

# India's 2026 culinary playbook

Pic: Coco Shambhavi

## Social media and digital discovery

Discovering new social media to learn about new restaurants and cooking recommendations online has placed a premium on Instagram-worthy presentation, creative plating, and photo-friendly ingredients. Digital trends don't just influence where people eat; but they also inspire. Viral dishes and trends spread quickly through social media and short-form videos, fueling demand for bold, shareable food moments.

**86%**  
trust online  
recommendations  
and word of mouth  
when deciding  
where to eat

Source: UNDP India

Photo: UNDP India

## Purpose-driven eating

Chefpreneur Shivani Sharma believes that the growing interest in "eating well" will give way to a greater demand for wellness foods, including raw diets, Ayurvedic inspirations, and gut-friendly ingredients over the next decade to mainstream. At the same time, sustainability has become a core value for consumers—sustainable and eco-friendly ingredients are the key to enhancing the eating experience and the environment. 2026 trends are all about "eating well" and "making a lasting impact on food, health, and the world," adds Sharma. This drives interest in farm-to-table sourcing, regenerative agriculture, and eco-friendly practices.

Photo: UNDP India



## Tech and convenience will take centre stage

Technology is transforming the way we eat. From AI-driven menu personalization to ultra-fast grocery and food delivery services, growing demand for convenience food. However, convenience is not everything. While AI-enabled tools are increasingly used behind the scenes for inventory management, meal optimization, and predictive cooking, consumers want efficiency without sacrificing the human touch that defines Indian hospitality.



## Your guide to simpler, healthier, Plan an efficient kitchen space



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