

India's F&B (R)evolution: Brand, business & beyond

The Food & Beverage (F&B) landscape in India is undergoing a remarkable transformation — one that extends far beyond what's on the menu. Once dominated by pan-Indian offerings and conventional hotel dining, the sector is now being redefined by a new generation of chefs, hoteliers, and culinary entrepreneurs who are creating distinct, experience-led food brands.

Regional cuisines — long oversimplified or overlooked — are being rediscovered and elevated, not merely as nostalgic tributes but as strategic responses to changing consumer tastes. From the delicate nuances of Kashmiri cuisine to the spice-rich complexity of Chettinad, local food cultures are being celebrated with renewed pride and global intent.

At the same time, technology and sustainability are reshaping the industry's DNA. AI-enabled operations, predictive inventory tools, and digital guest experience platforms are empowering F&B teams to optimise efficiency while delivering personalised, high-touch service. Conscious consumption, meanwhile, is prompting hotels and restaurants to integrate sustainability into every layer — from local sourcing and zero-waste kitchens to ethical supply chains and transparent practices. The dual focus on innovation and responsibility has become not only a brand differentiator but a business imperative.

F&B as Brand Identity and Growth Engine

In modern hospitality, F&B has evolved from a supporting service to the soul of a hotel experience — where brands come alive through culture, creativity, and connection. Across India, hotel groups are reimagining their restaurants and bars as signature spaces that define their identity, engage communities, and drive business growth.

“In a competitive market, F&B is no longer just about serving a meal — it's about creating a sense of place and memory,” says Chef Rakesh Sethi, Corporate Executive Chef – South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group (RHG).

By celebrating India's regional diversity through design-led, contemporary presentations, RHG has turned dining into a central part of its travel story. Workshops on beverage innovation and sustainable mixology are transforming its bars into experiential hubs that build loyalty and recall.

At Accor, the narrative is anchored in sustainability through its Good Food Policy, which aims to reduce food waste by 60% by 2030. "From crafting low-carbon recipes to ensuring ethical sourcing, every initiative is designed to create meaningful dining experiences that resonate with modern travellers," says Sachin Maheshwary, General Manager and F&B Alchemist, Accor India.

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts views F&B as a defining brand pillar that contributes over a third of total revenue and more than half of non-room income. "Each of our hotels brings alive the culinary essence of its locale," shares Anupam Dasgupta, Senior Vice President – Operations (North) and Head of Wellness. Under initiatives like Aujasya by The Leela and collaborations with celebrated chefs such as Massimo Bottura and Himanshu Saini, the brand blends heritage and modernity through design-led dining experiences and cross-hotel culinary pop-ups.

Hilton, meanwhile, has redefined its F&B strategy to create spaces that reflect the rhythm and flavour of each region. "In India especially, F&B is deeply tied to culture, community and celebrations — it becomes a natural way to engage guests," says Prashant Kulkarni, Director – F&B Operations, South Asia.

For Hyatt, F&B is "the most emotive and expressive form of hospitality," according to Thomas Angerer, Director of F&B – India and Southwest Asia. "In a standardised hospitality landscape, it is the clearest way to tell our brand story."

Even in the midscale and economy segments, F&B has become a tool for personalisation and differentiation. Rahoo! Macarius, Market Managing Director – Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, notes, "By blending global standards with locally inspired offerings, we ensure every restaurant or bar becomes an extension of the hotel's identity."

Reimagining Menus: The New Culinary Canvas

Today's menus are more than lists of dishes — they are statements of philosophy.

Chef Sethi of RHG highlights how menus must be dynamic, rooted in tradition yet responsive to global trends. “We are working with hyper-local produce, forgotten grains, and regional recipes while presenting them in formats that appeal to the modern palate. Plant-forward and wellness-driven dining is central to our approach.”

At Hyatt, the guiding principle is “thoughtfully sourced, carefully served.” Restaurants like Sarvatt at Hyatt Regency Ahmedabad and Alila Fort Bishangarh bring this ethos alive through farm-to-table concepts and vegetarian-forward dining rooted in regional identity.

Hilton's Kulkarni stresses the importance of authenticity and conscious dining. “Conscious dining has moved from niche to mainstream,” he says, pointing to Hilton's introduction of Good Dot — an Indian plant-based protein brand — into its menus. Initiatives like the Kongunadu Food Festival in Tamil Nadu showcase hyperlocal traditions while appealing to contemporary diners.

At Accor, Maheshwary explains, “Sustainable sourcing is at the heart of our operations.” From herb gardens to coffee programmes at Grand Mercure, Accor is highlighting local produce and ensuring at least 25% vegetarian options across menus.

Wyndham's chefs, too, are curating hyperlocal menus with a global edge. “Plant-forward choices are now integrated into our core offerings,” says Macarius. “Coupled with storytelling around provenance, our experiences resonate with diners seeking both cultural depth and lifestyle alignment.”

The Leela's Aujasya programme champions wellness-led, plant-forward, and seasonal dining. “Menus today are about ingredient-forward storytelling,” says Dasgupta. “Beyond the plate, we engage guests through masterclasses, chefs' tables, and interactive kitchen experiences.”

Indian Cuisine as a World-Class Experience

Indian cuisine is now taking its rightful place on the global culinary stage.

At Hyatt, chefs reinterpret heirloom recipes with finesse. At Shrot (Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar) and Malabar Café (Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty), regional classics are refined into contemporary experiences.

Chef Sethi of RHG believes “Indian cuisine deserves to be spoken of in the same breath as the world’s great culinary traditions.” Through curated tasting menus and storytelling dinners, RHG properties act as ambassadors of Indian culinary excellence.

At Accor, restaurants like Rasoi at Raffles Udaipur and Jyran at Sofitel Mumbai BKC showcase the depth and diversity of Indian food traditions, while Tuskers celebrates regional vegetarian excellence.

Hilton’s Art of Experiential Dining and Conrad Curates platforms transform Indian dining into narrative-driven experiences. Meanwhile, The Leela’s Jamavar remains the gold standard for luxury Indian dining — a stage where tradition meets artistry.

F&B Strategy, Loyalty, and Growth

Chef-led innovation now sits at the core of brand storytelling.

At Wyndham, chefs act as brand ambassadors who drive provenance-led, sustainable experiences. RHG’s Chef Sethi calls chef-driven curation “the backbone of our strategy,” while Hilton empowers its chefs through exchange programmes across Asia Pacific to foster creativity and collaboration.

Accor’s Maheshwary observes that “authenticity today is personal,” as chefs reinterpret their roots through global perspectives. At Hyatt, Angerer sees chefs as “central characters” in the brand’s narrative — delivering thoughtful, elevated experiences that build emotional connections.

This chef-led creativity directly fuels brand loyalty and revenue growth. RHG’s experiential dining and zero-waste mixology programmes have transformed restaurants into community hubs. At Accor, distinct concepts like Nora’s Cantina in Goa help attract both locals and travellers, boosting footfall and positioning hotels as social destinations.

For The Leela, dining is a revenue powerhouse — contributing over 50% of non-room income. Signature venues like Jamavar, Le Cirque, and Spectra act as standalone destinations that embody luxury through storytelling and craftsmanship.

“In luxury hospitality, experiential differentiation is key — and at The Leela, it powers both affinity and profitability,” says Dasgupta.

Hilton, Hyatt, and Wyndham share similar philosophies — that food, when rooted in culture and executed with creativity, becomes a brand’s most emotive connector and its most measurable growth driver.

The Road Ahead

The future of Indian F&B lies in its ability to blend authenticity with aspiration. Culinary storytelling, destination dining, and gastronomic tourism are turning food into a catalyst for both brand differentiation and national identity. As Indian cuisine continues to travel across borders — reinterpreted yet rooted — it is redefining how the world experiences India, one plate at a time.