

CELEBRATING MOMS FROM THE FOOD INDUSTRY!

A tribute on Mother's Day



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By Bindu Gopal Rao



Chef moms juggle a lot more in the kitchen as they strike the perfect balance between their personal and professional lives. We speak to women chefs who are mothers, about how they manage their kitchen and children and how their mothers have inspired them.

Art of balance

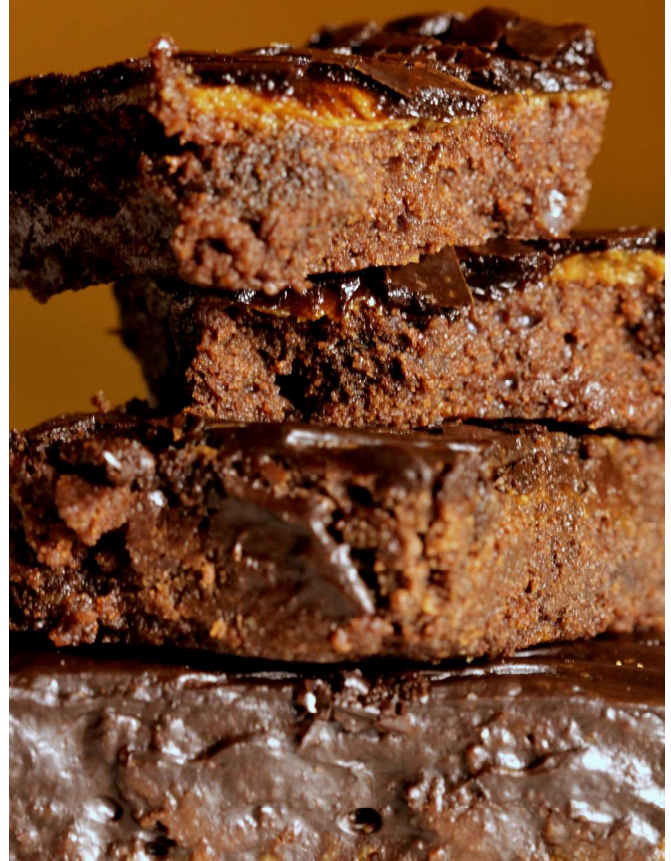
Being a mother is an incredibly rewarding experience, but it also presents a unique set of challenges for women who choose to continue working outside the home. The challenges faced by working mothers are unique and often require significant adjustments to manage their family responsibilities alongside their professional commitments. Due to the time limitations and need to care for their children at home, working mothers may find it difficult to extend their work hours or take sick days when needed. “The most difficult challenge I face as a working mother is to juggle between work and my time with the kids. To come to terms with the fact that work life balance is not as dreamy and realistic as it seems. Instead of expecting an equal division of time between work and family, we should focus on finding a way to thrive as a family despite the challenges of balancing work and parental responsibilities. By embracing this reality, we can work together to create a fulfilling and harmonious life for everyone involved,” says **Aditi Handa**, Co-founder & Head Chef, **The Baker's Dozen**.

Crossing the bridge

Most mom chefs believe in being open and honest about the difficulties they have as a mother in the kitchen and help create an understanding community by admitting and discussing these difficulties and working together to develop solutions that work for everyone. **Michelle Vaizfdar**, Founder, **Royal China, Jia & Kuai Kitchen** says, "As a mother, you want to be there for your children while also pursuing your career dreams. However, being a restaurateur requires long hours, late nights, and a considerable amount of mental and physical energy. The pressure of balancing these two roles can be overwhelming and create feelings of guilt, stress, and burnout. Running a restaurant business comes with its unique set of challenges when it comes to parenting. For instance, you may have to deal with unpredictable schedules, emergencies at work, and childcare responsibilities. Finding the right balance between your business and family life can become an ongoing challenge, but with a little bit of planning and

Michelle Vaizfdar





organisation, it's possible to overcome these obstacles." **Shipra Khanna**, Celebrity Chef and Author avers, "Striking a balance is extremely important in life, whether it's work, personal, or emotional, and once we know how to do it, life is way simpler and your existence as a human being feels way more worthwhile. It not only helps you boost your self-respect but also helps you grow and evolve as a balanced person."

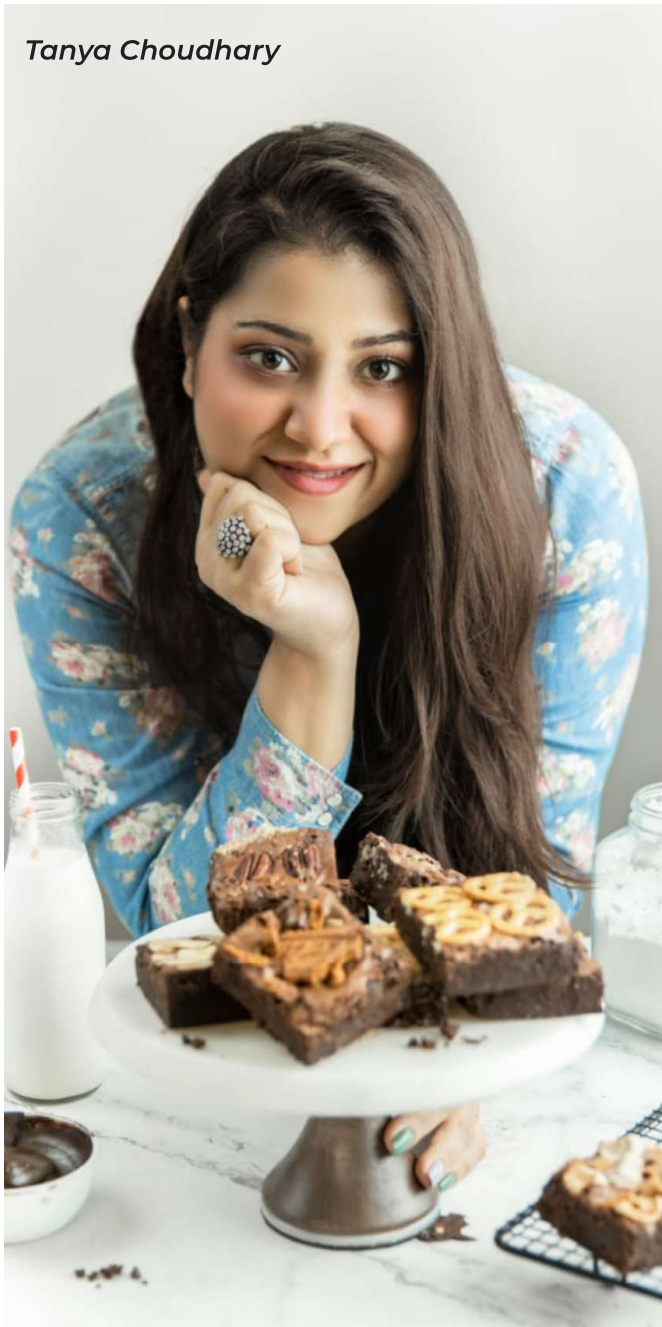
Mother's guilt

It is obviously harder for women restaurateurs to juggle professional and personal commitments post becoming a mother as children obviously take priority over everything else. **Tanya Choudhary**, Founder, **BonnTonn Gourmet Cloud Kitchen** admits that the stress of motherhood was quite rough in the beginning. "I was sleeping less and lashing out at family and friends. I was always exhausted from coming home in the evening and getting up early. I was super stressed all the time because I was juggling

Shipra Khanna



Tanya Choudhary



too much and worried constantly that my baby was not getting enough time and attention. I have returned to my fitness routine and meditation, which has given me some relief. I spend quality time with my son. I trust and respect all the help I can get. I have been mentoring and skilling new trainees because I want them to become productive members of my team, grow in their skills and provide support to the business. We pay extra to the team to compensate for their time, we also plan way ahead to accommodate new products in the menu for the upcoming season."

Mom is right

Mothers are often the unsung heroes of our lives, providing support and guidance through all of life's ups and downs and they often support their daughters. Many female chefs have successfully juggled their professional and personal commitments after becoming mothers and have even used their experiences to become better chefs and entrepreneurs. **Chef Gauri Varma**, Founder and Owner at **G's Patisserie and Confect** says, "My mother has been a



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huge source of emotional and professional motivation for me. She has always been a strong and independent woman who instilled in me the importance of hard work, devotion, and perseverance. Her love of cooking and ability to prepare tasty and nutritious meals from scratch motivated me to seek a profession in the culinary arts. Growing up, I would often watch her cook and experiment with various recipes, and she encouraged me to do the same. She instilled in me a passion for eating and cooking that has lasted my entire life. Her advice and counsel have been important to me, and I am grateful for everything she has taught me. As a mother and a chef, I strive to embody the same traits that she has demonstrated to me and to inspire others in the same manner that she has inspired me.”

At the end of the day, chef moms are a fine example of how they can multitask and be successful at it. So, raise a toast to the Chef Moms, this Mother’s Day!

Gauri Varma

