

Sattvik 2024

The 23rd edition of the SATTVIK Traditional Food Festival, held from December 28-31, 2024, once again provided a vibrant platform for celebrating traditional knowledge, organic farming, and grassroots entrepreneurship. The festival was hosted in Ahmedabad and attracted over 75,000 visitors, including farmers, food enthusiasts, researchers, and sustainability advocates.



This year's festival focused on reconnecting the past and the present, reviving forgotten grains, indigenous cooking methods, and eco-conscious innovations. Millets remained a central theme, with each food stall featuring at least two millet-based dishes and two uncommon traditional recipes. Standout offerings like millet-based dhokla (*steamed fermented millet cake*) and other creative preparations reintroduced visitors to the rich, diverse flavours that once defined local diets, breathing new life into culinary traditions that deserve to be celebrated.

Inauguration and Special Recognitions

The festival was inaugurated by Shri Parshottam Rupala, Member of Parliament, alongside distinguished guests such as Dr. Dinesh Awasthi, Vice Chancellor of LJ University, Shri

Bhagwat Rusi from Sola Bhagwat Trust, and Prof. Praveen Nahar, Former Director of NID. Minister Rupala was honoured for his significant contribution to grassroots innovation, particularly for facilitating the legal recognition of the "Bullet Saathi-Sanedo" tractor in 2018.

Stalls and Exhibits

The SATTVIK marketplace featured 95 organic farmers under the Khedut Haat initiative, 45 small entrepreneurs and green technologists, and 38 NGO and Ayurveda-based enterprises. A lively food court with 65 stalls offered more than 400 recipes.

Among the many culinary highlights, tea made from Arjun ki chaal (*Terminalia arjuna bark*) by Jaswantbhai Prajapati offered a healthy alternative brewed without tea leaves or milk. Millet rotla (*thick*

millet flatbread) was prepared by knowledge holders Ramjibhai Dabhi, Mohit Acharya, Jeshabhai Chauhan, Dinuben Chauhan, Rekhaben Dalvi, Rekha Thakkar, Rohini Shah, Rajiben Chaudhary, Ilaben Rathod, and Panchuben, reflecting the growing awareness around millets. Seven-grain khichdi (*mixed-grain porridge*), demonstrated by Mohit Acharya, Ramjibhai Dabhi, Shobhaben Handa, Panchuben, Devshibhai Jada, and Rekha Thakkar, emphasized the nutritional richness of traditional food combinations. Visitors also enjoyed the finger millet gulab jamun (*millet-based syrupy sweet balls*) prepared by Falguni Pratik Panchal, palak jalebi (*spinach-infused sweet fried spirals*) crafted by Ganpatsinh Rajpurohit, and honey-based chikki (*nut brittle*) by Nina Desai. Citrusy flavors found a place in the citron-based mukhwas (*mouth freshener made with Citrus medica*) prepared by Govindbhai Patel, and health-conscious visitors relished the hummus protein salad (*chickpea spread salad with local greens*) curated by Dr. Apeksha.

Traditional seed sales were particularly high this year, signaling a growing interest in preserving India's agricultural heritage. In addition, artisanal gobar (cow dung) art garnered significant attention, showing how traditional materials can be repurposed for contemporary artistry. A new attraction this year was the selfie point with copper and brass utensils, which became a popular spot for visitors. Over one lakh photographs were clicked at this unique display,

highlighting the public's connection to sustainable and traditional materials.

Recipe Competition

The third edition of the Recipe Competition brought together home chefs, culinary enthusiasts, and professional chefs from Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Gandhinagar, and Anand. Participants showcased innovative recipes using organic, locally sourced ingredients, blending traditional techniques with modern adaptations. The judging panel, comprising Aarti Thakkar, Mittal Chauhan, Ami Patel, Preeti Thakkar, Bhamini Bhatt, Jigisha Modi, Divya Thakkar, and Swati Dhruva, evaluated dishes based on authenticity, presentation, and creativity. Among the standout entries was the slow-cooked Umbadiyu (*underground cooked mixed vegetable dish with winter greens and herbs*), prepared by Ritaben Chauhan, Dinuben Chauhan, and Mukesh Chauhan, a seasonal delicacy from the Valsad region that attracted over 200 eager visitors.

The following participants were recognized for their contributions to the Recipe Competition:

Winners of the Recipe Competition (Vangi Harfai - 2024):

Banshi Thakar

Recipes: Kochiya, Vanva (wild leafy greens stir-fry), Mithajal (sweet made from jaggery and herbs), Tikhat (spicy millet fritters), Tuzuki Deep (traditional spice-based lentil snack)

Nina Naren Desai

Recipes: Lol Panjabi Vangi (stuffed eggplant dish), Deshi Chana Laddu (chickpea flour sweet), Chula Chataka with Chatpati Chataney (smoky millet snack with tangy chutney), Variyali and Magajtari Seeds Chikki, Ragi Bilipatra (Aegle marmelos) and Tulsi (Ocimum sanctum) Powder Sukhadi

Hardik Kirankumar Bhatt

Recipes: Kanchnar na Ful (Bauhinia variegata flower) nu Shaak (flower curry), Aamla Murabba (Embllica officinalis preserve), Aamla Pickle, Bajri Vegetable Dhokli (dumpling stew)

Jasvantbhai Prajapati

Recipes: Without Tea-Sugar Tea

(Terminalia arjuna decoction), Ganeri Tea (Cordia dichotoma bark tea)

Vibha Chapanery

Recipes: Ragi Walnut Barfi (sugar-free sweet), Gluten-Free Momos (dumplings made with millet flour), Gluten-Free Dumplings (wrapped in palak leaves)

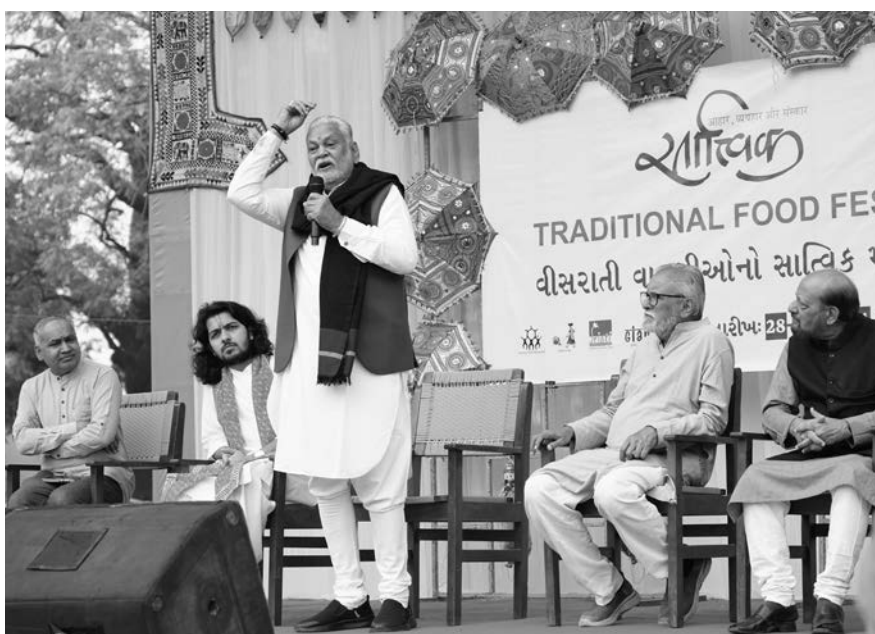
Organic Fields to Conscious Meals

At the center of SATTVIK 2024 was Khedut Haat, where farmers showcased chemical-free produce, heirloom seed varieties, millet snacks, bamboo pickles, and herbal health products. The initiative strengthened direct farmer-to-consumer connections, promoting fair trade practices within the organic ecosystem.

The festival also deepened discussions on agroecology, climate-resilient crops, and ethical farming techniques. Dialogues between researchers and practitioners addressed the commodification of organic produce and the challenges of scaling sustainable systems.

In the biodiversity conservation section, two farmers were specially invited to highlight the importance of preserving indigenous varieties. Lalu Sonipat from Haryana displayed and sold rare seeds, including 80 varieties of lauki, a one-foot-long bhindi, and 25-kilogram pumpkins. Alongside him, Pradeep from Tamil Nadu showcased 200 varieties of vegetable seeds, including 45 varieties of brinjal, 12 varieties of ladyfingers, 140 varieties of tomatoes, and 10 varieties of bottle gourd, all preserved at home. Each stall promoted millet consumption by featuring at least two millet-based recipes.

Regional food traditions from states such as Sikkim, Maharashtra, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and





Nagaland were showcased, offering visitors traditional dishes like seven-grain khichdi (*nutritious multigrain porridge*), green chickpea sabzi, and drumstick soup, along with newer fusions such as ragi-jowar waffles (*millet flour waffles*), banana-oats brownies, and Arjun ki Chaal-based (*Terminalia arjuna bark*) herbal tea.

Knowledge Sharing and Workshops

SATTVIK 2024 also served as a space for intellectual engagement. A major highlight was the session on Ayurveda and food led by Dr. Dinesh Pandya, an expert in Ayurvedic nutrition and health traditions. Dr. Pandya

explored the relationship between diet, health, and seasonal rhythms, advocating the consumption of older varieties of wheat and rice for better digestion, immunity, and overall well-being. His session demonstrated how ancient Ayurvedic principles align with contemporary nutritional science, offering practical guidelines for healthier living.

The Kalam School's student exhibit showcased handcrafted, laser-cut products such as diaries, lamps, purses, and keychains, achieving a total revenue of 4 lakhs. This initiative highlighted the potential of artisanal skills combined with entrepreneurial opportunities.

As a mark of respect following the passing of former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, cultural performances were postponed. Nevertheless, the festival's educational workshops and discussions continued, ensuring a meaningful experience for all participants.

Looking Ahead to SATTVIK 2025

SATTVIK 2024 reaffirmed that traditional knowledge is a vital resource for building a sustainable future. Looking ahead, the festival aims to expand to more cities and explore new models such as home delivery services to promote everyday engagement with sustainable living.

Supporting grassroots innovators and small-scale organic farmers remains critical to sustaining this momentum. More than an annual event, SATTVIK has evolved into a platform that reimagines food as a bridge between culture, health, and ethical responsibility.

Until next year, SATTVIK remains more than just a food festival, it's a movement towards a healthier, more sustainable future!

