

April - "Taste of India Month"

The Taste of India festival, a signature event of the Hindu Temple, is excited to commemorate its 15th anniversary with grandeur. To mark this special occasion, we are embarking on an ambitious initiative by designating April as 'Taste of India Month'—a tradition set to continue each year. This year marks a significant expansion of the festival's scope. While it has been a cherished event in Hampton Roads, we are now extending our invitation to the entire state of Virginia, aiming to establish it as a renowned event along the East Coast and across the United States. This expansion is set to transform April into a month-long, dynamic celebration that showcases the diverse and rich aspects of Indian culture and cuisine. Recognized as a prestigious event that has evolved into a celebrated brand, our commitment is to leave a lasting impression on the cultural scene. This year, we turn our spotlight on the captivating mythology and folklore of India, introducing innovative and engaging activities designed to attract a wider audience, capture greater attention, and expand our circle of enthusiasts and followers.

Key Features and Benefits:

- **Inclusive Participation for Indian Businesses:** We invite Indian business owners across various sectors - restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, and hotels - to join the festival. This initiative is designed to promote community engagement and drive business growth.
- **Special Menus & Attire at Restaurants:** Participating restaurants are encouraged to create specially curated menus and have their staff don Indian attire that resonates with the theme of Indian mythology and folklore. This effort is aimed at enhancing the culinary experience for all patrons, regardless of their heritage.
- **Indian Cooking Sessions:** Recognizing some concerns, we propose daily cooking sessions featuring instant Indian dishes and drinks at registered restaurants. This will not only drive additional footfall during the Taste of India month but also debunk the myth that cooking classes reduce restaurant visits, as online recipes have not diminished dining out.
- **Themed Decorations at Gas Stations:** Gas stations can immerse themselves in the festivities by adopting Taste of India-themed decorations. We will provide all registered outlets with danglers and point-of-purchase (POP) materials to enhance their participation.
- **Hotel Participation:** We encourage hotels, especially privately owned ones, to decorate their lobbies and include Taste of India flyers, brochures, or magazines in guest rooms. Co-branded room key cards will

be distributed to all participating hotels, further promoting the event.

- **City Involvement and Main Event Integration:** Efforts will be made to have the city officially recognize April as Taste of India month, accompanied by LED billboard advertising. The main event on April 20th will be a highlight, seamlessly integrating with the month-long celebrations.
- **Thematic Gifts and Stalls:** Visitors at various establishments will receive theme-based gifts. Thematic stalls will be set up, showcasing this year's theme, providing cultural display and engagement opportunities.
- **Local Celebrity Endorsements:** To maximize the event's reach and appeal, local celebrities will be involved in social media marketing campaigns.

Event/Festival Integration Highlights for April 20, 2024:

- **Cultural Figures Participation:** Aligning with this year's theme, we plan to include stalls featuring cultural figures like Jyotish, Baba, Swami, or other Indian ritual leaders to enrich the mythology and folklore experience.
- **Hourly Energetic Activities:** Dynamic activities will be scheduled every hour to engage and gather crowds.
- **Welcome Kits:** Attendees will receive a goody bag/kit upon entry, with an encouragement to register their contact details for future communications.
- **Personalized Badges:** To foster a sense of belonging and pride, visitors will receive personalized badge-type stickers displaying their name and business type.
- **Virtual Engagement:** We'll leverage digital platforms to reach a broader audience, featuring virtual tours of Indian destinations, heritage sites, temples, online cooking classes, and live-streamed performances.

As 2024 approaches, the Taste of India evolves beyond a mere festival—it's an extensive cultural odyssey. Our aim is to celebrate and enlighten, bringing together diverse communities to share in the beauty of Indian culture. The 'Taste of India Month' is an initiative designed to weave a tapestry of cultural understanding and appreciation. This marks a significant step in our journey to foster cultural exchange and build bridges of mutual understanding, uniting people from various backgrounds in a shared celebration of India's cultural heritage.