

INDIA SWEDEN FOOD TALK

Our Culinary Sambandh !

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Remarks Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Food remains a fascinating topic for discussion anywhere in the world.

Food is central to our lives. In so many ways.

Within families we have our own personal food preferences.

We can immediately identify cuisines from different geographies & cultures - Thai, Indian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Ethiopian, Mexican ...

But we would also **struggle to easily define Indian cuisine.**

At the same time global popular Fast Food chains have also created uniform eating cultures.

Food production, distribution & consumption have huge significance for our **national economies.**
Vast global grain trading networks feed the **fast-growing human population.**

Food habits are linked to our individual health.

Global food production systems & supply chains impact the **health of the entire planet.**

If we look at our past, **cooking with fire defines humans.**

Food is intimately linked to **our collective journey of human civilisation** - from hunter gatherers to farming to urban settlements; from plantation economies to colonisation; from restaurants to fast food franchises; from lab grown foods to startups.

Culture

There is such a wonderful **megadiversity of cuisines** across the world.

It obviously reflects the diversity of **soils, climate, crops, availability of meat or fish, trading networks, and historical influences.** For instance - potatoes or tomatoes in India

But basic cooking processes remain same - grilling with **fire**, cooking with **liquid** in pots, baking bread with **air, fermenting** cheese or beer.

Today, our food reflects our history, geography, culture (and economic status) to a large measure.

Indian food is also unique in terms of its huge diversity and use of different kinds of spices. Our thali also reflects our history and geography.

There is also a rediscovery of our Traditional Knowledge underway. Whether it is local herbs and produce or ways of farming.

In Indian tradition, **Ayurveda** provides a holistic science including science of food. **Organic farming** is making headway. For instance, Sikkim ...

This year was designated as the **International Year of Millets** by the United Nations and FAO at India's initiative. Its revival is necessary as it is a climate smart super food.

Food evokes **memories** - of **growing up**, times spent with **families & friends**; of traditions and **festivals**; or feasts on **marriages** or other special occasions.

Food tells **stories** - of **migrations, conquests, kingdoms**. They remember past versions of globalisations.

Our Inter-connected World

Food & Fertilizers

Bread baskets - Egypt for Roman empire; Ukraine

Spices - global trading networks - Nutmegs, Pepper

Colonial & Plantation economies - Sugar, Coffee, Bananas - slavery; Migration (Mauritius)

Famines - WWII - Bengal

Food Security - When India became an independent nation, we were heavily dependent upon food imports - a legacy of colonial period. Today, India is among the largest producers and exporters of several foodgrains.

Industrial farming

Concentration of food and seed production in a few companies globally.

Massive agricultural **subsidies** especially in developed economies.

Preservation & Packaging

Fast Food Franchises

BigMac Index

Health-Sustainability

The younger generation today is increasingly aware of the impact of **industrial farming & meat production** on **soils, water or carbon emissions and health**. There is growing consumer acceptance for more sustainable solutions.

They are also increasingly moving to more **vegetarian** options, where Indian cuisine has a lot of delicious choices.

Business

Improvement in **logistics** and **digital** services transformation is driving many innovations, including food delivery.

There are new **Startup** trends in plant-based food, precision fermentation, special proteins, use of seaweed, algae and fungi, cloud kitchens, non-alcoholic drinks, personalised nutrition, lab-grown 'meat' and D2C solutions.

All these also offer huge collaboration opportunities between entrepreneurs.

In this social media age, the popularity of shows and vlogs about **Recipes, Restaurants, Diet Plans** involving **influencers** and **celebrities** continues to grow.

In fact, **top Chefs and food critics are Celebrities. Chefs also help build bridges across geographies.**

Our longstanding and growing Culinary Sambandh.

IKEA is also an ambassador for hearty Swedish meals. I understand it offers vegetarian or chicken balls with Indian curry. In Sweden we sometimes offer **Indian style toast Skagen.**

Indian and tropical spices in Swedish cuisine - cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, pepper, saffron

Fika - *Kanebulle* with **Cardamom** - recalls Viking Trading routes

As Christmas approaches we could talk about Swedish **Glögg** that also has cardamom

And the Traditional Christmas recipe **risgrynsöt**, or **rice pudding**

Indian Street Food