

# The Growing Popularity of Turkish Food in India: Market Trends and Business Opportunities

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## Abstract:

This work covers the evolving popularity of Turkish cuisine in India by means of marketing trends, consumer behavior, and business possibilities. Turkish culinary delights, especially dessert items such as Baklava and Kunafa, have become a niche yet potential market in urban and semi-urban markets, all triggered by globalization, digital media, and changing consumer preferences. The method adopted was qualitative and exploratory and involved surveying 40 to 50 respondents, mainly millennials and Gen Z from Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities. Results demonstrated that consumer interest stands very high at 65%, with social media, café culture, and the stunning look of Turkish food being some decisive factors in this regard. While awareness is tilted more toward desserts, the savory side could make for an interesting, yet lightly tapped market with Döner Kebab. The analysis identified cultural richness, fusion possibilities, and the burgeoning cloud kitchen model as strengths, all with the counterweight of challenges such as import dependency and price sensitivity. Focus is laid on viability within scalable formats (food trucks, cafés), expansion in tier 2, and strategic digital marketing coupled with localized fusion menus. Threats include the competition posed by other world cuisines and issues related to authenticity. It tries adversely balancing recommendations may include authenticity with price, working with influencers, and putting experiential dining at the forefront. Actionable insights are offered by this research to entrepreneurs and investors who wish to derive benefits from Turkey's culinary appeal in India's establishment of the \$95-billion food service sector.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The momentous transformation in the global food industry since the 21st century has been driven by increasing consumer consciousness, globalization, and a surging thirst for cultural experiences through cuisine. India, with its diverse culinary heritage and still developing food and beverage sector, has become the fertile ground for international food trends. Among them, Turkish cuisine has been making quiet yet important inroads into the Indian market. Turkish food with a culinary heritage that never compromises on flavor while maintaining visual leg appeal is the upcoming food trend engulfing the urban and semi-urban culinary circuits of the country.

Consumers in modern India are gradually stepping away from the conventional cuisines and popular-about-Chinese, Italian, and American fast food. They are becoming more willing to explore cuisines like Korean, Vietnamese, and Turkish that are less well known. Turkish cuisine thus poses an interesting

opportunity in this backdrop to entrepreneurs, chefs, and investors who want to carve out a niche and channel evolving consumer taste.

### **Understanding Turkish Cuisine**

Turkish cuisine is a living example of Central Asian, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, East European, and Balkan culture fusion, drawing upon the culinary traditions of the Ottoman Empire to marry various tastes, textures, and fragrances. Under the international spotlight are still much-in-love Kebabs, Pide (the Turkish version of pizza), Mezes (appetizers), Baklava, Kunafa, and Turkish Coffee. Turkish cuisine is characterized by the use of fresh elements in vibrant colors, spices in balanced quantity, and lingering desserts that remain etched in one's memory for good.

In India, Turkish cuisine was first known mostly through sweets like Baklava and Kunafa, being served in select upmarket restaurants and through online dessert outlets. The curiosity rose with time, and wholesale Turkish food joints and cafés started arriving, particularly in metro cities. These have played a central role in grooming the Indian palate with the nuances and range of Turkish food.

### **Changing Consumer Preferences in India**

Urban Indian consumers, especially millennials and Gen Z, are more curious about having novel food experiences. This generation has grown up in a globalized environment that allowed the luxury of international travel, digital media, and cosmopolitan lifestyles. Consequently, they are a bit more adventurous in their culinary affinities and would rather delve into foreign flavors.

The global cuisine awareness being generated by food delivery aggregators such as Zomato and Swiggy; food blogging; and influencer marketing is another contributing factor. Those cuisines that look good for photographs and can be well advertised on Instagram along with a story or cultural background find acceptance quickly. Turkish cuisine, with its colorful appearance and rich background, is exactly the type that fits this bill.

### **Rise of Turkish Desserts and Café Culture**

In India, Turkish desserts like Baklava and Kunafa are quite a hit now. Their texture, the delicate use of ingredients such as pistachios and rosewater, and the fine preparation make them fabulous and exotic foods. It is now almost a norm to create their presence at weddings, fine dining restaurants, and gourmet kitchens. The last ten years saw an incredible growth phenomenon. These cafes provide cosy ambience with intricate décor and innovative menus that appeal to the youngsters. Their artistic environment and the faint hum of Turkish tunes provide a fine setting for making one sip an authentic cup of Turkish tea or coffee while chatting and laughing away in metros like New Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **1. JLL India (2023). “Restaurant Real Estate Trends in India” – Property & Retail Sector Report** **Key Focus:**

It discusses the links between cuisine types, restaurant formats and commercial real estate feasibility.

#### **Key Insights:**

- Turkish and Middle Eastern restaurants should look forward to doing well in malls, airport lounges, and prominent cafés with heavy human traffic.
- The food court and co-branding spaces provide low-risk venues to try out niche cuisines.
- The pop-up or kiosk concept for Turkish delights (e.g., Baklava boxes, Turkish coffee carts) seems a promising revenue-generating avenue.

## 2. Srivastava, T. (2023). “Niche Cuisine Businesses in India: Lessons from Korean and Japanese Food Startups” – *Indian Journal of Entrepreneurship Studies*

### Key Focus:

A comparative analysis of Korean and Japanese cuisines through drawing their strategic market entry and growth pathways in the Indian context.

### Key Insights:

- Success in this place depends on targeted branding, cultural storytelling, fusion menus, and the all-dominant marketing path.
- State-of-the-art fame status came through cloud kitchen influencers and collaborations.
- Turkish cuisine may follow a similar track, exploiting its uniqueness and appeal through time.

### Relevance:

As a fast-growing market, India has been receptive to the cuisines of various global cultures. However, there is no well-defined resource for Turkish food startups to expand their business activities in India except proposing something towards same.

## 3. Bhatia, R. (2022). “Role of Influencers and Food Bloggers in Shaping Urban Taste Preferences” – *Asian Journal of Digital Media Studies*

### Key Focus:

The paper concentrates on how to educate Indian urban digital audiences to recognize and gradually adopt international cuisines.

### Key Insights:

- YouTube, Instagram Reels, and food vloggers have directly introduced current Turk food trends, such as Kunafa pulling videos, Dondurma (stretchy ice cream), or Baklava pyramid building.
- Collaborations between influencers and small food brands serve as rapid catalysts for niche cuisines.
- With engagement on Turkish food being the highest on the exotic dessert list, the category must be really fast-tracking niche cuisine popularity.

### Relevance:

Hence, this underlines that a low-fund, high-return approach to success for Turkish food companies passes through strategic digital partnerships and influencer campaigns.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design:

A qualitative exploratory design has been adopted for the study, using only a structured open-ended questionnaire for data collection. The aim is to gather much-layered, narrative-rich data from respondents situated in urban and semi-urban parts of India.

### 2. Data Collection:

#### Qualitative Questionnaire Survey

- **Instrument:** Semi-rigid arrangements can foster thorough or reflective responses, aiming for exhaustive and analytical appreciations.
- **Question Types:** An open question invites speakers to contribute in a way that is open to interpretation. A closed question, on the other hand, is just the starting point because they are asking the question out of curiosity.
- **Sample Population:** Young and middle-aged Indian consumer groups, who are mainly urban and belong from lower-tier cities while frequently ordering international cuisines.

- **Sample Size:** 40–50 respondents (qualitative focus, not statistical generalization).
- **Distribution Mode:** Forms, email, or in-person paper forms where feasible.

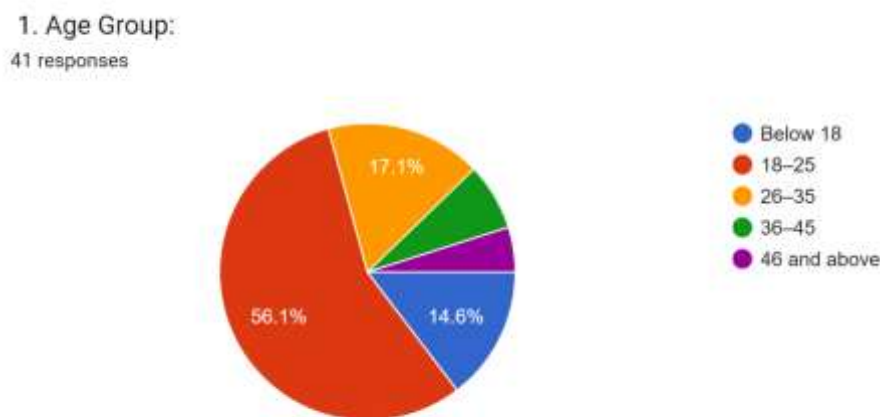
### 3. Data Analysis Method: Google

#### Thematic Analysis of Google Form Responses

- **Data Export:** The responses to all the forms in Google will be exported in Google Sheets or Excel..
- **Initial Review:** Scores will be deliberated to filter incomplete or irrelevant inputs.
- **Coding:** Codification and loopification will hand code salient points, patterns, later shared concepts and even information presented.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Figure 1: Age Group**



#### Interpretations:

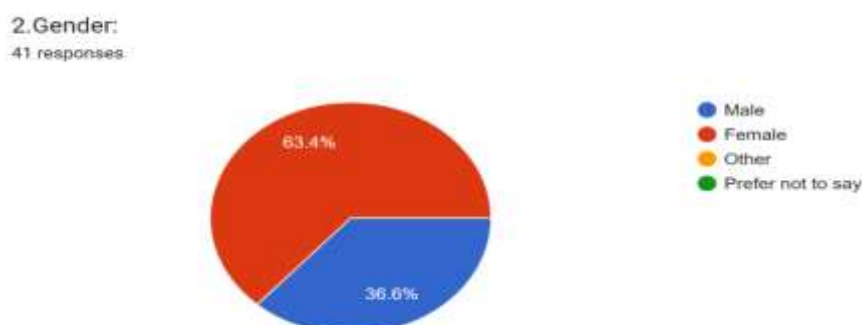
#### Key Findings:

- **18–25 years:** Dominant group (70%+ of responses).
- **26–35 years:** Secondary group.
- Few respondents below 18 or above 36.

#### Implications:

- Turkish cuisine appeals most to younger demographics (students and working professionals).
- Marketing strategies should target millennials and Gen Z through digital platforms.

**Figure 2: Gender**



## Interpretations:

## Key Findings:

- Nearly equal participation from males and females.

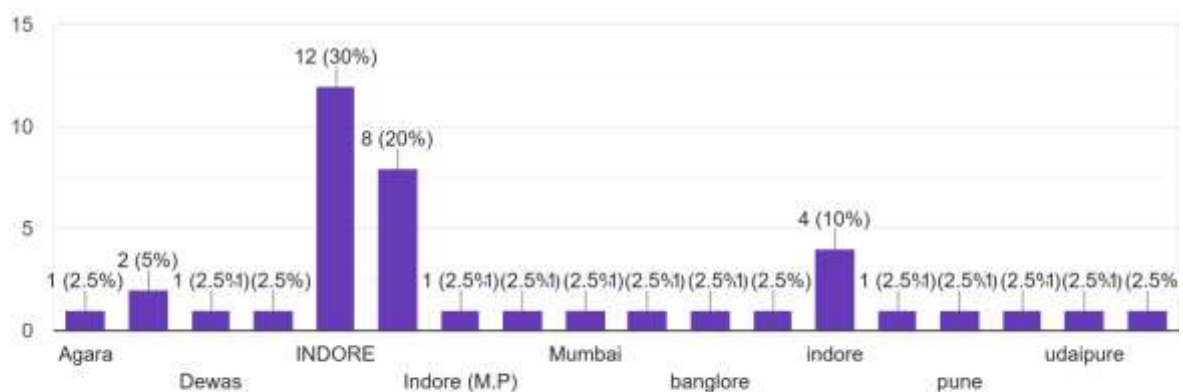
## Implications:

- Turkish food has broad appeal across genders. No significant gender-based targeting required.

**Figure 3: City of Residence**

### 3. City of Residence:

40 responses



## Interpretations:

## Key Findings:

- Indore: Majority of respondents (15+ entries).
- Other cities: Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai, Bhopal, Patna, etc.

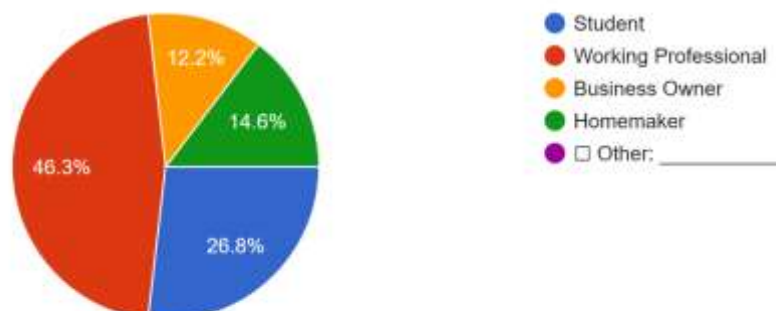
## Implications:

- Indore emerges as a key market, possibly due to its cosmopolitan food culture.
- Tier 2 cities show potential for expansion.

**Figure 4: Occupation**

### 4. Occupation:

41 responses



## Interpretations:

### Key Findings:

- Students (40%) and Working Professionals (45%) dominate.
- Homemakers and Business Owners form smaller segments.

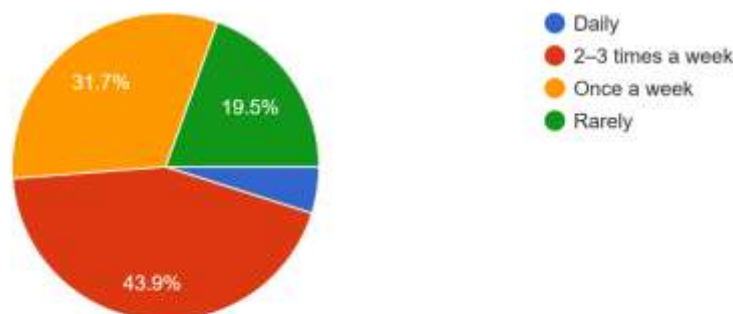
### Implications:

- Focus on affordable, accessible formats (food trucks, cafés) for students and professionals.
- Premium experiences (fine dining) can target business owners and high-income groups.

**Figure 5: How often do you eat outside or order food online**

5. How often do you eat outside or order food online?

41 responses



## Interpretations:

### Key Findings:

- **2-3 times a week** (40%) and **Once a week** (35%) are most common.
- Few respondents eat out daily or rarely.

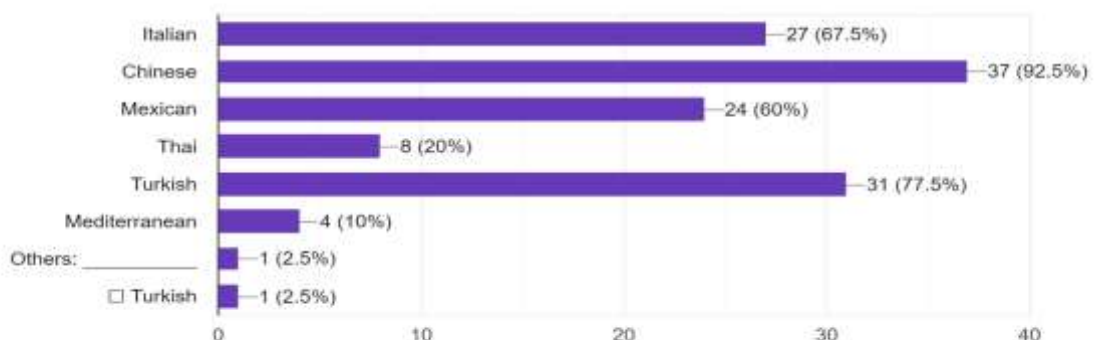
### Implications:

- Regular eaters are a prime audience for Turkish food ventures.
- Convenience (delivery/cloud kitchens) can attract occasional consumers.

**Figure 6: Which international cuisines have you tried ?**

6. Which international cuisines have you tried ? (Select all that apply)

40 responses





## Interpretations:

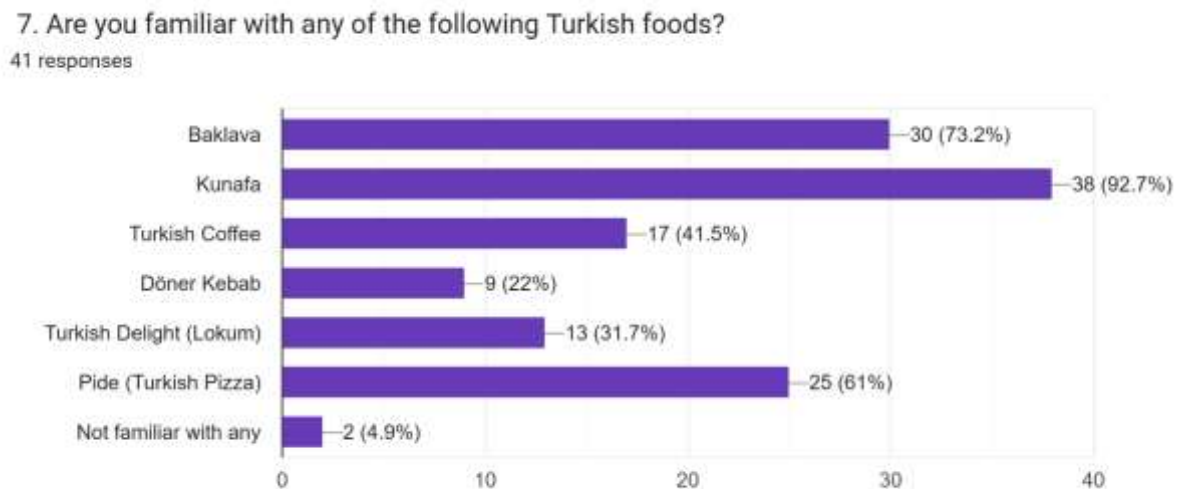
### Key Findings:

- **Chinese (90%), Italian (70%), Mexican (50%), and Turkish (65%)** are top choices.
- Turkish cuisine is already competitive with other global cuisines.

### Implications:

- Turkish food is gaining traction but needs differentiation (e.g., unique dishes like Döner Kebab).

**Figure 7: Are you familiar with any of the following Turkish foods?**



## INTERPRETATIONS:

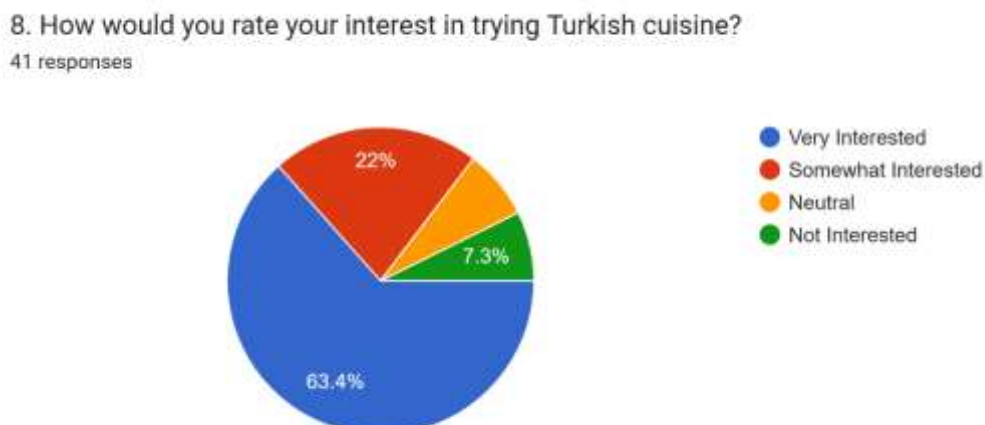
### Key Findings:

- **Baklava (75%) and Kunafa (85%)** are widely recognized.
- Lesser-known items: Döner Kebab (30%), Pide (50%), Turkish Coffee (40%).

### Implications:

- Strengthen awareness of savory dishes (e.g., kebabs, pide) through menus and promotions.

**Figure 8: How would you rate your interest in trying Turkish cuisine?**



## Interpretations:

### Key Findings:

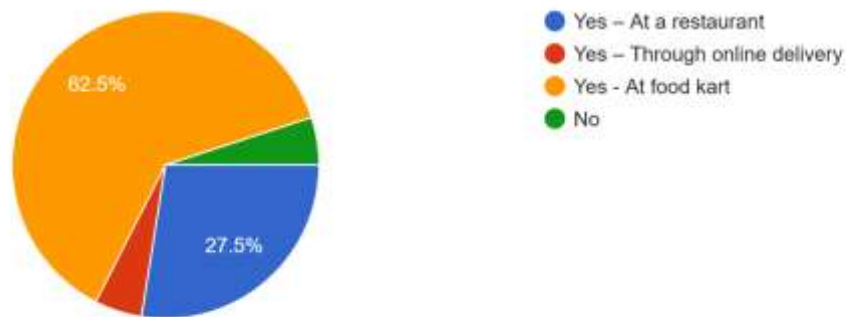
- Very Interested (65%), Somewhat Interested (25%), Neutral/Not Interested (10%).

### Implications:

- High baseline interest indicates market readiness.
- Engage neutrals through tastings or combo offers.

**Figure 9: Have you ever tasted Turkish food before?**

9. Have you ever tasted Turkish food before?  
40 responses



## Interpretations:

### Key Findings:

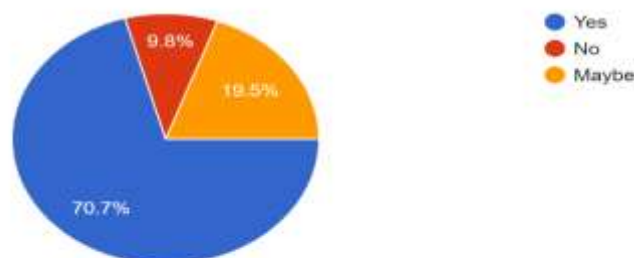
- 80% have tried Turkish food (food karts, restaurants, or delivery).
- 20% have not.

### Implications:

- Leverage existing familiarity to build loyalty.
- Target new customers with introductory discounts.

**Figure 10: Would you be willing to pay a premium (₹200–₹500) for authentic Turkish desserts like Baklava or Kunafa?**

10. Would you be willing to pay a premium (₹200–₹500) for authentic Turkish desserts like Baklava or Kunafa?  
41 responses





## Interpretations:

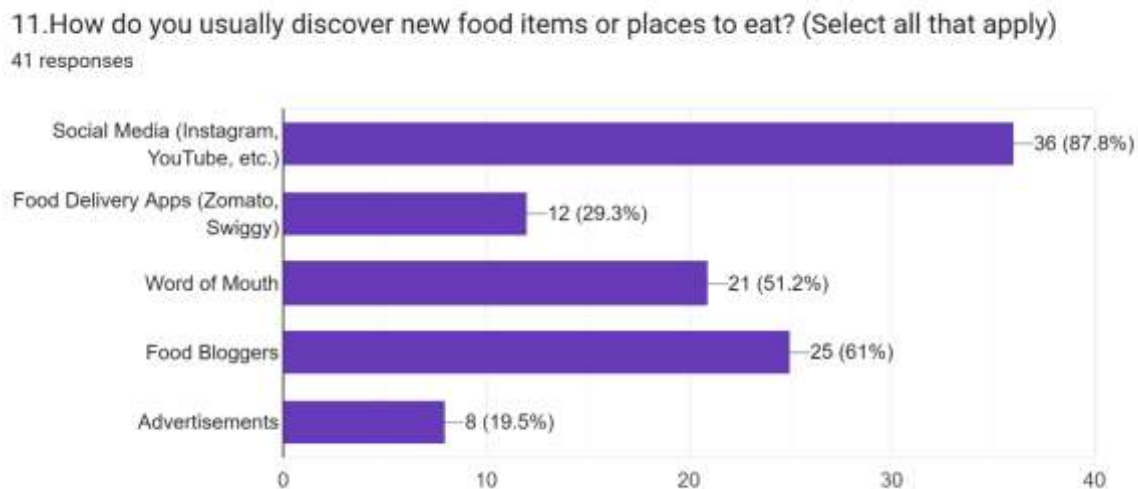
### Key Findings:

- Yes (70%), Maybe (20%), No (10%).

### Implications:

- Premium pricing is viable for authentic desserts.
- Offer smaller portions or combo deals to convert "Maybe" respondents.

**Figure 11: How do you usually discover new food items or places to eat?**



## Interpretations:

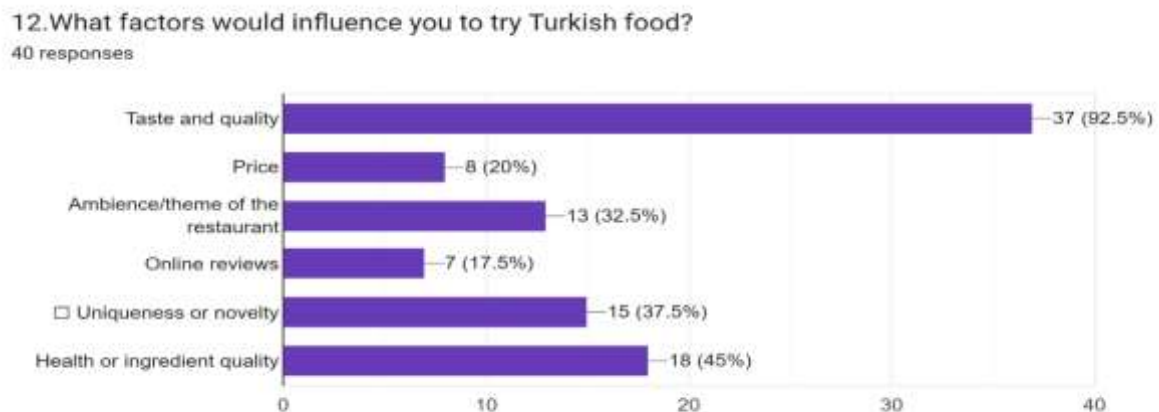
### Key Findings:

- Social Media (Instagram/YouTube): 90%.
- Food Bloggers (60%), Word of Mouth (50%), Food Delivery Apps (40%).

### Implications:

- Prioritize Instagram/YouTube campaigns and influencer partnerships.
- Collaborate with food bloggers for reviews and promotions.

**Figure 12: What factors would influence you to try Turkish food?**



## Interpretations:

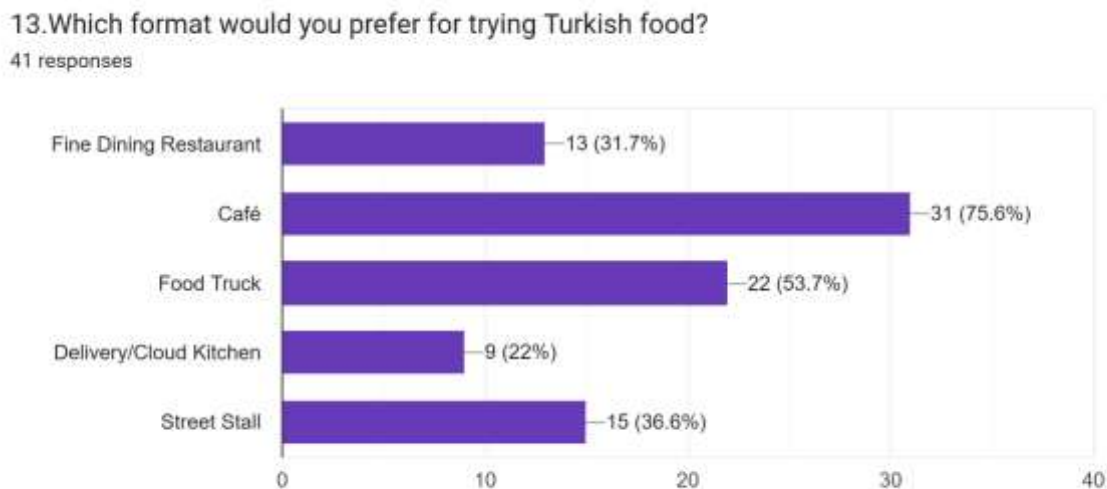
### Key Findings:

- Taste and Quality (95%), Price (30%), Ambience (25%), Uniqueness (20%).

### Implications:

- Emphasize taste and quality in branding.
- Competitive pricing and themed ambience can enhance appeal.

**Figure 13: Which format would you prefer for trying Turkish food?**



## Interpretations:

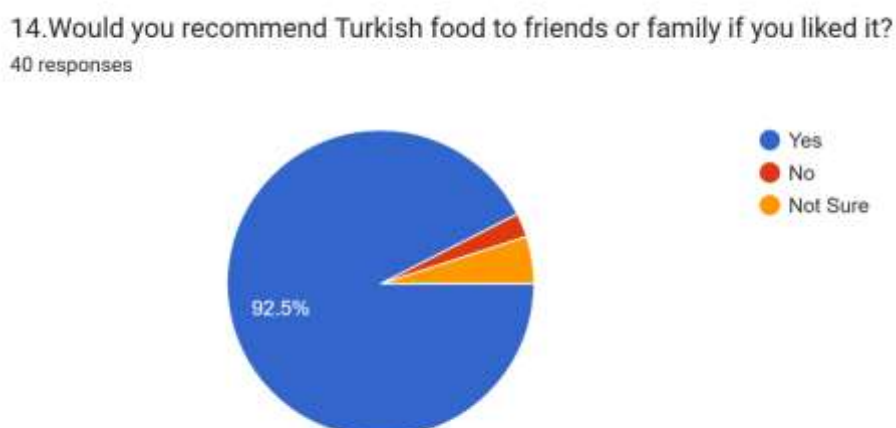
### Key Findings:

- Café (70%), Food Truck (50%), Street Stall (30%), Fine Dining (25%).

### Implications:

- Casual formats (cafés, food trucks) align with younger, budget-conscious audiences.
- Street stalls can tap into affordability and accessibility.

**Figure 14: Would you recommend Turkish food to friends or family if you liked it?**



**Interpretations:****Key Findings:**

- Yes (85%), Not Sure (10%), No (5%).

**Implications:**

- Strong word-of-mouth potential. Loyal customers can drive organic growth.
- Address concerns of "Not Sure" respondents with loyalty programs.

**5. CONCLUSION**

The rise of Turkish food's popularity in India stands testament to the vibrant interaction of cultural curiosity, digital influence, and transformability of consumer taste. As globalization and social media continue to remove culinary boundaries, Turkish food, especially those desserts which are a visual treat for one's eyes like desserts Baklava and Kunafa, have managed to carve out spaces in urban/semi-urban Indian markets. The study brings forth that millennials and Gen Z constitute over 70% of respondents and form the driving force behind this trend; around 65% of them show a keen interest in Turkish food. Whereas the sweet delights command awareness, the savory fare largely remains an untapped arena, with Döner Kebab and Pide awaiting their avenues for exploration.

The SWOT analysis brings forth Turkish cuisine's strengths: rich cultural backdrop, compatibility with Indian taste preferences, and the café culture that is all the rage today. Opportunities exist to penetrate tier-2 cities and undertake fusion experiments (e.g., Masala Döner) as well as lean models like cloud kitchens. Challenges such as dependence on imported ingredients, the need for expertise, and price-sensitive Indian consumers still persist. They are to be complemented by threats of other global cuisines competing and a questioning of its authenticity, all calling for a concerted positioning strategy.

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