

# Culinary

## Entrepreneurs

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A magazine for the food, hospitality  
and tourism entrepreneurs by



Vegan hotels

**Dog-friendly  
hospitality**

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hospitality

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Cooking Equipment*

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Guest are looking for places that offer special experiences like farm-to-table dining, vegan food or wellness food.

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Pet-friendly hospitality is booming as travellers seek places that welcome their companion pets like dogs and cats. Many hotels now accommodate companion pets, and some even offer special foods and amenities for dogs and other pets.

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Farm-to-table dining using fresh home-grown ingredients is becoming the buzzword among travellers.

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# Editorial

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The food and hospitality industry is evolving, with guests demanding more and more personalized services.

One of the noticeable global trends in hospitality is the consumer demand for vegan-friendly hotels and restaurants that provide plant-based food, and use cruelty-free toiletries and vegan furnishings

Following the Pandemic, pet-friendly hotels that offer special foods and amenities for dogs and other pets are growing in demand.

Wellness is one of the top trends, driving hotels, resorts and restaurants to include wellness experiences, healthy food and organically-grown produce among their offerings.

Equipment for restaurants, caterers, cloud kitchens, bakeries and food processing factories are incorporating smart features. We interviewed a tech-entrepreneur who talks about how high-speed cooking appliances not only reduce cooking time but also save space, human resources and energy.



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# Vegan-friendly Hospitality

Vegan Hospitality is evolving rapidly, with hotels and homestays adapting to meet the growing demand for plant-based foods. Truly vegan hotels also ensure plant-based amenities, cruelty-free toiletries and furnishings that are free from animal products. We spoke to a few vegan-friendly property promoters.





## Georgia Kontiza

### Owner and Founder of Koukoumi Vegan Boutique Hotel, Mykonos

The inspiration behind Koukoumi Hotel stemmed from a deep-rooted commitment to promoting a lifestyle that harmonizes with nature, respects animal life, and fosters personal well-being.

Recognizing a gap in the hospitality industry for truly vegan and sustainable accommodations, especially in a renowned destination like Mykonos, we envisioned a sanctuary where guests could experience luxury without compromising their ethical values. Our goal was to create a space that embodies authenticity, simplicity, and balance, offering an alternative way of living that is both enjoyable

and compassionate.

Beyond this vision, my inspiration is also deeply personal. My grandmother, Maroulia, had an innate sense of hospitality and warmth, always welcoming foreigners with open arms. Her generosity, kindness, and love for Mykonos shaped my own values and instilled in me a strong desire to preserve and protect our homeland. Through Koukoumi, we honor her legacy by creating a place where guests feel truly at home, embraced by genuine Greek hospitality and a commitment to ethical living.

When we started, the Greek market was not prepared for our strict vegan and eco-friendly

requirements. We required cruelty-free certifications and sustainable products for every aspect of the hotel, from construction to daily operations. Every single object was carefully checked to align with our vegan philosophy—no leather, feathers, wool, plastic water bottles, dairy, eggs, chemical detergents, or synthetic fabrics. Overcoming these challenges meant working closely with like-minded suppliers, educating vendors, and ensuring that everything in Koukoumi met our high ethical and sustainability standards.

Koukoumi Hotel is designed to be a peaceful sanctuary that reflects traditional Myconian architecture infused with modern, boho-chic



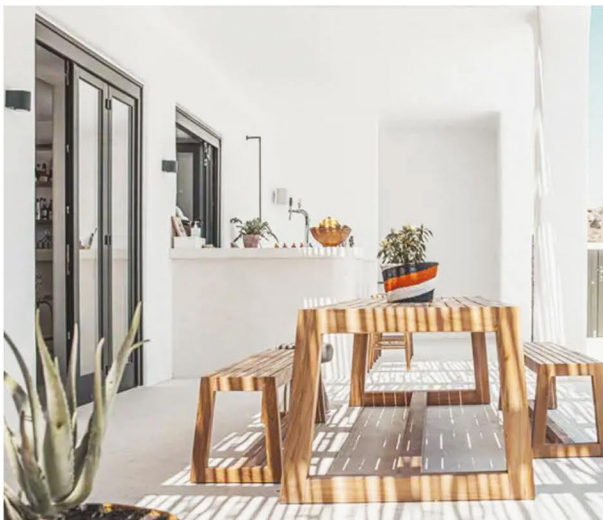


elements. Our suites are adorned with locally sourced materials, promoting sustainability and supporting local artisans. The hotel offers a range of services, including a fully vegan restaurant serving gourmet plant-based cuisine, a spa utilizing organic, cruelty-free products, a well-equipped gym, a sauna, and a serene yoga shala. Guests can also immerse themselves in a variety of holistic experiences, such as yoga and

meditation sessions, handpan music sessions, and outdoor cooking classes near my grandmother Maroulia's house, where we share traditional plant-based recipes passed down through generations. These unique offerings allow guests to connect with Mykonian culture while embracing a wellness-focused lifestyle.

We leveraged digital platforms, including social media channels and

our website, to reach a global audience. Collaborations with travel bloggers, influencers, and media outlets in the vegan and sustainability sectors have amplified our message. Participating in international travel and wellness exhibitions has also provided exposure to niche markets. Additionally, word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied guests have been invaluable in building our reputation.





Our cuisine is not strictly Greek. Our vegan chef Aggeliki Charami constantly explores new flavours and secret ingredients, blending Mediterranean materials, flavours, and aromas with Japanese influences to create an innovative plant-based dining experience. Our different menus are inspired by nature and the paradoxical coexistence of different elements, forming a unique culinary journey. We challenge the way people perceive plant-based cuisine by discovering new flavour paths while maintaining familiar textures—our dishes may reference animal-based meals, but they are entirely plant-based

#### **Our signature dishes include:**

- **Sinless Memory (Satan):** A redefined approach to seitan, packed with umami flavors.
- **Cocoon Bloom (Dumplings):** Exquisitely crafted dumplings with rich, plantbased fillings.
- **Senses Fusion (Ramen):** A Japanese-inspired dish, blending deep flavors with seasonal ingredients.

Additionally, we offer a nine-stage tasting menu, carefully curated to take our guests on a remarkable sensory journey through plant-based



gastronomy. Our restaurant has been awarded the FNL Award for Best International Cuisine Restaurant of the Year 2025, marking a significant milestone in our journey.

Our goal is to continue enhancing guest experiences by introducing new wellness programs, expanding our culinary offerings, connecting with the vegan community and organizing sustainability-focused workshops. Our bigger vision to create new Koukoumi Hotels worldwide, with the backing of international investors who align with our vegan and sustainable mission. This could be an exciting opportunity to grow the brand and spread the philosophy of health, well-being, and respect for tradition. This way Koukoumi would be established as a leader in the vegan luxury hospitality sector, setting new standards in ethical travel.

## VEGAN TRENDS

There is a significant global shift towards veganism and plant-based diets. This movement is driven by increasing awareness of health benefits, environmental sustainability, and ethical considerations regarding animal welfare. As more information becomes accessible, individuals are making conscious choices to adopt lifestyles that are compassionate and environmentally friendly.

Our primary audience includes ethically conscious travelers who prioritize sustainability and wellness. This segment often comprises individuals who follow a vegan lifestyle, environmental enthusiasts, and those seeking holistic well-being experiences. However, we also attract guests who, while not strictly vegan, are open to exploring plant-based diets and eco-friendly practices during their stay.

Our goal is to continue enhancing guest experiences by introducing new wellness programs, expanding our

culinary offerings, connecting with the vegan community and organizing sustainability-focused workshops. Our bigger vision to create new Koukoumi Hotels worldwide, with the backing of international investors who align with our vegan and sustainable mission. This could be an exciting opportunity to grow the brand and spread the philosophy of health, well-being, and respect for tradition. This way Koukoumi would be established as a leader in the vegan luxury hospitality sector, setting new standards in ethical travel.



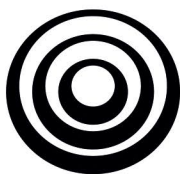
also mainly whole food and sourced locally when possible.

At Kapuhala Sicily, Sicilians are very traditional people when it comes to eating but all my guests love our vegan Eggplant Parmigiana, so this is definitely one of the favourites. Another one is the Mushroom Garden, it's a beautifully presented dish that looks like a small plant in a terra cotta pot.

**Crystal Lee**  
Director , Kapuhala  
(Koh Samui , Sicily &  
Hong Kong)

We wanted to open a hotel that can give an experience of how we wanted to enjoy our own holidays. Kapuhala Koh Samui is a sustainable and plant-based hotel, with a focus on health and longevity. It promotes sports and offers fitness and yoga classes.

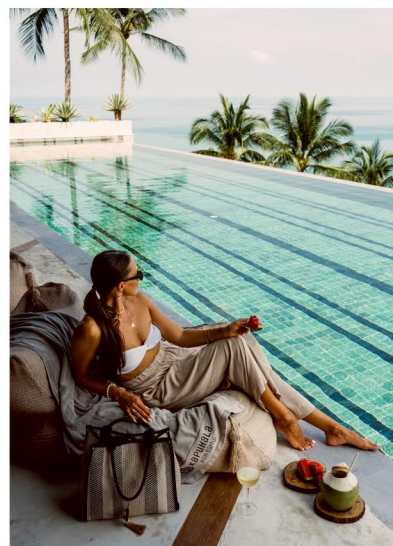
We believe if we help guests to set their good habits they will continue to keep up with the healthy lifestyle even after their stay with us.



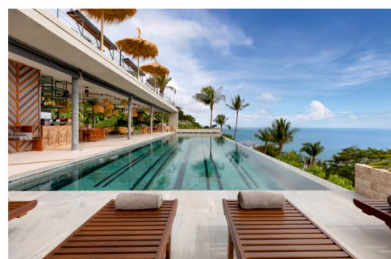
**KAPUHALA**  
KOH SAMUI

We are plant-based ourselves so this is something we really believe in rather than just following a trend. My culinary teacher is the executive chef of a Michelin green star restaurant in Milan, so I've learned a lot from him to create exciting dishes with all sorts of vegetables. Our menu is not just plant-based, it's

We always keep an inclusive approach to curious diners who are not already plant-based. We don't preach them, but we communicate







the concept of vegan dining through great food, then they realise it's not that hard. If more people can eat "vegetables only" for at least 2,3 times a week, we will already make a huge positive impact in the world.

We already received our first recognition in "Wellness Cuisine" by Destination Deluxe but we hope to keep doing what we are doing and spread our plant-love to different places in the world!



## VEGAN TRENDS

Veganism is definitely growing. We run two vegan-vegetarian restaurants in two different parts of the world so we can see this trend in different ways. People become plant-based for different reasons, either for the environment or the animals or themselves. All of which are very valid and straight forward reasons why we should not consume meat.







## Padmini Smetacek. The Retreat, Bhimtal

We have been an omnivore homestay since 1959. We added numerous vegan options when vegan guests visited (including Shivya Nath the travel blogger, several times), and because my daughters became vegans one by one since 2013 - we still serve non-vegetarian and dairy-based food as well to guests who wish it. We also serve gluten-free meals, and customise other dietary restrictions too. I try to create vegan alternatives for everything. We have preserved the 170-year-old house, a classic colonial tea-estate bungalow, made simply of local materials using vernacular wall-building techniques, and its surroundings in their original condition - which were eco-friendly



to start with. We have the greatest variety of local trees and the best preserved collection of huge old deodars and cypresses in Bhimtal and around it.

We preserve a large tract of forest, have wild grounds with numerous local tree species and have no fences, so local flora and fauna have space to thrive. We try to fight forest fires, since almost every summer people do set forests on fire, and prevent them from reaching the eco-valuable forest of cypress and the



mixed broadleaf forest that grew over former tree terraces by simply leaving those 10-15 acres undisturbed from 1951 onwards (it is a habitat for brown wood owls, pheasants and numerous bird species; insects and Lepidoptera (the late Fred Smetacek Sr and his







son Peter Smetacek both renowned lepidopterists); mammals including leopards, yellow-throated martens, sambhar, muntjac, porcupines, langurs, and more.

We are low-waste, low-consumption. Sustainability practices include minimal power usage, e.g., no unnecessary outdoors light (these waste power and disturb wildlife), recycling of laundry and kitchen waste water; composting, waste segregation, etc.

We grow our own herbs, salads and some vegetables in an organic garden.

The Wood-burning stove in the sitting room reduces power consumption while efficiently

heating the room using dead wood collected from our forest and fallen trees on estate, and trimmings of pruned trees. We are actively engaged with the villages on the estate (settled with gift deeds to land by my father-in-law in the 1950s) and other local villages of the area, and buy their produce, encourage women's and young people's enterprise, etc.

We offer a range of vegan food. For breakfast guests can have **French toast, crepes, pancakes, and even vegan versions of scrambled eggs and burji, with home-made preserves and spreads. We offer a variety of Indian food like chickpea, rajma and soy kebabs with**



**accompaniments, and Indian curries. Some of our other culinary specialties are the potato salad, rissoles, Lebanese and Italian meals, Czech goulash (a family recipe), Veg and soy pie, Korean and Thai dishes. We have carrot cake, chocolate cake, Italian upside-down apple cake, chocolate pudding, cheesecake, etc, all of them vegan.**





# Pet-friendly Hospitality





## Emerald Trail

Leena Dutta  
Co-Founder

In 2005, a weekend getaway to Jungaliagaon, Bhimtal, turned into a life-changing moment for Sumith Dutta. A corporate executive caught up in the fast-paced, high-stress world, he found himself instantly captivated by the untouched beauty and serenity of the Kumaon hills. In that moment, he knew he had discovered his true calling. With a vision to create employment for local villagers and embrace a simple, self-sustainable lifestyle in harmony with nature, he laid the foundation for Emerald Trail. Originally conceived as a green

haven for stress-free living, a decade later, it evolved into Uttarakhand's premier pet-friendly resort—where dogs, rabbits, cows, birds, and bees thrive, and guests

can immerse themselves in nature, coexisting peacefully with the wild. What sets Emerald Trail apart is its commitment to space and tranquility. Unlike typical hill



**P**et-friendly Hospitality is a growing trend in tourism. *Pet-friendly hotels are growing in demand as pet owners look for places to take their pets. The Pandemic increased the demand for hotels that welcome pets as people were forced to travel with their dogs and cats. Hotels started getting special requests from guests who were either fed up of staying indoors and needed a staycation or were relocating to a new place, and were short of choices to find friendly and safe spaces for their pets. The trend is evolving fast as the pet market itself is growing rapidly in India.* We spoke to a couple of pet-friendly hosts about their experiences.



resorts, Emerald Trail offers just 10 exclusive accommodations. Among them is a villa with four bedrooms, complete with a living and dining area, while the rest are lush cottages. Each cottage is surrounded by nearly 10,000 square feet of gardens and lawns, giving guests the feeling of a private retreat for their stay.

Additionally, Emerald Trail boasts a unique leash-free pet policy, allowing pets to roam, play, and

relax freely under the cool sun. As passionate pet-lovers ourselves, we noticed early on the growing demand for pet-friendly accommodations. Initially, we didn't aggressively market Emerald Trail as a pet-friendly destination, but word of mouth gradually spread. Recognizing this, we decided to actively refine and tailor our offerings to meet the needs of pet families. We introduced thoughtful amenities such as pet beds, a special pet menu, pet bowls, and



toys, ensuring that pet parents wouldn't need to pack extra items when staying with us. This approach has made Emerald Trail a haven for travellers who cherish vacationing with their furry companions. Issues and challenges with managing a pet friendly property? When you're passionate about what you do, managing day-to-day operations becomes a joy. Pet owners instantly fall in love with Emerald Trail, and we are fortunate to have many loyal guests who return year after year.







We've had the pleasure of watching puppies grow, mature, and even return as senior companions.

At Emerald Trail, we go above and beyond to pamper both our pet guests and their human families, creating a truly memorable experience for all.

Pets enjoy free accommodation at Emerald Trail—we don't charge a single rupee for their stay. We have a vet who works specially for us. We also alert them on the travel details if they are coming in a car which

involves more than 10 hours of drive time. Beyond this, we arrange picnics, treks, and other outings that pet families can enjoy together, creating unforgettable experiences for both pets and their humans.

There are countless heartwarming stories, but one, in particular, brings tears to my eyes even today—the story of a golden retriever. A couple first visited Emerald Trail in 2012 with their retriever pup, and over the years, it became a constant in their lives. Every year, they returned with their pet, celebrating special

occasions like their child's first birthday and escaping Delhi's pollution to enjoy Diwali here. Emerald Trail had become their second home. After the pandemic, we received a call from the couple. Their beloved retriever was critically ill, they said she wouldn't make it, and they wished to spend her final days in a place she loved. They stayed for nearly two weeks, giving her the comfort and peace of Emerald Trail. When she passed, they chose to bury her here, alongside our own pets—Russi, Ringo, and Piya. This story, like







many others, is a testament to the deep connections and lasting memories our guests create at Emerald Trail.

Our entire team of Lalit Mohan, Prakash Chandra, Kailash Arya, Chef Deepa Devi, etc are committed to ensuring a good stay for guests, including those who come with their pets.

## Pet-Friendly Tourism Trends

Sumith Dutta & Leena Dutta

*Research indicates a significant surge in the pet industry, particularly in the post-pandemic era. The industry is projected to grow at an impressive 19% annually, making it one of the*

*fastest-growing sectors globally. With an estimated 20 million pet dogs and 5.5 million domestic cats, the current industry value stands at \$900 million.*

*At Emerald Trail, we've witnessed this trend firsthand. The increasing demand for pet-friendly vacations year-on-year highlights the growing need for high-quality pet*







retreats—a clear testament to how much pet families value these experiences.

Transparency is absolutely essential when it comes to pet-friendly travel. I strongly recommend that pet parents do their homework before booking. Start by calling the hotel or resort

directly and asking all the right questions—such as whether pets are allowed to stay in the same room as their owners, what amenities are available, and which services are chargeable. It's important to note that some properties advertise themselves as pet-friendly but may house pets in separate areas or provide sub-

standard accommodations.

Ensuring clarity on these aspects will help travellers choose the best and most comfortable experience for their furry companions.

If you don't truly love pets, don't venture into running a pet-friendly place. The bond between pets and humans is incredibly special, and to create a space that honours that bond, you need to be 100% invested. It requires understanding the details and nuances of what it takes to operate a pet-friendly establishment. Equally important is transparency. If your property lacks certain amenities, be upfront and communicate this to potential guests before they book. Pet parents go the extra mile to bring their beloved companions on vacation, and their primary goal is for their pets to enjoy the experience. Making false promises not only disappoints them but also negatively impacts the reputation of your establishment.





## Shel, Ladakh

Hajra Ahmad  
Resident Manager

Shel was conceptualized to make something that perfectly bridges ancient wisdom with today's technology, a homestay that blends perfectly with its environment and the surrounding outdoors.

We are located on the banks of the Indus and the marshes which are a great spot for birding. We give the entire house as one so even if one person books a room, the entire house is blocked for them thus ensuring complete privacy and



exclusive access to the house and its areas. Essentially it becomes like a private home for families or friends Travelling together.

We are all pet lovers and animals have always been a part of our lives. Also having seen the feral dog issue in Ladakh first hand, we focus on helping with the stray dogs as much as possible. Our guests can give a



voluntary donation at the end of their stay towards Live to Love which we match to help them in their endeavour to rehabilitate injured and rescued animals.







co-existence with visiting guests' pets.

We treat pets as guests so they have all the facilities our guests have. This means their food is made by our chef based on their preferences, they are provided with welcome drinks on arrival and they receive housekeeping services, just like a guest would.



We have three dogs of our own, so the challenge can be if they don't get along with our visiting pets. While our dogs do not come inside the house, we try to ensure a peaceful

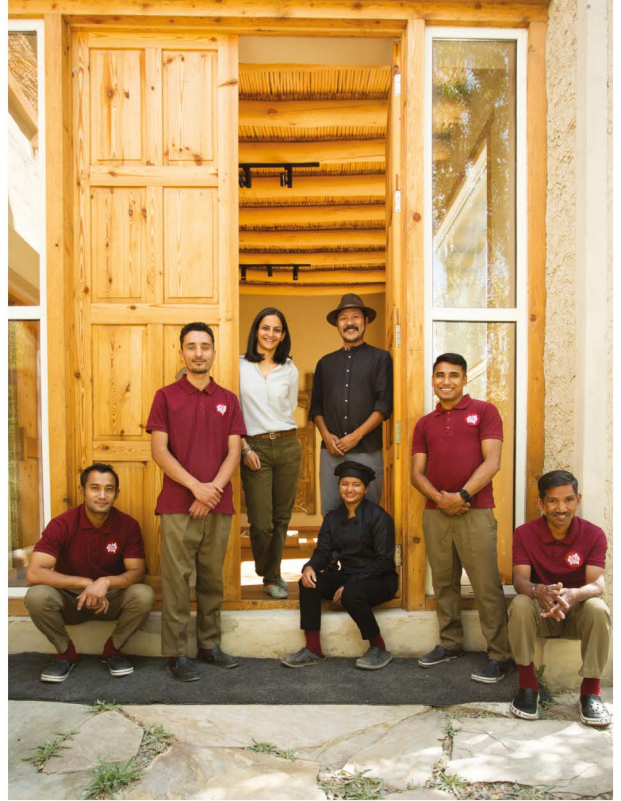
## Pet-Friendly Tourism Trends

Hajra Ahmad,  
Resident Manager, Shel

*Personally we find a lot of people now treat pets as their family members so for us to provide an equal level of hospitality is what we feel will be a growing trend.*







*Since pets are like family members, being transparent about all their requirements and all our provisions ensures a good stay for the pet parents.*

*For anyone planning to open their properties as pet-friendly or even pet-accommodative must think about everything it entails. It might sound easy to say pet-friendly but people are extremely sensitive about their pets and any mistakes in their treatment can affect your image.*





# *Cooking Treats* **FOR DOGS**



## **Shirley Dhudha**

My enterprise specialising in food for dogs was inspired when I had my own labrador who would drool over the food we were eating, often leaving what was made for him. We could not give him the cakes and pizzas as they were not good for him. I began to make dog-friendly versions of the items we were having to satisfy him.



I was earlier planning a food photography career after my bachelor's degree in psychology but found I had a limited talent for photography and more for cooking. I attended culinary school with Florence Academy in Ahmedabad. After that I worked with Taj hotels, L'artiste institute of culinary arts and

Novotel Ahmedabad. It was while working with Novotel Ahmedabad that the hotel decided to become pet-accommodative and even pet-friendly. They developed a menu called Yummy Licks. This gave me the opportunity to get a better insight into cooking for dogs.

I started my own enterprise of cooking food for dogs. I consulted a veterinarian for advice about how to make balanced diets for dogs and decide the meals depending on the breeds. Our dogs, cats and other companion pets become cherished members of our families. As we share moments of joy and treat, it's essential to be mindful of their unique dietary needs. For example, lactose intolerance, a condition affecting the ability to digest milk and dairy products, is a surprisingly common concern in dogs. I had experienced it with labradors. But, in many vegetarian households, milk is given as a major part of the diet.

For marketing my services, I contacted dog hostels where I could connect with pet owners. These places also regularly host dog birthdays and dog parties for which I started getting orders from these dog hostels and pet-friendly facilities.







I work on developing attractive-looking dishes for dog parties. I propose to develop this profession further for making home-made pet foods.

## Pupcakes

Dog cupcakes made with banana and peanut butter, potato made creamy with buttermilk, will be loved by your dogs, especially the smell.

Yield : 6-7 Pupcakes

## Ingredients

Rice flour – 1 ½ cup

Baking Powder – 1 tsp

Eggs – 2

Peanut Butter – ½ cup Banana

(ripened and mashed) – 1

Milk/water/buttermilk – as required

## Method

- In a bowl add the flour and baking powder. You can mix wheat flour in half the quantity to rice flour if your dog eats wheat regularly.

• While we mix the ingredients, preheat the oven to 170 degrees(Celsius). Take another mixing bowl and crack two eggs. Beat the eggs with an electric beater until they fluff.

- Now add the mashed banana and ½ cup loosened peanut butter. The peanut butter has the tendency to get stiff so put it in the microwave for 10-20 seconds and then add it to the mixture.

• Next, beat the mixture well until it is creamy. At this point you can add carrot, potatoes, minced chicken or any of your dog's favourite ingredients.

• Now add the flour and baking powder mixture and gradually mix it with a hand whisk or spatula. Add water/milk/buttermilk as required. The consistency should be similar to dosa batter.

• Take a cupcake tray and place the liners.

• Sift your pupcake batter to a piping bag.



• Pour approximately 35-40 gms batter in each liner.

• Place the batter in the preheated oven and bake for 22-25 minutes. The timing may vary in accordance with the oven voltage. You can prick one of the pupcake and check if done.

• Add some mashed bananas/potatoes and peanut butter.

• Transfer it to a piping bag with any decorative nozzle of your choice and frost the pupcakes once they completely cool down.



# Hospitality Edu Trends

**Popularly known as Chef Thiru or Chef K. Thiru, Chef K.**

Thirugnanasambantham worked with Taj Group of Hotels, Residency Group of Hotels, Blue Hill Food Products, and other companies before joining Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration (WGSHA). Out of 25 years at WGSHA, he served for four years as Vice Principal and six years as Principal. Today, he is the founding Dean of the School of Hospitality Management, the upcoming world-class hospitality school at Mahindra University, Hyderabad. He talked to Ankita Sharma about how institutions can prepare chefs for the future.





### **How do you see technology as a disruptive force in the hospitality industry?**

At the School of Hospitality Management, Mahindra University, we see technology playing a transformative role in the hospitality industry, and we are committed to preparing our students to thrive in this evolving landscape.

Our focus is on a multi-disciplinary curriculum, classroom engagement, and mentoring, which allows us to integrate cutting-edge technological advancements into our programs. We are proud to offer unique and futuristic subjects such as AI in Hospitality and Culinary Management, Culinary Biotechnology, Culinary Pharmacology, Revenue Optimization, and F&B Data Analytics. These subjects are designed to equip students with the skills to navigate and leverage technological innovations in the industry.

Our experienced faculty members, supported by advanced labs, industry-standard training software, and simulated games, ensure that students receive hands-on learning experiences that mirror real-world scenarios. This blend of technology, innovation, and mentorship not only

enhances their technical capabilities but also prepares them to address the challenges and opportunities of a technology-driven hospitality industry.

By integrating technology into our curriculum and pedagogy, we aim to empower our students to become future-ready leaders in hospitality and culinary management.

### **What are the future trends you foresee in the food service industry?**

Over the next 5-10 years, the hospitality industry will experience significant changes driven by evolving consumer preferences, technological advancements, and sustainability initiatives. Here are some key trends and how aspiring chefs can prepare for them:

#### **Some key trends:**

**Sustainability**

With growing awareness of environmental issues, eco-friendly dining and zero-waste kitchens will become essential. Chefs must embrace sustainable cooking techniques, ethical sourcing, and efficient kitchen management to meet these expectations.

#### **Technology in Culinary Operations**

AI, kitchen automation, and data analytics will redefine culinary



processes and guest experiences. Chefs should familiarize themselves with tools like food management software, menu optimization systems, and emerging innovations like 3D food printing.

#### **Health and Integrative Nutrition**

Increasing health consciousness will elevate the demand for wellness-focused meals. Integrative nutrition, functional foods, and culinary pharmacology will play a critical role. Chefs should build expertise in creating menus that address nutritional and health needs.

#### **Experience Dining with Hyper-Local Focus**

The demand for experiential dining will soar, with an emphasis on hyper-local ingredients and culturally rooted dishes. Chefs should master the art of blending local authenticity with global



culinary techniques to deliver memorable dining experiences.

### **Curating Unique and Personalized Offerings**

Personalization will dominate the hospitality landscape, with bespoke food and beverage experiences tailored to individual guest preferences. Aspiring chefs should develop creativity and the ability to use guest insights to craft unique, customized menus.

### **Culinary Globalization with Local Authenticity**

A balance between global trends and local authenticity will continue to shape the culinary industry. Chefs must have the versatility to innovate globally while honouring regional culinary traditions.

### **What are your career tips for young chefs?**

For young chefs starting their careers in the culinary field, here is my advice based on years of experience:

#### **Focus on the Basics**

Mastering the fundamentals of cooking is essential. A strong foundation in culinary techniques, flavours, and kitchen management will serve as the bedrock for your growth.

#### **Think Beyond the Traditional Career Path**

The culinary world is evolving rapidly, with opportunities in food styling, culinary entrepreneurship, food technology, and more. Be open to exploring unique avenues within the industry.

#### **Learn Your Family Recipes**

Your family's recipes are a treasure

trove of tradition, culture, and authenticity. Take the time to learn and perfect these dishes—they are your culinary heritage.

### **Record Your Grandmother's and Mother's Recipes**

Documenting these recipes is invaluable. They carry generations of wisdom and often provide unique techniques and flavours that can inspire modern innovations.

### **Stay Updated on General Knowledge and Industry Trends**

Keep yourself informed about what's happening around the world in the hospitality and culinary industries. Understanding best practices, new trends, and innovations will keep you ahead in your career.

### **Work on Improving Your Skills**

Never stop learning and sharpening your skills. Whether it's mastering a new cuisine, understanding modern plating techniques, or working with advanced kitchen tools, continuous improvement is key.

### **Be Resilient and Patient**

The culinary field is demanding, but perseverance and patience will help you succeed. Embrace challenges as opportunities to grow and stay committed to your passion.



By following these principles, young chefs can build a fulfilling and successful career while contributing meaningfully to the ever-evolving culinary world.

**What strategies or initiatives would you suggest for institutions to provide more holistic and experiential learning opportunities for aspiring chefs in the hospitality industry?**

To enhance holistic and experiential learning for aspiring chefs in the hospitality industry, institutions can integrate global virtual classrooms and emphasize soft skills development through the following strategies:

**Introduce Global Virtual Classrooms**

• **Collaborative International**

**Learning:** Partner with culinary schools and chefs worldwide to host virtual masterclasses, workshops, and group projects. Students can exchange ideas and learn diverse culinary practices and global hospitality trends.

• **Real-Time Case Studies:** Use virtual classrooms to simulate real-world challenges in hospitality management, such as menu innovation, supply chain issues, or cultural adaptations.

• **Cultural Exchange Forums:** Create online spaces where students from different regions discuss traditional cuisines, sustainability practices, and customer preferences, fostering global perspectives.

**Focus on Soft Skills Development**

**Teamwork and Leadership Training:**

Facilitate group projects and team-based culinary challenges to develop collaboration and leadership skills.

Introduce role-playing activities to simulate real kitchen scenarios, such as leading a team during a dinner rush.

**Communication and Customer**

**Interaction:** Conduct workshops on effective communication, active listening, and conflict resolution, particularly for interacting with colleagues and guests.

Train students to present dishes professionally and narrate their culinary stories to engage diners.

**Problem-solving and Adaptability:**

Design simulations for high-pressure situations, such as equipment failure or unexpected changes in event menus, to build resilience and quick decision-making.

**Emotional Intelligence (EQ):** Offer courses in self-awareness, stress management, and empathy, crucial for working in fast-paced, high-pressure environments.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** Teach students to respect diverse cultural norms and dietary preferences to excel in multicultural hospitality settings.

**Combine Global Virtual Classrooms and Soft Skills Development**

**Virtual Collaboration Projects:** Have students work across borders to plan and execute menus or events, requiring cultural awareness, effective communication, and teamwork.

**Soft Skills Assessments:** Use global classroom settings to simulate international team collaborations and assess interpersonal skills, adaptability, and conflict management.

By integrating global virtual classrooms and a structured focus on soft skills, institutions can create chefs who are not only technically proficient but also culturally aware, emotionally intelligent, and equipped to thrive in the global hospitality industry.

# A FARM-TO-TABLE EXPERIENCE

*Farm-to-Table Meals are growing in demand as they combine home-grown produce, local sourcing, experiential dining, and sustainable practices.*

*Jharna Thakkar and Rohan Fernandes gave up fast-paced city life when they moved from Mumbai to Uran, where they now run Fernandes Wadi as a homestay and practice agriculture. The homestay has become famous for its farm-to-table meals.*







Says Rohan, “my grandfather James Heredia, moved to Uran. He bought this property with the idea of creating a slice of Goa for himself close to Mumbai”. The house has three bedrooms: the master room with a balcão, and two upstairs overlooking South Mumbai’s skyline in the distance, and the Dronagiri mountain. They are done up with four-poster beds, hotel-grade linen, and are fully air-conditioned. A balcão runs around the front of the house, leading towards a screened dip pool with sun beds.

Says Jharna, “I have experience working in restaurants and restaurant kitchens, together with editorial and publishing. Rohan is an ex-advertising professional. We decided to move to Uran where he became an experimental farmer and has been christened the ‘nariyal king’ of the village. We started this homestay, where we happily spend

time with guests discussing topics as diverse as pets, food, farming, politics, etc. Rohan takes guests around his small farm to see the produce from raddish to pok choi”.

She says her menu for each meal is expansive, seeking inspiration from her Kutchi roots, Rohan’s Goan roots, and local Maharashtrian and coastal cuisine. “For our simple, farm-to-table lunch or dinner, we serve a seasonal spread in a table d’hôte format. No menu, just a personally curated, table of the host meal, where nature decides the vegetable, catch or meat of-the-day,” she explains, “each meal may include Kutchi and Gujarat dishes, Goan dishes and perhaps something Marathi or coastal”.

She says, they ask for 48 hours notice for the full farm-to-table culinary experience, barbecue when the season is favourable, and even Asian and Western dishes. “Popti is a one-pot harvest special dish of the Konkan coastal region that we serve in the appropriate season”, she



explains, “ Simply said, our farm-to-table meal, what we’re most known for is made up of a salad, a vegetable of the season, a dal and 1 non vegetarian dish. Besides, we serve local vada, kolam rice, roti or bhakri with pickles and dessert. Popular dishes include Goa Sausage chilli fry, Kutchi dahi mango kadi, Parsi tamatar nu saar and our salads like Khamang kakdi kachumber, Gajar ane Shimla jo Kachumber and Mooli pata Koshumbir.





# RAPID COOKING APPLIANCES

*One of the most significant trends in kitchen equipment is the integration of multiple cooking technologies into a single appliance to reduce cooking times while ensuring evenly cooked and high-quality dishes. The demand for these high-speed appliances is increasing, driven by the ability to cook dishes faster than traditional methods, energy efficiency, improved use of space, and the efforts of manufacturers to enhance the user-interface, compact and modular designs and safety features. They are also customised for the need of commercial users.*

**Sanandan  
'Sandy' Sudhir,  
Inventor,  
On2Cook talks  
about his rapid  
cooking  
appliance.**



**CE: After completing your education in design and technology and working in healthcare, what motivated you to create solutions for the food industry?**

SS: I have always been an inventor at heart—a designer, an innovator passionate about making a positive difference in the world. Early on, I explored various paths, yet the food industry captured my attention because I saw it as being remarkably stagnant. In many parts of the world, particularly in Asian cooking, we have relied on the same methods for centuries: using a gas flame, placing ingredients in a pot, making masala or gravy, and then stirring everything for a long time to ensure proper cooking and flavour. This traditional process often relies on intuition rather than precise temperature and timing, unlike Western cooking appliances such as ovens.

My personal experiences further spurred my interest in food innovation. When I moved to Bangalore from the North for work, I struggled to adjust to the local cuisine. Eating out daily became taxing on my palate, so I tried cooking for myself. Using a microwave with an Indian recipe book was not very successful—Indian dishes weren't designed for that. Meanwhile, cooking entirely on gas



led to overcooking or undercooking. Eventually, I found a hybrid approach: partially cooking vegetables and meats in the microwave, while preparing the masala on the stovetop. This provided better control, taste, and texture.

However, life changed after marriage when I shifted back to conventional eating habits—either meals prepared by others or restaurant buffets, which often left me dissatisfied. This contrast between the quality of my hybrid-cooked dishes and overcooked buffet food inspired me to develop a new, more efficient cooking product. Despite working at a technology centre with access to cutting-edge appliances, I realized I couldn't pursue my idea there, so I made the leap to leave my job and dedicate myself full-time to creating what

eventually became On2Cook.

**CE: What were the biggest challenges in starting the company and developing the pilot models of On2Cook?**

SS: The biggest challenge was funding. Our concept—combining flame-based and microwave cooking—was perceived as radical in a market that, at the time, favoured simpler app-based or software-centric startups. I pitched to multiple avenues, but “deep tech” cooking





innovation wasn't immediately compelling to investors. To bootstrap, my wife Jyoti and I started a consulting firm called Invent India, and we funnelled our earnings into On2Cook prototypes—investing around 4–5 crores in R&D before securing outside funding.

We refined the product through rapid prototyping and embracing a culture of constant iteration. Each failure taught us valuable lessons, and our resilience ultimately pulled us through. We believed wholeheartedly in the impact On2Cook would have and refused to give up.

**CE: What makes the On2Cook device so different from conventional cooking methods, and what are its main benefits for both domestic and food service users?**

**SS:** On2Cook is designed to cook food precisely—no overcooking, no undercooking. This precise control helps maintain vitamins, nutrients, moisture, colour, and texture. Adding water unnecessarily can leach out water-soluble vitamins, and excessive heat can degrade nutrients like vitamin C and B. With On2Cook, you can quickly cook just enough to ensure safety without sacrificing flavour or nutrition.

One of the most tedious tasks in cooking is constant stirring to prevent burning. On2Cook automates this by offering consistent stirring at adjustable speeds. You can also add moisture or steam as needed to perfect your dish. Induction and/or microwaves can be balanced for the right amount of heat at the right time. This simplifies cooking while improving consistency. You can reduce cooking

time by up to 70%. For example, baking a cake can be done in just six minutes at a cost of around 3 rupees in an Indian household. Conventional baking might require preheating plus about 30 minutes of baking time—resulting in significantly higher energy costs (20–25 rupees). This has a remarkable impact on energy bills for both homes and commercial kitchens.

Commercial kitchens can benefit from cutting their cooking space by half and their energy bills by more than half. Food yield can increase by 15–20%, and oil absorption is cut by about 30% compared to standard deep-frying methods. Additionally, there's less stress for staff since devices don't need to be on all day. On2Cook also allows you to cook directly from frozen ingredients, eliminating the need to defrost—a key advantage in fast-paced



environments like restaurant chains or airport kiosks. On2Cook is a 6-in-1 device, integrating the functionalities of a microwave, induction cooktop, steamer, OTG, griller, and even an air fryer or deep fryer. By eliminating the need for multiple pieces of equipment, kitchens become more efficient and cost-effective. We are finalizing an app that will complement On2Cook with recipe presets, cooking guides, real-time control features etc.

**CE: How did you eventually secure funding?**

SS: It was exciting to present on television, but On2Cook was still pre-revenue at that point, and our valuation seemed too high for investors looking for immediate returns. Most companies that received funding on the shows were Direct-to-Consumer brands already generating revenue. Although we didn't secure funding on the show, the exposure was invaluable. Later, we received investment from Desai Ventures and supportive friends and family. Dr. Mayur Desai, in particular, has been an instrumental backer, recognizing how challenging it is to invest in deep tech with only a prototype and patents on hand. Their confidence allowed us to move forward with production and refine the product.

**CE: Which restaurant or food project collaboration has given you the greatest satisfaction so far?**

SS: Collaborating with Wow! Momo has been particularly rewarding. For about six months, we worked together to perfect how momos and related dishes cook in On2Cook. The results were fantastic, and we are now in over 20 of their outlets, looking to scale further. Another gratifying project is installing On2Cook devices at airport food outlets. Because our method doesn't require large chimneys and extensive exhaust systems, we are able to provide cooking options in areas with strict regulations. Solving these real-world problems for both high-volume and specialized kitchens keeps us inspired.

**CE: What's next for your cooking technology business?**

SS: We are looking to scale and cover 10 countries over the next three years, focusing on both B2B and B2C markets. In the United States, we have nearly finalized a partnership to drive our B2B expansion and the development of new product lines—innovations that will greatly enhance efficiency in the food service industry. We will also be launching a competitively priced On2Cook product tailored for

commercial kitchens, aiming to transform the sector from the ground up.

An exciting new dimension we are bringing in is AI-powered automated cooking and recipe generation. This means that, with a tap on the On2Cook app, users can access global recipes, automatically configure cooking parameters, and even let the device make real-time adjustments to heat, moisture, and stirring—all powered by AI. Whether you are in Mumbai, Milan, or Mexico City, you'll be able to recreate traditional local dishes with ease. The AI engine can also recommend recipes based on dietary preferences or ingredient availability, ensuring every meal is both delicious and health-conscious.

Looking ahead, our vision is simple but ambitious: Continue refining and producing devices that combine multiple functionalities to reduce cooking times; Integrate advanced AI-based controls for a more convenient, consistent, and globally informed cooking experience; promote sustainable, nutrient-preserving cooking on a global scale. We hope you will join us on this journey to change how the world cooks—improving food quality, saving time and resources, and transforming kitchen experiences everywhere.

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# A CULTURAL IMMERSION THROUGH CUISINES

## Chef Pankaj Singh Panwar

Executive Chef  
The Westin Resort and  
Spa Himalayas



**Our property stands out due to its commitment to authenticity, wellness, and cultural immersion.**

Having grown up in Tehri Garhwal, I have an in-depth understanding of local ingredients and cooking traditions. My international exposure over a decade has introduced him to global culinary techniques, allowing

for a refined fusion of flavours. With 80% of the kitchen team hailing from Uttarakhand, the restaurant's menu is crafted with an intrinsic understanding of the region's tastes and traditions. My vision is to elevate the region's culinary identity, introducing guests to Garhwali food while refining it for a global audience.

Since its debut in early 2023, The Westin Resort & Spa Himalayas has grown to become a wellness stay that offers a range of cuisine from regional to international.

We highlight the unique flavours of the Himalayas using ingredients like barley, buckwheat, goat meat, madua (finger millet), jangora (barnyard millet), and local herbs. These dishes reflect the traditional foods of the area, offering an immersive cultural experience. Himalayan staples like stinging nettle, horse gram, and local herbs are used by our team.

**By blending these distinct cuisines, we create a comprehensive and memorable dining experience that celebrates the depth of the region's culinary traditions.**

**Our restaurant specializes in authentic Garhwali cuisine, offering dishes deeply rooted in local traditions and ingredients. Some of our top regional dishes:**

**Palak Kandali Ka Saag** – A nutrient-rich dish made from spinach (palak) and stinging nettle (kandali), both



locally sourced. Its unique flavor and health benefits make it a staple in Garhwali households.

**Bhaddu Ki Dal** – A slow-cooked lentil dish prepared in a special vessel called 'bhaddu.' The slow cooking process enhances its flavors, making it a hearty and comforting dish.

**Ghat Dal Ka Paratha** – A stuffed paratha made from horse gram (ghat dal), known for its high protein content and earthy flavor. This dish is both nutritious and deeply satisfying.

**Swala** – A traditional Garhwali snack, this deep-fried stuffed poori

features potatoes and jakhya seeds, offering a delightful crispy texture and rich flavors.

These dishes are signature items as they embody the essence of Garhwali cuisine, showcasing indigenous ingredients and traditional cooking techniques.







We emphasize wellness by offering nutritious food options that align with our focus on Himalayan millets and lentils, both rich in protein and fiber. Our spa and wellness menu includes:

**Millet Salad** – A refreshing mix of Himalayan millets, fresh vegetables, and a light lemon dressing, offering a nutritious yet satisfying option.

**Lentil Soup** – A comforting soup

made with moong dal and masoor dal, seasoned with Himalayan herbs and spices for a wholesome and protein-rich dish.

**Millet and Vegetable Stir-Fry** – A vibrant stir-fry featuring seasonal vegetables and Himalayan millets, cooked with minimal oil and natural herbs.

**Lentil and Millet Patties** – A delicious blend of lentils and millets, lightly spiced and pan-fried, served with a fresh salad or yogurt dip.

**Millet Porridge** – A nourishing breakfast made from Himalayan millets, cooked with almond milk and sweetened with honey, topped with fresh fruits and nuts.

These wellness-focused dishes provide a balanced combination of nutrition and flavor, supporting our guests' well-being.





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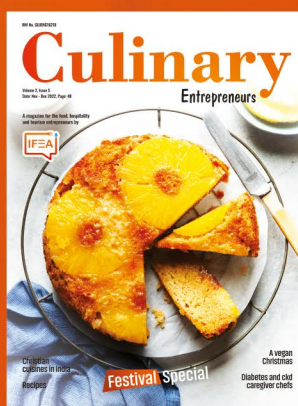
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