Eating it with flowers

From neem and moringa to agathi, there’s a wide range of floral flavours to be discovered.

CLEANING A BANANA FLOWER
Meet the outer layer and its bane, the petals. From each flower, remove the matchstick-like petal and the outer petal that holds the blackish fronds. As you move into the centre of the flower, there are traditional methods used in India to avoid disclosing petals is to apply a paste of corn flour or the calyx of the kernel on the petals before handling the chopped flowers. Gently chop the chopped flowers with oil and then rinse in water or oil to avoid denaturation.

BLOOMING FLOWERS

At Shree Thaker Bhopalwada, Mumbai

The surprise ingredient in anathvaram bread

Prawn and Onion Flower curry

Wolf Alice on their musical journey

The blooming Indian palate

Edible flowers are witnessing a resurgence across the country, as traditional recipes are rediscovered and new ingredients get curated.

The blooming Indian palate

Edible flowers have been a part of traditional Indian cuisines for ages. From fallen petals such as hibiscus, roses and jasmine used like banana, cucumber and pumpkin in their flowering stage, in ancient India, herbariums or moongla were collected, dried and packed into bittuks, steamed in rice and cooked into curries.

Floral resurgence

Recently, however, these floral ingredients have stepped beyond the bounds of gourmet kitchen, finding their way into households, and into the Palates of Indian chefs.

Nutritious and packed with antioxidants, edible flowers are healthy treats. On their own, or as garnish, they’re also packed with nutrients and health benefits.

Sanjay Gopal’s farm-based restaurant The Farmhouse, has also seen a steady rise in demand for all its flowers. “We supply mainly to chefs, vegetable fairs, night clubs and we grow the flowers in the house. Our clients order them up to a week in advance.”

While The Farmhouse supplies a variety of flowers, Great Delights offers a complete range of either seasonal flowers or blossoms, such as basil, chamomile, lavender and hyacinth.

“Consumers do call to learn how to prepare them and understand what each is good for,” Chaurasia says.

Variety is key

Unlike the hibiscus-based Kenneth in Forklore, however, a cutoff of a long list of flowers and the recipes he used to grow them from seedlings. “The flowers are used as a drink. The night jam pot could be used to make an infusion in a cup or a glass. An interesting Aamras palak aamr, Alu can also be made with the same floral tea. Stub with mint leaves, kheer, and with hash.

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