

## **You Are What You Eat- Changes in the Food Tradition of Malabar**

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*In this article discusses the evolution and growth of Malabar food, the economic factors behind a cuisine, migration and socio-cultural diffusion, the history and geography of a place and its influence on the cuisine and other cultural implications of food. Malabar was also a hotspot of all kinds of spices. Malabar cuisine relies heavily on spices which was a major item of trade during ancient and medieval times. The curious blend of the cuisines from all parts of the world renders Malabar to be a culinary hotspot. It is fact that Food being the catalyst of all human activity. The decision of man to cook his food was the result of a revolutionary notion. Food is an indispensable part of the lifestyle and culture of the Malabar Coast. Food had changed the attitude of human beings through the centuries. The cuisines and eating practices are inextricably connected with the society and culture of the place. With the years of cultural diffusion, Malabar dining space has accommodated a flagon of recipes and flavours' to satiate every plate. It was after the Gulf migration the Malabar cuisine gained momentum and began evolving, introducing new flavours, colours and recipes from the Arab culinary traditions. The paper presents the traditional food culture of Malabar, the changes apprehended in it, with special reference to Gulf migration.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Food is not merely a substance that enables the functioning of life, but it has great historical importance. The culinary habits of today are the result of a series of changes introduced through the ages. As a nourishing material, only food can be used to maintain life and growth. Most of the studies conducted about food were when it was a part of history. History cross-examined the food habits of certain societies or as a part of many studies. Many studies have been conducted globally on food habits, most of them were concerning science, health, and nutrition. Historicizing food habits are more relevant because the life journey of man developed with his search for food. From the necessity of food, men started gathering food, hunting animals, observing nature, collecting, producing, storing, distributing, processing, trading, and innovating on food for a new taste.

Food tradition became part of the culture and by food different cultural fusion emerged. In this sense, food has more historicity in the story of humankind. The historic view of food's progress would enable us to understand the basic changes in the food in particular societal habits and how it gets transformed chronologically. Thus, the food itself has a history and needs deep historical studies. In this regard, an attempt is made in this work to find out the historical heritage of food and assess its validity in deriving conjectures that would enable in-depth studies in history. Food not only helps us to engage in physiological activities but also to embrace the heritage of our past. Malabar culinary culture underwent a paradigm shift, incorporating diverse cuisines and cultures of the world.

The location of *Malabar*, is an overriding factor for the regions rich culinary history. The area served as a channel that connected the trade routes of various empires. Caressed by the Arabian Sea and guarded by the Western Ghats, the Malabar region of Kerala comprises places north of the River *Bharatapuzha*. Its incredible history, the unfathomable heritage, and the alluring spices makes it one of the most fascinating and exclusive regions in Kerala. It includes parts of *Thrissur*, the districts of *Palakkad*, *Malappuram*, *Kozhikode*, *Wayanad*, *Kannur*, and *Kasaragod*.

Ancient trade links with Romans, Arabs, and Greeks have caused Malabar to be a fusion food culture from ancient times. Religion, region, and geographical features later caused Malabar to have an extravagant and multifaceted food culture. In addition to the ancient foreign links medieval and Modern Malabar cuisine influenced by Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British taste. Apart from these, historical diversity, cultural influences particularly, religion the large percentages of Muslims and Christians, Jews, Anglo-Indian have also

contributed unique dishes and styles to Malabar cuisine, especially non-vegetarian dishes. In the current scenario, studies on ancient food habits and their benefits are more relevant.

The surge in human requirements culminating from civilization enabled us to experiment and speculate new methods and trends in food preparation. There exists an adamant bond between food and history. The innovations in science and technology we see today were paved to consummate our need for subsistence. Studies on food culture on continental and Indian levels have been conducted ever since the 1800s. Even though, Malabar has a unique and multi-dimensional cuisine. The role of Gulf migration in our food culture has not been properly assessed. An important factor which decisively shaped the Malabar cuisine was the Gulf boom that resulted in the mass emigration of the Kerala population particularly of Malabar especially to the Arab countries in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A vast population of Malabar is in Gulf countries and they are more acquainted with the Arab culture.

Food has always been a significant indicator that reflects the kind of history experienced by a region. The diversity of the cuisine of Malabar evolved from its past, from its numerous intimations with the cultures that traded and settled in this area. This distinctive cuisine has the flavours of Arab, Brahmin, *Zamorin*, and *Chirakkal* cuisines. *Kozhikode* and *Thalassery* are branded as the centres of Malabar cuisine.

The migration to the Gulf is of short term nature, the Gulf returnee's imbibed the socio-cultural elements of Arabs and incorporated it to the native culture. This commercial and cultural interaction later culminated in the growth and evolution of a sophisticated culinary culture. With Gulf migration, Malabar cuisine had to adapt to different kinds of changes including new recipes, techniques, fashion, and tactics. The invention of innovative dishes and hoteliers led to changes in our food culture both advantageous and disadvantageous. The youth erratically switch between cuisines, diets, and food habits causing various health issues like diabetes, stroke, fatty liver, hypertension, eating disorders, etc. Malabar being a coastal area, seafood find ample space in the dining. We can find Amazing prawns, crabs and an array of fresh fish which form an integral part of Malabar cuisine. River and lake fishes are also widely consumed. Curries of Malabar are very spicy with a mild and delicate flavour. Dates are mainly imported from Arab countries. Shallots, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves, garlic, coriander, pepper, cumin are the different kinds of spices used in Malabar. So, studying the food tradition of Malabar and the numerous changes that took place eventually gave historical knowledge about the indigenous food items we once had and the substantial factors that intervened in our food culture.

## **KEYWORDS**

Malabar, Cuisine, Food, Gulf, Pepper,

## **Research Problem**

Though this study, an attempt is made to explore the following problems.

### **1. How was food constituted in ancient Malabar?**

Ancient Malabar similar to all other regions of Kerala followed Megalithic Culture. Many food items that were discovered from the sites included vegetables, fish, fruits, and animal flesh. The proximity to the sea made the availability of fish and other seafood in this region.

### **2. What were the effects of changing food habits on the people of Malabar?**

Changing food habits affected the life pattern of people. Their food substances and ingredients changed. The dining style also changed. Rice was the staple food of the people and the principal agricultural produce. During the first half of the 20th century, there was an appreciable change in food habits due to severe adverse effects on the agricultural development of Malabar. Their consumption habits were meagre and rigidly subscribed by tradition.

### **3. What was the contribution of ancient trade relations in our food pattern?**

The Columbian discovery of the New World brought several new vegetables and fruits to Malabar. A number of this such as potato, tomatoes, chillies, peanuts, and Guava has become staples in many regions of Malabar. Northern Kerala, which has blended in Arabian, Persian, Indian and European styles of cooking, was as a result of its long history as a maritime trading post. The influence of Arabian and Mughal cultures is evident, especially in the dishes of the Muslim community, although many have become popular among all communities.

### **4. What was European influence in our food habits?**

There are broadly two classes of the non-vegetarian cuisine in Kerala; *Malabar cuisine* which is from North Kerala and *Syrian Christian cuisine* which is from the South (Travancore and Kochi regions). The two are distinct from each other; the former has *Mughlai*-Arab, Portuguese, British, Dutch, Jewish, and French influences and the latter includes a mix of Kerala traditional dishes rich in coconut as well as various recipes of

Syrian, Dutch, Portuguese or British origin. *Thalassery* also occupies a special place in the modern food history of Kerala with British influence as the pioneer of its bakery industry, since the first bakery was started by *Mambally Bappu* in 1880 and the western-style cakes and muffins were introduced in 1883 which received wide acceptance among the *Keralites*.

5. Has religion played any role in changing societal food practice?

In addition to historical diversity, cultural influences, particularly the large percentages of Muslims and Christians, have also contributed unique dishes and styles to Kerala cuisine, especially non-vegetarian dishes. The meat-eating habits of the people were historically limited by religious taboos. Brahmins eschew non-vegetarian items. However, most modern-day Hindus do not observe any dietary taboos, except a few of those belonging to upper castes. Most Muslims do not eat pork and other items forbidden by Islamic law.

6. What was the role of Gulf migration in our food habits?

Contribution of the gulf migration created shifts in the food pattern, style, dining, food culture, which paved greater impacts upon our acceptance of magnanimous tradition and universal thought of food brotherhood that is very significant in the Malabar provinces today.

### **Objectives of the Proposed Research**

Malabar was the spice garden of the ancient and medieval world, for which the traders from distant countries travelled great distance by sea. The study was carried out to examine the main features of the traditional food in the Malabar society and the existing system in Malabar in general and *Thalassery* and, *Kozhikode* in particular, ranging since 1800 CE.

1. To historicize the food tradition of Malabar and circulate the indigenous food culture, its changes, and acknowledge the new trends in eating habits

2. To examine the historical necessity of indigenous cuisine. Our food habits and culture evolved with a distinct individuality and harmonious fusion so its historical necessity is deep-rooted with our daily life and transformed the individual and the society as a whole in the realm of socio-cultural food habits and rituals.

3. To develop an appreciation of the contribution of inherent cuisine to our culture and lifestyle. Our food habit evolved depending on the geographical factors of the region, the flora, the fauna, so these food habits are landmarks of our culture. Its appreciation uplifts conventional and healthier food practice

4. To cross-examine the advantages and disadvantages of today's consumption habits. Today's consumption habits cause health problems and lifestyle diseases this should be cross-examined to understand our unhealthy food practice and involve in remedial activities.

5. To identify the food items recently added to our food culture, its intricate popularity and influence on the food interest of our youngsters.

6. To compile the recipes of food in the Malabar and to make it beneficial to the taste buds of the health-conscious society. One who explores through food tradition of Malabar will have more convenience to access if the food history of Malabar was compiled.

7. To understand the evolution of the food tradition of the Malabar region. There was an important development of food associations such as food laws, ingredients, dining practices of a community, food habits during several occasions like rituals, religious gatherings, festivals, and wedding ceremonies.

### **Area of study**

Malabar, the northern part of modern Kerala was a district in the Madras presidency during the British rule in India. The geographical area selected for the research is Malabar and the period of study ranged since 1800 CE and the case study will be conducted in *Kozhikode*, *Thalassery* region. This particular period was selected determinedly due to strong reasons. First, it was in 1800 CE the Malabar district formed officially. There were notable changes in the traditional food habits, customs, and practices of the natives of Malabar due to European influences. The research is to be conducted in the Malabar provinces especially in *Thalassery* and *Kozhikode* as it is considered as the headquarters of a variety of food of Malabar. Several studies had been done concerning the Malabar area but, in this inquiry of food, the area had been selected due to the availability of records and the multi-dimensions *Malabari* culinary possess.

### **Hypothesis**

- Food has a culture. As a basic factor of life existence, its history touches all classes of the society unbiased, were many aspects of life formed regarding food practice in society. Being the base of human life and its progress, changes, fusion occur as a historical process in the society. Food habits of a family were derived from the Socio-cultural interlinking in society. Every unique cuisine has multiple tales to recount about the community, locality, region, country, ethnicity, history, myths and values.

- Food habits changed over time. Food habits of a family are influenced by its tradition, physiographic nature of the place, the income of the family, available ingredients flora, fauna etc. So the common food practice of the

society differed, but as a whole, it has an indigenous food culture of the place. The knowledge of traditional aliment culture, the more recipes and subsistence can be utilized.

- Food has a socio communal structure in society. That socio-cultural tradition marked certain food habits of society. But within the long span, many influential factors make changes, modification, intermingling, transition, transformation, and synthesis in culinary practice.
- Malabar region experienced such changes by migrated religious and foreign influences. This influence made some addition and elimination of foods that once we had in the Malabar region.
- The food habits that still exist were subjected to various factors with Gulf migration that changed the trends and taste of Malabar cuisine.
- Contribution from Gulf migration created shifts in the food pattern, style, dining, food culture, which paved greater impacts upon our acceptance of magnanimous tradition and universal thought of food brotherhood that is very significant in the Malabar provinces today.

### **Significance of the study**

According to *Yuval Noah Harari* (Sapiens), ‘‘We study history not to know the future but to widen our horizons, to understand that our present situation is neither natural nor inevitable and that we consequently have many more possibilities before us than we imagine.’’- Thus, being the basic unit of life historical studies of food is significant in several ways – Primarily, the historical exploration through the food tradition of Malabar and its changing tradition provides a system of knowledge about the food culture we renowned.

Secondly, the studies aim to consolidate and preserve our valuable food culture. Thirdly the importance of food studies in Malabar was recognized with the development of local historical researches. Studying food traditions will contribute to micro historical researches. Such studies enhanced the importance of culinary practices and the need to investigate the changes that it undergoes with time. A properly undertaken food research in the historical view would enable us to understand and consolidate the food tradition once we had.

Fourthly, the role of women in the contribution of food culture would be studied. A woman is a central and attention-seeking figure in our traditional cooking system. Studying traditional food habits, changes and modern practice in food preparation will be helpful to understand the gender dilemma. Finally, studies on our food tradition make us aware of the various new trends and global acceptance of all food traditions. In this exploration, the under-privileged section, and their cooking habits could help one to understand their abilities and disabilities which quite often was not recorded in history.

## **II. Methodology**

The researcher intended to make use of food and its changes occurred, as an interdisciplinary and analytical factor.

- Arab, Greek, Portuguese, French, and English influence with a variety of regional, geographical, and religious influenced the culinary of Malabar and broadened the diverse fields of research, and the present study needs a vast collection of sources. The sources of information are primarily grouped into two thus the archival sources and written sources, within which it may include the traditional literary sources like *Vadakkan pattukal*, *Margam pattukal*, *Oppana pattukal*, etc. And Northern Ballads.
- Biographical literature, diaries, photographs, advertisements, cookbooks, magazines, household guides, novels, and fictions published since 1800 CE the traveller’s account; present excellent documentation of the everyday forms the database. The study mainly traces the linkages of the changing ingredients and culinary habits that constituted the food and eating patterns of the people of colonial Malabar.
- There are several tools and techniques to collect data. Investigator will randomly select the demography of 50 people of conventional cooks and modern chefs to assess contrasting recipes and their extent of nutritional content.
- A questionnaire is supplied to the youth concerning their indulgence in various conventional and continental foods. Assert the importance of traditional food culture and the need to reclaim recipes of the older generations.
- An interview will be conducted with professional chefs and nutritionists concerning the advantages and disadvantages of both traditional and contemporary food habits

The Research methodology selected for the study was Analytical and narrative. This study was analytical and has required the analysis and interpretation of relevant data collected from Primary and secondary sources. The present study used field survey and personal interviews for the method of survey and the data collected from surveys and interviews had been statistically analysed, processed, and interpreted from a historical perspective. The survey was conducted in the Malabar regions.

As this research was a study of food, tradition developments, and experience of the past of Malabar, the careful weighing of evidence and validity of the source of information on its past and the interpretation of the evidence, the researcher applies narrative method. In this way, the study mainly concentrated on the effects of traditional food practices in the public sphere and the families of the different religious classes. The public sphere consists of society, organizations, communities, ritual practices, festivals, and wedding ceremonies. The concept was adopted here to analyse the food taste and the religious restrictions that prevailed in the society where the people interact with each other.

### **III. Review of Literature**

Some available literature on food history had been reviewed. As there is meagre work so far on the historical contextualisation of the eating habit only a few in available were reviewed

'Food and Culture': A Reader *Carole Counihan, Penny Van Esterik (Editors- 2012)* Tells us that the food touches everything important to people: it marks social differences and strengthens social bonds. Common to all people, yet it can signify very different things from table to table. Food and Culture takes a global look at the social, symbolic, and political-economic role of food. The stellar contributors to this reader examine some of the meanings of food and eating across cultures, with particular attention to how men and women define themselves differently through their footways. Crossing many disciplinary boundaries, this reader includes the perspectives of anthropology, history, psychology, philosophy, and sociology. The reader starts by illustrating the food's ability to convey symbolic meaning and communicates about a wide range of subjects. Essays exploring the relationship between body image, eating, and sexuality in different societies give particular attention to the special and contradictory relation between women and food. Also demonstrated is the relation between the commoditisation of food, food industries, political power, and colonial dominance. They skilfully offer food from an anthropological and historical perspective, giving attention to feminist, structuralism, semiotic, and other approaches.

K.T Achaya' gives a detailed description of Indian food, was an eminent oil chemist, food scientist, nutritionist, and food historian. He is the author of ' *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* ', *The Food Industries of British India*, and *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*. In his book, K.T Achaya describes where tomatoes, chillies, and potatoes came from, how utensils took shape, and also describe ancient Indian foods of Indus valley people and Vedic people. A more interesting food description by him was that of the Mughals.

According to A L Basham, the Dravidian south first begins to appear in the light of history in traditionally the Tamil country has being divided into three kingdoms – Cola (the Coromandel coast), Kerala or *Chera (Malabar)* and *Pandya* (the southern tip of the peninsula). A.L Basham's the wonder that was India describes everyday life: the daily rounding city and village mentioned there are several references to the science of cookery *Supasastra* from passages

In the south, toddy the fermented sap of the palmyra or coconut was the staple alcoholic liquor, and is frequently mentioned in early Tamil literature. In the earliest stratum of Tamil literature, we find the three kingdoms in a state of almost continual warfare, one passage even suggests Cannibal feast after the battle. The available literature on the food tradition of Malabar had been reviewed. There is no authentic work so far on the historical contextualisation of the eating traditions of various communities of Kerala. The colonial-era had some work mentioned the food tradition of Malabar which helped to trace the Malabar cuisine. Their efforts and observations helped get a common knowledge about the food history of Malabar.

The *Malabar Manual* of William Logan was a valuable resource to peep into the history of Malabar's tradition and it was a precious source material to understand the food practice customs and mannerisms and thus food habits in Malabar. Much research was not done regarding the food of history but some works had been undertaken about food history a few indigenous as well as foreign scholars.

'*Food and Culture*' by *Fabio Paarasecoli*, gives some valuable information about how was ancient trade influenced our food habits. The book provides a well- researched and rich cultural history of European food culture. The author shows us that each community contributes to the food ingredients, which eventually is made to evolve over time. The recipes of some of the food items of various communities of Kerala are also given in meticulous details.

### **IV. Findings**

This study has been attempted to acknowledge the possibilities of historicizing food and the following findings were drawn based on the latter. Malabar is located in the state Kerala and the Indian Subcontinent at the south which lies on the coast of the Arabian Sea. It has a diverse climate and physiographic and has one of the most multifaceted food traditions. In Ancient times this physiographic and influence of the Arabian Sea impacted the food habits of Malabar.

As per Sngalia's opinion, Kerala was not included in the pre-historical Map of India. The archaeologist's opine that pre-historic trace comes from ancient times when man started gathering forest

produces and other nutrients. Like the other part of the world, agriculture originated in the Neolithic period in our region. The primitive man was a food gatherer, hunted, and caught fish. Roots and Fruits of the forest were also eaten. From the dissipated food items (seeds) new plants germinated, was noticed and this was a turning point in the history of mankind - the innovation of agriculture.

Early food traits in Kerala were part of *Tamilakam* which had references in ancient *Sangam* literature. Tamil literature refers to (foreign ships from Rome and Egypt) arriving with gold and perfumes and returning with pepper. The Dravidians in the south first begin to appear in the light of history in 6<sup>th</sup> AD. Traditionally the Tamil country has been divided into three kingdoms – Cola (the Coromandel coast), Kerala, or *Chera* (Malabar) and *Pandya* (the southern tip of the peninsula).

A.L Basham's "*The wonder that was India*" (chapter-6) *everyday life: the daily rounding city and village*, have mentioned that there are several references to the science of cookery *supasastra*. From passages in literature, we know that ancient Indian cookery did not differ much from that of the present day. Meat and vegetables alike were seasoned in curries and eaten with rice, boiled, or fried. Their favourite cooking medium was ghee, in which the food was fried. The law books contempt drinking and *Fa-hien* stated that respectable Indians did not drink but drinking was mentioned frequently in literature especially in that of the Tamils'.

In the south, toddy the fermented sap of the palm tree or coconut was the staple alcoholic liquor, and is frequently mentioned in early Tamil literature. In the earliest stratum of Tamil literature, we find the three kingdoms in a state of almost continual warfare; one passage even suggests Cannibal feast after the battle. The *Sangam* literature contains a lot of information regarding the growth of agriculture. During this period Kerala was part of the *Tamilakam* and *Chera* dynasty ruled here. Agriculture became the main source of livelihood and the economic foundation of society.

And later Kerala regions were included in *Chera* kingdom in the first centuries of Christ. Valuable everyday life descriptions were only available from literary sources of second *Chera* rule (800 CE-1122 CE). After the second *Chera* declined, the number of kingdoms emerged which was known as '*Swaroopa*'. The primitive practices which prevailed in the agricultural system in the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Kerala were changed by the Buddhists. They had started organized and large-scale cultivation in the nearby land of their *Viharas*. The Buddhists were the first time to popularise the method of ploughing in the marshy field. Buddhist *Viharas* became the largest cultivation field. A large number of people abandoned their tribal life and became their followers. Gradually Buddhism popularised in Kerala and simultaneously agriculture also developed. As a result, more vegetarian items included in the food habits of people. 12<sup>th</sup> CE *Polanadu* ruler *Polartiri* was defeated by *Nediyiruppu* rulers and made Kozhikode as their centre. From the food gathering in Kerala especially Malabar the cuisine was derived from the periodical changes which was even evident in vegetables, meat, fish, fruits, and sweets. Ancient trade links with 'Moors' (Arabs) influenced the food in Kerala but was more impacted with the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries of European settlement.

Certain foods that are widespread in India nowadays are however 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>-century importations, brought from America by the Portuguese. The most surprising of these is the *chili* or red pepper, which forms characteristics of south Indian cooking the *brinjal* or eggplant, is another seventeenth-century innovation, as are of course potato, sweet corn, or maize. Fruit and sweet meats of many kinds were as popular as they are today, but many of the Indian sweets eaten nowadays such as the *jalebi* are Muslim importations.

In the mid - 18<sup>th</sup> century, Kerala faced the *Mysurian* invasion. Later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the defeat of *Tippu Sultan*, Malabar became part of British territory. After the British settlement, Malabar was under Bombay presidency later included in Madras presidency. Chronologically Malabar region's socio-cultural evolution in food habits influenced all religions and Foreign European styles. Many Flora and Fauna of the region changed with time immemorial. Studies on food culture on continental and Indian levels have been conducted ever since the 1800s. Apart from the ancient foreign links medieval and Modern Malabar cuisine influenced Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British taste. The 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries witnessed various kinds of new cooking techniques and exotic flavours were carried to life from foreign trade influences and religions, regions, communities and even from one household to another.

The cuisine of Malabar was a product of history and a blend of cuisines from all over the world. As a result of the age old maritime relations with the other countries, the influence of mercantilism, imperialism, spice hunting voyages and the demands of western emperors, the cuisine of Malabar is an amalgam of Mughal, Persian, Arab, Portuguese, Dutch, French and British cuisines. The distinctive cuisine has the flavours of Arab, Brahmin, *Zamorin*, and *Chirakkal* cuisines. Kozhikode and *Thalassery* are branded as the centres of Malabar cuisine.

With Gulf migration, Malabar cuisine had to adapt to different kinds of changes including new recipes, techniques, fashion, and tactics. The most celebrated Malabar dish *Biriyani* etymological origin lies in the Persian root *Birinji*, meaning rice. *Biriyani* is historically believed to be of Persian origin. It was a popular and prominent dish of Mughal kitchens. Because of the Islamic influence it was introduced

in Malabar. *Biriyani* was the most popular Malabar recipe is the product of the Arab influence also. It was a dish made with melange of spices, rice, meat and egg is highly sought. *Biriyani* in different places of Malabar has distinct taste and flavour as they all employ different recipes. The Malabar cuisine is mostly non-vegetarian, which is uncommon in other parts of Kerala in as much as they prefer meat and seafood even on auspicious festival days because the proximity of sea is a driving factor. The invention of innovative dishes and hoteliers led to changes in our food culture both advantageous and disadvantageous. The surge in human requirements culminating from civilization enabled us to experiment and speculate new methods and trends in food preparation.

So, studying the food tradition of Malabar and the numerous changes that took place eventually gave knowledge about the indigenous food items we once had and the substantial factors that intervened in our food culture. The Malabar's affinity for stuffed meat also has its origin in the Middle East. The Gulf boom that resulted in mass emigration of the *Malayali* population of Kerala, particularly of Malabar, to the Middle Eastern Arab countries in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also decisively shaped the Malabar cuisine. In the beginning of the modern age, the long range trade in food took place which practically broke down cultural barriers. The intermingling of people from different countries and cultural backgrounds led to exchange of food items and food habits. This long range trade in food gave way to the ecological exchanges, revolutionising global distribution of plants and livestock. In recent years a great revolution occurred in the field of food was the industrialization and globalization of food. This made the mass production of food items which were made available throughout the entire world. With the emergence of feminist movements, Malabar kitchens undergoing a radical change, which resulted cooking patterns and eating habits modernized.

Malabar has had a unique and multi-dimensional cuisine; the Spices were travelled from Malabar Coast to the Mediterranean and from there to the markets of Europe. The role of Gulf migration in our food culture has a remarkable role. It widened the culinary knowledge and made it more accessible. With the trends of globalization, privatization and liberalization, our culinary practices and dietary habits tend to fuse, creating a cultural amalgamation. In recent past, lot of restaurants, cafeterias and bakery shops serving Middle Eastern dishes have sprung up in various parts of Malabar and it played a crucial role in building a civil and cosmopolitan society. The legacy of Malabar food reflects its hospitality.

Malabar cuisine is the socially and cultural amalgamation of global blend, with the Arab and Middle Eastern influence is highly prominent, adapted and made to suit the local and regional variants of spices and other raw materials. The interaction between two cultures revolutionized both the cuisine and the society. This exchange of ideas, cultures and traditions still continues. Malabar culinary culture adapted, evolved and preserved both indigenous and immigrant recipes. Food is so festive and an important part of Malabar for bringing people together and strengthening their relationship. The Malabar culture of dining together and sharing food is emphasizes a sense of equality among them and these gatherings create strong social networks among the communities and as a result it strengthen mutual acceptance, respect and solidarity and cosmopolitan approaches among the communities. Experimenting new recipes and accepting new influences, not only adds new dishes to the cuisine but also it is a symbolic of the broad perspective of the people of Malabar. Culinary culture is an important marker of identity in all societies, as what we eat is an implication of our culture and values and finally it led to an egalitarian society where different cultures co-exist harmoniously without overlapping or posing any threat to each other's existence.

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