Ranjani Raman

snacks, she points out. "Too much sweet in a meal item or dessert is also a bad option. Beverages like wines or other drinks should also be avoided or consumed carefully. Fruit drinks are the best way to go," says Priyanka.

She says that she has heard of cases of 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' where people haven't eaten healthy and feel tired throughout the day. "The best quick fix to this is hydrating oneself with electrolytes." She adds that when one has consumed a heavy meal loaded with carbohydrates, they are bound to feel sleepy. "The right balance of everything is important. Also, the moment one feels half-full, stop eating."

Others like Ranjani Raman, dietician and nutrition consultant, says that it is that part of the year, when there is a box of sweets or junk food around one always and people are tempted easily.

"It is a big challenge to steer away from sweets during this time, but one can choose the ones they eat. Instead of having completely fried food or extremely sugar-high sweets, it is better to indulge in milk and jaggery-based sweets, which are nutritious too, though they are high in calo-

Festive fitness

- Keep yourself hydrated through the binging season.
- Have a light meal before attending a party.
- Understand the number of calories in each dish or dessert.
- Go for cardio-exercises to burn calories consumed.

ries," she says. She adds that even dryfruit-based sweets are a good option.

"When consuming a sweet, always chew and enjoy each bite thoroughly, so that you feel satisfied. One could have one laddoo or 10 laddoos at one go, but it's all about how you feel."

She adds that it's always best to have a sweet during the first part of the day — mornings or afternoons than during the evenings. "We end up not using calories during the later part of the day, which ends up in depositing as fat," she says.

Others like Shankar SB, who works as a fitness consultant with corporate and wellness clubs in the City says that one needs to understand the amount of calories incurred during consumption, rather than trying to deal with the holiday weight later.

"There are two types of people — the ones who are aware of the amount of calories they are consuming and the others who have a lot of junk food, without understanding the after-effects," he says.

He adds that the latter are the ones "who often settle with the idea of holiday weight and crib or struggle with it after the season."

The safest way, he says is "to be conscious about whatever is going into your body". "If you have a few extra sweets on a particular day, cardio-exercises that will burn the calories is the best way out. Often, many feel that walking is all that is required to burn calories but exercising should be as intensive as consumption," he says.

Tini Sara Anien

'Ruhaniyat'

Connecting different worlds

'Ruhaniyat' will be held on December 19 at the Jayamahahal Palace Hotel. The performers in 'Ruhaniyat' this year include some first-time artists as well as all-time favourites. The basic theme of transcendence will be the thread connecting all performances.

The programme will include 'Gorakhnath to Meera', by Voices from Kutchh which includes Vesabhai Bhopa from Gujarat. 'When hearts connect', an Indo-African production, will be presented by Mamadou Diabate N'agoni (Balafon player/singer from West Africa) with Mir Mukhtiyar Ali (Rajasthan), and Par-



Mamadou Diabate

vathy Baul from West Bengal will present 'Baul songs'. The event will also include 'Qawwali' by Niyazi-Nizami Brothers from Delhi.

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