



EVENT REPORT

CHEF'S MEET FOR WORLD TOURISM DAY 25th- 26th 2024



REPORT BY: TEAM, THE OPEN FIELD

Event Summary: International Chef's Summit 2024 at Netarhat

Theme: "A Culinary Expedition to Asur Tribe, Jharkhand"

Dates: September 25th - 26th, 2024

Organized by: Institute of Hotel Management Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Supported by: The Open Field Farm, Jharkhand Tourism

Location: Netarhat, Jharkhand



SUPPORTED BY: IHM (INSTITUTE OF HOTEL
MANAGEMENT, BRAMBE, JHARKHAND



SUPPORTED BY: DEPARTMENT OF
TOURISM, JHARKHAND



INTERNATIONAL CHEFS SUMMIT, JHARKHAND 2024

The International Chefs Summit 2024 provided an unparalleled opportunity for culinary professionals to immerse themselves in the indigenous culinary traditions of Jharkhand, specifically those of the Asur Tribe. Hosted at Netarhat, this summit brought together chefs from around the globe to explore and learn about sustainable food practices, forest-foraging techniques, and the cultural significance of the ingredients used by the Asur and Oraon tribes. The summit was organized by the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Ranchi (IHM Ranchi) in collaboration with The Open Field Farm and Jharkhand Tourism. Over three days, participants engaged in forest foraging, knowledge-sharing sessions, traditional meals, and cultural performances, all while learning how ancient tribal practices can inform modern culinary innovation and sustainability efforts.

Introduction to the Asur Tribe

The Asur Tribe is a small ethnic group located primarily in Jharkhand, with their roots embedded in traditional practices of iron-smelting, agriculture, and foraging. Once skilled hunter-gatherers, the tribe's transition into agriculture, and later foraging, demonstrates their deep connection to the natural environment



This transition has resulted in a complex and sustainable food system that utilizes the diverse flora and fauna of Jharkhand's forests. As traditional food practices diminish due to modernization, environmental change, and lifestyle shifts, events like the International Chefs Summit 2024 serve as a platform to rediscover and preserve indigenous food traditions while highlighting their significance in today's global culinary landscape.

This report explores the key activities and insights shared during the summit, especially how the Asur tribe's food practices can be a model for sustainable living.

DAY-1 HIGHLIGHTS:



Welcoming the Chefs at Prabhat Vihar Resort

The summit commenced with a warm welcome for the participating chefs at Prabhat Vihar Resort, organized by The Open Field Farm with support from IHM Ranchi. This introduction to Netarhat's scenic beauty set the tone for the experiential journey ahead, as chefs prepared to engage with the region's rich culinary traditions.

Visit to the Asur Village and Special Lunch

The chefs were then taken to a local Asur village, where they were greeted by the tribe and introduced to their culinary traditions. The knowledge-sharing session led by Sushana Didi, an elder from the tribe, provided the chefs with an in-depth understanding of the importance of forest foraging in the tribe's lifestyle. The Asur people rely heavily on the forest for their food, gathering wild ingredients that are not only rich in nutrients but also carry medicinal properties.

The knowledge-sharing session covered the use of various ingredients such as Khukri mushrooms, Sandhna (bamboo shoots), and Gethi Kanda (forest tubers). These ingredients, harvested from the forest, form the basis of the Asur Tribe's food system, providing both nutritional and medicinal benefits. The tribe's traditional knowledge of seasonal harvesting ensures the sustainability of these resources, safeguarding the balance between human needs and ecological preservation.

Each ingredient holds profound significance in the tribe's daily life, with many also revered for their medicinal properties.

Key ingredients introduced during this session included:

- **Khukri (Wild Mushrooms):** These mushrooms are a monsoon delicacy, gathered from the forest. Rich in nutrients, they are commonly used in stews and curries. Sushana Didi highlighted their immune-boosting properties.
- **Dried Bamboo Khukri (Bamboo Mushrooms):** These mushrooms are foraged during the season and dried for year-round use, showcasing the tribe's food preservation techniques.
- **Gethi Kanda (Forest Tubers):** Known for their high nutrient content, these tubers are a key source of energy for the tribe, often consumed boiled or roasted.
- **Sandhna (Bamboo Shoots):** Bamboo shoots are an integral part of the Asur diet, valued for their vitamin-rich profile and antioxidant benefits.
- **Pitharu Kaanda:** These medicinal tubers are used to treat inflammation and pain, reflecting the tribe's use of natural remedies.
- **Bairaini Kanda:** This tuber aids in digestion and is consumed for its fiber-rich properties.
- **Nakla Kanda (Black Forest Tubers):** These tubers are valued for their ability to boost immunity, and are often consumed boiled or mashed.
- **Muchri Saag (Appetite-Enhancing Green):** This wild green is used to stimulate appetite and improve digestion.
- **Kudrum (Rosella):** Both the leaves and flowers are used in tribal cuisine, particularly in chutneys and Maar Jhor, adding a tangy flavor while providing antioxidant properties.
- **Gondli:** Also known as Little millet, rich in nutrients and in providing immunity.



Lunch like locals

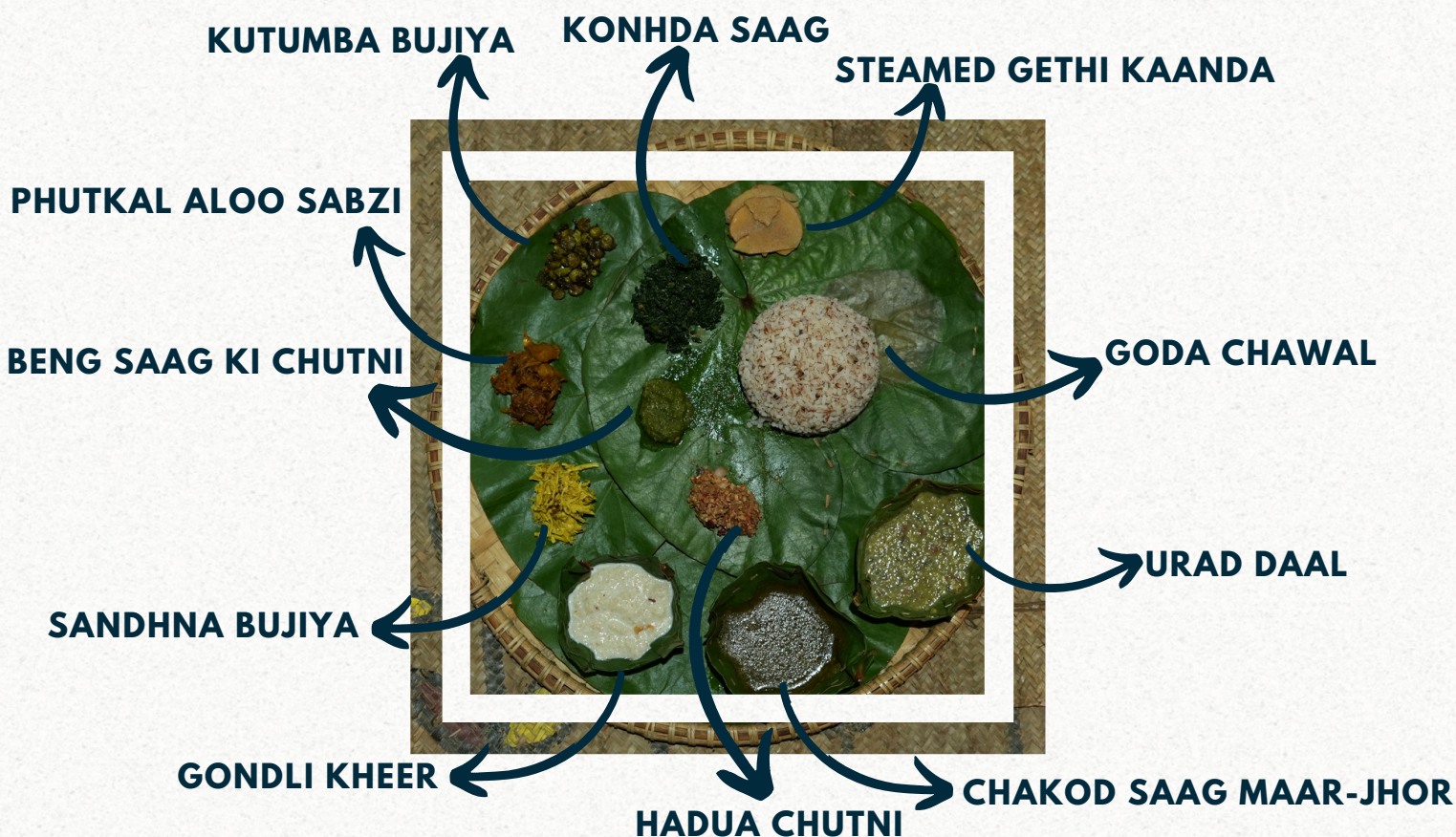


The session was followed by a special lunch, where the chefs had the opportunity to taste dishes prepared using the very ingredients they had just learned about. This meal included traditional tribal dishes made with Goda Rice (native jharkhandi rice), Gondli (little millet), Sandhna (bamboo shoots), Gethi Kanda (forest tubers) and more. These ingredients reflect the tribe's close relationship with the forest, as they are all gathered using sustainable foraging practices that have been passed down through generations.

The chefs were treated to an authentic tribal culinary experience, with dishes served on Gungu leaves, a practice that symbolizes the tribe's deep connection to nature and their use of eco-friendly, biodegradable materials for plating.



Drinks were served alongside Channa Chakhna, a spiced chickpea dish that is traditionally eaten as a snack with fermented beverages. These drinks are integral to the Asur tribe's social rituals and provide a glimpse into their fermentation techniques, which have been used for generations.



Anatomy of Asur-tribal thaali

Visit to Magnolia Sunset Point via Gondhli Fields

The first day continued with a visit to Magnolia Sunset Point, a breathtaking spot with panoramic views of Netarhat's lush forests and agricultural fields. On the way, the chefs passed through Gondhli fields, where they observed local agricultural practices such as the cultivation of millet and potatoes.

Magnolia Point provided a space for reflection, where the chefs discussed how the landscape influences local food production, offering a perfect setting to appreciate the connection between Jharkhand's agricultural bounty and the forest ecosystems that support the Asur people's food practices.



Cultural immersion

The first day of the Chef's Meet concluded with a vibrant cultural performance by the Oraon Tribe, showcasing their traditional Jhumar dance. This form of music and dance is deeply rooted in the agricultural cycles and festivities of the Oraon people, embodying their connection to the land and the seasons. The rhythmic beats and graceful movements of the dancers highlighted the tribe's rich cultural heritage, providing chefs and participants with a deeper understanding of the region's traditions.



Adding to the enchantment of the evening, Chef Dr. Parvinder Singh Bali performed a flute session, which took place by the lake, amidst light rain and fog. The serene sound of the flute, combined with the misty atmosphere, created a magical and reflective ambiance. This performance, set against the natural beauty of Netarhat, served as the perfect ending to a day filled with culinary discovery, cultural exchange, and deep immersion into the heritage of Jharkhand's tribal communities.

The peacefulness of the flute, the soft rain, and the cultural vibrancy of the Oraon dance created a memorable experience, weaving together nature, music, and tradition in a way that perfectly encapsulated the spirit of the summit. This final event of the day left a lasting impression on the participants, blending the culinary and cultural journeys of the day into a holistic celebration of Jharkhand's rich tribal legacy.

DAY-2 HIGHLIGHTS:

Taste of Traditional Tribal Teas

The morning of Day 2 began with a unique and insightful tea-making session, where the chefs were introduced to two traditional tribal beverages: Chawal ki Chai (rice tea) and Arjun ki Chaal tea (Arjun bark tea). Both teas are deeply rooted in the culinary traditions of the tribes of Jharkhand and are known for their health benefits.



Chawal ki Chai (Rice Tea)

The preparation of Chawal ki Chai involves using Arwa Rice (also known as Goda Rice), a staple in the diet of the tribal communities. The rice is sautéed until it turns a rich brown color, releasing a nutty aroma. Once browned, boiling water is added to the rice, followed by a small amount of honey to enhance the flavor. This process creates a warm, earthy tea that is both soothing and beneficial for digestion.

Chawal ki Chai is traditionally consumed by the tribes as a digestive aid, making it a popular drink after meals. Its simplicity, combined with the natural sweetness of honey, creates a delicate balance of flavors, offering a glimpse into the resourcefulness of tribal food practices.



Arjun ki Chaal Tea (Arjun Bark Tea)

The second tea introduced during the session was Arjun ki Chaal tea, made from the outer bark of the Arjun tree, a plant revered for its medicinal properties. The external bark is carefully peeled and steeped in boiling water to extract its essence. Once brewed, honey is added to balance the slightly bitter taste of the bark.

Arjun ki Chaal tea is highly regarded for its health benefits, particularly its ability to boost immunity and improve skin health. It is a staple among the tribal communities, valued for its ability to promote overall well-being. The tea's antioxidant properties and its role in supporting cardiovascular health further highlight the tribe's understanding of the medicinal uses of plants in their environment.

Cultural and Culinary Significance

Both Chawal ki Chai and Arjun ki Chaal tea are not just beverages; they are an expression of the tribal connection to nature and the holistic use of local resources. These teas demonstrate the tribe's ability to create simple yet powerful remedies from the ingredients available in their immediate surroundings. For the chefs, this session offered valuable insights into how traditional knowledge can inform modern approaches to wellness and sustainability.

DAY-2 HIGHLIGHTS:

Forest Foraging

The highlight of Day 2 was the Forest Foraging and Hiking activity, which offered participants a unique opportunity to explore the natural abundance of the local forest. Guided by an experienced foraging expert, participants embarked on a 1-km hike, learning about sustainable food-gathering practices used by tribal communities.



The activity proved to be a blend of adventure and cultural immersion, offering a glimpse into the forest's bounty. Notable finds during the hike included:

- **Mushrooms:** A staple in tribal diets, valued for their versatility and flavor.
- **Demta Ants:** An intriguing and highly nutritious component of the tribal diet.
- **Edible Greens:**
 - Being Saag: Prized for its tender leaves and earthy taste.
 - Tepa Saag: A versatile green commonly used in traditional recipes.
- **Kutumba (Thai Brinjal):** A small, round vegetable cherished for its unique texture and flavor.

Role of Tribal Communities in Forest-Based Livelihoods:

The activity also shed light on the indispensable role of tribal women in forest sustenance practices. Their contributions include:

- Gathering wild edibles, medicinal plants, and nectar.
- Crafting ropes, baskets, and containers using bamboo and rattans.
- Engaging in fishing and small-scale hunting.

Forests are a cornerstone of tribal livelihoods, offering direct and indirect employment opportunities, sustenance, and cultural identity. The sustainable practices employed by tribal communities ensure the balance between forest conservation and the fulfillment of daily needs.

Community and Forest Conservation:

The intrinsic relationship between forests and tribal communities was highlighted during the activity. Forests not only serve as a source of food, fuel, and medicinal resources but also form the foundation of social, cultural, and religious practices. In return, forest dwellers contribute significantly to conservation efforts, ensuring sustainable use and protection of these natural ecosystems.

Closing Lunch and Reflections

The event concluded with a thoughtfully curated Closing Lunch and Reflections session, hosted by The Open Field. Set against the stunning backdrop of Koel View Point, this gathering offered participants an opportunity to savor the richness of tribal cuisines and reflect on the learnings of the two-day experience.

Experiential Lunch Highlights:

The closing lunch was an experiential celebration of Jharkhand's tribal culinary heritage:

- **Cuisine:** Participants enjoyed dishes like Goda Chawal (an indigenous rice preparation) and seasonal mushroom recipes, made using locally sourced ingredients.
- **Ingredients:** Foraged greens, mushrooms, and other tribal staples were featured, emphasizing sustainable and authentic cooking methods.



Book Launch

As part of the lunch, The Open Field unveiled the book "What Tribals Eat?" This publication celebrates the culinary diversity of tribal communities, documenting:

- Indigenous recipes with a focus on sustainable ingredients.
- A special feature on the Asur Tribe, highlighting their food traditions and ecological practices.



Reflections and Discussions

The event concluded with participants sharing their experiences and insights. Key themes discussed included:

- The importance of preserving tribal culinary traditions as part of cultural heritage.
- The role of indigenous practices in fostering sustainable living and ecological balance.
- Strategies to promote tribal cuisines and knowledge to wider audiences.

About The Open Field

The Open Field is an innovative initiative focused on sustainable forest management and community empowerment. With a mission to harmonize ecological conservation and rural development, The Open Field integrates traditional knowledge with modern sustainable practices. Their efforts emphasize:

- Community Engagement in decision-making and project execution.
- Sustainable Practices that combine biodiversity preservation with food security.
- Capacity Building through skill-based workshops.
- Cultural Preservation of indigenous knowledge and traditions.

A Summary

The event underscored the profound cultural, social, and economic significance of promoting tribal cuisine. Tribal food traditions are not just about sustenance; they represent a harmonious relationship with nature, sustainable practices, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge. By bringing attention to these cuisines, we can create opportunities for economic empowerment within tribal communities through avenues such as eco-tourism, artisanal food production, and culinary collaborations. Moreover, promoting tribal cuisines fosters cultural pride, ensures the continuity of traditional practices, and encourages sustainable living. Emphasizing the value of these traditions enables us to honor the wisdom of tribal communities while building inclusive frameworks for development that benefit both people and the planet.



Note for Reference

Dissertation Title: Factors Affecting Traditional Practices and Malnutrition in Tribal Children in Jharkhand

By: Naman Priyesh Lakra, IAS

(i) Munga Saag (leafy vegetable) has a high nutritional content. It is readily available around the tribal settlements. It has high calcium and iron content. Recent researches have shown that it is highly effective in treatment of high blood pressure and also has high concentration of anti-cancer agents.

(ii) Beng Saag (leafy vegetable) is high in iron content and is very effective in the treatment of jaundice and eases stomach problems, it keeps the blood pressure and blood sugar in control. It enhances the mental capacity also.

(iii) Other Saags like Chimti, Chakor, Bhatua, Saru, Karmi, Gandhari, Kudrum, Khapra etc. to name a few, are high in Vitamin C.

(iv) Ragi/Finger Millet (Madua as is called in Jharkhand): it increases bone strength, controls diabetes and cholesterol, aids relaxation. It treats anemia and is a good source of protein, minerals and amino acids. It also helps in lactation, maintains metabolism and helps in digestion of food. It has great value in muscle functioning and blood formation. It has anti-microbial as well as anti-cancer properties

(v) Pulses such as 'Khesari' as well as Bodi (Barbatti: which is eaten as vegetable as well as pulses) are rich sources of thiamine and iron.

(vi) The indigenous rice called 'Lalhat Desi' is rich in folic acid.

(vii) Phutkal (which is eaten as Saag as well as pickles) is rich in zinc, calcium and has high dietary fibres.

(viii) Foods such as Snails, Crabs etc. which are found near water bodies. Demta Ant which is found in the forest areas are often consumed in the form of 'chutney'. They have high protein and calcium content.

(ix) Papaya leaves are used to cure fever, especially effective in the children.

(x) Bhuineem leaves are good blood purifiers and are also used for the treatment of fevers and malaria. Also the various forest produce were being collected by them as a part of food gathering practice.

These traditional lifestyle practices are almost extinct now due to the drastic change in the environment and ecology around the habitats where the tribals have been living traditionally.