

kalamata olives. Synonymous with the Greek city, these succulent black olives travel well.

Lovage. A very European plant, looks like wild celery but is a herb that is excellent in soups, salads and meat dishes.

miso. A soy paste which has the same aura in Japan as fine wine or cheese. High in sodium, to be used sparingly.

New Zealand lamb chops. Yes, go ahead, start the debate. Is it better than the Australian lamb chop? It's all good.

Organic tofu. Transformed from the humble "coagulated bean curd" to a delicacy in Japanese food. Not to be confused with tempeh, a traditional Indonesian food made by culturing whole soybeans with rice.

pommery mustard. From a 17th century recipe, its distinctive packaging matches its flavour.

quaker oatmeal. One of this conglomerate's many oatmeal products. At one time, were shrouded in controversy.

26 % Annual growth rate of imported pasta. The current market size is 5,200 tonne. To put it in perspective: the annual wheat production of India is 65 million tonne

Vanilla pods. Expensive essence, restaurateurs earlier relied on friends from Kerala. Now freely available.

HEMANT CHAWLA

5 % Share of imported cheese in the Indian market, which is still dominated by Amul

"Imported food products are the new software for the retail hardware that is in expansion mode."



SUKU SHAH, FOOD IMPORTER



deep fry the pasta? Is it like fry-yums?" But all importers are almost unanimous in their demand that the government match the uniform VAT policy across India with the abolition of octroi/entry taxes across all states and amend the antiquated Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and Rules, 1955, which Tandon says angrily, still judges the quality of food on its fat content. Only then can foreign food stop being industrial and become interesting.

And to remain interesting is one of the biggest challenges for a booming hospitality industry. The provenance of food immediately lends it an authenticity which is increasingly absent in the era of mass production. In an era when Chinese truffles are passed off as the real thing, the reassurance of a package which announces its origins is immense. "All of us are looking for new ways to set ourselves apart," says Marchetti. Some importers are ensuring brand promotion is not restricted to just swish hotels. Shah, for instance, has hired 15 food sommeliers who travel the growing retail landscape of India to keep owners and buyers well informed.

What you eat is what you are. In the new global India, a thali lunch can co-exist with a fine Italian dinner, and a New Zealand rack of lamb can serve the same appetite as butter chicken from the local dhaba. In a homogenised world, such variety is indeed, a well-cooked slice of life.

with Kimi Dangor, Swagata Sen and Nirmala Ravindran

Ragu. A sauce used for the all-time favourite Spaghetti alla Bolognese. The best ragu has only a slight tomato flavour.

Wasabi. Preferred fresh in Japan. Never cheap, the horseradish powder or paste that can set the sashimi on fire.

Shittake mushrooms. They are to an Asian stir fry what porcini mushrooms are to an Italian risotto. Abs fab.

X or rather XL. The size the reader is likely to become after buying and consuming all the food in this dictionary.

truffles. The white truffle mushrooms from Piedmont are unaffordable, which makes them every epicure's must-have.

yoghurt. Fat free flavoured yoghurts are now in every supermarket. Pascuals is the biggest foreign brand in India.

Udon noodles. Thick Japanese noodles made of wheat flour, can be eaten hot or cold.

Zucchini. Thought to be vegetable, is actually a fruit. Is almost as popular as asparagus.

