



INSIGHT INTO HISTORY OF INDIAN FOOD



Syndicate:3

Introduction

- Indian cuisine reflects an 8,000-year history of various groups and cultures interacting with the Indian subcontinent, leading to diversity of flavours and regional cuisines found in modern-day India.
- Early diet in India mainly consisted of meat legumes, vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy products, and honey. Staple foods eaten today include a variety of lentils (*dal*), whole-wheat flour (*atta*), rice, and pearl millet (*bājra*), which has been cultivated in the Indian subcontinent since 6000BCE.
- Over time vegetarianism was made popular in our culture. Main proponents of vegetarian foods were Emperor Ashoka, Mahavir Jain and Gautam Buddha.
- During Middle ages several Dynasties travelled to India which introduced several cooking methodologies and products to the region. For example Mongolians introduced Hot Pot cooking, Chinese introduced fried food and sweetness in food, Arabs introduced Barbeques, Portugese introduced tomato, chilli and Potato, British introduced Tea and Ketchup.
- In Modern India the interaction of various Indian diaspora communities with the native cultures of their domiciles have resulted in the creation of many fusion cuisines, which blend aspects of Indian and foreign cuisines such as Indo-Chinese, anglo-Indian cuisines.

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORICAL EVENTS

- I. Historical evidences from Indus Valley civilization
- II. Food preferences during Aryan adventure
- III. Changes introduced during Buddhist periods and Empires
- IV. Changes introduced in Mughal periods
- V. Food preferences of royalty
- VI. New varieties introduced due to advent of British
- VII. Changes in Modern food culture pertaining to globalization

Food: Indus Valley Civilization

- The harrapans ate a wide range of plant and animal products including fish.
- **Skeletons and DNA studies of human remains shows few signs of malnutrition.**
- Archaeologists have been able to reconstruct dietary practices from finds of charred grains and seeds
- **Grains found at Harrapan site include wheat, barley, lentil, chickpea and sesame. Millets are found from site of Gujarat. Finds of rice are relatively rare.**
- The people of the valley were habituated in creating ornaments in the shape of various fruits which were found during excavation. Through this it can inferred diet included fruits notably, melon, pomegranate, coconut fruit and banana.
- **Meat also formed an important part of diet of people of Indus valley. Meats seems to have been generally available, to judge by animals bones have been found. Archeologists have found bones of cattle, sheep, goat, pigs, water buffalo, hens, elephants, camels, and fish. Dogs appear to have been kept as pets.**

- A cylindrical strainer found at Harappa , which was probable used to make Beer.
- Harrapan houses had a kitchen opening from the courtyard, with a hearth or brick built fire place. Pottery vessels in a range of sizes were used in cooking; in wealthy households metal vessels were also used.
- Cooking practices would have included roasting, boiling and baking. Excavation of certain Indus sites has resulted in discovery of tandoori style ovens used for cooking. Cooking was done in mustard and seasome seed oil.

➤ **How artefacts are identified** Processing of food required grinding equipment as well as vessels for mixing, blending and cooking. These were made of stone, metal and terracotta. This is an excerpt from one of the earliest reports on excavations at Mohenjodaro, the best-known Harappan site: **Saddle querns** ... are found in considerable numbers ... and they seem to have been the only means in use for grinding cereals. As a rule, they were roughly made of hard, gritty, igneous rock or sandstone and mostly show signs of hard usage. As their bases are usually convex, they must have been set in the earth or in mud to prevent their rocking.



SADDLE QUERN : FOR GRINDING
GRAINS



COPPER TOOLS FOR
CHOPPING

Food: Vedic era

- The Vedic period is the earliest period of Indian history for which we have direct textual evidence. The Vedas, earliest form of literature in India, contains several references to food and drinks of the earlier period
- Barley (Yava) is the ancient staple food known to Vedic Indians and thus it enjoyed the staple food status in this period. All other cereals, whether it is rice or wheat, got only a secondary status in this period.
- The discussion on rice can be seen only in post Vedic literature. Various varieties of rice find mention in Yajurvedas and Brahmanas e.g. Sastika rice is considered very nutritious and its daily use is recommended in texts.

- Different varieties of pulses of Masa (Black Gram), Mugda (Green Gram), and Masura (Lentils) were referred to. But it is interesting that for some reasons Masa is not considered edible as it despised for sacrificial purposes.
- Milk was one of the principal ingredients of food of Vedic Indians. The reference of fresh milk, boiling of cow's milk and cream can be seen in Rigvedas and Brahmanas. Curd and butter was also widely used during this period.
- Meat eating in India is as old as Rig Vedic period. The ritual flesh offerings was pure enough to be consumed even by the priests.
- Honey is the earliest sweetner known to the Vedic civilization and Rigveda states that honey from small bees was much better than large bees. Chewing of sugarcane is referred to in Atharvaveda.

- Somarasa was a very common beverage in vedic period which was made from soma plant. Rig veda describes another drink mentioned as sura. In AV, it is mentioned as a reward for the performers of sacrifices.
- The Date (Khajura) and Bilva (Ber) are mentioned in the yajurveda. Amara or mango is first mentioned in the satapatha Brahmana.
- The Rigveda mentions vegetables like lotus stems (Visa), Cucumber (Urvaruka) followed by in the later vedas lotus roots (Shaluka), bottle guard (Alabu) and Singadha (mulali sapahaka).
- It would be unthinkable for a cook or housewife to taste any dish during the course of its preparation. Water used for rinsing the mouth must be cast out and never swallowed.

Food: The Buddhist Period

- They had many features in common with the hindu ethos but also some distinct elements.
- Food which was made out of rice, barley ,wheat ,masura and other grains ,ghee ,oil of seasum ,honey ,sugar ,fish ,eggs and other which are full of soul qualities.
- Monks were advised to eat solid foods only between sunrise and noon and nothing between noon and sunrise the next day as this would lead to spiritual strength
- Buddha also permitted his followers to eat animal flesh on occasions if the killing had been unintentional.

Food in The Empires

- By 300 B.C with the coming of mauryans, many people became vegetarians though eating of meat not give up completely.
- The emperor of Ashoka in his edicts not only preached non killing powerfully but himself practice it.
- By 650 A.D worship of mother goddess came into prevalence.cow came to be worshipped and hindus stopped eating beef completely.
- In the Gupta empire they mostly ate vegetables ,cereals ,fruits ,breads and drank milk
- According to traditional Indian medical system Ayurveda , food is of three kinds

Food: The Empires

- Satvic Food - It is most simple and easiest to digest type of food. This contains most of its nutrient values and provides the necessary energy to the body. It is also considered as a foundation of higher state of consciousness.
- Rajasik Food – It is rich in flavour but heavy to Digest. It is suitable for people who do arduous physical work. Vegetables are cooked in excess of butter with spicy and strong flavoring agents.
- Tamasic Food – Dry , unnatural , overcooked , stale , decaying and processed food makes for a tamasic diets. It consumes large amount of energy while being digested.

Islamic Cuisine

- Islamic culture: Mixture of Persian, Iranian, Afghani
- Early stages of Islamic era around 1200 AD, Amir Khusro described the food of novelty: bread, roasted meat, sharbat-e-labagir, naan, samosa, flesh of various birds.
- During Mughal era traditionally food formed a part of gift-giving culture and laid the rules for diplomatic etiquettes.
- “*Ni'matnama*” a famous cookbook of 15th century contains recipes of Sultan of Mandhu (Madhya Pradesh), Ghiyat Shahi and Nasir Shah. It brags about Samosa, Pilaf and Saffron meat, paan, sherbet etc.
- In 1498 Vasco-da-gama and after that Babur invasion marked the lasting impact on india's culinary culture.
- **Babur** liked Indian fish and created lots of kitchen garden. He always craved for his native fruits like grapes, musk melon etc.



A banquet including roast goose given to Babur (1507)

- **Humayun's** Iranian wife introduced saffron and dry fruits. Humayun shunned the use of beef and goat, fowl were used.
- Shah of Iran used '*Farman*' to invite Humayun and full depiction of food to be served is given in that. It shows the Halwa, delicious beverages with white bread kneaded with oil and milk containing caraway seeds, poppy seeds and nuts. All beverages were mixed with rose water and ambergris to taste good.
- **Akbar** used rosewater in his kitchen garden so that they smell good. In times of Akbar, the Mughal cuisine reached heights. He mixed Persian with Rajasthani and a remarkable dish called *Murg-musallam* was invented. Also, *Murg-jamindo*z (cooking of murg underground with charcoal) came into culinary.



Noor jaha's plate
courtesy- Sotheby's



- Through Ain-e-abkari, it is known that there were three classes of food:
 - 1) safiyana (No meat) - use of rice, wheat, dal. Palak sag etc.
 - 2) Meat and rice mixed- biryani (Biryan means 'fried before cooking'.) shulla and shurba; Meat with wheat Haleem, Khushka, qutab (samosa)
 - 3) Meat cooked with ghee, spices, curd, eggs etc – kabab, dampukht, qaliya (Thick dishes)
- The delicious cold Kulfi by freezing a mixture of Khoa, pista, nuts and jafran in a metal cone with sealing the open part with dough.
- **Jahangir** introduced Falooda, mango into his court's feast.
- When Shah Jahan came into rule, the invention of Mughlai food was at its peak – thick lamb kebabs marinated in Indian spices, rice pilaf ramped up a notch into the newly developed biryani, and silver and gold edible foils used to enhance the appearance of foods. Shahjahan also instructed to cook the food with more haldi, red chillies and cumin powder since water in his capital Shahjahanabad was not good.

- Aurangzeb was a vegetarian but he liked 'Qubooli' a Murg biryani with rice, Bengal gram, dried apricot, basil, almond. He was also fond of Khichri with garlic, cinnamon powder.
- The Mughal period also saw the potato, tomato, tapioca, groundnuts, papaya, rajma, cashew, chiku, capsicum, certain kind of cottage cheese etc due to portugese invasion.
- The Arabs and central Asians brought bajra, jowar, lobia and roti into our culinary. And extensive use of apricot, plums, melons and peaches.



HALEEM



SHERBAT

FOOD: ROYALTY

- Food served to the royalty in the Sanskrit and regional literature from 1000 to 1500 A.D.
- King Somswara III the Western Chalukya king ruled from 1126 to 1138 A.D. To him is attributed the Sanskrit work, Abhla-sahitartha-chintamani better known as Manasollasa, meaning the refresher of mind.
- It gives recipes, some fairly detailed others less for the preparation of a variety of dishes that are even now current in Kannada, Marathi and Tamil areas, such as idli, disai, vadai, dahi vada, poli, wadia, shrikhand, pheni and Laddu
- The king pays much more attention to non vegetarian food preparation. He says even though food preparation served in earthen vessel tastes well, kings must be served in vessels made of gold

FOOD: ROYALTY

- There were many tastes in a royal meal. These are madhura (sweet), amla (sour), lavana (salty), kata (pungent), tikta (bitter) and kasaya (astringent).
- First were served fruits that could be chewed (grape, pomegranate, ber), then fruits to be sucked (sugarcane, oranges, mangoes).
- Food that could be licked came next and in the fourth course came solid sweet items such as sevaka, modaka and phenaka.
- Rice followed next and the sixth was of broths.
- Curd preparation made the seventh course and the eighth ended with thickened milk flavoured with saffron.
- Items such as parpata (papad) and vataka (vadam) were common.

MODERN FOOD OF ROYALTY

- Rajasthanli Thali



- Hyderabadi Biryani



IMPACT OF BRITISHERS ON INDIAN FOOD

- Britishers as compare to Portuguese and french made very little contribution to Indian food.
- During this period hybrid cuisines developed because the khansamas (male cook) of the memsahibs innovated food which combined some of the flavours of India with those of Britain, France or Portugal.
- Portuguese has played a very crucial role in introducing certain foods to the Indian kitchen, for instance, tomatoes, potatoes, chillies, bread etc.

SOME FAMOUS DISHES OF PORTUGUESE ORIGIN

Chicken Vindaloo(spicy meat curry)



Bandel cheese



Shukto



Bebinca(dessert)



➤ French has very strong influence on Pondicherry cuisines.

➤ Some cuisine that originate from france are

salad Nicoise



Ratatouille



Bouillabaisse



Crepes- sweet and savoury



➤ Britishers introduced Fish, chips or Yorkshire pudding pale.

➤ Indian started using forks and knives at dining tables due to colonization

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN FOOD

- Globalization is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. Globalization has grown due to advances in transportation and communication technology.
- Globalization has profound impact on Indian food and its significance is greater in India because it is directly related to our agriculture sector & in India low cost of raw materials, labour, manufacturing talent and access to technology

- Globalisation has changed the food habit of the Indian people now-a-days, the young people prefer burgers, pizza, hot dogs, fried chickens, momos etc.
- Introduction of cake and bakery in kolkata, which is still one of the main part of bengali cuisines.
- Mulberry, blackberry and litchi fruits was came to india from chinese.
- The soybean was imported from China into India in 1908 for cultivation, though it caught on widely only after the U.S. variety was introduced in 1970s.
- The most precious introduction of China to India (and to the world at large) is their tea.
- Apples were first introduce to india from America and now we export apples to other part of the world.

EAT HEALTHY AND BE HEALTHY

THANK YOU