

# How India Eats Swiggy X Kearney

*A report on*

**The Ever-Evolving Food Space in India**



**Swiggy**

**KEARNEY**

# CXOs Speak: Insights from industry leaders



**Zorawar Kalra**  
Founder – Massive  
Restaurants

*India today has emerged as one of the world's most sophisticated dining cultures, with consumers who are well-traveled, culturally discerning, and increasingly open to experimenting with their palates.*



**Sagar Daryani**  
Co-Founder – Wow! Momo  
Foods

*Food is no longer just about the cuisine. It's about timing, packaging, presentation, and becoming part of someone's lifestyle.*



**Nikhil Gupta**  
Co-Founder – The Pizza  
Bakery

*Back then, we had to explain what sourdough was using table cards. Today, it's available on Instamart. That evolution tells you how much food awareness has grown.*



**Kiran Shah**  
Founder – GoZero

*Founder-led storytelling builds authenticity. Today, founder presence on LinkedIn or social is not optional - it's a placement tool, a free channel to build trust and visibility.*

# CXOs Speak: Insights from industry leaders



**Rajat Agarwal**  
CEO – Barista Coffee

*In the Indian market, cafés are not just beverage-only brands; food continues to play an essential role. While speed of delivery is critical in today's environment, the product still comes first and has to be done right.*



**Nishant Kedia**  
CMO – Rebel Foods

*Fusion cuisine, especially products which blend international flavors in Indian avatar, is seeing a rise in preference across QSR food categories such as pizza, burgers, bowls etc.*



**Saurabh Agarwal**  
Group Strategy – Devyani

*Tacos may have introduced Mexican food, but interest is now expanding to newer dishes. Korean cuisine is going mainstream – Korean noodles & chicken roll have started to feature in QSR menus. Health food trend is also picking up - may potentially reach scale in future. The only constant for food service brands continues to be Menu Innovation.*



**Ajith Kumar**  
Head Coffee & Innovation – Starbucks

*While millennials contribute a significant share of spending, Gen Z, despite their lower purchasing power, experiment more and play a larger role in shaping perceptions. Hence menu innovation continues to be highly critical for all food service players.*

# Executive Summary (1/2)

## Food Services Industry in India



- India's Food Services Industry is expected to surge – **Set to reach USD 125+ Bn by 2030**
- Rising incomes, digital adoption, and growing appetite for convenience to drive growth
- Organized segment to outpace unorganized players amid strong consumer demand, resilient supply chains, and aggregator-led expansion

## Key Consumer Trends



- India's QSR revolution is moving beyond metros – **Tier-1 & Tier-2 cities are the new growth engines**
- **Health-oriented orders growing rapidly (2.3x)** compared to overall order growth (1x)
- Midnight cravings becoming mainstream – **late-night dining emerges as India's fastest-growing meal occasion**
- New era of experimentation – **diners are venturing beyond familiar tastes, embracing both regional gems and global cuisines**

# Executive Summary (2/2)

## Ever evolving customer preference



- The next growth frontier lies in India's own backyard – **hyper-regional cuisines such as Goan, Bihari, Pahadi etc. are capturing consumers through authenticity and storytelling**
- **From lassis to buttermilk** – Indian beverages are reclaiming the menu, redefining what “refreshing” means to modern consumers
- **Cross-cultural innovation and immersive dining formats are accelerating the acceptance of global cuisines** across Indian cities. Korean, Mexican and Vietnamese cuisines lead the growth
- **Cold beverages are capturing a growing share of India's café culture** – Asian drinks like matcha & boba are gaining popularity within it.

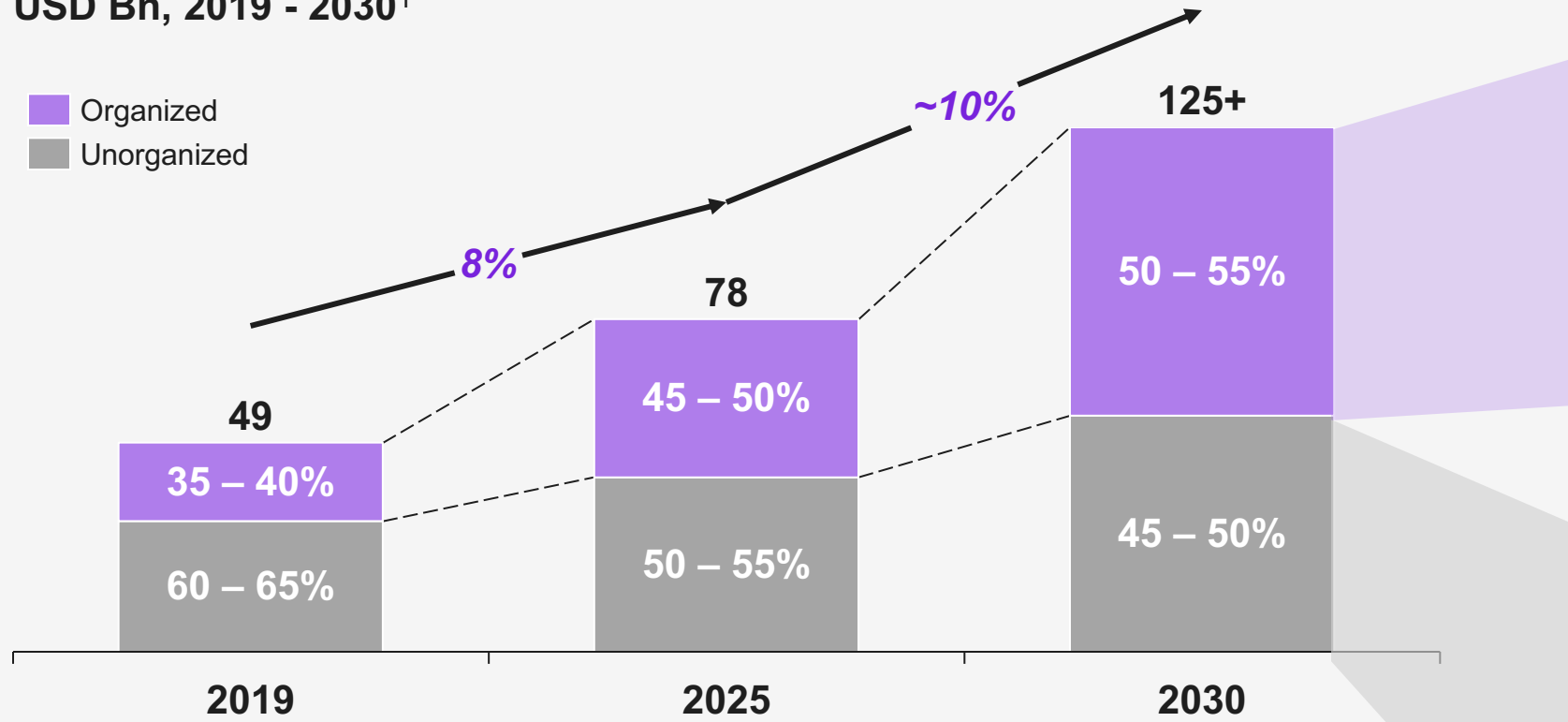
## Secret SAUCE for restaurants



- **Speed** is rewriting the menu for restaurants; **delivery speed is becoming a competitive edge** for restaurants
- The **Affordability** piano varies by cuisine: North Indian and Italian cuisines indicate increasing **pivot towards affordable meals**
- Immersive **Unboxing** experience for erstwhile protection philosophy – **Packaging is evolving** blending function with narrative to build stronger connections
- **Consumer** health is the new norm, with brands focusing on healthy & clean-label ingredients highlighting a **shift towards health-oriented orders**
- **Engaging** Gen Z requires more than great food – **digital connection is becoming the new trend**. Restaurants are transforming into destinations – **where immersive experiences drive footfalls**

# Organized segment is set to grow at 2x pace of unorganized segment; surpassing it by 2030

Indian Food Service Market  
USD Bn, 2019 - 2030<sup>1</sup>



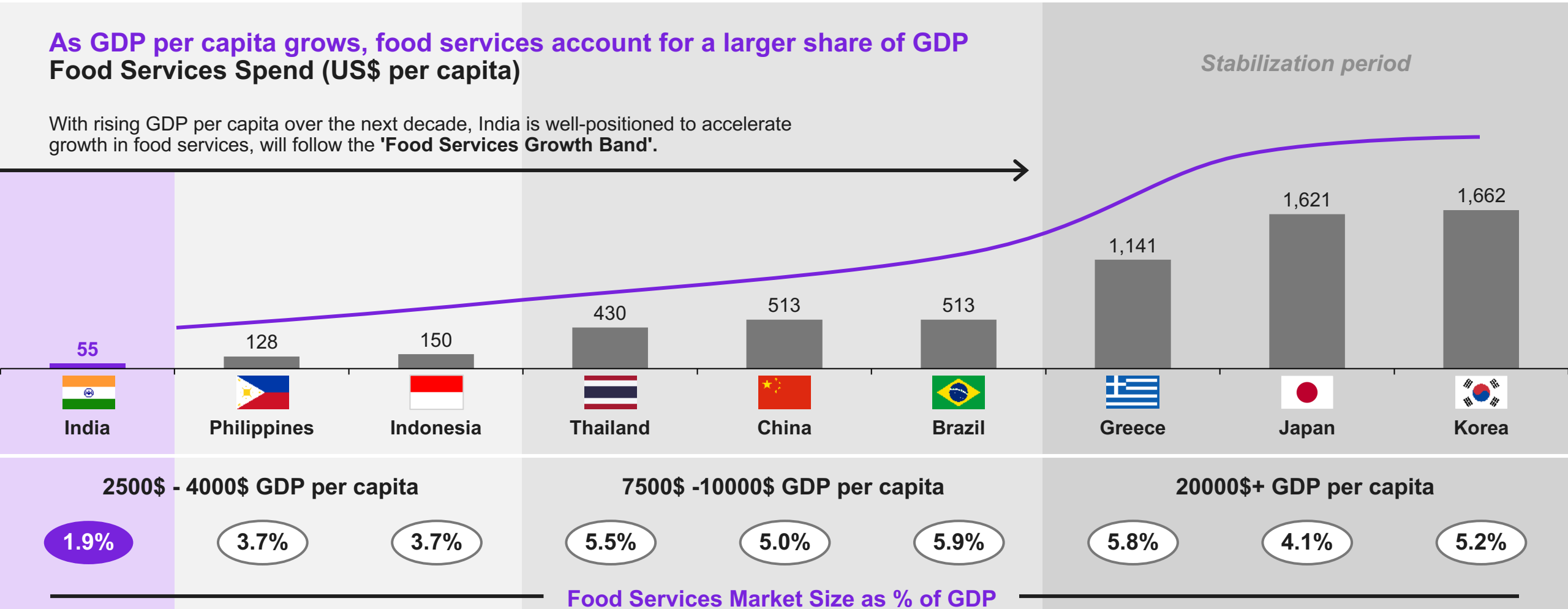
% CAGR Projected  
(2025 - 2030)



# Food services spend of a country increases with GDP per capita — India's food service spend is expected to witness high growth over next 7 years

As GDP per capita grows, food services account for a larger share of GDP  
**Food Services Spend (US\$ per capita)**

With rising GDP per capita over the next decade, India is well-positioned to accelerate growth in food services, will follow the 'Food Services Growth Band'.



# This growth is an outcome of unstoppable consumer demand supported by resilient supply

## Increase in Consumer Demand ...



Increasing GDP per capita leading to higher disposable incomes and lifestyle shifts



Urban youth prefer dining out for convenience, socializing, & celebrations



Exposure to global cuisines through travel & digital media broadened consumer palate

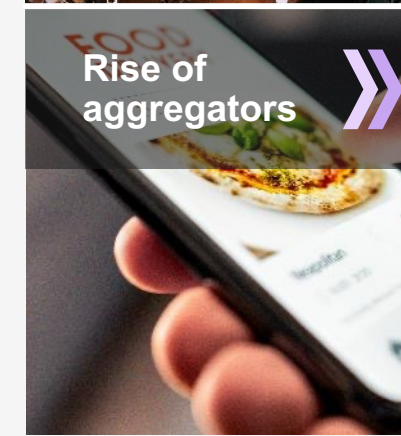
## ... supported by increase in Supply



Infrastructure growth led proliferation of malls, office complexes, & retail



Innovative business models including cloud kitchens and House of Brands have reduced entry barriers for the food services industry



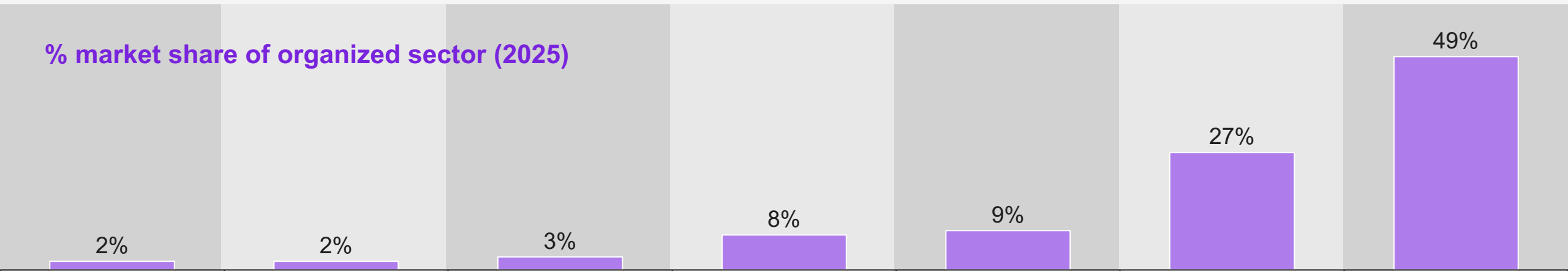
Aggregator driven expansion of delivery ecosystems and speed-led quick commerce propositions (e.g., Bolt, Bistro)

# Cloud Kitchens, QSRs & Dessert parlours are expected to lead the charge with above-average growth

## Projected growth rates

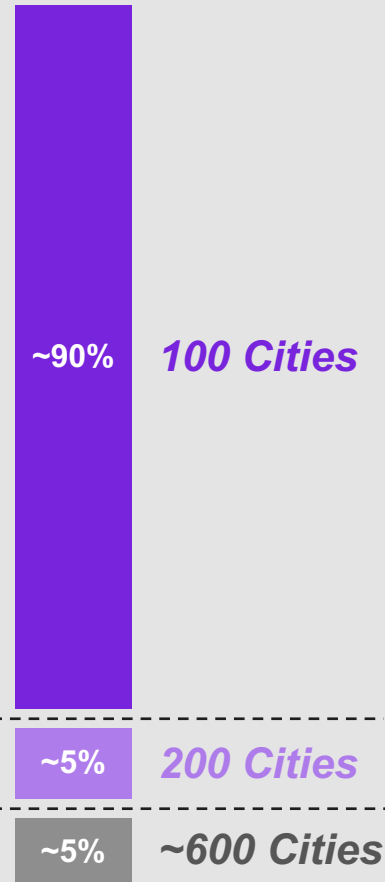
Cloud Kitchens	Fine Dining	Dessert & Ice-cream parlours	Cafes	Pub, Bar Café & Lounge	QSRs	Casual Dining
32 - 37%	11 - 13%	14 - 16%	10 - 11%	9 - 10%	15 - 17%	10 - 11%

## % market share of organized sector (2025)



# The next set of cities are emerging; Dining-out growth beyond top 8 is 2x that of top 8 cities

## Distribution of Indian Organized Food Service Industry across cities



Source: Kearney QSR Retail Index  
 Estimated basis chained food services market size and % of chained food-service market, GDP per capita and F&B spend per capita and sales and store count of top 7 food-service chains in India

## Top cities and emerging cities Kearney's QSR Retail Index

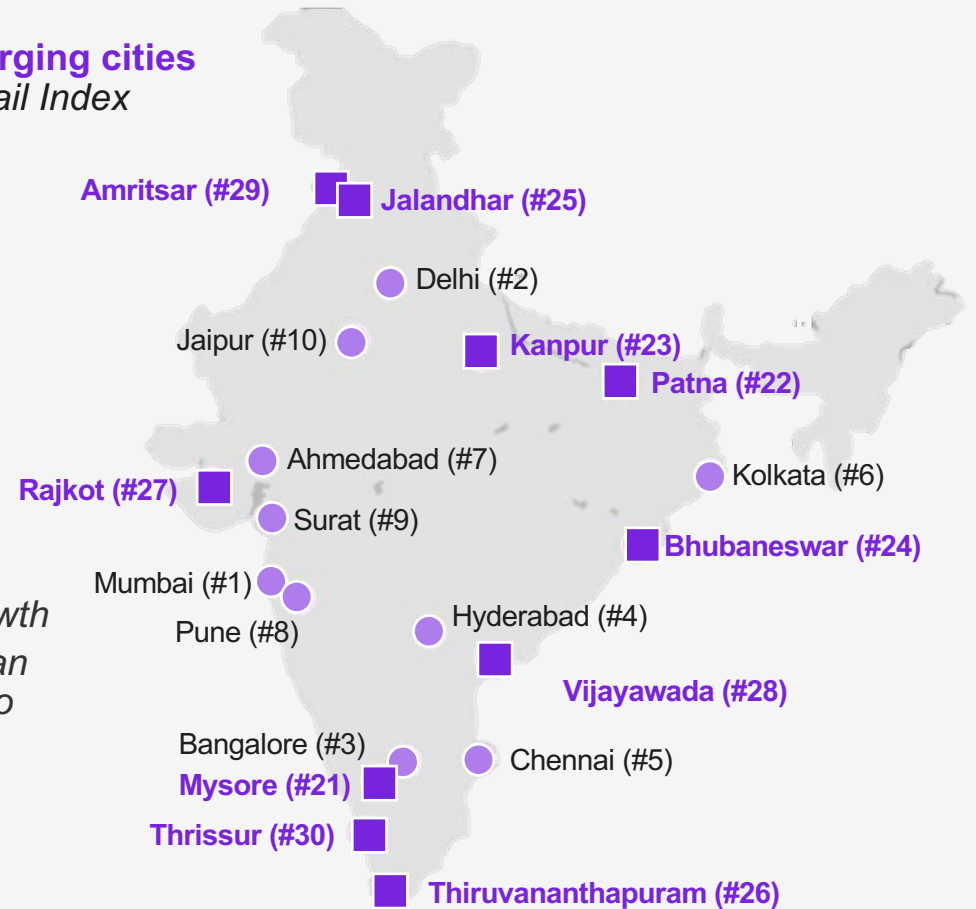
### City (#Rank)

■ Emerging Stars – gaining ranks fast

● Top Cities

**2x** dining out growth in beyond top 8 Indian cities as compared to top 8 cities

**7x** growth of pre-booked tables as compared to walk ins



## Different cities have different growth stories with consumers developing appetite for eating out in a variety of ways:

- Emergence of IT hubs in Thiruvananthapuram and Vadodara
- Tourism-driven growth in Mysore, Dehradun, and Kannur
- Expansion of industrial and corporate hubs in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Ludhiana
- Rise of educational hubs in Jalandhar, Kanpur, and Lucknow

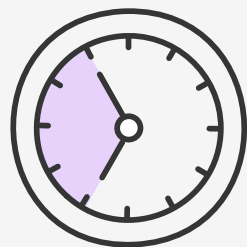


Kearney QSR Retail Index

**Late night meals have seen the fastest growth (~3x that of dinner), with an indulgence focus**

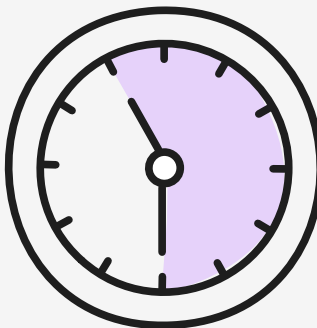
In 700+ cities, food delivery is serviceable 24/7

**Growth rate index of consumption by time of the day (CAGR 2022-2025)**  
Indexed to Dinner

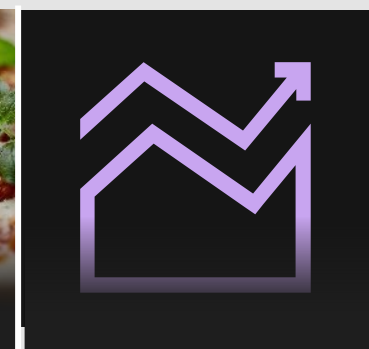
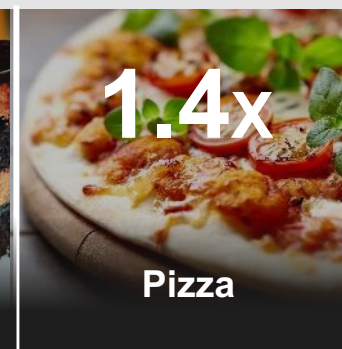
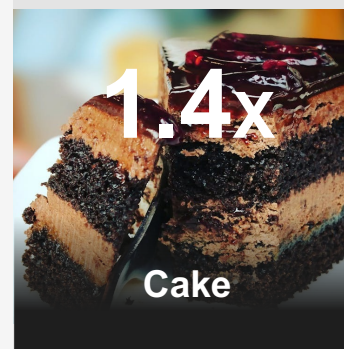
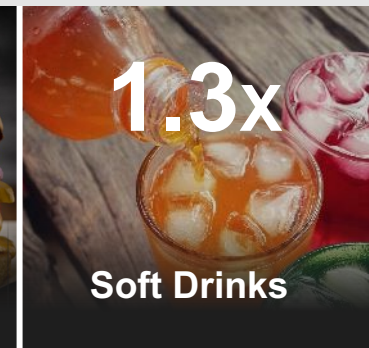
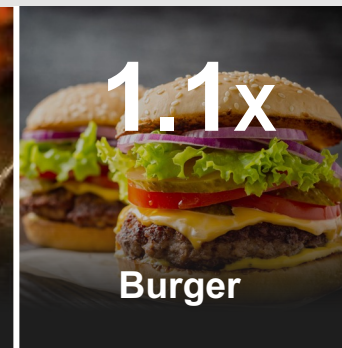
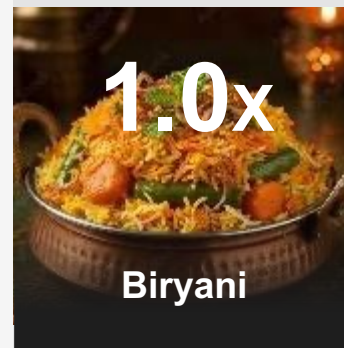


**1.0x Dinner**  
07 PM – 11 PM

**2.8x Late night orders**  
11 PM – 06 AM



**Growth rate index of late-night consumption (CAGR 2022-2025)**  
Indexed to Biryani



*“Your evening snacking has become an extension of lunch, and dinner has become late night. For young India, eating a momo at 9 p.m. still counts as snacking, not dining.”*

*Sagar Daryani, Co - Founder, WOW! Momo Foods*



Consumers are rapidly broadening choices by trying newer cuisines and different restaurants; Mughlai and American cuisines still dominate

Top cuisines based on order volume



India's Palate Is Expanding — One Delivery at a Time

~20%

Growth in # unique cuisines ordered per customer in the last 4 years

~30%

Growth in # restaurants ordered from per customer per annum in the last 4 years

“Cities like Bangalore are extremely open to trying new cuisines. It has helped us test gourmet concepts like Neapolitan sourdough pizzas, French-style sandwiches, & now smashed burgers.”

Nikhil Gupta, Co - Founder, The Pizza Bakery

Source: Kearney, Swiggy  
 1. Mughlai includes Biryani, Korma, Tandoor, etc.  
 2. American includes Burger, Sandwich, American breakfast, etc.  
 3. Italian includes Pizza, Pasta, Risotto, etc.



# India is therefore seeing two exciting frontiers for growth in food services

## Rediscovering India's Rich Culinary Heritage

*From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, hyperlocal delicacies are making their way into mainstream delivery menus*

## Embracing Global Culinary Diversity Like Never Before

*Sushi, tacos, and Korean BBQ are no longer niche—they're becoming weeknight staples for urban foodies*

India is home to a rich culinary diversity, where every district reflects unique tastes and preferences

## North

**Kashmir** : Gustaba, Tabak Maaz, Dum Aloo, Haak or Karam ka Saag

**Himachal Pradesh** : Siddu, Aktori, Dham (vegetarian mid-day meal by Boti Brahmins)

**Punjab** : Dal Makhani, Makki di Roti-Sarson da Saag, Chole Bhature, Amrisari Macchi

**Haryana** : Kachri ki Sabzi, Cholia (Green Gram), Chhaach-Lassi, Bajre ki Khichdi

**Rajasthan** : Dal-Baati-Churma, Ker-Sangri, Laal Maas, Gatte, Pyaz ki Kachori

## West

**Gujarat** : Thepla, Dhokla, Khandvi, Handvo, Panki

**Madhya Pradesh** : Lapsi, Bafli, Bhutte ka Kees, Bhopali Kababs

**Maharashtra** : Shrikhand, Thalipeeth, Vada Pav, Modak

**Goa** : Vindaloo, Xacuti, Bebinca, Prawn Balchao

## East

**Odisha**: Fish Curry, Khirmohan, Rasabali, Chhena Poda

**West Bengal** : Bhapa Ilish, Rasgulla, Mishti Doi

**Bihar** : Litti, Sattu, Khaja, Khubi ka Lai, Anarsa, Tilkut

**Manipur** : Iromba, Kabok, Chakhao Kheer

**Nagaland** : Momos, Rice Beer, Cherry Wine

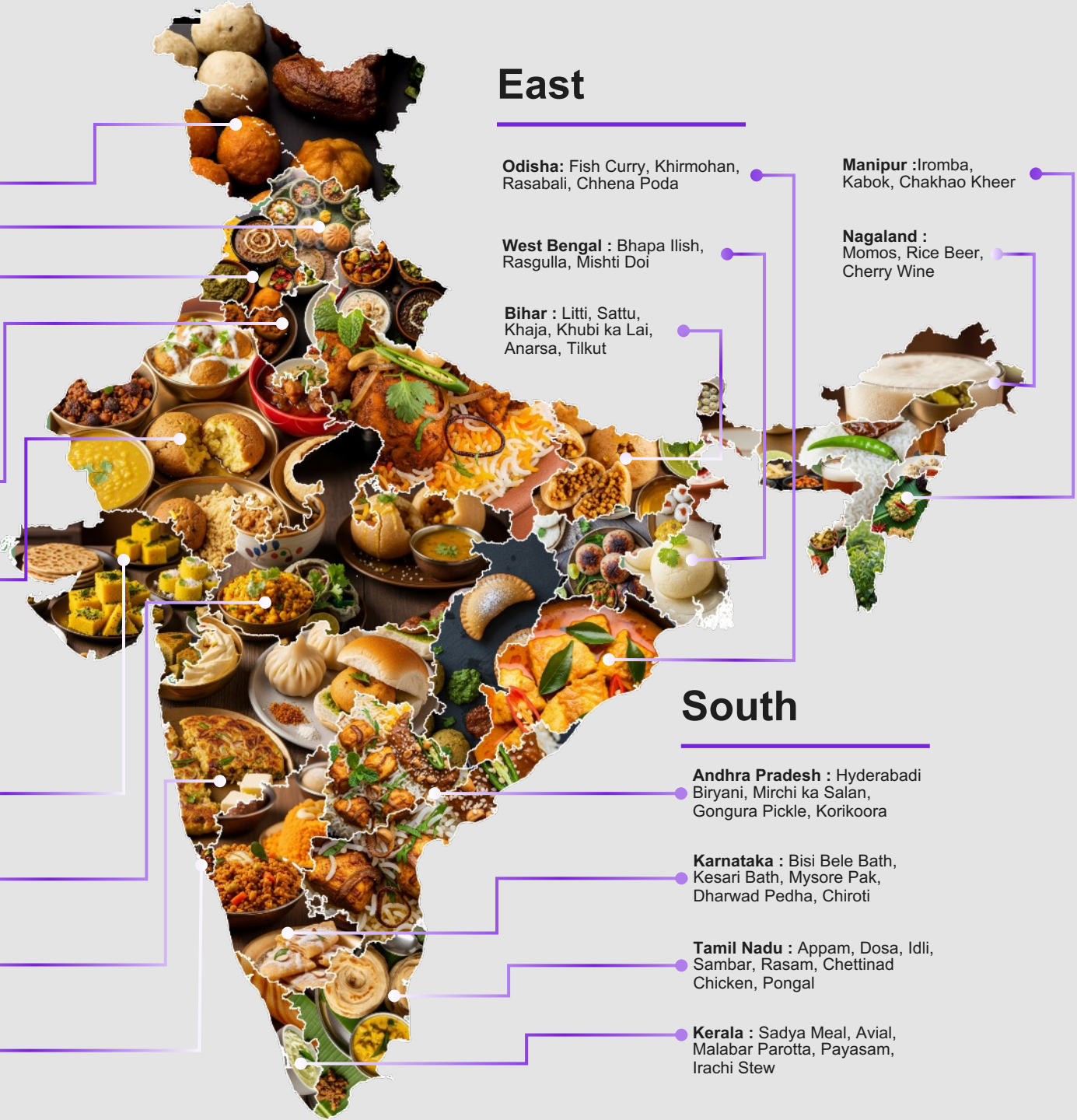
## South

**Andhra Pradesh** : Hyderabadi Biryani, Mirchi ka Salan, Gongura Pickle, Korikoora

**Karnataka** : Bisi Bele Bath, Kesari Bath, Mysore Pak, Dharwad Pedha, Chiroti

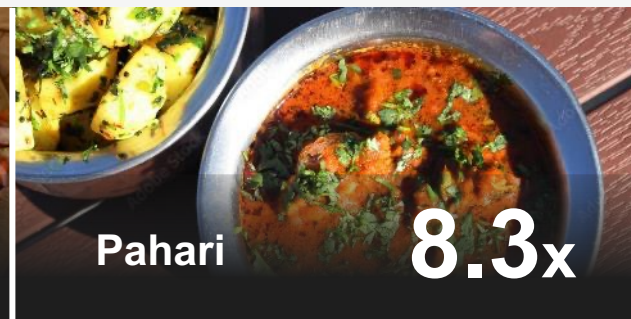
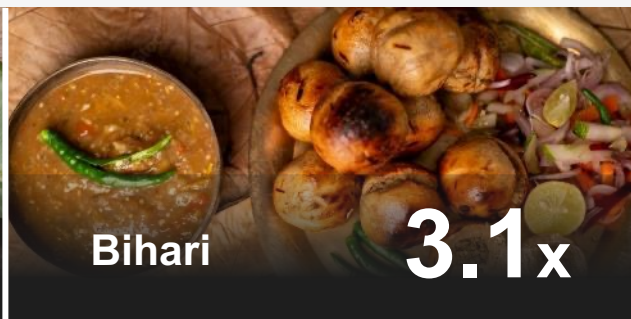
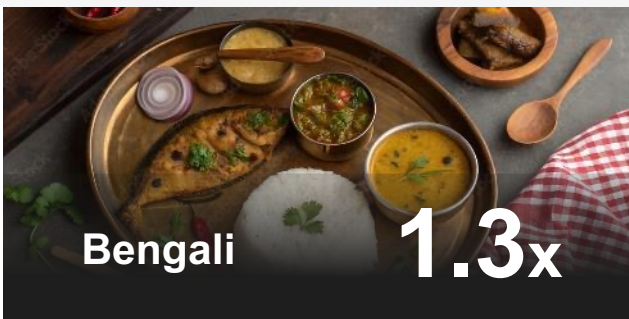
**Tamil Nadu** : Appam, Dosa, Idli, Sambar, Rasam, Chettinad Chicken, Pongal

**Kerala** : Sadya Meal, Avial, Malabar Parotta, Payasam, Irachi Stew



# Hyper-regional cuisines are experiencing accelerated growth, with Goan, Bihari, and Pahari cuisines growing at more than 2x

Growth rate index of cuisines (CAGR 2022-2025) Indexed to North Indian and South Indian Cuisine



*"Indian food is a 5,000-year-old intellectual property. Hyper-regional concepts are simply tapping into that deep cultural reserve."*

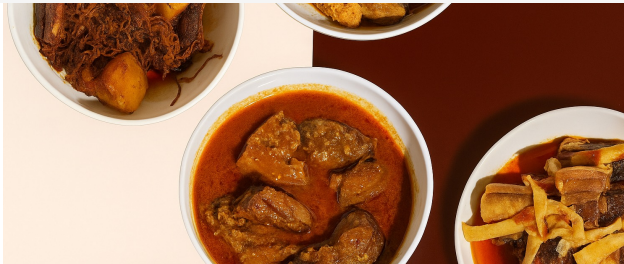
*Zorawar Kalra, Founder, Massive Restaurants*

# Focused regional menus with authentic ingredients, immersive experiences, and hyper-local storytelling are enabling rise of the hyper-regional cuisines

Design regional menus with authentic ingredients and local chefs to build culinary identity and cultural pride



*Nandhana Palace (Andhra cuisine) sent their chefs to the Araku valley forest to learn how to make bamboo chicken in the tribal way. They also serve traditional recipes from regions like Nellore, Guntur, Amaravati*



*Yong's Kitchen (Naga cuisine) sources ingredients like herbs and spices, bamboo shoots, Axone, and Anishi directly from Mokokchung, Nagaland*



*Potbelly (Bihari Cuisine) blends ancestral family recipes with locally sourced ingredients*



*Yeti (Himalayan Cuisine) uses recipes, sources spices, and hires chefs from the Himalayas*

Offer cultural dining experiences enriched with local stories and community engagement



*Yong's Kitchen (Naga cuisine) is decorated with textile canopy, inspired by ceremonial shawls worn by Ao Naga warriors*



*Himalayan-inspired setting with prayer flags, rustic wood, by Yeti*

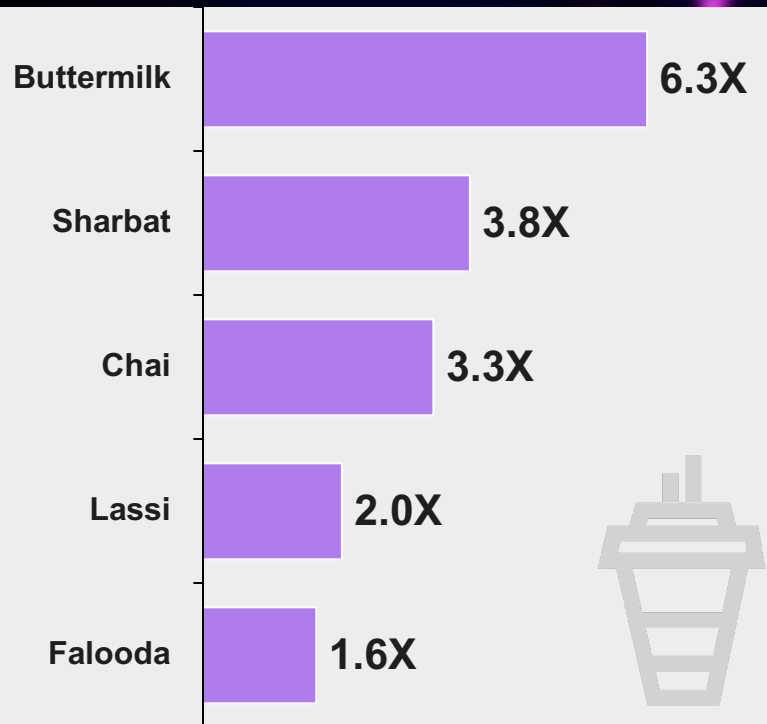


*Naar (Himalayan cuisine) focuses on Himalayan culture, people & origin stories during dining*



# Local Indian beverages are growing with Buttermilk & Sharbat leading the charge; QSRs & Café Chains are expanding their menus to introduce Indian beverages tailored to local tastes

**Growth rate index of Indian beverage**  
Relative growth index vs overall beverage category, 2022 - 2025



## QSRs have launched new Indian-origin drinks to attract Indian palate



Starbucks has launched drinks like filter coffee and Kala Khatta cold brew



McDonald's added items like "masala pop" and a "chilli guava" drink to their menu



Barista introduced Kehwa, a traditional saffron-infused Kashmiri tea, to appeal to local tastes and highlight regional authenticity

# India's culinary landscape is also going global, with a disproportionate Asian influence (Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese)

Growth rate index of cuisines (CAGR 2022-2025)  
Indexed to Chinese Cuisine



# Blending Indian flavors with global innovation, authentic collaborations, and immersive themed experience is supporting growth of global cuisines in India

## Blend Indian flavors with global twists to inspire exploration of new cuisines

**SNACKS**  
 AVOCADO TOSTADA **NEW** SNACHOS  
 CHEESY TOSTADA POPCORN MUSHROOM **NEW**

**DRINKS**  
 MEXICAN SUNRISE PEACH

California Burrito has introduced Customizable Make-it-yourself model along with Indian topping options

Taco Bell has modified Mexican flavors to suit the Indian palate

Gastronomica Kitchen has launched classic Japanese sushi stuffed with butter chicken

## Build credibility and cultural relevance through immersive experiences and collaborations with trend-aligned celebrities and brands

Mizu Izakaya created an authentic Japanese experience

Le Cirque (French-Italian Fine Dining) used Parisian-style interiors, heritage storytelling and collaborated with chefs from the original Le Cirque, NYC

**RANGE**  
 YOUR FAVOURITES, BUT MAKE IT KOREAN  
 Korean McSpicy™ Chicken Burger

McDonald's tapped the Korean Wave with gochujang flavors and K-pop tie-ins

# Cold beverages are growing 60% faster - with Matcha and Boba Tea seeing outsized search growth of 4x and 11x respectively

## Growth rate index of beverages (2021-2025)



**1.0x**

**Hot Beverages**  
(Tea, coffee, etc.)

**1.6x**

**Cold Beverages**  
(Iced tea, cold coffee, etc.)



Consumption of cold beverages is consistently growing, with demand rising equally during both summer and winter seasons

## Rise of global beverages from niche to mainstream

**Boba Tea**

**11x**

Growth in Search in last 5 Yrs<sup>1</sup>



*Taiwanese tea-based drink with chewy tapioca pearls*

**Matcha Tea**

**4x**

Growth in Search In last 5 Yrs<sup>1</sup>



*Finely ground green (superfood ingredient) powder-based Japanese drink*

*“There has been a lack of supply of quality beverages at scale beyond cold drinks, coffee & tea, which has opened up an exciting space for brands to differentiate themselves through beverages, especially as an add-on to meals”*

**Nishant Kedia, CMO, Rebel Foods**

# Secret SAUCE of success for restaurant partners to win in the rapidly growing food services space



Speed



Affordability



Unboxing Experience



Consumer Health

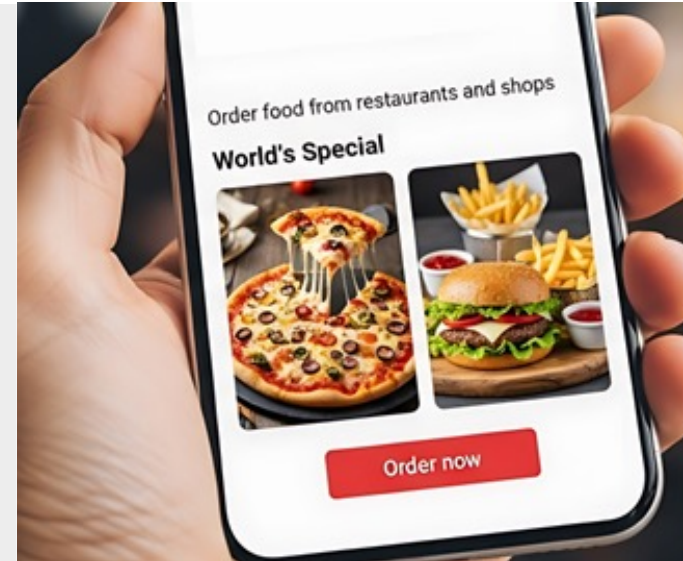
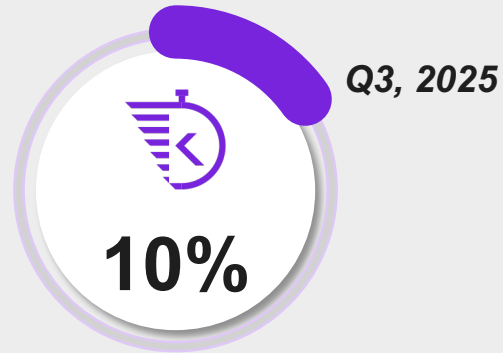
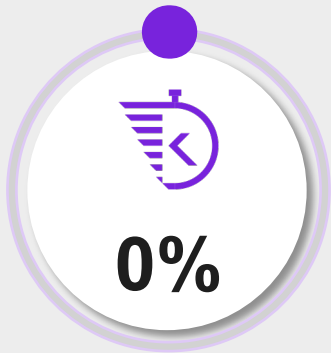


Engagement

# Quick commerce mindset is reshaping food delivery, with niche brands experimenting with ultra-fast formats



## Increasing share of Bolt Orders (Quick commerce for food delivery)



**4 – 6 pp**  
higher monthly **customer retention** for consumers acquired through Bolt vs platform average

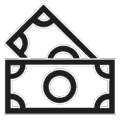
**Curated menu items designed by restaurants to suit fast-format dining, offering simplified choices, quick prep, and great taste**

*“Certain cuisines- like samosas, chai, and ice creams - will fly on quick commerce model because they are fast-moving and suited for speed. Quick commerce today forms almost 80–85% of our revenue, growing faster than food delivery”*

*Kiran Shah, Founder, Go Zero*



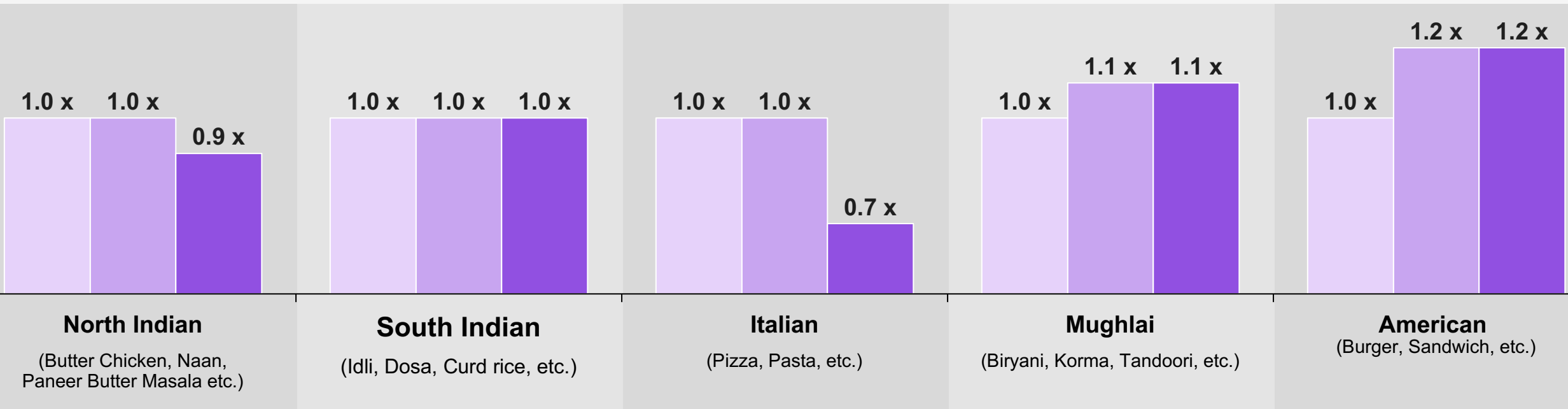
# The Affordability piano varies by cuisine: Pareto cuisines North Indian & Italian indicate increasing pivot towards affordable meals while premiumization plays out for others



**Affordability**

Growth rate index of items by item price range<sup>1</sup>  
2022 - 2025

₹0-200   ₹200-400   ₹400+



# Reimagined formats and intelligent packaging are transforming how consumers experience and connect with food



## Unboxing Experience

### Narrative packaging

Using heritage motifs and local materials to narrate food traditions



e.g., *Subko Bakehouse* uses native scripts on its labels; *The Bombay Canteen* delivers meals in *potlis* that transform into a tablecloth, as a thoughtful nod to traditional family gatherings; *Biryani by Kilo* seals biryani in earthen handis, reinforcing the story of slow-cooked dum

### Smart packaging

Butterfly burger boxes unfolding into plates, compartmentalized packaging to enable easy, spill-free dining, containers for easy heating of food



e.g., *Box8* uses multi-compartment boxes to prevent soggy and enable dine-from-box convenience; *Haldiram's* delivers microwave-ready curry bowls that keep gravies intact for easy reheating

### Functional designs

Reusable formats such as cans with plastic screw caps, traceable containers and steel cutlery, compostable cutlery



e.g., *Keventers* uses take-home glass jars while *Salad Life* and *Pot Pot* send steel forks with their deliveries; *FabCafe* sends compostable cutlery packs that double as napkin holders



### Interactive formats

Adding gamified QR codes, loyalty stamp collections, or personalized thank-you notes



e.g., *Chains like McDonald's, Dominos and Chaayos* integrate QR codes to view nutritional details and avail limited-time campaign offers; *Starbucks India* integrates app-linked stickers on takeaway cups to collect rewards and drive repeat visits



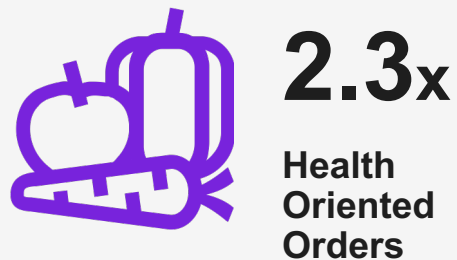
# Healthy and 'better-for-you' meals are growing 2.3x faster, fueled by clean-label innovation and wellness-led marketing



## Consumer Health

### Growth rate index of health-oriented orders

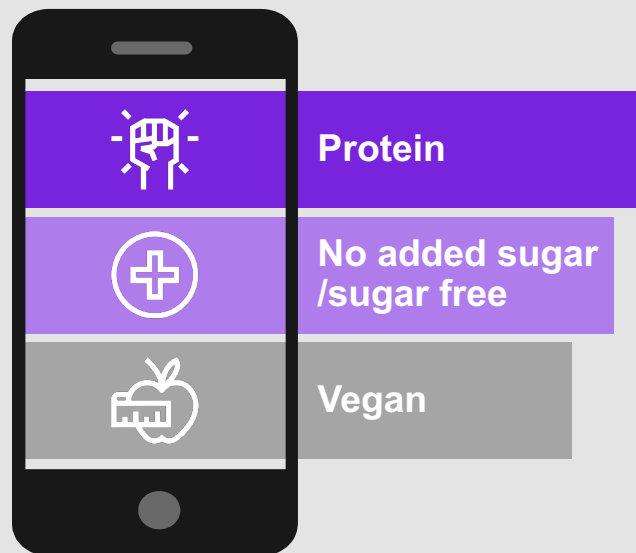
Growth rate index of health – oriented orders  
2021 - 2024



Menus are now highlighting Kcal per dish as part of a broader shift toward transparency and healthier dining

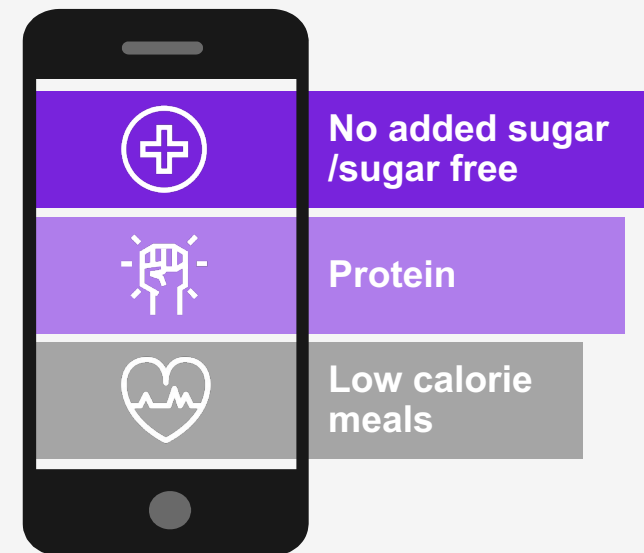
### Most Searched Health Tags

Basis search volume



### Emerging Health Trends

Basis growth in search volumes



*“While healthy ingredients are important, high-quality ingredients matter just as much for today’s consumers. In fact, the most successful offerings are those that combine both.”*

Nikhil Gupta, Co-Founder, The Pizza Bakery



# Digital-first, experience led engagement is reshaping how restaurants connect with GenZ



## Engagement

5-10%



Spend on marketing as % of Revenue by leading QSR chains

75%+



Share of spends on digital (over traditional media)

3x



Growth of GenZ cohort in dining out as compared to other cohorts

### New-age events



Events like **coffee raves** are being organized by multiple chains/ café across both metro and tier 1 cities

### Collabs with storytelling



Storytelling driven brand collaborations are creating deeper **cultural resonance**

### Promoters acting as brand ambassadors for their restaurants/ kitchens



### Instagrammable Locations/ Menus



**Themed dining concepts**—like Harry Potter and Money Heist cafés—remain highly engaging for customers

### Experiential dining formats and social gatherings



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