

NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

RT Mission launches 'EXperience Ethnic C...

Date : 17.10.2020 | Edition : Kochi | Page : 1 | Clip size (cm) : W: 10 H: 14

RT Mission launches 'Experience Ethnic Cuisine' with homemakers

Atithi Devo Bhava

Over 2,080 homemakers in the state have been able to open their kitchens to tourists as part of the 'Experience Ethnic Cuisine' project mooted by the Responsible Tourism Mission.



Many are hesitant to eat food from hotels due to safety and hygiene issues and are opting for homely food prepared by us

Vaheeda A P, entrepreneur



STENI SIMON

A year ago, homemaker Vaheeda A P never thought she could be an entrepreneur. Now, she is successfully hosting lunches for tourists at her home in Thamarassery, Kozhikode. Although Covid-19 has played spoilsport for the food businesses, it was a blessing for food entrepreneurs like Vaheeda. Over 2,080 homemakers in the state have been able to open their kitchens to tourists as part of the 'Experience Ethnic Cuisine' project mooted by the Responsible Tourism Mission under the State Tourism Department. Initiated with the idea of promoting healthy and safe food options, it also provides opportunities for homemakers to generate income.

"Many are hesitant to eat food from hotels due to safety and hygiene issues and are opting for homely food prepared by us," said Vaheeda. She has been getting many orders for the wide range of dishes she serves which include different types of biryanis and snacks native to her region.

A year since inception, the project has been attracting homemakers from across the state to showcase their culinary skills and

even encouraging them to start their businesses. Women from various districts have been introducing tourists to the state's unique food culture and cooking techniques. Suja Mohan, a homemaker from Amaravilla in Thiruvananthapuram, said: "Many foreign and domestic tourists prefer the traditional sadya. They are curious about the varieties of curries and ingredients."

While Suja isn't hosting guests right now, she plans to recommence once the Responsible Tourism Mission provides instructions regarding safety protocols.

Handling tourists during Covid-19 times

"Out of the 2,080 homemakers, 1,600 have already received the FSSAI registration certificate from the Food Safety Department. Training was also provided to identify and list traditional dishes that could be prepared, ensuring hygienic steps to be taken while cooking, etiquette and communication skills. Around 600 homemakers have also started their business through the project," said Rupesh Kumar, coordinator, State Responsible Tourism Mission.

However, some homemakers had to stop hosting guests due to the pandemic, he said. But, with tourist destinations being opened to the public, the RT Mission is also taking steps to bring more women under the initiative. "We are focusing on training women to provide food parcel services. We have already provided training to 150 homestays across the state," he said.