

employees and self-employed professionals. This segment is expected to grow to 65 million households by 2010. The writing, says food importer Sanjay Tandon who supplied 60 per cent of the 250 tonne of foreign cheese last year, is already on the kitchen wall. Few working couples are going to cook during the week, and minimum-fuss cooking ingredients will be in demand.

At the same time, increasing technophobia has meant a greater appreciation for healthy food. Enough has been written about ingesting chemicals and carcinogenics for people to be will-

FOOD SNOB'S DICTIONARY

A quick guide to what's on the stocked shelves and splendid tables in the global Indian's home



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artisanal cheese. From ricotta to cacioav-allo, usually eaten with a variety of condiments.

extra virgin olive oil. From the first pressing, vastly different from the pomace widely available.

iceberg lettuce. Once found only in Delhi's INA and Mumbai's Crawford Market, is now a staple.

balsamic vinegar. A traditional condiment almost as highly valued as good wine. The best is said to be from Modena.

fondue. Swiss dish—wags would say their only one apart from rosti—now widely available in packages in Indian stores.

jalapeno. Pepper variety, used as a paste or pickle. Mexican necessity most suited to the heat-seeking Indian palate.

Cantuccini. An almond biscotti to accompany a shot of Lavazza espresso, preferably made on your own coffee machine.

gravadlax. The finest Norwegian smoked salmon, cured using a mixture of dill, sugar, and herbs.

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de cecco pasta. From farfalle to tagliatelle, this high-end commercial brand has enough varieties for every meal.

ham. From parma to pepperoni, farmer's salami to ham lyoner, the humble in-between has become a meal in itself.



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A FOODIE'S DELIGHT: Foreign foods give the much needed variety

ing to pay more for food free of harmful additives. This is the consumer that Suku Shah, a food importer, wants to tap, with products such as organic soy milk and silken tofu. In any case, food and grocery retail sales contribute 77 per cent of the total retail sales in India, and importers are looking optimistically at projections which indicate organised food retail is likely to grow by 30 per cent in the next five years and become a Rs 11,000 crore industry, from the current Rs 2,500-3,000 crore—that is, all things being equal, and the government relaxing foreign direct investment rules in retail.

Even then, the journey so far has been phenomenal. Nikhil Asrani, who imports a range of pastas, cheeses and sauces, says, as late as the late '90s he remembers being asked by consumers at a trade show: "Do we shallow fry, or

