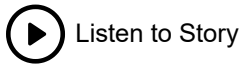


Fine dining | Culinary crossover

From matching Japanese whiskies with Indian delicacies to a critique of fusion food from the two nations, experts have a say on a myriad of delectable topics



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(L-R) Harry Hakuei Kosato, Director & India Representative, Kikkoman India Private Limited; Suvir Saran, Michelin Star Chef and Culinary Director, Bastian Hospitality, Mumbai, and Sandeep Arora, Founder, Spiritual Luxury Living, and Consulting Editor, Whisky Magazine (UK)



India Today Bureau

ISSUE DATE: Dec 25, 2023 | UPDATED: Dec 15, 2023 21:05 IST

A Japanese wonder

Sandeep Arora: Japanese themselves, for a long time, really didn't feel very comfortable with their own whiskies. But that was way back. They have taken a pole position when it comes to whiskies. Japanese whiskies are crafted around nature, sun, season and temperance. All the flavours are so robust and rich that they go absolutely sublime with great food, not just Japanese food but even Indian food. I'm not too confident of a rogan josh or a butter chicken as yet, but definitely, a lot of sublime flavours will go with whiskies. They're very confident whiskies. They're not easy to give up, and they will be persistent, like the Japanese to keep pairing and evolving the pairing platform.

The fusion confusion

Suvir Saran: The Japanese work very hard in creating purity of flavour, and purity of experience. They spend lifetimes perfecting things. In India, we are in a fusion moment. In the West, the word fusion is a dirty word...we are pouring things that mask flavour, mask hideous ingredients and then you can label them Italian or sushi and people think they're eating something exciting. I think we need to take our people back to a conversation on what ingredients really are. Whether it's Japanese or Indian. So I think there's no bandwagon saying Japanese food is going to go to Hathras, Meerut and Bhadohi and become something incredible. It will be sushi dal, dal chawal sushi. But that's not what's going to make Japan happy or India healthier.

Healthy eating



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Harry Hakuei Kosato: Health comes from good habits, good ways of spending time. And that, I think, has to be also education-wise. People need to realise in India, and I think people are ripe for that kind of huge, huge change, where you know we demand more. We want the best ingredients. Ask your chef, ask your restaurant. Are they using the best ingredients? You know, once a year you might go have a £400 meal or \$400 meal. But why can't you have a nicely-priced sushi or nicely-priced tempura, which is maybe 20 per cent Indianised? I think that's fine. But I think restaurants have to change. The consumer has to change. Importers have to change.

Published By: Shyam Balasubramanian

Published On: Dec 15, 2023