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'Tasting India: Farm to Table' Global Symposium Concludes With Pledge to Work Towards Sustainable Food Culture

- Tasting India: Farm to Table is one-of-a-kind global symposium on the country's culinary tourism potential and sustainable food culture

- The symposium aimed to initiate a dialogue on putting India on UNESCO's Intangible Heritage List and adopt The Indian Food Manifesto

Following a tremendous success on debut (February 28 to March 2, 2017), Tasting India: Farm to Table returned with its second edition from December 13-17, with a galaxy of stellar speakers addressing inter-disciplinary view of food, mapping its journey from the farm to your table, and the challenges at every stage.

The symposium opened on December 13 with the media launch of a national food donation initiative flagged off by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). 'Save Food, Share Food, Spread Joy' is the tagline of the Indian Food Sharing Alliance, flagged off jointly by the FSSAI CEO, Pawan Kumar Agarwal, and President of the National Association of Street Vendors of India, Arbind Singh. It was followed by the India premiere of Anthony Bourdain's documentary on food waste, Wasted.

On December 14-15, at the prestigious India International Centre, the symposium addressed important issues like India's culinary tourism potential and on sustainable business models for a sustainable food culture, by key speakers like Director General of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Satyajeet Rajan; Global First Lady of Indian Cuisine, Madhur Jaffrey; Dr Pushpesh Pant, culinary historian; Karnataka's Agriculture Minister, Krishna Byre Gowda; ICCR Director General Riva Ganguli Das; Kairali's Managing Director, Gita Ramesh; brand strategist and TV commentator Sunil Alagh; hoteliers Priya Paul and Diwan Gautam Anand; restaurateur AD Singh; scholars Bina Aggarwal, Shylashri Shankar and Ishita Dey; corporate food czars Jaspal Sabharwal and K.S. Narayanan; noted bloggers Kalyan Karmakar ('Finely Chopped'), Rushina M. Ghildiyal, Mohit Balachandran ('Chowder
Singh') and the culinary world's leaders, Chef Manjit Gill, Bill Marchetti and Manisha Bhasin.

Sanjoo Malhotra, Stockholm-based Make in India promoter, and co-founder, Tasting India: Farm to Table, said, "The symposium seeks to engage opinion-makers in the country and around the world to shift their lens on India's opulent gastronomical heritage, its potential to emerge as a culinary tourism showcase for the world, and its vast wealth of wisdom relevant to the current global debate on sustainable lifestyles."

Sourish Bhattacharyya, noted food journalist and blogger, and co-founder, Tasting India: Farm to Table, said, "Our emphasis is not so much on the act of eating food as in the blood, sweat and toil that goes into making it. I can assure you that you'll just love partaking of it."

An important element of the symposium was the launch of The Indian Food Manifesto at Park Hotel on 15th December.

Declaration adopted by the Delegates to the Tasting India: Farm to Table Symposium

- Recognising the immutability of the web that binds humankind to our ecosystem and the biodiversity that we consider to be our common inheritance;

- Recognising the inalienable right of every citizen of this planet to have continuous access to nutritive food with no traces of fertiliser and pesticide residues, or chemical additives;

- Recognising the need of nations to return to the practice of eating traditional produce grown locally in the designated seasons;

- Recognising the small-holder farmers, who are the custodians of nature and feed the majority of the world, yet do not have their own food security; and

- Reiterating the inescapable duty of the travel, tourism, hospitality and food sectors to contribute their mite to the growing international movement for sustainable planet-friendly practices as enunciated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Indian Food Manifesto: Working Towards a Sustainable Food Culture

We, the delegates to the Tasting India Symposium, hereby resolve that:

(1) We will work towards creating a national alliance of hotel and restaurant owners, chefs, academics, food producers and marketers, public advocacy groups, tour operators and students to promote the values of smart eating based on food that is good for us, good for the planet and good for the farmer.
(2) We will act in concert with all the stakeholders in the travel, tourism, hospitality and food sectors to promote traditional produce and create a market for them nationally in hotels, restaurants and homes across the country.

(3) We will work unceasingly, and in concert with the government and other public initiatives, to create awareness among consumers, especially children, both against food that is inimical to a higher quality of life and the environment, and in favour of a healthy, balanced diet not dictated by any current fad.

(4) We will provide traditional and organic farmers a public advocacy platform so that they can reach out to a larger public and the decision-makers in the government, and be heard above the din of the publicity machine of big food, fertiliser and pesticide corporations.

(5) We will steer a national initiative to introduce global opinion-makers to the power of Indian gastronomy and give culinary tourism the thrust it requires to arrive on the scene as a tourist footfall driver and creator of new employment avenues, especially for women (in business, as entrepreneurs, at home and B&B operators).

(6) We will promote, through international food influencers and tour operators, established restaurants, old and new culinary trails, and spice routes to attract a new category of high-spending international tourists.

(7) We will work together with other stakeholders to delve into the principles of ayurveda and its potential contributions to humanity's search for sustainable food production and consumption, without romanticising it or turning it into an exotic attraction.

(8) We will strive together to connect the international vegetarian movement with its peers in India to popularise the Indian vegetarian diet as one of the sustainable options to reduce the planet's carbon footprint and the use of water in dry lands.

(9) We will continually showcase India's 'lost foods', which are produced by the poorest of the poor using sustainable agricultural practices, so that they find a market that could, in turn, open up new wealth-generation opportunities for our marginal and poor farmers.

(10) We will put systems in place to set in motion a globally accepted certification process to guarantee the authenticity of Indian food served in restaurants around the world.

We, the delegates to the Tasting India Symposium, further resolve that this resolution be circulated among all our partners and supporters for their insights and inputs, as well as programmes of action, so that it becomes the voice of all citizens wedded to the idea of smart food for a sustainable India.

About Tasting India: Farm to Table
The idea behind Tasting India: Farm to Table is to empower Indian gastronomy and to pursue the mission to:

- Generate widespread, informed awareness of India's rich and diverse gastronomy to make it a leading global food destination
FSSAI IN NEWS

- Provide a platform for innovative young chefs and food entrepreneurs to interact, share information and grow commercially
- Showcase and revive India’s 'Lost Foods'
- Promote sustainability in the entire food chain - from Farm to Table, and beyond
- Foster understanding of Ayurveda’s contribution to a healthy lifestyle
- Set in motion a certification process to guarantee the safety and authenticity of Indian foods in India and across the world

**Tasting India: Farm to Table**, founded by Sanjoo Malhotra and Sourish Bhattacharyya, is supported by Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and ICRISAT, apart from a slew of trade bodies and leading businesses, such as DLF5, Roseate Hotels and Resorts, and The Park New Delhi.