



Bindu Gopal Rao

One of the quintessential elements of Bangalore is its bakeries. Especially the old-time ones. Many of them are called Iyengar bakeries and stock the most delicious buns, puffs, and cakes - not the modern kind, but honey cakes, pineapple cakes, and more.

Not to forget savoury favourites like the bread slice (bread topped with carrots, onion, and tomatoes cooked with spices) and *dil pasand*, a bread filled with sweetened coconut and dried fruits.

Old meets new

VB Bakery, OG Variar, Jayalakshmi Bakery, Janardhana Bakery, and Srinivasa Bakery are among the old-timers that continue to draw crowds, having managed to preserve the charm and flavours that made them memorable in the first place.

Ria Belliappa, chef and founder of Juny's Bakehouse in Jayanagar, approaches product development through a nostalgic lens but reinterprets familiar flavours with the techniques and standards of a modern pastry kitchen.

"We focus heavily on seasonal produce and ingredients that people already have an emotional connection to. The goal is never nostalgia for nostalgia's sake, but rather creating something that feels both familiar and exciting at the same time," she explains.

Belliappa's experience of walking through Bangalore's bakeries has always been one of observation and appreciation. What stands out is how deeply bakeries are woven into the city's everyday life — whether it is stopping for a puff and tea, picking up a fresh loaf of bread, or celebrating milestones with cakes.

Many of the classic bakeries have maintained products that have remained largely unchanged for decades, and that consistency is part of what makes them special.

"I am fascinated by how these bakeries balance tradition and change. While consumer tastes evolve, there is still a demand for the products people grew up eating. That nostalgia carries enormous value and reminds us that food is often about memory

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FRESH OUT OF B'LORE

FROM IYENGAR BAKERIES TO BOOKSHOP CAFES, BANGALORE'S BELOVED BAKE CULTURE IS EVOLVING BUT REFUSING TO DISAPPEAR

A social space

Bakeries have always been a special part of a true-blue Bangalorean's life. The smell of fresh bread baking is a signal that it is time for coffee and snacks. Whether it is children returning home from school or office-goers getting back, the practice of stopping at the local bakery before heading home is still seen, especially in the traditional localities.

"There was always something to pick up. A warm veg puff, an aloo bun, a piece of *dil pasand*, or perhaps a honey cake that would inevitably be shared with a friend or two. These weren't occasional treats; they were part of everyday life. Every bakery had its speciality and version of familiar favourites," recalls Prativii Ponnappa, communication professional.

"Even today, bakeries remain one of my favourite indulgences. On days when I'm working from home, I often make it a point to get a warm loaf of bread. Not the neatly sliced version, but a freshly baked loaf that is still soft and warm. The best way to eat it is to tear it apart with your hands rather than cut it into slices. Somehow it tastes better that way, especially alongside a cup of tea or coffee," she adds.

Changing vistas

Many newer bakeries are evolving into cafes, patisseries, workspaces, bookshops, and community hubs all at once. The older bakeries seem rooted in preserving tradition and familiarity, while the newer ones are responding to changing lifestyles and preferences.

They are often more experience-driven, creating spaces where people can spend hours rather than pick up a snack and leave.

Chatterjee sees this not as a conflict but as a continuum. "What's fascinating is that I don't see this as a competition between old and new. They serve different emotional needs. The old bakeries are a symbol of nostalgia, heritage, and a sense of continuity. The newer ones are building their own identities and communities. A great example is Beku, which combines a bakery, cafe, and bookshop under one roof. It still celebrates the culture of baking, but in a way that resonates with today's generation. In many ways, modern bakeries are not replacing Bangalore's bakery culture; they're expanding it. The city has always been about bringing different worlds together, and its bakeries continue to reflect that spirit," she says. Perhaps that is what makes bakeries so special. They are not just places that sell food. They are repositories of memories, routines, friendships, and small moments of happiness. Every visit brings back a little bit of childhood, one bun, puff, or biscuit at a time.



as much as it is about flavour," she adds.

A slice of nostalgia

Come down to South Bangalore, and the bakeries here are continuing the legacy of their forefathers with their signature offerings. Sreenivasa Brahmin's Bakery in Gandhi Bazaar is filled with crowd favourites - *Congress Kadlekaayi* (a peanut snack tossed in salt, chillies, asafoetida, and curry leaves); *palya bun* (a potato-stuffed bun); *khara bun* (a bun made with coriander and other spices); vegetable puffs; and eggless cakes like the popular honey cake.

Medha Chatterjee, a working professional based in the city, has always had a soft spot for bakeries. "Bakeries have always held

a very special place in my heart. Growing up, some of my fondest memories were with my grandmother, who had a knack for finding the best bakeries in town, and exploring them together became our favourite pastime," she says.

When she moved to Bangalore three years ago, she carried that love for bakeries with her. But she was also stepping into a city she knew almost nothing about. Everything felt unfamiliar - the streets, the language, the pace of life. Then someone introduced her to Thom's Bakery, and she genuinely thinks that changed her relationship with Bangalore.

"I still remember trying their marble cake for the first time. It was incredibly soft, the kind that melts in your mouth. More than the taste, it gave me something I had been searching for without realising it: a sense of familiarity. For a brief moment, I was transported back to those bakery visits with my grandmother. In a city that was slowly becoming home, that feeling of comfort meant everything. Even today, whenever I have Thom's marble cake, it feels like revisiting a cherished memory," she adds.