



**TASTE
RADAR**
— 2026 —

EMOTIONAL *Duality*



CRAVE

- Bigger Sensory Rewards
- Aspiration Driven
- Traditional



CARE

- Cleaner Everyday Choices
- Value Conscious
- Modernised

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP



India's food industry is moving through a rare advantage cycle: rising incomes, a younger consumer base, faster adoption of global formats, and a stronger expectation of consistency at every price point. We are seeing demand grow-not only for new flavours, but for reliable delivery: the same taste, texture, and experience, every single time.

That is the lens behind **Taste Radar 2026**.

This report is not a prediction exercise. It is a working view of what is scaling now, what is building next, and what is worth watching-across QSR, cafés, cloud kitchens, and retail-led foodservice. The real challenge in 2026 will not be finding ideas. It will be executing them cleanly: with stable sourcing, fast launch timelines, and minimal operational friction.

At FSIPL, our role is to help partners move from intent to action-without compromising on quality, safety, or cost discipline. We do that by combining market signals with strong R&D translation, dependable manufacturing, and formats that fit real kitchens and real service conditions.

I hope this edition helps your teams make sharper choices-what to launch, what to scale, and what to simplify-so you can stay ahead of the curve while staying true to your brand.

-AJAY J MARIWALA
Managing Director



Editor's Note



-TAYYABA SHEWAN
Vice President R&D

There is a quiet paradox that is shaping the food & beverage industry today. Global exposure has never been higher, but cultural pride is rising faster.

Consumers are moving effortlessly from iced matchas to kokum sherbets or Korean Ramen to Chicken Ghee Roast. **This is not confusion, but confidence.** A generation that knows the world well enough to come back to what feels rooted, but to ask for it to be delivered better.

This emotional landscape is what we call in FSIPL **EMOTIONAL DUALITY**.

The choices are no longer indulgence and intention, health or taste, speed or craft. Consumers expect it all, often in the same menu or in the same bite. **Health may be aspirational but taste is non-negotiable.** And nostalgia continues to outsell novelty.

At FSIPL, this duality has always been the way we think of innovation. We call it **M.A.Y.A. - Most Advanced Yet Acceptable**.

At FSIPL Innovation Centres, we translate real shifts into ingredients & applications that sell. The focus has always been to create solutions, not just products, that work across formats in live kitchens, under cost & time pressure.

In a world where ideas are abundant, **execution is the differentiator**.

Our approach has always been on converting taste movements into menu-ready solutions that enable our partners to launch quickly and scale cleanly, while staying relevant to the consumer without operational drag.

Taste Radar 2026 is a set of choices from a library of emotions — what to intensify, what to simplify, what to systemize without compromising on taste.

Because brands that will win in 2026 are not those who pick a side, but those who can deliver both sides of the mood, consistently.



PUNCH

Impact you can feel -
bold, layered flavour

ROOTS

Regional Truth,
Modern Rhythm.

BALANCE

Everyday cleaner
Upgrades

FLOW

Convenience
becomes craft

GLOW

Small Affordable
luxuries

MACRO FOOD & BEVERAGE SHIFTS

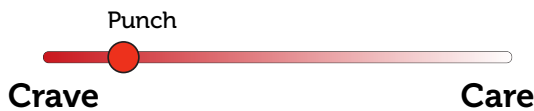
What's changing in consumer behavior

PUNCH

Impact you can feel -
bold, layered flavour

THE SHIFT

- **Contrast-led flavour:**
Sweet-heat, tang-smoke,
crispy & creamy.
- **Finishers become value drivers:**
Toppings, drizzles, dusts.
- **Instant clarity wins:**
Impact should be obvious in the
first bite.



WHAT IT MEANS

Fast, loud flavour upgrades that feel
instant.

Built to spike attention and drive add-ons.



KEY INGREDIENT DIRECTION

- Chilli-Crunch Texture
- Flavoured Oils
- Sweet-Heat Glazes
- Tang Boosters
- Umami Lifts
- Smoke/Charred Notes
- Pepper Heat With Citrus Lift
- Crunchy Finishes
- Aromatic Notes

ROOTS

Regional Truth,
Modern Rhythm.

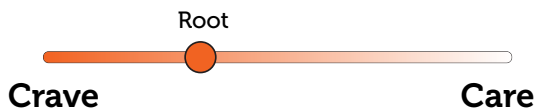
WHAT IT MEANS

Indian familiarity-rebuilt for modern formats.

Not nostalgia. Precision

THE SHIFT

- Regional taste isn't "back"—it's **being systemized** (bases, pastes, concentrates).
- Consumers want **true flavor logic**, not random fusion.
- Heritage wins when it becomes **portable + repeatable**



KEY INGREDIENT DIRECTION

- Regional Gravies DNA
- Regional Sour Ingredients
- Signature Aromatics
- Chutney Families
- Regional Spice
- Regional Chilli
- Heritage Dessert

GLOW

Small Affordable luxuries

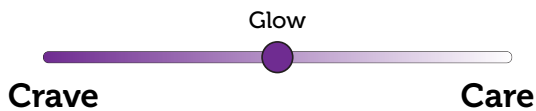
WHAT IT MEANS

Premium feel, not premium price.

Texture + aroma do the heavy lifting.

THE SHIFT

- Treats shift from “expensive” to **elevated**- Finish, mouthfeel, aroma.
- Consumers pay for **sensory depth** more than novelty.
- “Small luxury” formats win (dessert coffees, sauces, drizzles).



KEY INGREDIENT DIRECTION

- Creamy Nuts
- Caramelised Dairy
- Deep Cocoa + Coffee Roast
- Saffron-Cardamom Blend
- Salted Caramel / Jaggery Base
- Layered Textures: Whipped, Glossy, Crackle Inclusions
- Exotic Fruit

FLOW

Convenience becomes craft

WHAT IT MEANS

Speed becomes a quality signal.

Great taste—made repeatable at scale.

THE SHIFT

- Winning brands **reduce steps** without losing character.
- Kitchen prefer: **one base → many menu items.**
- Kitchens want modular systems (base + finisher packs)



KEY INGREDIENT DIRECTION

- Multi-Use Bases
- “Base + Boost” Combination (Core Sauce + Optional Punch Topper)
- RTU/RTC Systems That Hold Flavour In Delivery
- Concentrated Pastes For Rapid Assembly
- Seasoning Blends Designed For Repeatability

BALANCE

Everyday cleaner Upgrades

WHAT IT MEANS

Cleaner everyday upgrades that still feel rewarding.

Quiet health, loud taste.

THE SHIFT

- "Better" must feel normal, not medicinal.
- Consumers accept health add-ons when taste stays first.
- Lower sugar + higher satiety becomes the new default



KEY INGREDIENT DIRECTION

- Protein Base (Without Chalky Note)
- Fibrous Texture Upgrades
- Cultured Tangy Note
- Natural Sweetness
- Clean Fats
- Better-For-You Desserts: "Less Sweet, More Flavour"

IMPACT STACKS

REGIONAL DNA



CLEAN FRESH
UPLIFT

INDULGENCE
BUILDERS

BETTER-
FOR-YOU

INGREDIENT CLUSTERS

Clusters that will define menu



IMPACT STACK

FLAVOUR DIRECTION

Heat + tang + savoury depth, with crunch and aroma doing the last-mile work

WHAT IT MEANS

Ingredients that deliver an instant “newness hit” — the finishing touch that upgrades familiar menu items without changing the base.



HEATMAP

MAINSTREAM

- Schezwan
- Peri-Peri
- Sweet Chilli
- Gochujang
- Smoky Chilli
- Tamarind-Chilli
- Green Chutney

NEXT

- Peanut Chilli Oil
- Raw Mango Chilli
- Hot Honey
- Kimchi
- Achari
- Curry Leaf
- Habanero

WATCHLIST

- Black Garlic
- Koji Chilli
- Cocoa-Chilli
- Regional Indian Chilli Oils
- Shito Pepper

FORMAT

Sauces, Glazes, Crunchy Toppers, Flavoured Oils, Seasoning Blends

REGIONAL DNA

FLAVOUR DIRECTION

True regional logic: roast depth, souring cues, chilli identity, and finishing aromatics.

WHAT IT MEANS

The flavour “signature” of India’s regions - built into dependable bases that can travel across formats and price points.



HEATMAP

MAINSTREAM

- Makhani
- Tikka Masala
- Kadai
- Korma
- Chettinad
- Pepper-Roast Note
- Hyderabad Biryani

NEXT

- Kolhapuri Heat Profile
- Malvani Coconut + Spice Mix
- Goan / Coastal
- North-East Mustard + Sour Note
- Kashmiri Rogan-Style Aromatics

WATCHLIST

- Akhuni
- Assam Black-Curry Tones
- Manipur-Style Sesame richness
- Pahadi Lentil
- Malabar Spice Note

FORMAT

Core Gravies, Concentrated Pastes, Sauces, Glazes, Spice Sprinkler

CLEAN FRESH UPLIFT

WHAT IT MEANS

Ingredients that make flavours feel brighter and lighter-freshness that reads modern, not bland

FLAVOUR DIRECTION

Citrus + herbs + botanicals, with controlled florals and tea notes.



HEATMAP

MAINSTREAM

- Lime
- Coriander-Mint
- Passionfruit
- Kaffir Lime Leaf
- Basil

NEXT

- Pink Grapefruit
- Calamansi
- Lemongrass-Lime
- Tangerine / Orange Zest
- Hibiscus
- Jasmine Tea Note
- Rosemary Citrus

WATCHLIST

- Bergamot
- Pomelo
- Shiso
- Pandan

FORMAT

Sweet Sauces, Savoury Sauces, Toppings, Syrups

INDULGENCE BUILDERS

FLAVOUR DIRECTION

Creamy + Nutty + Toasted, with darker tones and controlled spice.

WHAT IT MEANS

Ingredients that create premium feel through mouth-coating richness, roasted warmth, and long finish - "small luxury" without shouting.



HEATMAP

MAINSTREAM

- Dark Chocolate
- Vanilla
- Salted Caramel
- Hazelnut
- Brownie
- Pistachio

NEXT

- Cheesecake
- Brown Butter
- Cream / Malai
- Jaggery Caramel
- Tres Leches
- Saffron
- Toffenut

WATCHLIST

- Black sesame
- Burnt honey finish
- Pecan

FORMAT

Sweet Sauces, Frappe Bases, Sweet Toppings, Syrups

BETTER- FOR-YOU

FLAVOUR DIRECTION

Gentle sweetness, cultured tang, lighter body, and satiety cues — with comfort flavours leading

WHAT IT MEANS

Cleaner everyday builds that still feel rewarding - the kind of “better” that customers accept because taste stays familiar.



HEATMAP

NEXT

- Yoghurt / Lassi Bases
- Oats + Honey Profiles
- Reduced-Sugar Fruit
- Water-Based Refreshers
- Millet
- Vanilla Protein
- Chocolate Protein

WATCHLIST

- Sattu
- Prebiotic Fibre Texture
- Turmeric-Ginger Blends
- Kombucha (Fermented Note)

COLOURS OF THE YEAR & VISUAL TASTE



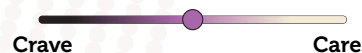
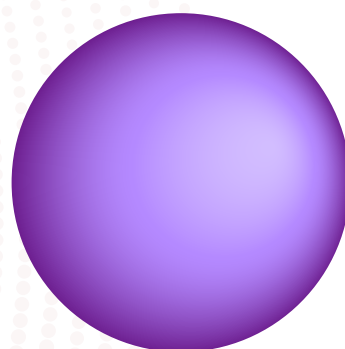
Cues : Bold, deep, grown-up
Taste : Roast, char, savoury-sweet depth
Texture: Dense, lingering finish

BLACK



Cues : Expressive, modern, playful-luxe
Taste : Dark berry, tart-floral lift,
layered sweetness
Texture: Juicy, multi-layered

PURPLE



Cues : Familiar, comforting, everyday-easy
Taste : Soft sweetness, dairy warmth, Clean
Texture: Smooth, Velvety

CREAM



INDIA ADOPTION LENS

Fast Movers

- Heat finishes are no longer optional. A **strong, familiar base with one bold topping** is what wins attention.
- Regional flavours travel best when they're built as **dependable bases**, not special, one-time recipes.
- **Citrus and herb freshness** is now everyday — especially in drinks and lighter food formats.
- Affordable premium works when the upgrade is obvious: **creamier texture, fuller mouthfeel, better balance**.
- What spreads fastest is instantly clear — **you see it, taste it, get it** in the first bite or sip.

- Heat is getting more nuanced. People want **sweet-heat, sour-heat, smoky heat** — flavour that feels thought-through, not loud.
- Regional DNA is moving beyond the usual gravies to **Hyper regional flavour identities** — coastal, mustard-led, chilli-forward.
- Freshness is evolving from basic mint-lemon to **botanical citrus, tea notes, and gentle florals**.
- "Small luxury" is growing: **nutty richness, premium dairy, caramel depth** — less sugar, more flavour satisfaction.
- The smartest builds are modular: **one solid base, plus a finisher that changes the experience without changing the kitchen workflow**.

Building

Watchlist

- Fermented and aged notes are showing up quietly — adding **depth, not sharp sourness**.
- Dark flavours are expanding beyond chocolate into **roast, char, black sesame-note, and smoky-savoury -sweetness**.
- Premium acids are becoming subtle upgrades — **clean, precise brightness that feels modern and drinkable**.
- **Fortified foods/drinks** will only scale if they taste indulgent — flavour has to lead, always.



EMOTIONAL
Duality

2026 belongs to brand that delivers both sides of the mood

- Make it intense – but clean
- Make it rooted – but modern
- Make it scalable – but special

FSIPL will keep turning signals into applications
– so our partners stay ahead of the curve.

FROM RADAR TO REALITY.

Work with us to translate taste trends into ingredients, formats, and flavour builds that fit your brand, your kitchen, and your consumer.

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