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The Great Indian Cook-Off Tour

Join this exciting, 'once-in-a-lifetime' culinary adventure where we take 5 couples on a journey across 5 very exotic locations in India culminating in a Master Chef style cook off!

Besides learning a distinctive style of cuisine at each of the destinations, you will also have the opportunity to explore and experience the magic and grandeur of India. Explore the bustling metropolis of capital Delhi, the rich culture of Lucknow, the charm of Calcutta and the history of Hyderabad before travelling to breathtaking Kerala. Your tour includes many exciting adventures and experiences including visits to local markets, cookery lessons from local experts, a houseboat cruise on the backwaters of Kerala and others.

The tour will end with a Master Chef style cook-off where the five couples will use the culinary skills they have learnt to battle it out for a £1000.00 cash prize.

Detailed Itinerary:

Day ONE

- **Welcome to Delhi**

Arrive into Delhi where the Globe Travel Centre team will be waiting to give you a traditional Indian welcome before escorting you to the ITC Maurya. Delhi is a contemporary and bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its fold the ancient & the modern. Its strategic location was one of the prime reasons why successive dynasties chose it as their seat of power. There couldn't be a better place than the Indian capital to start off your culinary adventure. We have deliberately chosen the ITC Maurya as your first hotel, as besides being a premier luxury hotel located in the heart of the Capital it has earned a reputation for excellence in cuisine. From the robust flavours of the North West Frontier and the refined pleasures of royal Indian traditions, to the delectable flavours from the West and the Far East, all paired with an extensive collection of the finest beverages, the restaurants at ITC Maurya promise an inspiring culinary experience, unmatched by any other in New Delhi. Relax and unwind on your first day in India. Overnight at ITC Maurya
(Vehicle for transfers only)

Day TWO

- **Sightseeing, Street Food Walks and the quintessential Delhi experience**

After breakfast at the Maurya, proceed for a daylong tour of Old and New Delhi. Visit Jama Masjid, which is the largest mosque in India commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (to give you an idea of the scale, the courtyard of the mosque can hold about 25,000 worshippers.) Enjoy a tuk tuk ride to get a real flavor of Delhi. Your tuk tuk will take you through Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi's busiest market. Here you will be escorted by foot through the busy, colourful streets by a guide who will give you an introduction to the street food that makes these markets a sought after place. Later venture into New Delhi and drive past several monuments including the majestic Red Fort, Presidential House, India Gate and several other government buildings before you head to Rajghat, Mahatma Gandhi's memorial. Visit the 14th century Humayun's Tomb- the first garden tomb built in the Indian sub-continent where the Persian architect has used red sandstone on a large scale. Also visit the Qutab Minar, the tallest brick minaret in the world; which was commissioned by Qutbuddin Aibak, the first Muslim ruler of Delhi. Return to your hotel for an evening of leisure. Overnight at ITC Maurya **(Vehicle at disposal)**

Day THREE

- **Lesson 1: Chicken Tikkas, Butter Chicken & the art of cooking Punjabi**

After breakfast this morning, you will enjoy your first Indian cooking demonstration and lesson. While Delhi is a melting pot (excuse the pun) for many different types of Indian cuisine, owing to its status as the Capital of India, Punjabi food is a big feature here. Learn traditional Punjabi cuisine under the guidance of expert Shivani. (Big note for the uninitiated; Indian dishes like the 'Chicken Tikka' and 'Butter Chicken' which are popular Internationally are part of the Punjabi fare, so here is your chance to gain some culinary skills that will make you popular back home) Punjabi food is a lot like the people of Punjab - rich, robust and full of life. Bold textures and hearty ingredients are what make Punjabi cuisine so popular all across North India and the rest of the world. Try your hand at dishes such as 'makhni daal' (lentils), traditional Punjabi butter chicken, 'baingan bharta' (fire-roasted eggplant with onions and tomatoes), stuffed capsicum (bell peppers stuffed with vegetables), mutter paneer (peas and Indian cheese), salad, raita, roti (bread) and rice. Enjoy a wholesome Punjabi meal with your host before you return to your hotel for an evening of leisure.

Tip: This is the first of five culinary styles that you will learn on your tour. We suggest you make notes as you could be given any of the five styles to cook during your final cook off in Kerala.

Overnight at ITC Maurya **(Vehicle at disposal)**

Day FOUR

● **Fly from Delhi to Lucknow...the Land of the Royal Nawabs**

This morning you will be transferred to the Delhi airport for your flight to Lucknow - the capital of India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, which is also referred to as the 'City of Nawabs' (City of the Princes). Lucknow boasts of a rich and glorious past and has been renowned for being the cultural centre of Northern India for over two centuries. Needless to say, the city of the Royal Nawabs is also renowned for its royal cuisine. On arrival in Lucknow, you will be escorted to the Taj Gomati Nagar hotel. Set along the banks of the River Gomati, this magnificent hotel set in 25 acres of manicured gardens will welcome you into another era. Discover the Taj's many restaurants that open into the lobby to create an enticing food zone offering cuisine from across the world. Spend your morning at leisure. In the afternoon, you will enjoy a half-day sightseeing tour of the city. Visit the 'Residency', a group of buildings that were built for the British Resident General during the days of the Raj. In 1857, mutineers laid siege to The Residency, where every European settler in Lucknow had sought refuge. Though the building saw a lot of fighting in the past, carefully manicured lawns surround the ruins of The Residence today. Visit the 'Bara Imambara', Lucknow's grandest mosque. You will also explore the Chhota Imambara, a mosque designed in the Indo-Islamic Charbagh pattern, with a stream running through the middle of its gardens.

No visit to Lucknow can be complete without a walk along its streets teeming with artisans, handicraft shops and local eateries. Go on an escorted street food walk where your guide will show you the local delicacies that are popular in Lucknow. Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

Overnight at Vivanta By Taj Gomti Nagar **(Vehicle for transfers only)**

Day FIVE

● **Learn to cook food that's fit for Kings. (Lesson 2: The Royal Awadhi Cuisine)**

Enjoy a leisurely morning where you can sample the delicacies prepared by the Chefs at the hotel. Later this morning you will get to meet with Royalty when you visit Raja Amresh Kumar Singh and his family at his city palace, Khajurgaon. Here you will get to learn about Lucknow's Hindu Royalty and how they co-existed with the Nawabs and later with the British during the Raj, and today continue their legacy in modern times. Get your first experience of the 'Awadhi' style of cooking at the Palace. This is a distinctive style of cooking where you will get to learn recipes that were once closely guarded secrets of the Royal kitchens and accessible only to nobility. You will have the opportunity to learn under the expert supervision of the 'Khansama' (royal chef) himself who will explain the intricacies of Awadhi cuisine and how you can recreate them. Learn a culinary style that not many others in the world, can boast of. Don't be surprised if the Nawab decides to join you for dinner and comment on your preparations. Enjoy an authentic royal Awadhi dinner with the Royal family. Return to your hotel for an evening of leisure. Overnight at Vivanta By Taj GOMTI NAGAR **(Vehicle at disposal)**

Tip: Awadhi cuisine is more complex than the conventional and popular styles of Indian cooking so please ensure you make lots of notes about the ingredients in use. The richness of Awadh cuisine lies not only in the variety of cuisine but also in the ingredients used like [mutton](#), [paneer](#), and rich spices, which include [cardamom](#) and [saffron](#).

Day SIX

- **Fly from the land of the Nawabs to the City of Joy (and fish ... and desserts)– (Lucknow-Kolkata)**

This morning you will be transferred to the Lucknow airport to board a flight for Kolkata (or Calcutta as it was called in the past).The city of Joy is also a city of contrasts. Once the capital of British India (and now the capital of the state of West Bengal), the city easily combines its 400 years old heritage with the pace of modernization. What's remained intact through the city's history is the Bengali's passion for food (If you are a fish lover or have a sweet tooth, then you are in the right place)

On arrival in Kolkata, you will be met by a representative who will escort you to the Oberoi Grand hotel, where you can spend your evening at leisure. Fondly known as the Grand Dame of Kolkata, The Oberoi Grand dates back to the 1880s and has been known for its fine cuisine, spectacular dinner parties and legendary live entertainment. Needless to say, it has been the choice of accommodation for Heads of states and celebrities visiting the city.

Overnight at The Oberoi Grand **(Vehicle for transfers only)**

Day SEVEN

- **Lesson 3: Learn Bengali Cooking**

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast this morning. Back in Lucknow, you cooked with the Royals in a Palace. Here in Kolkata you will learn cooking in a traditional Kolkata home with local food expert, Bibi. After welcoming you with an 'ampura sherbet' (a refreshing raw mango drink) or, in the winter, apple juice with a hint of ginger, Bibi will teach you how to cook a proper traditional Bengali meal. Learn the famous Doi Maach (fish cooked in yoghurt) amongst other dishes. And since you are in Kolkata no meal can be complete without a dessert of mishti doi (sweetened yoghurt) or payesh (rice pudding with jaggery made from nectar from the date palm tree). End your cooking lessons with a Bengali meal treat specially prepared by Bibi.

Later this evening, Bibi will escort you through the streets of Kolkata to show you the local markets.

Overnight at The Oberoi Grand **(Vehicle at disposal)**

Day EIGHT

● **From the city of Joy to the land of the Charminar (and the Biryani). Kolkata – Hyderabad**

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Kolkata in the morning. Visit the Victoria Memorial, a splendid architectural structure in white marble, modeled on the Taj Mahal. Built in the early 20th century in memory of Queen Victoria, and formally inaugurated by the Prince of Wales in 1921, the building still retains its colonial charm. Visit the Birla Planetarium, which presents a series of shows on the intricate world of planets, galaxies, solar system, and life cycles of stars. Drive to the famous Howrah Bridge, an engineering marvel that is counted as being amongst the busiest cantilever bridges in the world. Later pay a visit to Mother Teresa's Ashram. This evening you will be transferred to the Airport to board a flight to Hyderabad

Hyderabad is as famous for its 'Charminar' and other monuments as it is for its 'Dum Biryani' and other Mughal cuisine dishes. No claim to be an Indian cooking expert can be justified if you didn't know how to cook up the perfect Biryani. So here we are in the land of the Biryani where you will have the opportunity to do exactly that.

On arrival, you will be escorted to the ITC Kakatiya hotel. The Kakatiya brings an exceptional repertoire of culinary excellence to Hyderabad in a selection of the city's finest dining destinations. From the delicious kebabs and pan Indian dishes at K & K, to the flavours of Southern India's most delectable cuisines and a tantalising selection of Indian and international favourites all paired with an extensive collection of the finest beverages, the restaurants at ITC Kakatiya promise an inspiring culinary experience, unmatched by any other in Hyderabad. Spend your evening at leisure at the hotel.

Overnight at ITC Kakatiya **(Vehicle for transfers only and at disposal in Hyderabad)**

Day NINE

● **Sightseeing in Hyderabad & the Biryani experience- Lesson 4**

After breakfast proceed for a half-day sightseeing tour of Hyderabad. Start with a visit to the magnificent Birla Mandir. Visit the Salar Jung Museum, which houses one of the largest private collections in the world. Different cultures and countries are represented, with arms, paintings, sculptures, bronzes, textiles, carvings, manuscripts, lacquer ware, porcelain and much more. Proceed to the Charminar, Hyderabad's magnificent square edifice of granite, built upon four grand arches with high slender minarets and spiral staircases. Also visit the nearby Mecca Masjid, one of the oldest and biggest mosques in Hyderabad. Later, visit the adjacent Laad Bazaar, to buy bangles, semi-precious stones, pearls, saris and more. Go on a street food walk with an escort, to see the hustle and bustle of Hyderabad.

Later this evening we have organized for the quintessential Hyderabadi Cooking lesson with Mumtaz Khan- a true connoisseur of this style of cooking.

Mumtaz Khan, has been cooking family recipes passed down through the generations and knows everything there is to know about this style of cooking. Learn the art of making the perfect Dum Biryani (rice cooked with layers of spiced vegetables) from Mumtaz.

Tip: Mastering the art of the Dum Biryani has many bonuses. A biryani is a single food item which combines rice, meat and an assortment of spices and can be served with a yogurt and does not need too many other accompaniments.

Overnight at ITC Kakatiya **(Vehicle at disposal)**

Day TEN

● **Hyderabad To 'God's own country, Kerala**

This morning you will be transferred to the Airport for your flight to Kerala, also known as God's own country. Arrive into the port Town of Cochin, where you will be met by a representative and transferred to the Brunton Boatyard hotel.

Moored on a historic stretch of Cochin's famed harbour, the Brunton Boatyard Hotel has been resurrected from the remains of a Victorian shipbuilding yard and gives you a unique opportunity to dwell amidst the shadow-plays of 19th century history.

As with the choice of the other hotels on your tour, we have chosen the Brunton Boatyard, amongst other things for the enviable delicacies its restaurant offers. Every dish on offer at the Boatyard's History Restaurant will take you back in time and give you a flavor of the many communities and traders who left their imprint on Cochin.

For example, the Cutlets speak of an Anglo Indian heritage. Fish lovers savoring the flavor of Samak Bil Harder Asful will be transported to Arabia. Then there's the Fish Moilee with its Syrian Christian roots. The Vindaloo will take you back to the time of the explorer Vasco Da agama.

Enjoy your evening taking in the flavours and delicacies of Cochin.

Overnight at Brunton Boatyard **(Vehicle for transfers only)**

Day ELEVEN

● **Port Town of Cochin / Introduction to traditional Kerala Syrian Christian Cuisine**

After breakfast proceed for a half-day tour of Cochin. The twin cities of Fort Cochin and Mattancherry have preserved an extraordinary wealth of really old colonial architecture spanning the Portuguese, Dutch and the British eras. Visit Fort Cochin, explore the church of St Francis, the oldest European-built church in the country and the 282-year-old Dutch Cemetery.

Continue your tour with a visit to Mattancherry, where you will visit the 400 year old historic synagogue in the Jewish Quarter. You will also visit the Mattancherry or Dutch Palace, constructed in 1555 which houses a fine collection of mural paintings depicting scenes from the Hindu epics. Walk along the amazing Chinese Fishing Nets, strung out along the tip of the peninsula. Also drive past Willingdon Island, a man-made island that belongs to the Port Trust and the Indian Navy.

Later this afternoon you will be introduced to your final style of Indian cuisine on the tour..the Kerala Syrian Christian Cuisine. For this we have organized for you to meet a very interesting chef, Leela. In fact Leela isn't your conventional chef.. she is a Deputy Customs Commissioner by day and her husband is a professor of Political sciences. However the couple are so passionate about Kerala cuisine that their cookery lessons are featured on International television. Using freshly-picked organic vegetables, from pungent ginger to snappy green beans, Leela focuses on traditional Kerala Syrian Christian feast cuisine which is served at banquets. The cuisine includes dishes like 'Appam (Rice panckaes) and chicken stew , fish moilee, prawn curry and other delicacies.

Your tryst with Kerala cuisine will start with a visit to the local markets with Leela where she will help you choose vegetables and spices from her favorite vendors.

Back at Leela's home you will get the opportunity to both learn this exotic style of cooking and enjoy a treat laid out by her.

Return to your hotel for an evening of leisure.

Overnight at Brunton Boatyard **(Vehicle at disposal)**

Day TWELVE

● **Houseboat Cruise & The FINAL COOK-OFF**

It's the day of the final cook off and its time to put what you have learnt on the tour to battle against the other couples for that £1000 bounty. But before the big battle, we have organized a special treat in the form of a houseboat cruise along Kerala's mesmerizing backwaters.

After breakfast, we will drive you to Alleppey where you will board your houseboat. Houseboats or "kettuvalloms" are converted rice barges with well appointed bedrooms and ensuite bathrooms. The crew consists of a captain, chef and housekeeping staff who will ensure that you are well looked after during your cruise. You can sunbathe on the deck or watch the palm fringed waterways from the comfort of your rooms. Besides the stunning landscape, what makes the backwaters magical is the life along the waterways.

After a traditional meal on the houseboat, you will be dropped off at Chitrakayil Island, the stage for the great cook off. Its time to put on your aprons and chef's gears and put what you have learnt to test.

The whole event will be managed by a team of chefs and hospitality professionals and supervised by a Sous Chef (In this case, the Executive Chef of the CGH group of Hotels who will be judging the event).

Based on a draw, the judge will allocate each couple one of the styles of cooking that you have learnt on the tour (to recap, the five styles you will have learnt on the tour are 1. Punjabi 2. Royal Awadhi 3. Bengali 4. Hyderabadai and 5. Kerala Syrian).

Each of the five couples will be assisted by a Commis 3 chef who will provide assistance with choosing ingredients from the store for your allocated style of cuisine. Each couple will have a separate cooking station and all the equipment required for the cook off. The whole event will be timed and each couple will have a 2 hour time frame to finish cooking and present what they have prepared to the judge.

The winner will be awarded a £1000 cash prize. All participants will be provided with a certificate to celebrate the event.

Remember that the whole cook off will be recorded by professionals, so make sure you put in your best, as you will be given a tape of the event at the end of your tour.

After the event, you will board your houseboat again to spend a night of celebration on the backwaters.

Overnight in Houseboat **(Vehicle for transfers)**

Day THIRTEEN

- **Alleppey – Cochin**

Wake up to a beautiful sunrise in the backwaters. After a traditional breakfast, you will be transferred back to Cochin, where you can spend your last day in Kerala at leisure.

Enjoy a sunset cruise along Cochin harbor, indulge in some shopping or simply take in the sights and sounds of Fort Cochin by walk.

Overnight at Brunton Boatyard (**Vehicle for transfer only / No Vehicle at disposal**)

Day FOURTEEN

- **Homeward bound**

This morning you will be transferred to the Airport for your return flight. Return home equipped with Indian culinary skills and memories of a lifetime experience.