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AJ FINN ON PAGE 22
AN INDIA EXCLUSIVE

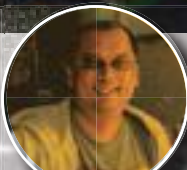
[THE FOOD ISSUE!]

INDIA'S BEST FOOD BLOGS

MEET THE MASTERS OF FOOD PORN
AND ANSWER THE Q OF THE MOMENT:
DOES TASTE MATTER, OR
'INSTAGRAMMABILITY'?



@ankietgulabani
ANKIET GULABANI



@finelychopped
KALYAN KARMAKAR



@hebbars.kitchen
ARCHANA HEBBAR



@masterchefmom
UMA RAGHURAMAN



@monikamanchanda
MONIKA MANCHANDA



@saffrontrail
NANDITA IYER



@twomouthsfull
ALISON & SUMANTO RAY

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pity the city



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5 MUST-WATCH TV SHOWS



Filmmaker **Tanuja Chandra** picks her favourites across five genres. And there's something for everyone!

BREAKING BAD

Genre: Drama



When it ended, it was famously said that there was television before *Breaking Bad* and television after *Breaking Bad*. This show is possibly the best writing done in the long format, which consistently got better with each season.

Gorgeous, cinematic production, it has stunning performances; no show since has matched its brilliance.

MODERN FAMILY

Genre: Comedy

(Disclaimer: I'm one of the very few non-fans of *Friends* in the world.)

From the older ones, *The Office* was fun and *30 Rock* was laser sharp, but *Modern Family* is my favourite because it brings



topics like homosexuality into mainstream entertainment. It's relevant while being crazy funny.



SHERLOCK

Genre: Thriller

The combination of Arthur Conan Doyle and Benedict Cumberbatch

makes *Sherlock* irresistible. Contemporary in its form, human emotions and frailty in its core, the show sucks you in and keeps you breathless till the end.

ZINDAGI GULZAR HAI

Genre: Romance

The most disappointing genre on television for me, one show that stayed with me is the Pakistani series, *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*, with the gorgeously intense Fawad Khan. It was adapted from a book, which is probably why it is nuanced and has depth.



LUTHER

Genre: Guilty pleasure (If this isn't a bonafide genre, it ought to be.)

Luther for me tops the list of cop shows, for which man could be hotter than Idris Elba, as a brilliant, angst police detective, too passionate for his own good, fighting bad guys but not without demons of his own. All the dark, twistedness of British crime with bursts of raw romance – it couldn't get any better.



Stuff You Said Last Sunday



Apurv Nagpal

@apurvnagpal

Rarely read celebrity stuff but truly enjoyed going through this interview by @ananya1281 in @HTBrunch of two very talented, creative individuals – #RBalki & @gauri's relationship

What a piece @ananya1281 this is a beautiful interview. It speaks of everything – modernity, independence, respect and unconditional love. A blissful adding experience thanks for teaching us couple goals @gauris and #RBalki #KiAndRi. @HTBrunch always amazes!

@k7joshi

@HTBrunch The Most amazing and Unusal pair!! Secret decoded of super successful marriage. Got to learn so many things from this issue. Couples go and get the handy of this issue!! @gauris #KiAndRi @Its_Chaitali

Loved reading your article in @HTBrunch today on #sausages @virsanghvi. Thank you for educating English breakfast and sausage lovers like us on where to have the best ones in India. #Sunday #Foodexpert #Englishbreakfast #HTBrunch @kunalgupta07

Finally after changing my newspaper vendor thrice, I got my first HTBrunch of this year :) @bubblyfalak

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Curating the best of the Internet for your Sunday viewing benefits



WATCH

The short film *Methi Ke Laddoo*, about a mother who encourages her daughter to go for IVF when she is worried about judgement is the most progressive thing you'll watch this weekend.

TAP

Alia Bhatt's profile (@aliaabhatt) is a good vibe only spot for behind-the-scenes of shoots, her cat shenanigans and chilling scenes with friends. Follow her for the millennial feed!

FOLLOW

Funny guy alert. Bratticus (@bharatunnithan) tweets and RTs some of the funniest stuff on Twitter, making your Sunday super light and fun.

FOLLOW

When is that Hollywood Metlaga thing I need an excuse to post my bathrobe picture again

Cover photograph courtesy: @SAFFRONTRAIL BY NANDITA IYER
A. J. Finn picture courtesy: HARPER COLLINS INDIA

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Cranberry chicken salad
@monikamanchanda



Cranberry cheesecake
@monikamanchanda



Groundnut hummus with cumin and chilli
@ankietgulabani



Crack pie with coconut cookie base, salty Monaco top crust and sweet custard
@ankietgulabani



Prawns cooked at home using Marathi *ghati* masala
@thefinelychopped



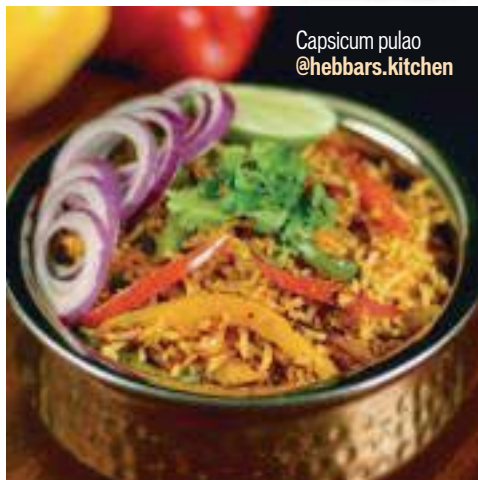
Steak fry, Goan sausage and vindaloo from New Martin Hotel in Mumbai
@thefinelychopped



Pepper biryani
@masterchefmom



Cholia salad
@monikamanchanda



Capsicum pulao
@hebbars.kitchen



Easy prawn masala recipe
@monikamanchanda



Spring dosa
@hebbars.kitchen



Cherry cake
@monikamanchanda

[THE FOOD ISSUE: INDIA'S BEST FOOD BLOGS]

HAVE APPETITE, WILL STOMACH

**FOOD CRITICS BE DAMNED!
NOTHING GETS THE DIGESTIVE JUICES FLOWING
MORE READILY THAN THE FOOD PORN DISHED OUT
BY THESE NEW-AGE DIGITAL CONNOISSEURS**

By Deepika Nidige

For so many of us, food is an almost sacrosanct feature of living well. Which is why food blogs and vlogs are so popular on social media. There are all kinds of food blogs – some focus on health, others on

tradition, still others on quick recipes. Some are the manifestation of a hobby, some are meant for business. But each kind has a hardcore band of followers. Meet some of India's most popular purveyors of food porn.



JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION USING #BestFoodBlogs

“I CRITIQUED RESTAURANTS SO HARSHLY THAT MY WIFE NAMED MY BLOG ‘FINELY CHOPPED’”

@thefinelychopped (30.3k followers)

KALYAN KARMAKAR
Blog: finelychopped.net

For Kalyan Karmakar, food blogging began in 2007. Often he critiqued restaurants so harshly that his wife decided to name the blog ‘Finely Chopped’.

Kalyan believes there is never a bad time for people to start food

blogging, and there is no particular style necessary. “There is always place for a distinct, passionate voice to be heard,” he asserts.

However, you have to work at it. “Most blogs wither away after a post or two,” he points out. “Sustainability is the key. The best part about my blog is the access it has given me to chefs and writers.”



One post you hit the delete button on: One on a fish market when one fish seller told me their sales had gone down after I wrote about going to another.

Difficult to capture on cam: Butter chicken.

Non-photogenic but yum dish: Dhansak.

A dish that is only pretty: Salads, but that's just me.

The most unique comment: I'd written about a meat shop, Kalman's in Kolkata, which had been founded by a Hungarian trapeze artist in the post World War II years. His granddaughter who lives in Australia, read the post and wrote a comment saying how touched she was to know about her grandfather and the regard in which he was held.

Your forte: Bengali food.

“SOMEONE CALLED ME A FAIRY ON INSTAGRAM!”

@saffrontrail (39.6k followers)

NANDITA IYER
Blog: saffrontrail.com

While blogging about food is enjoyable, it can also be annoying. “Everything is SEO-driven now,” laments Nandita Iyer. “It means I must compartmentalise my thoughts to optimise hits on my blog. And it is important to develop a niche early on, or you're just writing for yourself.”

Nandita started blogging in 2006 on a whim. By now, she says, the process of food blogging has become labour-intensive. “You have to



research the key words, photograph the food, and then edit it. It becomes tiresome,” she says.

But a loyal readership developed over the years is highly gratifying, she reasons.

“WE DON'T REVIEW UPON INVITATION”

@twomouthsfull (5.3k followers)

ALISON & SUMANTO RAY
Blog: twomouthsfull.com

Sumanto and his wife Allison make it a point to go on two holidays every year, love to cook, and throw memorable parties. New kids on the blogging block, they began reviewing restaurants and food a few months ago.

“Everyone has always sought out restaurants based on our recommendations and told us that they agreed with our experiences,” says Sumanto.



Restaurateurs and event managers often invite him to review their food, but he almost never accepts invitations. “They'd expect

me to write something nice,” Sumanto explains. “I prefer going a few days later, tasting the food and giving honest reviews.”

“I GOT TROLLED FOR USING CHEESE IN AVIAL!”

@monikamanchanda (12.3k followers)

MONIKA MANCHANDA
Blog: sinamontales.com



Hare tamatar ki sabji



Dubki walle aloo with khatti meethi methi ki chutney



Red beetroot pasta with goat cheese

Monika Manchanda's impeccably indexed blog began as a diary, but changed over the years to something structured for an audience. "For example, I resort to seasonal cooking. Or there is a different theme every month," she says.

Monika does two to three blog posts every week, and each entails six to seven hours of work: cooking, plating, photographing, editing, posting on various platforms, and audience engagement. The latter, she says, is the most humbling part of blogging. She remembers posting a recipe for peanut chutney, something she learnt from her mother-in-law, and hundreds of people recreated the recipe, making her thrilled.

Biggest social media boo-boo: I got trolled for my version of an avial recipe. I had used cheese!

Difficult to capture on cam: Indian brown curries.

Non-photogenic but yum dish: Chutneys.

A dish that is only pretty: Puris.

The most unique comment: Someone left a touching comment when my father passed away.

Your forte: Simple and quick dinner recipes.

One post you hit the delete button on: None. But I am redoing my old posts with better key words.

Biggest social media boo-boo: I went for a test drive organised by the Tatas for bloggers. Everyone asked what a food blogger was doing at a test drive!

Difficult to capture on cam: Brown-coloured Indian dishes

Non-photogenic but yum dish: Curry, sambhar, dal.

The most unique comment: Someone called me a fairy on Instagram!

Your forte: Salads.

One post you hit the delete button on: None, but a restaurant deleted a review of mine on a common blogging platform.

Difficult to capture on cam: Experimental food, like the dishes that smoke.

Non-photogenic but yum dish: Biryani.

A dish that is only pretty: Smoked meat.

The most unique comment: A man visiting from Florida visited a restaurant on my recommendation.

Your forte: For meat eaters.

“PONGAL PHOTOGRAPHS BADLY, BUT TASTES GREAT”

@masterchefmom (60.1k followers)

UMA RAGHURAMAN

Blog: masterchefmom.blogspot.in

Uma Raghuraman proudly says she comes from 'a foodie family that especially loves homemade food'. Cooking three meals a day for the 21 years of her marriage, plus tweaking her style according to her children's wants, she acquired such a huge store of recipes that her kids suggested she start a blog.

She now has 900 online recipes. And she also joined Instagram.

Uma is sustained by the comments left by her followers, and the awards she's received, such as the Saveur Blog Award for Best Food Instagram 2017. "When people recreate your recipe, it is the ultimate validation," says Uma.



Brinjal tiffin sambar



Paper roast dosa with tomato chutney



Podi idlies

One post you hit the delete button on: I worked on a draft post for two full days, and then deleted it by mistake!

Biggest social media boo-boo: A crank caller threatened to delete my account if I didn't pay him money. I panicked and decided to change my password, then realised I'd forgotten the password! Those 30 minutes were scary!

Difficult to capture on cam:

Ice cream. It melts before I am ready to shoot!

Non-photogenic but yum dish: All types of pongal

A dish that is only pretty: Salads.

The most unique comment: One person said, "There is so much LOVE in your posts, that's what makes you stand out".

Your forte: Tamil cuisine.

“BIG BOO BOO? I EDITED OUT ADDING SALT IN MY DUM ALOO VIDEO!”

@hebbars.kitchen (274k followers)



Moong dal vada



Dahi vada



Paan kulfi

ARCHANA HEBBAR
Blog: hebbarskitchen.com
Youtube: 648,682 subscribers

Archana Hebbar’s Hebbar’s Kitchen, a blog plus YouTube channel, started as a hobby but is now “a passion-cum-profession”.

“After I got married and moved to Australia, I wanted to continue in software, but couldn’t get a job without local experience,” says

Archana. “To kill time, I started my blog.”

Archana keeps videos short, shares step-by-step photo recipes, adds notes for every recipe on her website, and answers queries online. Her only challenge, she says, is developing recipes in response to reader requests.

On the plus side, everything she cooks for the blog winds up on her dinner table!

One post you hit the delete button on: I recreate old posts and delete the originals.

Biggest social media boo-boo: I added salt while preparing my dum aloo for a video, but then I edited out that bit while editing the video.

Difficult to capture on cam: Dosa, ice cream, kulfi.

Non-photogenic but yum dish: Pesarattu, badam halwa, lauki halwa, bharwa karela.

A dish that is only pretty: Overnight oatmeal.

The most unique comment: A reader asked if my thumb ring brings me luck.

Your forte: Udupi and paneer recipes.

“I MADE A TART FROM NAGPUR ORANGES, BUT CAPTIONED IT ‘NASIK’ ORANGES!”

@ankietgulabani (28.4k followers)



Speculaas spice wreath



Rose Levy Beranbaum’s famous white velvet cake with chocolate french buttercream and glaze



Pearl barley and red rice

ANKIET GULABANI
Blog: bellyovermind.com

Two successive setbacks in 27-year-old Ankiyet Gulabani’s professional life drove him to set up his own blog in late 2016: the shutting down of the Indian edition of the *BBC Good Food* magazine and the closure of the food and drink website *The Eat Post*, both places where he worked.

“I decided to fall back on myself,” says Ankiyet, hoping to make a living from his blog. Since he had already been testing recipes at home, his main investment was ingredients.

“I had to force myself to be disciplined,” he says. “And I didn’t give income much thought initially. What I knew very clearly was that to make this work, I had to deliver quality content for my readers. I created around 20-25 recipes and put them up. Soon people and brands came to me.”

By Anil Sadarangani

One post you hit the delete button on: None. I’m quite meticulous.

Biggest social media boo-boo: I made an orange tart recently, and said the oranges from Nashik, when they were actually from Nagpur!

Difficult to capture on cam: Soupy ones.

Non-photogenic but yum dish: Sindhi saibhaji.

A dish that is only pretty: Each dish needs to be treated differently to be photographed well.

The most unique comment: It’s touching when people tell me they are inspired by me.

Your forte: Sustainable and seasonal cooking.

deepika.nidige@htlive.com
 Follow @dpkndg on Twitter

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[THE FOOD ISSUE: ESSAY]

PRETTY PLATES, PRETTY PLEASE...

Sure, taste matters. But there's a new investment chefs are making: ensuring their dishes have 'instagrammability'!

By Saumya Vohra



FUN ON A PLATTER
Quirky stuffed mushroom canapés

Photo courtesy: RAKHEE JAIN

In a world where self-worth is judged by followers, and a 'like' is a saleable commodity, it's no surprise that food has fallen prey to the Instadiktat. Pretty pastel hues on the plate come alive with a quick click on the Gingham filter. Foods that involve a minute of at-the-table-prep need that quirky little Boomerang. Face it: 'Instagrammability' has fast become non-negotiable for a deluge of diners. Which means that for chefs, there's pressure to get their food aesthetics up to a nine on the Richter scale.

SHOOT AND EAT

Instagram is now more of a factor in dining than ever before. Chef Kelvin Cheung of Bastian, Mumbai, thinks it

face behind the food blog Gluttony Goddess. "Stark, minimal plating that brings the word 'clean' to mind works best, photographs wise. The core thought behind taking a photograph of a dish is to highlight the ingredients, and to make it look appetising to someone scrolling past. Strawberries, chocolate or cheese-laden dishes invariably make for great photographs," she says.

Adds food stylist Rakhee Jain, "It's how bewitchingly food is presented that attracts us to pay for it. The more visible you are on Instagram, the more likely it is that people will come and experience the menu," she says. "Aesthetics are where it all starts and, often, ends. Food can be beyond banal, but with the right elements – and

"When I started out, the thought of taking out my phone in the kitchen would have been unfathomable. But now..."
–chef Kelvin Cheung

particularly the right lighting – it can be made to look supremely desirable."

PICTURE PERFECT

Lighting is the key to a good photograph, and Kelvin admits that it can be a constraint in the kitchen. "Sadly, the lighting at Bastian is terrible, save for the sunlight that streams in and works beautifully for brunch and lunch photos," he says.

Pooja Dhingra, head chef at Le 15 Patisserie, says daylight is her Insta-saviour. "We have large French windows in the restaurant, so the whole space is naturally well-lit," she says. "Luckily, I work around really beautiful desserts that are just organically photographable."

Pooja has noticed a bit of an upsurge in the demand for 'prettier' food, because they just look so good on an Insta story. "I see that a lot with food like avocado

hasn't affected the way a chef's creative process plays out, but it has changed the way they propel their dishes.

"I plate dishes the way I want them to be eaten; if they end up looking Instagrammable, or picturesque, that's a bonus," he says. "But there has been a massive change in terms of how chefs promote their food. When I started out, the thought of even taking out my phone in the kitchen would have been unfathomable. Now..."

Most restaurateurs seem to have gotten the hang of shooting for Instagram, says Gunjan Sawhney, the

Photo courtesy: LE 15 PATISSERIE



SWEET HUES
A jar full of colourful macarons



RAKHEE JAIN
Food stylist



KELVIN CHEUNG
Head chef at Bastian, Mumbai



POOJA DHINGRA
Head chef at Le 15 Patisserie



GUNJAN SAWHNEY
Blogger at Gluttony Goddess



RAISE A TOAST
(Clockwise from top) Toasties with curd, orange and black grapes; strawberry and chocolate; mint mayo and bell peppers

Photos courtesy: GUNJAN SAWHNEY

toast etc. Basically, foods that pop with colour, or have a touch of the bizarre."

People also embellish their dishes with edible flowers, or add a tinge of liquid nitrogen to a cocktail to give it very Boomerang-able sizzle, says Gunjan. "This kind of thing has started happening to add to the aesthetic value of the image, though in some (specific) cases it does raise the taste bar as well," she says.

And contrasts really work, says Rakhee. "If you see something painstakingly plated, it often looks a little like a piece of art," she says.

ONLINE / OFFLINE

A recent survey by *The Independent*, UK, showed that Instagrammability is the number one reason for choosing a holiday spot, with 40 per cent of millennials claiming it was a higher priority than cost or availability of alcohol (24) or opportunities for sightseeing (3.9). This is a clear indicator of how social media cred counts to a millennial. Food is no exception.

So are we looking at a food future where visuals matter more than taste? Never, says Pooja. "People care a lot about how their food looks, but I don't think they would keep going back to a place just because the food is pretty if it didn't taste good enough to match the way it looks," she says.

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A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a long blue dress, stands with her arms outstretched in a dark room. The walls and ceiling are covered in a vibrant, colorful projection of a galaxy or nebula, featuring swirling patterns of blue, purple, pink, and orange, with numerous bright stars. The overall atmosphere is awe-inspiring and cosmic.

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LIVE WHAT YOU LOVE

MATCHMAKING SERVICE FOR GLOBAL INDIANS

Meet Anuradha Gupta, CEO of **Vows for Eternity** – a confidential and personalised global matrimonial search firm

Headquartered in New York City with an established presence in Mumbai, Delhi, London and Singapore, Vows for Eternity (VFE) is a confidential and personalised global matrimonial search firm that brings life partners together based on mindsets, values and personalities. The membership base consists of affluent, upwardly mobile global Indians/ Non Resident Indians in the age group of 24-70. What truly binds these people together is that while they are successful, well-travelled, progressive thinking and cosmopolitan in their outlook – they are missing that one special person to share their life with.

Anuradha Gupta, CEO of Vows for Eternity, currently lives in Manhattan, New York. Since she has also lived in Los Angeles, London, Melbourne and Delhi, she brings not only years of matchmaking experience but also a global perspective to her company, whilst also being strongly rooted to her Indian values. Anuradha started VFE years ago based on her own experience of looking for a life partner.

What defines Vows for Eternity?

A lot of things but my top two would be integrity and relatability. It's about recognising that people are looking for a partner who will also become their soulmate and confidante – a rare combination that is difficult to find. That's why we provide a global outreach while still maintaining a very personalised and confidential approach.

How does Vows for Eternity work?

I believe that people are delaying getting married because the personality fit and connect of values between two people and their families have become even more important and difficult. I do not work with biodatas as



Photo: HTBS

people are so much more than what they convey on paper. We like to engage with members for a better understanding of their personalities; their childhood, family members and their life experiences. As a result we are able to provide a global outreach whilst still maintaining a very personal and private approach, something we work very hard on and are immensely proud of. Our focus has always been on quality rather than quantity and so we enforce a strict eligibility criteria for membership.

Tell us about your typical member profile?

Our members consist primarily of successful professionals, industrialists and celebrities, primarily based in India, the US, UK, Singapore and Dubai. They are successful, well travelled, progressive, belong to diverse backgrounds and are looking for the right partner to make life even more meaningful.

Tell us about your membership options?

We have three memberships:

Privilege Suite is our signature bespoke service designed for members who are industrialists, celebrities and very senior professionals. Our Premium membership is designed for individuals who are extremely driven and accomplished, self-made persons. Our Silver Lining membership is specifically for people above the age of 55.

What do you think is important in a marriage?

I strongly believe that marriage is built on the four pillars of friendship, trust, respect and loyalty. Personality fit and the connect of values between two people and two families becomes very important and gets more difficult with time and age. That's why I don't work with biodatas as I don't think this does justice to people.

You are recognised as a successful entrepreneur. Any words of wisdom for aspiring entrepreneurs?

Follow your heart. Find the thing that engages you – the whole of you and then put your heart and soul into it. Believe in yourself and know that in life the only limits that really matter are the ones you set for yourself.

What is your favourite Indian romantic destination?

Rajasthan and Ladakh. Absolutely magical!

What does the future hold for you?

I don't know. What I do know is that I will enjoy the journey and live every moment because I don't know how to live any other way.

Anuradha will be visiting India to meet new members. For more information visit www.vowsforeternity.com, e-mail: contactus@vowsforeternity.com or call +91 997 173 1300, +91 99672 49707.

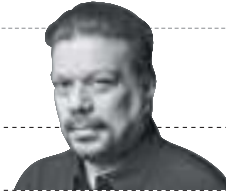
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rude food

The Hospitable Punjabi

The irresistible rise of Punjabi restaurateurs and the Moti Mahal Butter Chicken

It started with a moment of curiosity. Two years ago, I was invited to speak at a gathering of alumni from Delhi's Catering College (known within the trade as the Pusa Institute because of its location). As I looked around at the audience, I noticed that everybody who mattered in the hospitality sector seemed to be there.

How was that possible? I wondered why the Mumbai Catering College, which is as highly regarded, had not been able to produce such famous and powerful alumni.

Finally, an hotelier I met solved the mystery for me. Both catering colleges were outstanding, he said. The reason so many of the Delhi college's students were so successful had little to do with the calibre of the institute.

It was because the Pusa college attracted more Punjabis. And Punjabis were natural hoteliers who always rose to the top of the profession.

He was right, of course.

We sometimes forget how much Punjabis have shaped our hospitality sector. The Oberois are proudly Punjabi. ITC hotels have Punjabis at the top (Yogi Deveshwar who gave the hotel division its distinct identity is a Punjabi, so is Nakul Anand who pushed the chain into luxury). The Kwality-Gaylord group which opened restaurants all over India in the 1950s and 1960s is owned by Punjabis. Most famous Indian chefs are Punjabis: Satish Arora, Arvind Saraswat, Manjit Gill, Hemant Oberoi, Sanjeev Kapoor, Vineet Bhatia, Gaggan Anand, Manisha Bhasin, Vikas Khanna and so many others. The judges of *MasterChef India* have come



POINT OF ORIGIN

The original butter chicken was invented in the Moti Mahal kitchen in the 1950s

and gone but they have all had one thing in common: from Akshay Kumar to Kunal Kapoor to Zorawar Kalra, they have all been Punjabis.

Even the Taj, which was the least Punjabi of the major chains has now been headed by two Punjabis, one after the other: Rakesh Sarna and Puneet Chatwal. Both Sarna and Chatwal were among the most successful Indians in the global hotel industry before they came home and those Indians who continue to serve in key positions in foreign hotel chains – Radha Arora, Sandeep Walia, and Raj Menon (don't be misled by his name), for instance – tend to be Punjabis.

Most important of all is the food: what most of the world thinks of as Indian cuisine is a Punjabi invention.

I was reminded of this last month when I heard of the passing of the legendary Kundan Lal Jaggi. I never met Jaggi properly. We said a brief hello last year when he was given the "Legendary Cuisines Award" at the Chef's Conference. I wanted to chat to him about his role in creating some of the best known dishes of Indian cuisine and we fixed a meeting. Sadly, he fell ill before we could meet and never became well enough to talk about his career.

In the 1940s, Jaggi worked in a restaurant called Moti Mahal in Peshawar. Moti Mahal's claim to fame was that it used the tandoor (normally used for baking naans etc.) to roast a chicken. The dish was called Tandoori Chicken

Today, anybody who opens an Indian restaurant anywhere, regards a tandoor as an essential component of his kitchen

LENTIL LOVE

The rich, buttery dal that most restaurants serve now took birth at Moti Mahal



Aaj Kya Khaoge?





MUTTON FOR THE GLUTTON

Though we think of Moti Mahal in terms of chicken, it popularised many mutton dishes, like the Barrah Kebab

and though it was popular in Peshawar, it was relatively unknown elsewhere.

In 1947, during the horrors of Partition, Jaggi had to leave Peshawar along with Kundan Lal Gujral, another employee of Moti Mahal. The two arrived in Delhi as refugees and joined up with Thakur Das Mago, another Moti Mahal hand who had also fled to Delhi.

The three men had no means of income and possessed only the skills they had picked up at Moti Mahal in Peshawar. They contacted Moka Singh Lamba, the owner of Moti Mahal and told him that they wanted to start a similar restaurant in Delhi. Would he like to join them? Moka Singh, who was quite old by this time, told them that he had no desire to start all over again. They were welcome to start a restaurant on their own and they could even call it Moti Mahal if they liked.

So the three men took a shop in Fatehpuri and began making a facsimile of the Peshawar Tandoori Chicken. But their breakthrough came when a Sikh gentleman sold them a space in Daryaganj for ₹6000. Gujral, Jaggi and Mago opened a full-scale Moti Mahal there and began serving their tandoori dishes.

The three men divided their responsibilities. Kundan Lal Gujral, who was the natural extrovert, became the face of Moti Mahal. He was the one who looked after the front-of-the-house and maintained relationships with such powerful patrons as Jawaharlal Nehru. Mago looked after the finances. And Jaggi was in charge of the kitchen.

One reason I had wanted to meet Jaggi was because many of the dishes we now consider staples of Indian cuisine were invented in the Moti Mahal kitchen in the 1950s. The original butter chicken, for instance, was created in that kitchen. How the dish was invented remains a mystery. Kundan Lal's grandson, Monish Gujral, who has done so much to revive the Moti Mahal name, says it emerged out of a desire to reuse the leftover tandoori chicken. A rich gravy was needed to rehydrate the chicken and butter chicken was created as a result.

I spoke to Neelu Jaggi, daughter-in-law of Kundan Lal and she told me that right till the end, Jaggi (he was 95 when he passed away) would supervise the making of butter chicken at home to his own recipes. He shunned the recent innovations (honey, methi etc.) and made the dish as it was originally created, with tomatoes, cream and butter.

Moti Mahal also reinvented the Punjabi black dal. Until Moti Mahal started doing it, few people put tomatoes in

LEGENDARY CHAIN

Kundan Lal Jaggi (below) was in charge of the Moti Mahal kitchen in Delhi when it started



TORCHBEARER
Monish Gujral, Kundan Lal Gujral's grandson, has done a lot to revive the Moti Mahal name

ON THE web

For more columns by Vir Sanghvi, log on to hindustantimes.com/brunch. Follow Vir on Twitter at twitter.com/virsanghvi

The views expressed by the columnist are personal

SCRUMPTIOUS FROM A SKEWER

Kebab samplers from the kitchen of Moti Mahal Delux

the dal. Now the rich, tomato-flavoured, buttery dal is the version that most Indian restaurants serve. One theory is that the Moti Mahal founders had the bright idea of using the same sort of gravy they used for butter chicken to perk up the traditional dal. Neelu says that Jaggi's real concern was with slow-cooking. The Moti Mahal dal would not taste right unless it was cooked for hours on a slow flame.

Though we now think of Moti Mahal in terms of chicken (butter chicken, tandoori chicken etc.), it also popularised many mutton dishes. The seekh kebab was usually cooked over an open flame till Moti Mahal turned it into a tandoori dish and the Barrah Kebab's popularity is almost entirely down to Moti Mahal. "My father-in-law was very particular about the tenderness of the meat, about cooking it so that it retained all its juices and the aroma of the dish was all important," Neelu recalls.

Eventually alas, the original Moti Mahal went into a decline and the founders and their descendants sold it.

But the legacy of those men, three penniless Punjabi refugees from Peshawar, endures. At its simplest level, it endures in the dishes they created: butter chicken and the black dal.

But at a more significant level, their legacy lies in the rise of tandoori cooking. The original Peshawar Moti Mahal may have invented tandoori chicken but it was the Delhi Moti Mahal that taught us how the tandoor, an oven that was traditionally used only to bake breads, could be transformed into a means of imparting unusual flavours to meat, fish and chicken. Today, anybody who opens an Indian restaurant anywhere in the world, regards a tandoor as an essential component of his kitchen. Without the pioneering work of the Moti Mahal founders, this would never have happened.

The Moti Mahal story also demonstrates why Punjabis are India's natural restaurateurs, hoteliers and chefs. Gujral, Jaggi, and Mago lost everything during Partition. But within a few years they had created a successful new restaurant and revolutionised Indian cuisine.

Lakhs of other Punjabi refugees followed similar trajectories. They fled from bloodshed and unspeakable violence, leaving everything they owned behind. But in no time at all, they were back on their feet again, flourishing in a new city.

It is ironic that people who had seen so much tragedy and suffering were able to offer such warm hospitality. But then, hospitality is the natural skill of the Punjabi. It is a skill that has shaped India's hotels and restaurants and indeed, our cuisine itself.



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rajiv makhni

Life-Changing Apps

Quit social media and try these apps that are game changers in their own way

The verdict is in and it's absolutely unanimous. It's time to reboot your life. There are crystal clear reasons you should quit social media, according to science! Not reduce, not cut down, not lessen – completely quit. Not tomorrow, not in an hour – right now!

Reasons given are many, including eating disorders, making you dumber, ruining your real relationships, encouraging narcissism, leading to depression, messing up your work flow and making you part of a mob mentality. These were suspected, now proven! Add to this the Facebook security breach and the story is complete. But once you're off social media, what do you do with the hours and hours of time you've just brought back into your life. Here are some apps that you may not have heard about. These aren't the typical boring utility apps that columns like these usually feature. Some are fun, some are insane and some are game changers – but each will change your life in a good way.



A NEW EXPERIENCE

IFTTT allows you to automate tasks based on rules you set

confusing, it's my guarantee that anyone and I mean absolutely anyone, can use IFTTT and become a pro at it within minutes. So what does it do? The app allows you to automate tasks and inflow of information based on rules you set. Basically it uses the rule that if this happens then immediately it should trigger that. The trigger can be anything – time, a message, a new post, an update on a website – literally anything. For instance if there is a new cricket score posted, you can receive it as a message or email. Triggers and actions can be from websites, apps, devices and even smart bulbs etc. You can even check other people's triggers, featured recipes, themed collections and all-time favourites, and use them yourself. Get IFTTT now, you can thank me later.



IN TIMES OF CRISIS
Time your pee breaks with RunPee app

you exactly when to take that pee break without missing out on any important part of the plot. It'll even give you a synopsis of what you missed when you get back. Movies and plots, and

IFTTT

'If This, Then That' is the biggest secret of the Internet age. To those that know of it and use it, life is a completely different experience. They've understood that technology can be the most powerful ally and that doing repetitive tasks on your phone or computer is for fools. And while it may look daunting and

These aren't the typical boring utility apps....Some are fun, some are insane and some are game changers

ON THE web

For more TECHILICIOUS columns by Rajiv Makhni, log on to hindustantimes.com/brunch. Follow Rajiv on Twitter at twitter.com/RajivMakhni

The views expressed by the columnist are personal



SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

There are several apps that have helped in making things like money transfer, payments and even bookings convenient for all of us

pee-worthy timelines upload in real time and almost any movie is covered. This is basically the best thing to happen to your bladder in a long long time.



SAVE TAX

You can buy mutual funds and get real time information via UTI Mutual Fund app

UTI MUTUAL FUND APP

This one operates at a completely different level. I've had more questions about this one on Twitter than maybe anything else in recent times. Let me try and answer them here. Yes, you can actually buy mutual funds direct from the app, yes you can set up an account on the app itself, yes it allows you to invest even in liquid funds (potentially better returns than saving accounts without any

lock in). The app also offers you all details on New Fund Offers and you can check Net Asset Value of every Mutual Fund in real time. Existing investors can even get their statement of accounts mailed to them from within the app. For me the awesome part was that they even have a UTI chatbot working through Facebook messenger that can answer most of your queries and even guide you. I've used this app extensively and got some great new investments at tax time.

SELFISSIMO! AND MEMRISE

I'm combining the last two as I discovered them both on the same day and have been using them incessantly. Selfissimo! is for all the selfie addicts of this world.

Fire it up and it takes a photo every single time you pose. Yes, it shoots as soon as you are still and not when you're moving. Gives you an entire reel of photos to choose from once you're done. Memrise can get

you started on learning a new language and uses tools, games and experiences to make sure it's not boring or difficult. It even has chatbot assisted learning, speed reviews and speaker video interactive games. I tried out all the Spanish I had learnt through Memrise in Barcelona this time. The natives looked impressed!

There it is. Time to go off social media and bring in something different onto your phone. Apps that will change your life, not take it away!



FOR SELFIE ADDICTS

Selfissimo! helps take a selfie every time you pose

Rajiv Makhni is managing editor, Technology, NDTV, and the anchor of Gadget Guru, Cell Guru and Newsnet 3



shoba narayan

this indian life

NEW COLUMN!

You Can Count On It

Need a cell phone number that really works? Call Ramaswamy Mama

The Airtel store in Indiranagar, Bengaluru, is designed like a hospital. I walked in last week to a recorded voice on the loudspeaker saying, “Token number 1133.” I’m not sure of the exact number that was called but I remember it being unrealistically high. Had they really processed over a thousand people that day, I wondered. And then it occurred to me that they had a token system that continued from day to day. One day, they’d call out their “Token number one lakh,” and then what? Maybe that customer would get an extra Aadhaar card.

I was at the store to link my mother’s phone number to her Aadhaar card. She had been bugging me to do this chore for days. My dad and mum have a few pet projects. My dad likes to go to the bank and add entries to his passbook. My mum likes to invite the bank employees home for lunch and tries to matchmake the single ones with people of appropriate caste and religion. The Aadhaar linkage was a way of her grabbing moments with me.

HELLO, MANJUNATH

So here we were in Indiranagar. After much back and forth with a tall salesman named Manjunath – in Bengaluru, everyone is called Manjunath – we filled in forms and proceeded through different counters. The linkage itself was painless. My mother stuck her finger into an electronic reader and that was it.

“Anything else, Madam?” asked Manjunath, who had by now, become a friend.

All the salesmen in that store were tall and lanky except for the sole woman. I find that all stores hire a body type. At Café Coffee Day, all the salesmen behind the counter look like they had pumped iron for a week. The grocery store where I buy vegetables has salespeople who look like movie extras. They have perfected the smirk that male extras use while dancing behind the star.

The Airtel salesmen didn’t display that suppressed rage evident in Tamil movies. They were softer, more genteel, as people in Bengaluru are wont to be. But they all had the same body type.

IT ALL ADDS UP

My mother had insisted on accompanying me to the Airtel store for one reason: she wanted to meet the customer who’d pay ₹ 2 lakh for a “vanity” phone number. The first time we heard about this was when we went to get her a smartphone with a new SIM card.

“Would you like your new phone number to total up to a particular digit?” asked the salesman.

My mother instantly understood but I didn’t.

“Why?” I asked.

“Numerology,” she hissed.

“People want numbers that total up to five or eight,” he said.

Wait, said my mother, and called our family astrologer. His cook told us that he wasn’t in India, which meant a long process of FaceTiming his son who worked in Facebook so that my mom could consult him about lucky numbers. Since we had to do this live from



Photo Imaging: PARTH GARG

LUCKY NUMBER
To get her new SIM card, my mother called up our family astrologer to pick the number accordingly

My dad’s pet project is adding entries to his passbook, and mom’s is to matchmake the single employees from the bank

ON THE web

THIS INDIAN LIFE by Shoba Narayan can also be read on hindustantimes.com/brunch. Follow Shoba on Twitter at twitter.com/ShobaNarayan

The views expressed by the columnist are personal

the store, this meant coordinating the time zones so that we could be at the store at a time that was suitable for Facebook employees in San Francisco. Then there was the *Rahu Kalam* considered inauspicious by many South Indians – including my mom and her astrologer. It was like arranging a nuclear summit between Syria and Palestine. I was exhausted at the end of it.

My mother wanted a number that totalled either one or five. The salesman handed her an iPad with a series of numbers that totalled up to one. They had a computer or code that did this. I had to choose from about 12 numbers. The salesman said, “Pick a number with repeating last four digits, like 3949 or 8282.”

“What if I want the last four digits to have the same number?” I asked.

“For that you will have to pay extra,” he said. “We have vanity numbers that range from ₹ 1,000 to ₹ 2,00,000.”

I thought my mother would be outraged. Instead, this woman who bargains for two rupees off stale brinjals completely understood and approved of this. It was money well spent in her view.

FIVE ZEROES = HERO

It was at this moment that the whiner walked in. This man was fair, with ripped arms and thinning hair. Looked to be about 45.

“Excuse me,” he said in a high-pitched voice. “How long will it take to get through this queue?”

“No idea, sir,” said Manjunath, giving him the corner of the eye glance.

“What do you mean, no idea? Will it take 10 minutes or half an hour?”

“Depends on customer needs, Sir.”

This enraged the man. “I can’t believe how rude you are,” he began and launched into a rant about how he didn’t have all day to stand in the store. Within minutes, he dragged the state, country and demonetisation into it.

“So entitled,” I whispered to Manjunath.

“He has a two lakh vanity number,” Manjunath replied as if that explained everything.

Which it did.

Columnist photo: PRABHAT SHETTY

(This fortnightly column addresses the issue of parenting our parents, an integral part of This Indian Life and our culture. If you have stories about the weird and wonderful relationships that enrich or enervate your life, write in.)



PUPPY LOVE

Daniel Mallory loves dogs and while he doesn't own one, he volunteers at a dog shelter

[HT BRUNCH EXCLUSIVE]

MEET THE LIT WORLD'S NEW PRINCE CHARMING

What's so special about his debut novel that has made **Daniel Mallory** a worldwide sensation?

By Priya Bala

“I live in the same apartment, work out at the same gym and use the same laundry,” Daniel Mallory says, when asked how life has changed after *The Woman in the Window*. That, though, is all that

remains unaltered for the man described as the ‘megastar author of 2018’, whose debut novel has been hailed as the year’s instant bestseller, sold in an astounding 37 territories outside the United States, making it to the top of *The New York Times* bestseller list,

“When I began my book, I was aiming only to type in those two words, ‘The End’”

and winning a \$1 million movie deal with Fox.

Thirty eight-year-old Mallory has now become a full-time writer, having relinquished his job an executive editor at William Morrow, publisher of *The Woman in the Window*. He is



presently travelling extensively, promoting the book in the United States and in Europe.

"I'll probably move into a new apartment and get a couple of dogs," he says, speaking on the phone, from his home in New York's Chelsea neighbourhood.

Mallory loves dogs – while he doesn't own any at present, he volunteers at a dog shelter twice a week. He wrote his hugely successful novel under the pseudonym A.J. Finn, of which Finn is the name of a French bulldog, his favourite breed. The 'AJ' is from Alice Jane, a cousin he's very fond of.

"I chose to go with a pseudonym because I wanted the manuscript to be judged purely on merit and not based on authorship, given my position in the publishing world.

"I chose to go with a pseudonym because I wanted my manuscript to be judged purely on merit....," says Mallory, who picked 'AJ' from Alice Jane, a cousin he is fond of, and Finn from the name of a French bulldog, which is his favourite breed"

Also, I'm a private person and didn't want to see my name everywhere. Another consideration was that I felt it would be disconcerting for the authors I worked with to walk into a bookshop and see their editor's name on a stack of hardcovers," he says.

ALWAYS A MYSTERY

In any case, both Dan Mallory and A.J. Finn have acquired worldwide fame now and *The Woman in the Window* is that not-so-common phenomenon, a publishing sensation. Mallory says that with his years of experience in the business of books – he worked at Sphere, the crime imprint, in London before moving to William Morrow – he knows there is no such thing as a guaranteed bestseller.

"Who could have predicted *Fifty Shades of Grey* would become the hit it did or that erotica as a genre would come into its own?" he asks. The psychological thriller has, of course, been enjoying an upsurge in recent years, with the success of *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn – who has described Mallory's work as 'astounding, thrilling, amazing' – and *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins. Mallory has admitted these novels gave him the impetus

for his work, but adds he did not give a thought to how it would fare with critics or on bestseller lists.

"When I began on this book in the summer of 2015 (he wrote at night and on weekends while he was still working at William Morrow) I was aiming only to type in those two words, 'The End'," he says. While working to reach that point, he focused on writing words that would coruscate with elegance and beauty. Consider 'an archipelago of tiny moles, trailing across her back', 'a pulpy sunset, the dregs of dust, buildings paper-cut against the glow', 'Ingrid Bergman, never more luscious, slowly going insane', 'I shudder, wade deeper into my wineglass', 'Now the night has my heart in its claws'.

"While psychological thrillers are often written in a flat tone,

one of my goals was to write distinct, memorable sentences," Mallory says, much like the prose stylists he admires, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene and Henry James.

BLOOD VS BRAIN

He doesn't shy away from pointing to his other key reference points, the psychological thriller movies he is a fan of, particularly those of Alfred Hitchcock. His top film choices are *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) – one of Hitchcock's favourites, he points out – *Gaslight* (1944), and *Rear Window* (1954). Others include *La Diabolique*, the 1955 French classic and *Dead Calm* (1989), starring Nicole Kidman.

Mallory says he is drawn to these films because of the power of suggestion and the restraint they display. "Psychological thrillers can so often be saturated with blood and profanity. I have nothing against the latter – I swear a great deal myself – but violence puts me off," he says.

He remembers as a teenager watching a gory slasher film and *Psycho* (1960) back to back, and finding the Hitchcock film much scarier. "There's a timeless sophistication to these films," he says.

FOR INDIA, WITH LOVE

From Bollywood to rogan josh, Mallory confesses his love for all things Indian, and Arundhati Roy!

India is not on the book tour itinerary, but "it's one of the places I'm dying to visit," says Mallory. His interest was fanned by the 1994 John Irving novel, *A Son of the Circus*, which paints Mumbai as an extravagant circus of a city.

He says he hasn't read enough writing from India, then adds, "But as I glance at my bookshelf even as I speak, I realise I have quite a few books by Indian writers. Arundhati Roy is one of my favourite writers and I like Amitav Ghosh very much. I must confess I haven't read V. S. Naipaul and I intend to correct that soon."

"I must confess I haven't read V. S. Naipaul, and I intend to correct that soon"

Mallory has also seen several Indian movies, or Bollywood musicals, as he calls them. "I must have watched at least 50 films and I love them," he says. "I like to see the stars reappear in many films."

What about Indian food? "Yes, it's one of my favourite cuisines," he says. "I spent several years in London where the curry rules and I love a good chicken tikka masala."

He says he can cook up a very good rogan josh, but his attempts to make naan haven't been entirely successful. Perhaps he should come to India and tuck into authentic Indian food? Certainly, says the writer, basking in the warm glow of success.

Mallory says he hadn't envisaged his novel as a film at the time of writing, but concedes it's a cinematic book, especially given the leitmotif of films noirs. Is he going to have a say in the casting, especially who might play the protagonist, Anna Fox?

"No, I will leave that to the folks at Fox," he says, "though I do know that many actresses have evinced interest in the part and all of them would be perfectly suited."

INSIDE THE MIND

Fox, the eponymous 'Woman' of the title is, like Mallory, a Hitchcock fiend. She is suffering from a mental illness and Mallory has been able to nuance her character with his own experience of battling depression while he was doing his post-graduate studies at Oxford and, later, working at Sphere.

"Anna Fox suffers from agoraphobia," he says. "And while she's unable to step out of her New York apartment, there were days when my depression was at its worst, when I couldn't bear to leave my bed," he says. "So, I have poured a lot of myself into Anna."

He also went online and connected with several people afflicted with agoraphobia to understand the condition better.



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"I declared upfront to them what my purpose was and I did do my homework," Mallory says.

He now has a two-book deal and the second one is in the same genre. It's set in San Francisco and if *The Woman in the Window* made liberal use of classic movies, a recurring theme in his next novel is going to be the detective fiction of Agatha Christie. Clearly, the classic and the timeless hold a particular charm for Dan Mallory. His elegantly crafted novel, praised as being 'one of those rare books that really is unputdownable' by Stephen King, could well stand the test of time, too.



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Priya Bala is a senior writer based out of Bengaluru. She specialises in food, travel and lifestyle writing.



SNACK YOUR WAY TO GOOD HEALTH

Bite into a delicious **Washington Apple** today and give yourself a healthy indulgence

By Anjali Varma

With their nutrient-rich soil, arid climate, plentiful water and advanced growing practices, Washington's lush apple orchards in Northwest United States have been lovingly tended by multiple generations of family farmers. This produces top quality fruit that continues its legacy of being prized the world over.

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A FRUIT OF CHOICE

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Sumit Saran, India representative of the Washington Apple Commission says, "India is a growth market. In the last few years, the country has catapulted to being the third largest market for Washington Apples, the top two being Mexico and Canada, which are in close proximity to the US. This is a clear reflection of the aspirations of Indians for nutritive eating and healthy living."

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Photos: HTBS

BEST IN QUALITY

Washington Apples are considered one of the finest in the world

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Actress / Model

Diana Penty

Photo: MANASI SAWANT
Styling: NIDHI JACOB and SANDIP GHOSAL
Make-up and hair: KRITIKA GILL

DATE OF BIRTH November 2	SUN SIGN Scorpio	PLACE OF BIRTH Mumbai
SCHOOL/COLLEGE St. Agnes' High School/ St. Xavier's College, Mumbai	FIRST BREAK When I started my modelling career and in films, when I signed <i>Cocktail</i> (2012)	
HIGH POINT OF YOUR LIFE When I was appreciated for my performance in <i>Happy Bhag Jayegi</i> (2016)	LOW POINT OF YOUR LIFE When I lost my father 10 years ago	

If not an actress, you would have been...?

Sherlock Holmes, an astronaut, an interior designer, a marketing strategist maybe? Who knows!

A director you want to work with...?

The list is long! Aanand L. Rai, Shoojit Sircar, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Vishal Bhardwaj, Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari.

One classic film that you would have loved to be a part of...?

Abhimaan (1973).

Bollywood's most romantic pair according to you is...?

Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan, and Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh.

Which Hollywood actor inspires you?

Meryl Streep. She's a powerhouse both on and off screen.

A dessert that describes you...?

Gulab jamun with vanilla ice cream because I'm both hot and cold! *Okay, that was cheesy!*

Your favourite dance number is...?

I just love dancing to *Kala Chashma* from *Baar Baar Dekho* (2016).

Who is your 3am friend?

Breadsticks and cheese spread. Yum!

If you were the editor of a magazine, who would you put on the cover?

Tanushree Pareek (BSF's first woman combat officer), Manju Devi Yadav (Rajasthan's first woman coolie) and Anshu Jamsenpa (first woman who scaled Mount Everest twice in one season) would be my choices.

Last thing you do before going to sleep...?

Check Instagram to be up to speed with the world!

What makes your day?

When I take that first sip of hot chai I've been dying to have at the end of a long day.

You destress with...?

The sound of the rain.

Interviewed by
Veenu Singh

My Favourites

- STREET FOOD: Pani puri
- BREAKFAST IN BED: Eggs Benedict
- SONG: *If You're Gone* by Matchbox Twenty
- DESTINATIONS: Ladakh, Norway and Croatia
- SIDE OF THE BED: Left, although by the time I wake up, I'm rather diagonal





DADI KI
PURANI
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