

# It's '19. Eat like in the 90s

This year will be about going back to our roots more than before, and focusing on local produce



SHEELA KRISHNASWAMY

BY INVITATION

mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com

**N**ot many would know the period between 2016 and 2025 has been marked as the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) by the UN General Assembly. Under which, effective interventions and actions need to be taken to improve the diet and nutrition habits of people across the world. And Bengaluru is ever so welcoming to healthy ideas and activities, such as lapping up locally-grown, organic food. So here I am listing down some of the trends that can possibly explode in the space of nutrition and wellness in the coming year.



## Protein power

While the trend to take protein supplements either to bulk up muscles or just as a fancy after-workout potion has been around a few years now, the popularity of natural protein (that is through foods) is likely to increase. The reason is simple. People all over the world are generally moving natural foods rather than supplements. They want to satisfy their taste buds as well as get the maximum nutritional benefit out of the food they eat. Two, some of the protein foods that were thought to be harmful to health due to their high fat or cholesterol content are no longer in the list of 'bad foods'. For example, nuts and eggs. Three, proteins, which used to be part of our daily meals or traditional thalis and had disappeared some time ago, is making a comeback. This, thanks to the "my plate" concept which is being propagated by nutrition and dietetics professionals. So make sure to include dairy products or meat or pulses and *dals* in your daily diet. Now that it is the season of field beans (*avarekai*) in Karnataka, load up on them. Local food is always more nutritional.

## Fibre alert

The consumption of fibre-rich foods had steadily declined over the past few years because we had moved from whole grains to refined grains, and because we had stopped consuming fruits and veggies as much as our ancestors used to. But once again fibre is becoming central to our diet. Urban Indians have started to shift towards whole grains as seen by the increase in availability and intake of millets,



unpolished rice, whole grain cereals, high fibre ready-to-eat snacks, and so on. This trend is only likely to pick up in the coming years. A few days ago, the Indian Dietetic Association (IDA), which is a body of qualified dietitians and nutritionists across India, published a Position Paper on 'Dietary Fibre and Health', in which the association suggests that people should consume at least 30gm of dietary fibre from a variety of plant sources in order to attain various physiological benefits. The paper has been widely circulated amongst professionals and practitioners.

## Calorie count

Displaying the calorific and nutritional val-

ues of all the food served at restaurants will catch up. This mandate has come from our food regulating authority FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) itself. Packaged foods already come with nutrition labels that mention the number of calories, carbohydrates, protein, fat, sugar, and sometimes other micronutrients. But the foods that are sold in eateries could be anything from 100 to 2,000 calories or more, and there's no way of knowing how much of it goes inside the body. So display of calories against each dish on the menu card will make the consumer a tad more conscious of how much he/she should consume in a day or in a meal. This would probably make the restaurant owners and chefs also think twice before they pour oil or dump sugar into the foods. Alongside the calorie display, there's a good chance of

some restaurants showcasing the fat content in foods too. A few health-conscious restaurants have started doing it already in Bengaluru and this is likely to increase in the wake of the citizens becoming more aware of what's good for health.



## Healthy menu

Many people disagree with me when I say that banquets and family functions should watch out for the food they serve. But that's a trend that is likely to come soon. If a separate section for *chaats* or *dosas* or pastas can be arranged during these functions, why not one for healthy food too? I am told wedding banquets in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu have separate counters for the health-conscious. It's only a matter of time before this becomes a norm. No one is denied a dish or meal of their choice, when this happens.

## Small is big

A recent multi-country study showed that the foods served in restaurants and fast food joints are calorie-dense and might contribute to the global obesity epidemic.

This doesn't mean that the foods prepared at homes or other places are not high in calories. So whether one eats at home or at restaurants or any other place, meals should get smaller in size and lower in calories. That's one trend I hope takes off in 2019.

But then again, whatever may be the trend in 2019, eating right and wellness is here to stay. All in all, the awareness about leading a fit, active and wholesome life is on the rise. So wish you all a healthy 2019.

— The writer is a nutrition and wellness consultant

