

"We offer a low-calorie diet for guests"

It is a quite a challenge to provide sumptuous food on a luxury train. Chef Deepak Chaubey, Executive Chef, Golden Chariot, explains to Lakshmi Vishwanath the different aspects of providing food on the new luxury train in Karnataka



CHEF DEEPAK CHAUBEY
 Executive Chef, Golden Chariot

Q How did you design the menu for the luxury train?

A The train will cater mostly to foreign tourists, as they are the ones who are keen to explore new places in Karnataka. So, we have designed the menu keeping in mind the spice levels — foreign and regional. We conducted food trials before we rolled out the menu. We did a survey of all the destinations that the train will go to, and got information on the local cuisines. We also visited the local vegetable markets and sweet shops to see the quality of local materials. Based on the inputs from the trials and our own inputs, we designed the menu.

Q What are the main highlights of the food on board the train?

A We have laid special emphasis on the fact that the food is fresh. We avoid storing food as much as we can as it will become stale. We also have space constraints in the kitchen. So, at each destination we go to the local market to purchase vegetables, fruits and other ingredients such as paneer. Materials which can be stored or refrigerated are

brought from Bengaluru or Mysore. All English vegetables are procured from Mysore, as the quality is very good. We also offer a low-calorie diet for our guests. Since most of the guests are above 45 and are not here to just to eat, we focussed on a low-calorie diet. Most of the dishes are curd-based, coupled with salads and soups. We have studied the calorie intake of each of the dishes and created a healthy diet.

Q How often will you change the menu and add new dishes?

A The menu will be changed every three to four months. We will also add new dishes to the menu from time to time, based on the demands of the guests. However, we will change the snacks everyday. We offer a variety of Indian, Continental and Chinese snacks in the bar.

Q Will you offer the local cuisine of each destination?

A We still have not thought of offering the local cuisine of each destination. We will definitely explore the idea once the

train is fully operational and my team becomes comfortable with cooking on the train. Also, when we establish the menu and other aspects, it will become easier for us to explore new concepts.

Q What are the pros and cons of using electrical equipments for cooking?

A It is definitely a challenge to cook using electrical equipments such as oven, grill and hot plates. However, it is a once in a lifetime opportunity for me and my team. As long as the temperature and timing is maintained, the method of cooking doesn't make a difference. One of the main disadvantages is that we cannot offer Chinese and other fried Indian food, as these dishes need deep frying or a big flame for cooking.

Q Do you also plan to introduce buffets?

A I am not completely in favour of a buffet since the space is less, the staff is also less and it results in more wastage. The items will be limited and the food will lose its freshness, as it will have to be kept ready much before time. However, we will introduce buffet once we get

more staff and add the conference coach. The conference coach has a capacity of 60 persons, so once that coach is added to the train, we can think of a buffet.

Q Did the Chefs and kitchen staff undergo any training programmes before they joined?

A Yes, they have all undergone a short training programme conducted by Sapra Datta, who is the corporate trainer for the Mapple Group. The kitchen staff consists of 42 persons and most of them have worked with me in my previous assignments. So I share a good relationship with my team, which makes my job a lot easier. We have not faced any major problems so far. ■