Wedding Feast 2.0

Hotels are moving beyond sprawling buffets towards more distinctive, narrative-led food experiences.

By Bindu Gopal Rao

Wedding dining is an opportunity to tell a family's story through heirloom recipes, regional cuisines, live-fire cooking, ingredient provenance and chef-curated tasting menus. Experts weigh in.

Custom Cues

Today, wedding menus are becoming far more personal than ever before. Some of the most meaningful conversations happen around the Day o family dinner, where close members from both sides come together before the celebrations begin. This is often where food becomes a bridge between families.

Yogender Pal, Executive Chef, Grand Hyatt Goa, avers, "Couples increasingly want menus that reflect their shared journey, family traditions and cherished memories. We've recreated childhood favourites, dishes that were served at family gatherings, and recipes that hold sentimental value for parents and grandparents. Recently, we worked with a Sindhi family who wanted to include a koki roti made using a recipe passed down through generations by the bride's mother and aunt. In another celebration, a traditional saadya-inspired meal became a beautiful way to honour family roots."



Wedding menus are becoming far more personal than ever before.



Yogender Pal, Executive Chef, Grand Hyatt Goa



Amitesh Virdi, Executive Chef, JW Marriott Goa



Chef Shiiv Parvesh, Director of Culinary, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC



Chef Avinash Handoo, Director of Culinary at Espire Hospitality

Personal Connection

At every Indian wedding, long after the last toast has been made, it is often the food that families and guests remember most vividly. Today, with access to some of the finest chefs and their distinctive culinary sensibilities, families can give their guests something truly memorable: a dining experience that becomes part of the wedding story, retold for years to come.

Amitesh Virdi, Executive Chef, JW Marriott Goa, agrees, "Food has become one of the most powerful ways to express identity, heritage and cherished family memories. We are seeing families move beyond standard wedding menus and instead curate experiences inspired by recipes passed down through generations, favourite dishes from family gatherings or flavours that reflect their cultural roots and personal journeys."

Experimentation and More

Wedding dining today is becoming more experiential than ever before. Guests increasingly seek moments of discovery, engagement and connection, and culinary experiences play a central role in creating those memories.

"Live-fire cooking introduces theatre, aroma and craftsmanship into the celebration. Interactive chef stations allow guests to engage directly with the culinary team, understand ingredients and customise elements of their dining experience. It also allows for multi-generational tastes, catering to different palates. Curated tasting journeys can take guests through a series of thoughtfully crafted courses, each telling a different chapter of the couple's story or highlighting the destination's culinary identity. These experiences transform dining from a scheduled event into a memorable celebration that stimulates all the senses. Food becomes entertainment, a conversation starter and a storytelling medium all at once," says Virdi.

Family Ties

The process begins with listening to families and understanding their regional roots, food memories, customary wedding dishes and dietary preferences. These conversations help the hotel identify recipes and traditions that deserve a place in the celebration.

Chef Shiiv Parvesh, Director of Culinary, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC, opines, "Couples today are looking for wedding menus that reflect their identity, heritage and personal journeys rather than simply offering an extensive spread. There is a growing interest in regional specialities, family recipes and dishes associated with significant

"Couples increasingly want menus that reflect their shared journey, family traditions and cherished memories."

- Yogender Pal



A dining experience becomes part of the wedding story, retold for years to come.



Wedding menus are evolving from extensive spreads into personal expressions of family heritage.



Sandeep Kumar, Director of Culinary, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway



Chef Dirham Haque, Director of Culinary, JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata



Sandeep Sharma, F&B Manager, The Orchid Chandigarh



Mayur Ramachandran, Executive Chef, Radisson Blu Bengaluru Outer Ring Road



Wedding food is becoming all things interesting with curated tasting experiences.

"We are seeing families move beyond standard wedding menus and instead curate experiences inspired by recipes passed down through generations, favourite dishes from family gatherings or flavours that reflect their cultural roots and personal journeys." **- Amitesh Virdi**

celebrations. Wedding menus are evolving from extensive spreads into personal expressions of family heritage. The key is to preserve the authenticity of a cuisine while making the dining experience accessible to guests from diverse cultural backgrounds. This means retaining the defining flavours, ingredients and cooking techniques of regional dishes while introducing contemporary interpretations where appropriate."

Region Lore

The discovery process is often one of the most rewarding parts of planning a wedding menu. During tastings and menu discussions, it is common for multiple generations of the family to visit the resort together. Those conversations naturally lead to stories about traditional recipes, festive meals and dishes that may not have been prepared for years.

Chef Avinash Handoo, Director of Culinary at Espire Hospitality, says, "Couples today consider the food served at their wedding one of the most important ways to express their life's journey. From multiple food tastings to menu redesigns, they are fully involved in ensuring that the menu conveys who they are and their family traditions. For some guests, weaving age-old family recipes and childhood memories into the celebrations is a must."

The goal is always to retain authenticity while ensuring the dish feels relevant within the overall dining experience.

Destination Dining

Today, destination weddings bring together guests from diverse cultural backgrounds. This means that chefs need to balance authenticity and regional identity with innovation and global culinary influences.

Sandeep Kumar, Director of Culinary, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, says, "The focus can be on traditional flavours, fresh local ingredients and tried and tested cooking methods, in addition to a bit of modern style and global influences. It is also important to understand what people eat and how familiar they are with different foods. A menu that works well honours the family's past. It also makes sure every guest feels included and gets to try something new."

Somnath Singh Rakesh, Executive Chef, Taj Palace Lucknow, adds, "At a destination wedding, the menu must celebrate the host family's heritage while ensuring that guests from different regions and countries feel equally engaged and comfortable. Our approach is to establish a strong regional identity first, then build around it with thoughtful variety. The distinctive flavours, ingredients and techniques of Awadhi cuisine can be presented alongside familiar international favourites, contemporary vegetarian creations and lighter options that cater to diverse preferences. Innovation may come through a new presentation, a carefully considered ingredient pairing or a modern interpretation of a traditional preparation, but the original character of the cuisine should remain recognisable."

In Tandem

Wedding food is becoming all things interesting – think live-fire cooking, interactive chef stations, ingredient-led menus and curated tasting experiences. Wedding dining today is as much about



Wedding dining is increasingly becoming an expression of identity, heritage and personal memory.

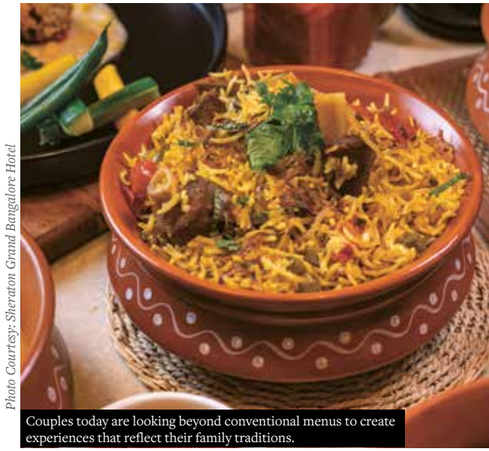


Photo Courtesy: Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel

Couples today are looking beyond conventional menus to create experiences that reflect their family traditions.

engagement as it is about food.

Chef Dirham Haque, Director of Culinary, JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata, says, "We approach wedding menu design like a tailored tasting session. Our culinary team conducts multi-stage tasting sessions with the couple and key family members. During these interactions, we listen to their personal stories, favourite travel memories, and dietary preferences. From crafting signature welcome cocktails paired with specific bite-sized hors d'oeuvres to curating a multi-course sit-down wedding reception dinner, every element is customised to ensure the feast feels distinctly theirs."

Seasonal Fix

While much is happening in terms of innovations, ingredient provenance, seasonal produce and local culinary communities continue to shape distinctive wedding menus, particularly at luxury and destination weddings.

Sandeep Sharma, F&B Manager, The Orchid Chandigarh, says, "Ingredient provenance and seasonality play an important role in creating menus that feel connected to their destination. Rishikesh and its surrounding region offer a distinctive cultural and natural context that can inspire thoughtful culinary choices. Prioritising fresh, seasonal ingredients and sourcing locally where feasible can enhance flavour, support regional producers and reduce unnecessary transportation. For luxury weddings, this approach adds authenticity and purpose, allowing guests to experience a destination through its food."

"Prioritising fresh, seasonal ingredients and sourcing locally where feasible... adds authenticity and purpose, allowing guests to experience a destination through its food."

- Sandeep Sharma



Photo Courtesy Grand Hyatt Goa

Modern couples and families today treat their wedding menu as a personal canvas rather than a routine banquet selection.

Looking Ahead

While chefs play an important role, the family always remains at the heart of a wedding celebration. A truly chef-led wedding experience begins with listening to the couple and understanding the story they want their celebration to tell. The future of wedding dining lies in combining culinary storytelling with thoughtful hospitality. Guests remember the flavours that remind them of home, the regional speciality they discover for the first time and the dessert that becomes a talking point long after the celebration.

"I also believe that a wedding menu should have balance. There should be moments of discovery, but also familiar flavours that make guests feel comfortable. There should be visual appeal, but never at the expense of taste. And there should be variety without making the experience feel overwhelming. Ultimately, a truly chef-led experience is not about demonstrating how much a kitchen can produce. It is about making thoughtful choices that reflect the couple and their families. When guests can taste the thought, care and personal connection behind a dish, the experience becomes memorable for all the right reasons. That, to me, is the difference between an elaborate wedding menu and a meaningful culinary celebration," says Mayur Ramachandran, Executive Chef, Radisson Blu Bengaluru Outer Ring Road.

Weddings are deeply emotional occasions, and food has a way of bringing families and traditions together, creating memories that last long after the celebration. Hence, it is essential that the dining experience reflects the couple's vision and identity while staying true to the food and its origin.