

Munchies cheer the good old cuppa



The new factory of HSM Foods International in Rajkot, Gujarat

Indian cuisine has won the hearts of diners around the world and it appears to be time for munchies that go well with beer, coffee and that good old cup of tea.

Indian ethnic food is beginning to conquer the palate and heart of not just the Diaspora but also people of other ethnicities, says an Indian entrepreneur.

It would be little wonder if Indian restaurants around New Zealand soon replaced the ubiquitous 'poppadom' with something healthier and more delicious.

HSM Foods International partner and chief executive Sanjay Maniar says 'Khakhara' is the in thing, quite literally in the mouths of an increasing number of people.

"The wheat crisp or crispy tortilla is proving itself to be an ideal companion for tea, coffee, beer or wine and spirits.

Unlike the poppadom, Khakhara is not salty and full of calories. It does not require any preparation and is ready to eat," he told Indian Newslink during his recent visit.

Mr Maniar was in New Zealand recently to explore the market potential for his products on either side of the Tasman and put in place an appropriate marketing strategy.

He said the company's products catered exclusively for the export market and recognised by the Indian government as the 'Star Export House.' "We are also registered with the US Food and Drug Administration, meeting its stringent standards, apart from being a 'Gold Card Holder' of the Reserve Bank of India." According to him, ethnic food products from India are beginning to capture the attention of consumers in more than 25 countries including the US, UK, Canada, the Arab Gulf, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

"Today's generation is calorie-conscious and more and more people are keen to eat healthy snacks without running the risk of adding weight "With taste enhancers, Khakhara has come to be regarded as an ideal snack," he said.

Mr Maniar began experimenting with the product, drawing inspiration from his father-in-law who has an established export business in poppadum.

He said since commencing export of Khakhara in 2001, he has never looked back. "India is proceeding with a silent but remarkable pace in marketing its ethnic products.

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"The country's immense workforce is proving to be its greatest asset," he said.

Mr Maniar's company in Rajkot India is reported to employ 2000 women who had produced more than three million kilograms of Khakhara as this report was "Progress is continuous and so is the anxiety to reaching higher levels of Efforts are exerted constantly to improve our already acclaimed standards of product quality, hygiene and packaging," he said.

He insisted that Khakhara should not be labelled as a 'Gujarati product meant only for Gujaratis' around the world. "From breakfast in the morning to snacks during the rest of the day, the Khakhara is an accepted item of food because it has no transfat or cholesterol.

The product has gained the acceptance of Punjabis, South Indians and others in India and is gaining a strong market position in Europe and Australasia," he said.

Mr Maniar is committed to making most of the world vegetarian, foster the healthy food habit and promote the lot of the people of drought affected areas.

The company's products are distributed in New Zealand by MZ Holdings Limited who can be contacted on 021-686686.



The new factory of

