

What Happens to the Unsold Food?

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Restaurateur Riyaz Amlani of the Impresario group of restaurants tells us what goes on behind the scenes

Has health conscious food become a big enough trend to have effected a change in menus?

We've a lot of health options but we've found no movement. My advice to restaurants: Have health options but not a complete health menu. That won't work. If a customer wants his butter chicken with lots of butter, don't bother cooking it in olive oil.

What's the latest cuisine craze?

Globally, I would say it's Mexican. In India, when people want exotic food they go for Chinese. But the number of people eating Italian is increasing.

Which gourmet dish is the fastest to make?

That would be a salad with good dressing. Add some kinds of cheeses to it and you're good to go.

How does one tell a freshly prepared dish from a leftover?

The flavour and the bite should give it away if it's stale.

Should we be wary of "Today's Special?"

Today's Special can mean three things: The restaurant is trying to get rid of old food; the chef is experimenting with new food; there's a genuinely good ingredient that's come in and the chef wants people to enjoy it.

What are the profit margins in your business?

25 percent Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation.

What happens to the unsold food at the end of the day?

We give it to the less fortunate near our restaurants.

Which Indian cuisine boasts the maximum number of restaurants for it?

Indian food across the world is known as chicken tikka. So people still associate Indian food with North India.

Have Indian cuisine restaurants picked up globally?

It's really picking up. There is a lot of interest in contemporary Indian food. The sheer variety of it is amazing.

What Indian city has the best restaurants? And the worst?

For quality, eat in Mumbai. For flavour, eat in Delhi. The worst ones are in Ahmedabad. All the food tastes similar and there's hardly any variety.

How do you deal with cutlery getting stolen?

Our staff are trained to tell the person, "Excuse me, but it looks like one of our forks has fallen into your bag."

What's a waiter's biggest gripe about customers, usually?

Lack of respect. People in this country don't know how to speak to waiters.

When is it okay not to tip?

Bad service. And tell the manager that you are not tipping the waiter because the service sucked.

(Co-ordinated by Abhishek Raghunath)

Next issue, our insider will be a event organiser. So, if you have a question only an art expert could answer, email us — ask.forbesindia@network18online.com — or write to Ask The Insider at our office address, and we'll get answers for you. You're also welcome to send us suggestions on the kind of "insiders" you'd like to hear from in the future.