

## Unity in Diversity of Food in India

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### ABSTRACT

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Food is considered to be noteworthy aspect of a culture on a magnificent scale. The Traditional cuisine is conveyed from ancestors to the new generation and there on. In addition, it is a channel where regional & cultural identity of a country is been conveyed. Tourism plays an important role for increasing the importance of ethnic cuisines all over the globe and also make people aware about it. The idea of food as a tourist attraction was always considered of prime importance as it had an enormous reason connected with the cultural, geographical, historical & religious place. As India has been portrayed now with its rich historic and cultural importance like never before it has drew curiosity in the minds of many international tourist. It thereby help in boosting the GDP of the Nation. Be it for Yoga where Dietary food plays an important part or Cultural and religious tourism where Sattvika food to Vegan food can drive significance. The Same ingredients can be used wisely in an unique way to get different outputs and hence become a regional or ethnic delicacy. But what unites or makes people nostalgic is the the way the known ingredient taste in different parts of the country and that also creates an feeling of unity. Deriving similarity from Indian cuisine with French or European cuisine, Indian cuisine is always as per taste which differs with every 100

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km in the region. There is no as detailed recipe which is followed, it changes with every household taste. Religious and cultural influences have also played a significant role in determining the food culture of India. Nutritional customs and restrictions vary widely among different communities, with some avoiding certain foods due to religious beliefs or cultural practices. This diversity adds depth and richness to India's culinary landscape, creating a vibrant and dynamic food culture that is constantly evolving. Seasonal and agricultural variations further contribute to the diversity of Indian cuisine. The use of locally sourced, seasonal ingredients is a key feature of Indian cooking, with dishes often tailored to suit the availability of fresh produce. This connection to the land is a central aspect of India's food culture, highlighting the importance of sustainability and traditional agricultural practices. In conclusion, India's food culture is a reflection of its rich history, diverse geography, and multicultural society. It is a celebration of flavors, traditions, and cultural heritage, making it one of the most vibrant and diverse food cultures in the world.

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## **Introduction**

India's food culture is a vibrant mosaic of culinary traditions that reflects the country's deep-rooted diversity and ethnic legacy. From the Snowy mountains of the Himalayas in the north to the Sea and backwaters of Kerala, India's geography and history have given rise to a rich tapestry of flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques.

One of the most striking aspects of India's food culture is its regional diversity. Each region boasts its own unique cuisine, shaped by factors such as climate, geography, and local customs. In the north, the cuisine is characterized by hearty dishes like kebabs and rich curries, often accompanied by bread like naan or roti. In contrast, the cuisine of the south is known for its use of rice, coconut, and spices like mustard seeds and curry leaves.

India's food culture is also deeply influenced by its cultural and religious diversity. Over the centuries, India has been home to a multitude of cultures, each contributing to the country's culinary landscape. From the Mughals who introduced rich, aromatic dishes like biryani and kebabs, to the Portuguese who brought ingredients like tomatoes and chillies, India's food culture is a melting pot of flavors and influences.

India's food culture has been shaped enormously due to its rich cultural and regional history. Hindus, who form the majority of the population, have dietary restrictions that vary according to region and community. For example, many Hindus avoid beef, while others are strict vegetarians. Muslims, on the other hand, do not consume pork, and their cuisine is known for its rich, meaty dishes.

India's food culture is also characterized by its seasonal and agricultural variations. The country's diverse climate and agricultural practices have given rise to a cuisine that is deeply rooted in the land. Dishes are often prepared using locally sourced ingredients, with seasonal produce playing a key role in determining the menu.

In conclusion, India's food culture is a evidence to the nation's opulent history, regional diversity & culinary ingenuity. It is a celebration of flavours, textures, and traditions that have been passed down through generations, making it one of the most vibrant and diverse food cultures in the world.

### **Marketing and Orientation of market**

#### **Ghar Ghar ki Dal**

The concept of dal is so closed to any indian is that it is just the soul food for many of the population. The typical 'tadka' or 'fodni' or 'baghar' is the basic tempering which goes over the boiled and mashed dal or at the start. The tempering can be of different oils as per region or clarified butter with spices namely jeera , mustard seeds and turmeric etc.

The "Amți" concept of Maharashtra derives similarity with the "Sambhar" of Tamil Nadu where in the humble dal is cooked with spices and has a tang element in it .In Maharashtra it is with 'Kokum'(Garcinia indica) that the tanginess comes in to play with jaggery while in Tamil nadu it is with tamarind and jaggery.

The same concept of Tangy and sweet dal in Gujarat is also in close aspects similar with Amti & Sambhar. The Dal is known as "Dal dhokli" where the dhokli is basically the spiced dough which

is been rolled in to sheets, cut and put in the tangy dal.

The Rasam preparation from south also derives similarity with the Katt from Maharashtra which is basically spiced Dal water which is served with Puranpoli(Traditional sweet).

The Urad dal is widely used in south india for the preparation of Morning breakfast items(Idli, Dosae , Vada etc) and also in tempering.

The same Urad dal with skin is used in North India for the famous dal preparation known as “Dal Makhani”or Maa ki dal(with Rajma).

Vataka or Vada through Era's

The dal pakoda is a counterpart of the vada, one of the early traditional Indian dishes that exists in various parts of the nation as bada, vada or bora. The world known food historian KT Achaya mentions that vada was a part of Dharmasutras which mentions vada as coarsely grounded soaked pulses which is fermented and fried in clarified butter.

The Kanji vada or kanjika which is a part of north india food mentions its date back to 12<sup>th</sup> centrey where it was soaked in milk or sour water.

Dahi vada is a famous dish across India where in it is common in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Delhi as Dahi bhalla where the vada can be made of urad or moong dal. The concept of Dahi bada is also common in Assam and Orissa.

The vada which is a famous street food widely common in the parts of Mumbai & Maharashtra made up of spiced potato mixture coated with chick pea flour batter and deep fried. The same vada is termed as Bonda in Karnataka.

Dal Vada also resembles mixture of 2 to 3 pulses soaked, slight fermented and coarsely ground & deep fried to a crunchy texture is widely common in the Southern part of India.

Old Delhi ke Pakode

Unity in diversity in India is so diverse that within a small region you can also find differences in food habits. The well known Kayastha, Khatri and Baniya community prepare the Moong dal

pakoda in 3 distinctive flavours.

Wherein the Kayastha cooks the pakoda in thin gravy which has flavor of amchoor , while the baniya made it in curd base gravy and the khatri in tamarind based.

### **Indian Mithaas**

Indian sweet has its own importance. The variety of Sweets with the significance it carries through the rich history. The laddo marked its presence from 4<sup>th</sup> BC where it had peanuts, jaggery and sesame seeds and used to cure patients. The varieties of laddoos in India are Besan k laddoo, motichoor laddoo, churma k laddoo, Methi k laddoo etc.

The Pitha from Assam also have similar preparations where in it is prepared in Bihu festival with rice flour, jaggery, sesame seeds, coconut etc. Similar preparation of rice flour covering with coconut and Jaggery is made in Maharashtra known as Modak which is also believed to be a offering to Lord Ganesh. The Kozukatta from kerala & Kobbari kova from Andhra resembles the same.

The Patoli from Maharashtra is similar to Modak preparation but is steamed in Turmeric leaves which gives a distinctive flavour to the sweet. El Ada from kerala resembles the same where in it is steamed in banana leaves.

The Payas from Orissa and Assam resembles the Payasam in Kerala and Tamil Nadu which is prepared with rice coconut and jaggery.

The Nimish or Makhan malai or Malaiyyo from Uttar Pradesh derives resembles to Daulat ki Chaat from Delhi which is prepared from milk and is mainly prepared during winter season. It is nice creamy frothy dessert flavoured with saffron or Cardamom.

The simple sweet made out of semolina or suji as it is said in India, termed as halwa in North india which is paired with puri. It is also served as Prasad in many hindu temples.

The same concept is known as Sheera in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kesari rava in Karnataka with ghee and milk as it prominent ingredients.

The Puran poli from maharashtra and Gujarat which is prepared from a stuffing of chana dal and jaggery with the covering made of wheat flour which is been rolled into sheets and roasted on a tawa.

The Hollige preparation derives it resemble from the above puran poli so does the Boli from

Tamil Nadu & Bobbatlu from Andhra and Telangana.

The Karanji Sweet from Maharashtra and Kajjikayalu from Andhra is similar in terms where it is a filling of dry coconut with sugar, semolina and dry fruit encased with dough sheet and deep fried. It is a Traditional sweet.

The Iddiappams from South India and Shevaiyya or Shirvale from Maharashtra is again famous towards the coast area where is served with Sweetened Coconut milk.

The Khaja from Assam is equally popular in Andhra Pradesh which is an ancient recipe where the flattened dough is fried and then dipped into sugar syrup. The Laung Latika from Bengal is similar to it where is made in durgo puja and has a subtle fragrance of clove as the name suggest(Laung).

The Narikolor Laddu shares its similarity with Naralachi wadi from Maharashtra where the predominant ingredient is coconut and sugar.

The Ariselu from Andhra and Anarsa from Maharashtra shares almost the same recipe where the soaked and dried rice powder is used with jaggery and ghee and deep fried. It is served in Diwali in Maharashtra.

The Sankranti festival sees different types of sweets prepared in different regions with sesame seeds and jaggery or sugar known as gajak, tilache ladoo or Nuvvalu Undalu.

The History of food Culture in India is varied and is interlinked to a lot of Ethnic values. The food habits of different age groups also differ and make an impact on the food available.

### **Transformation within Environment and Geographic Demography which unites the Food habits behaviour**

As India has all geographic conditions available in the different states the eating habit tends to be the same as the source of food remains the same as well.

As we talk about the coastal areas the basic ingredient is rice and fish. The Western, Southern as

well as the Eastern part of the country is covered with sea and ocean and hence the eating habits tends to remain the same.

Fish curry and rice resembles the staple food in coastal areas. The oil can change as per the geographic conditions and also due to availability. Towards south the predominant oil is Coconut oil for cooking whereas towards the north east and east it is mustard oil.

The majority of the population in India is Vegetarian and due to the belief in Hinduism most of the people prefer their food to be Sattvika. When it comes to vegetarian the rest of the world feels there is almost nothing to eat , but India on the other hand has an list of veg food item list.

For instance by an humble chana dal, Gujarat is a state where it has created an extensive display of food items from the same. The likes of Khandvi, handvo , Khaman , Dhokla , Locho, Farsan , Puran poli , Mohanthal , besan laddoo, fafda, gathiya and so on.

The preparation of Food is Oily in dry regions like Kutch , Rajkot, rajasthan, Marathwada areas of Maharashtra and spicy so the body deals with the extensive heat waves in the region. The Soothing drink Chaas is famous in most part of India.

The Dairy preparations are also widely popular in the country. Kadi pakoda from North is the classic example of buttermilk dish , while in Gujarat rajasthan and maharashtra it is little lighter in texture compared to North regions known as kadi or takachi kadi. The similar dish is known as Mor in Kerala and is enjoyed with Rice extensively.

The Concept of Refreshing drink is also common in India where each region has its own speciality where the north has Shikanji or lassi or chaas, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh has Sattu or chaas, while in the west it is Chaas or masala chaas.

The konkan region in Maharashtra has Solkadi which is made of coconut milk with kokum and green chilly while Mumbai also has Piyush which is saffron flavoured sweet buttermilk.

Nannari or Kulukki sharbat from kerala which is also a coolant drink.

The staple food of India still remains Rice, Dal, Pulses, leafy vegetables etc which is the basic food in any home in India. Rice is predominant in South while Flat bread like chapatti, roti , bhakri

in other western and northern regions of the country.

Extensive use of Ghee, Butter and dry fruit is seen in northern areas as it has cool climate and need to have high calorie diet for meeting the climatic needs in the region.

### **Methodology**

To understand the unity in diversity of food culture in India, a comprehensive methodology encompassing various aspects such as historical analysis, regional exploration, cultural examination, and culinary investigation can be adopted.

1. **Historical Analysis:** The historical influences that have shaped India's food culture includes the impact of various rulers, invaders, and settlers who introduced new ingredients, cooking techniques, and culinary traditions to the region.
2. **Regional Exploration:** Explore the different regions of India to understand the unique culinary traditions and flavors that define each area. This involves studying the local ingredients, cooking methods, and signature dishes that are characteristic of each region.
3. **Cultural Examination:** Investigate the cultural aspects that influence India's food culture, including religious beliefs, social customs, and traditional practices. This includes understanding the dietary restrictions and culinary customs of different communities and how they contribute to the diversity of Indian cuisine.
4. **Culinary Investigation:** Conduct a culinary investigation to delve deeper into the preparation methods, spice blends, and flavor profiles that are unique to Indian cuisine. This involves studying traditional recipes, visiting local markets, and engaging with local chefs and food experts.
5. **Comparative Analysis:** Compare and contrast the food cultures of different regions within India to identify commonalities and differences. This helps in understanding how unity is maintained despite the diversity in culinary traditions.
6. **Seasonal and Agricultural Analysis:** Analyze the seasonal variations and agricultural practices that influence Indian cuisine. This includes studying how seasonal produce is used in cooking and how agricultural practices impact the availability of certain ingredients.



7. **Societal Impact:** Lastly, consider the societal impact of India's food culture, including its role in festivals, celebrations, and daily life. This involves understanding how food is used as a means of social bonding and cultural expression.

By adopting this methodology, one can gain a comprehensive understanding of the unity in diversity of food culture in India, highlighting the rich tapestry of flavors, traditions, and influences that make Indian cuisine truly unique.

## **Results**

Through the application of a comprehensive methodology encompassing historical, regional, cultural, and culinary analyses, a nuanced understanding of the unity in diversity of food culture in India has been achieved. The results of this study highlight the rich tapestry of flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques that characterize Indian cuisine, as well as the diverse influences that have shaped its development over the centuries.

## **Regional Varieties**

Each region of India boasts its own unique culinary traditions, shaped by factors such as climate, geography, and cultural influences. From the hearty gravies of North India to the coconut-infused dishes of South India, the regional variations in Indian cuisine are a testament to the country's diverse culinary heritage.

## **Cultural and Religious Influence**

The study also reveals the significant influence of culture and religion on Indian food culture. Dietary customs and restrictions vary widely among different communities, with some avoiding certain foods due to religious beliefs or cultural practices. This diversity adds depth and richness to Indian cuisine, reflecting the country's multicultural society.

## **Seasonal and Agricultural Variations**

Another important finding is the impact of seasonal and agricultural variations on Indian cuisine. The use of locally sourced, seasonal ingredients is a key feature of Indian cooking, with dishes often tailored to suit the availability of fresh produce. This connection to the land is a central aspect of Indian food culture, highlighting the importance of sustainability and traditional agricultural practices. For example, mango is grown in mostly summer season in India. The famous variety is Alphonso, Kesar, Dasherri, Badami etc

## Unity Amidst Diversity

Despite the vast regional and cultural diversity of Indian cuisine, the study also highlights the ways in which Indian food culture maintains unity amidst diversity. Shared culinary practices, such as the use of spices like cumin, coriander, and turmeric, as well as common cooking techniques like simmering and tempering, serve as unifying elements that bind the diverse culinary traditions of India together.

## Conclusion

The outcomes of the study provide a comprehensive understanding in the unity in diversity of food culture in India. By examining the regional, cultural, and culinary aspects of Indian cuisine, this study has highlighted the rich tapestry of flavors, traditions, and influences that make Indian food culture truly unique. India's food culture is a vibrant testament to the country's rich history, diverse geography, and multicultural society. The unity in diversity of Indian cuisine is evident in its regional varieties, cultural and religious influences, and seasonal and agricultural variations. Despite the vast differences in culinary traditions across the country, Indian food culture remains united by shared culinary practices and ingredients. The rich tapestry of technicalities of Indian cooking with its bright history makes Indian cuisine ultimate diverse and fascinating in the entire globe, reflecting the harmonious coexistence of multiple culinary traditions. The food changes with every 100 km in India but the essence of the food remains same which also holds on the sense of belonging among all people. The Tourist

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