

How **pastry** can find prominence as a popular dessert

by Chef Michelle Karen Peris

People across generations are fond of bakery products. The appetizing aroma of freshly baked goods entices people, and the sweet scent can enliven their salivary glands. Desserts have always been known to trigger a good mood and activate taste buds. Celebrating any special moment without a dessert seems incomplete, be it a cake, an exquisite fresh fruit tart, freshly baked cookies, or delectable chocolates.



Q&A with **Chef Alisha Faleiro**, Pastry Chef, Academy of Pastry Arts

What inspired you to become a professional pastry chef?

My love for food inspires me a lot. I love exploring new food and enjoy cooking too. That is what got me into the kitchen and into pastry making.

How is a pastry chef different from chefs specializing in other cuisines?

A pastry chef focuses on desserts and breads. It is a specialized skill and is just as creative if not more than cooking.

As a pastry chef, what do you enjoy most?

I love being in the kitchen making sweet delights the entire day. It is one thing that pushes me to wake up in the morning and go ahead.

Which are the best known pastry destinations in India?

Pastry is just beginning to grow in India and most metro cities have a huge array of pastry shops. I think Mumbai and Delhi for me are at the top at the moment.

Which are the important techniques that go into the preparation of pastry?

The list is endless. There is more than meets the eyes. It's not as simple as it seems. Whether it's making a croissant that requires well-laminated dough to making crumbly cookie, all requires technique.

What are the hot trends in the pastry market these days?

The trend is towards more healthy delights or low sugar options.

What are your favorite desserts and flavor combinations?

I love the flavor pairing of orange and chocolate. And a nutty flavor like hazelnut is also something I like personally.

What do you consider your achievements as a pastry chef?

I started out at the bottom of the hierarchy and have grown at each step. Representing the country at an International competition (Asia Pastry Cup) has been my latest achievement.

Prominence of pastry as a popular dessert

Baking involves plenty of passion, time and perseverance. One of the important aspects to make a dessert more tempting is the presentation. It is rightly said that pastry as a dish is sold visually. When something looks good, it automatically draws a crowd towards it.

However, the field of pastry making requires a good set of skills, which when combined with culinary ability and creativity in decorating, adds more flavor to it. It requires proper dedication and the right mix of ingredients to ensure the product is superior when compared to other desserts.

Pastry chefs are also responsible for creating new recipes, and adding it to the menu. The use of fresh ingredients, right temperature while working and proper hygiene are crucial factors that one must adhere to while working in this field. These factors make a huge change in the appearance, as well as in the taste.

Potential for generating more revenue for restaurants

Bringing exposure to the restaurants and competing with other restaurants is a tough challenge for business owners. Restaurant owners always need to keep innovating and discover unique ideas to run the business according to the changing taste of the customers. There are certain factors, which helps the restaurant to generate more revenues. Having a "specialty pastry" is one of the essential factors, which keeps the restaurant's reputation on the rise. Baking a special and unique pastry will help differentiate your restaurant from others.

Also, with the growing importance for health, it is important to ensure one offers healthy options

in pastry. Pastries with low calorie and sugar offer a nutritious aspect to it. Gluten-free pastries allow health conscious and celiac customers to indulge guilt-free. Quality is one of the major aspect for generating more revenue for any restaurant. Ensuring fresh quality desserts and baked goods to the customers creates a loyalty base. Always "bake on time" or bake fresh to order. Ingredients should always be fresh and should be of superior quality. Taste also plays a vital role in attracting a customer base. Quality and taste should never be compromised, instead it should be given more importance and priority. One should have varieties of signature pastry in the menu to attract customers. It is a great idea to change and bring new products on the menu in a timely manner. After the purchase, customers can provide feedback on the quality of the pastry. This helps to improvise on their current dishes and bring innovation into them. Providing samples of a new pastry before introducing any special item in a menu boosts the revenue of the restaurant. Social Media marketing helps in creating an awareness and boost the revenue numbers by reaching out to a larger target audience.

To promote it as a main dish

Desserts from a particular brand simply have to traverse the extra mile to lure customers by promoting their brand. Having a package offer

on pastry and savory products can definitely help promote it as a main dish. Restaurants can send e-mails and messages to customers informing them of new and lucrative offers. Customers can rack up loyalty cards or coupons, for each visit, which will later allow them to buy pastries, with some special benefit and offer. By rewarding customers with certain points for purchasing pastry each time, it helps in promotion too. Baking competitions can also be organized where couples or single men and women participate to convert their passion into reality.

Conclusion

Since dessert is the last course, it should always be luscious and special. Pastry can find prominence as a popular dessert by innovating with flavors and having a unique taste to it. Working on business and marketing strategies to promote the sale of pastry goods will help to position pastry as a main dish in restaurants. Adding a unique and special touch to the pastry can generate good revenue for restaurants. One must always remember to ensure the quality of the ingredients should be the priority. Pastries are delectable and loved by all. By ensuring that skills and strategies are in place, and with constant innovation and upgradation, it can be used to generate high revenue for a restaurant. •



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