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Andhra Calling: *Bengaluru* Gets Its Dose of Traditional Andhra Pickles

Rucira Kitchens is the brainchild of Deepti Mahesh, and is a Bengaluru based cloud kitchen that has a range of powder rice and pickle rice, all of which are Andhra specialties. Bindu Gopal Rao finds out how...

Pickles and spice powders are a distinct aspect of Andhra cuisine and it is this unique aspect that you can experience when you order food at Rucira Kitchens. Deepti Mahesh was a Business Analyst in Melbourne, Australia, before she moved to Bengaluru, and set up an indoor play centre called Kydz Adda. Along with her husband Mahesh, she also runs a hotel, Toast on Terrace. Of her new venture, Deepti says, "We hail from a Telugu family and have always loved Andhra pickles and powders. With our experience in the hospitality industry, we decided to take the leap, and started Rucira Kitchens."

Rucira means 'taste' and the concept came about as the couple would buy a wide variety of pickles and powders for their home but not be able to consume it all. "It did not seem practical to buy and store to consume occasionally. So, we came up with the concept of Rucira Kitchens which caters to the unique Andhra pickle and powder meals," explains Deepti.

A family of foodies, they experiment and try flavour combinations. "Sometimes when we wanted a change, we would experiment with pickles and powders mixed with rice and other condiments at home and the kids would enjoy it just as much as we did. So we introduced this in our restaurant," Deepti adds. The lockdown gave the couple time to try out various flavor combinations. "We would get our friends who came to Toast on Terrace to try them and the reviews were great. We decided to launch under a new banner which exclusively caters to these flavoured Andhra specials," shares Deepti.

They now have eight varieties of pickle flavoured rice and eight varieties of powder flavoured rice on the menu for home delivery. They are listed on Swiggy, Zomato and Dunzo to



Advice for young women who want to be food entrepreneurs, "Food business, like any business, is driven by passion. Start something you are passionate about. Do diligent market research and have a business plan with all the financial projections before embarking on investing. Consider the location of your business and participate in local events to understand the market."

their customers. The pickles and powders are mixed in the rice and tossed in seasoning and other vegetables to give it a new delicious twist. Nalla Karam Powder Rice has dry chillies, tamarind and spices powder, and is tossed and seasoned with rice.

Pickle Rice variety offers flavours such as Red Chilli, Gongura, Drumstick, and Mango. "Apart from these we use immunity boosting ingredients such as ginger and Indian Gooseberry," adds Deepti.

The powder rice variants include Chana Dal, Groundnut, Sesame, and Nalla Karan, and Curry Leaf, Bitter Gourd, and Flax seed which also aid immunity. All the rice is served with raita and fryums. "Currently we are taking it slow and are working on spreading the word in and around South Bangalore," says the entrepreneur, "However, we would like to open multiple cloud kitchens to cater to various areas."

Like any food-related business, the biggest challenge they face is to maintain consistency in taste and quality. The chefs are trained for certain recipes and there is a challenge to ensure that it is adhered to. For someone who has tapped on her roots to launch her food venture, she knows the importance of local food and how it always manages to strike a chord.

Order online: Zomato, Swiggy

Price per rice item: Rs180

