

# Super Foods - A Key Trend for Restaurants in India

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## Abstract

Super foods are enriched with essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals etc. Indian super foods are the most talked about and known for their health benefits to reduce fat and toxins in the body. People all over the world include Indian super foods in their diet to maintain their health. People now want to try these super foods. Trend of offering super foods on menu is still need to be percolated in restaurant industry as it is the part of Five Star Category Hotels and few specialty restaurants only at present. Super food concept can be used by restaurants to differentiate in today's competitive market.

**Keywords:** Indian Super Foods, Lifestyle and Diet, Hospitality Industry, Market in India for Super Foods

## INTRODUCTION

Super foods are enriched with essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals etc. Super food can be used to serve different purpose and adding diversity in diet like flavour, colour, texture and appearance. Indian super foods are the most talked about and known for their health benefits to reduce fat and toxins in the body. People all over the world include Indian super foods in their diet to maintain their health. Haldi (Turmeric), Amla (Indian gooseberry), Daliya (broken wheat), Coconut and Coconut Oil, Jackfruit, Curd, Jau (barley), Ragi/Nachni (Finger Millet), Makhanas (lotus seeds), Desi Ghee (Clarified Butter), Maringa (Drumstick), Rajgira (Quinoa), Sabja/Basil seeds (Chia seeds) are some of the Indian Super Foods.

Turmeric is used as spice and medicine since thousands of year in India. Turmeric has unique properties which provide immunity and protection against illness. It is

gaining popularity in the West. People in the West are already treating it as gold. Cafes from Sydney, San Francisco, Berlin and London are adding 'golden milk' to their menu. The golden milk is nothing but an improvised version of our Desi Haldi Milk with the addition of coconut, almond and cashew milk. Its demand is increasing day by day. Global consumers are recognizing its health benefits. They believe that Golden Milk is an anti-inflammatory alternative to caffeine drinks. In India, Yogisthaan – A Yoga studio, in Bengaluru has turmeric latte at their café, with a pinch of cinnamon and cardamom added into the mix.

Some other Indian Super foods like Ghee and Coconut oil, which are been avoided by Indians for their supposedly harmful properties such as high saturated fat content, linked to cholesterol and heart diseases. Indian ghee, traditionally considered as the better butter, and is also acknowledged by Ayurveda as a crucial component of meal. It is noteworthy that the Ghee as well as Coconut Oil are more preferred and suggested in West as the "Most Marvelous Super Foods". Coconut Oil is recommended for clear skin and good digestion, to strengthen the immune system and amusingly reducing total cholesterol level in the body.

Moringa leaf powder sold abroad is pretty expensive (varying from \$30 a kg on Amazon to some more expensive varieties), while drumstick leaves are a humble super food, easily available and very nutrient-rich, which can be used in a variety of Indian dishes from dal to poriyal to parathas.

Quinoa has been loved by the West for many years. Quinoa is one of the healthiest grains available. It's gluten-free, high in protein and one of the few plant foods that contain all nine essential amino acids. In the West it has become a popular substitute for rice.

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Puffed Makhana (lotus seeds) are becoming a popular snack globally. These are low in fat and sodium and high in protein, magnesium, fiber, potassium, zinc and iron.

Amla (Indian gooseberry) is 80% water and contains minerals: It is rich source of vitamin C and is also high in antioxidants. It improves eyesight, immunity, hair quality and also helps to burn fat. There are many Indian traditional and healthy recipes for Amla like Amla Murabba, Amla Chutney, Amle ka Achaar. Many restaurants and hotels now a day's are simply serving juice of Amla or smoothies prepared with Amla to serve as healthy beverage on the menu.

Basil seeds which are commonly known as sabja or chia seeds and are popularly used in preparations like Faloodas during the summer, basically because of their cooling properties. Basil seed is also easy source of vitamins, iron and helps to control blood sugar levels and facilitates weight loss. They can also help to relieve constipation and bloating.

Chef Daniel, Executive Chef at JW Marriott Bengaluru, stated, "We use few of these super foods in our cyclic menu based on seasonal availability. We used to have quinoa as a salad along with salmon. Avocados are another all time favorite, which we have in our menu along with fresh salmon. Broccoli has become almost a staple vegetable on our buffet because of the benefits it brings to the diet."

"As a part of global hospitality brand, Indore Marriott Hotel serves guests with food of choice that includes ingredients such as quinoa, avocado, chia and amaranth. These ingredients are quite readily available in India now days", stated Vivek Kalia, Executive Chef, Indore Marriott Hotel. "We have an organic supplier who supplies us all these ingredients and due to increasing demand for these healthy ingredients, all these are easily available" he added.

"Changing social dynamics has seen people expecting more from food served in hotels in terms of its health and nutritional quotient. The expectations are higher when a five star property comes into the picture. These expectations have seen 'super foods' making a major impact in the hospitality sector," said Oliver Viegas, Director of F & B, Hyatt Regency Amritsar. "Owing to society which is becoming increasingly health conscious, thanks to the social media which makes things go viral

in minutes. Super foods have become very popular. Today, super foods are not an exception but a norm for an increasingly large number of health conscious people who are including super foods in their daily diet. Catering to the requirements of the patrons, hotels too are incorporating super foods in their menu," he added.

As now there is sizeable community of people who are not only Vegans, but also health conscious, they prefer ingredients like quinoa, chia, avocado etc. I serve them in my restaurant as they are in high demand and are also easily available. As these super foods are good for health, low on cholesterol, high fiber content, my guests who are dieting, frequently asks for these," explained by Vineet, Sous Chef, Marriott Suites Pune.

High nutrient foods like quinoa, chia, amaranth and avocado, which were available in retail chains like Walmart in the US, Canada, and other foreign countries, are now finding space on the shelves of India's super markets. The result is that, entrepreneurs are now making these available locally instead of importing them. Entrepreneurs, are now producing crates of purple, yellow, red and white carrots; orange and purple sweet potatoes; and yellow beetroots, romaine lettuce and spinach and bright watercress and micro greens. However, the cost of some of these super foods is high by Indian standards, which is preventing super foods widespread application in India's Food Service Industry. They are expensive as their harvesting process is time-consuming and has to be monitored throughout.

People in India no longer need a reason or special occasions to eat out. Indians simply eats out because they want to experiment, love food or want to spend their free time. Many reasons like increases disposal income, no time for cooking due to long working hours are responsible for increase in eating out pattern. The overall food segment in India is growing at 6% per annum, out of which super food has a share of 10% and is the main segment contributing for overall food segment growth.

People in India are increasingly focusing on the lifestyle and diet that support wellbeing as a way of life. As a part of this healthy lifestyle, super foods are gaining popularity in the India. The demand for super foods is thus expected to grow in India, allowing entrepreneurs to come up with more super foods in the India's food retail and food

service industry. Fusion recipes are being created by chefs with these super foods as element to create differentiation in food taste and variety. Super foods are not only gaining demand in metros of India but also becoming popular in tier II and tier III towns of India as people are acquiring knowledge about them through online portals, TV shows and food magazines. People now want to try these super foods. Trend of offering super foods on menu is still need to be percolated in restaurant industry as it is the part of Five Star Category Hotels and few specialty restaurants only at present. Super food concept can be used by restaurants to differentiate in today's competitive market.

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