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48. A Study on Health and Nutritional Benefits of Traditional Indian Foods and Regional Therapeutic Practices in Urban Patna, Bihar

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Abstract

The health and nutritional advantages of traditional Indian food are examined in this study, with particular attention paid to its Ayurvedic foundations and its concentration on complete, plant-based foods and anti-inflammatory components. Locally grown grains, lentils, and spices are abundant in traditional Indian meals, which not only provide a well-balanced nutritional profile but also greatly enhance general health and illness prevention. Structured interviews were used to collect detailed information on dietary practices and the medical applications of different foods in this study, which was carried out in metropolitan Patna with a purposeful sample of 100 homes. A number of important Indian foods, such as bajra, lentils, turmeric, and various leafy greens, are highlighted in the research for their nutritional qualities. These foods collectively provide a rich composition of macronutrients, micronutrients, and bioactive compounds. These foods' anti-inflammatory and antioxidant qualities aid with digestion, support cardiovascular health, and boost immunity. The results also highlight the medicinal application of regional constituents, including Tulsi, which is prized for its ability to promote respiratory health, and drumstick leaves, which are frequently used to control blood pressure. These applications show a holistic approach to wellbeing that goes beyond simple diet, highlighting the traditional knowledge ingrained in Indian food culture. The study emphasizes the great importance of traditional Indian meals as more than just nutritional sources; they are instruments for fostering overall health and closely correspond with contemporary dietary guidelines that seek to enhance well-being and fend off chronic illnesses. Furthermore, the sustainable methods used in Indian cooking, such as emphasizing locally and seasonally grown ingredients, are in line with international demands for ecologically friendly eating practices. This nutrient-dense strategy is pertinent and applicable to modern health and nutrition practices worldwide since it promotes

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ecological balance in addition to individual wellness. Through an analysis of the nutritional and medicinal qualities of traditional Indian foods, this study offers a framework for incorporating these customs into contemporary dietary recommendations, proving their relevance in promoting long-term health solutions globally.
Keywords:, Ayurvedic nutrition, Health advantages, Illness prevention, Sustainable diets and traditional Indian food.

Introduction

India's cuisine past is as dynamic and varied as its culture, with distinct flavours, ingredients, and preparation methods found in each region that combine to create a rich and diversified cuisine culture (Reddy & van Dam, 2020). Deeply ingrained in Ayurvedic principles, traditional Indian cuisine prioritizes a balanced approach to nutrition and wellness in addition to a pleasing palate (Pandey et al., 2013). Traditional Indian diets are becoming more well-known for their distinctive combination of health-promoting foods, spices, and cooking techniques, as worldwide health trends continue to support whole foods, plant-based diets, and anti-inflammatory ingredients (Salis et al., 2021). Indian cuisine views food as a tool for overall wellbeing as well as a source of nourishment. Many traditional recipes are based on the idea that "food is medicine," where each ingredient is selected for its nutritional and therapeutic qualities (Kumar et al., 2016). The balance of macronutrients, such as proteins, carbs, and fats, and micronutrients, such as vitamins and minerals, forms the basis of traditional Indian meals and helps to maintain optimal health. Additionally, the use of locally obtained, seasonal ingredients demonstrates a centuries-old, environmentally responsible, and sustainable approach (Savarino et al., 2021). Using a variety of spices and herbs, each with unique medicinal qualities, is one of the things that sets Indian cuisine apart. For instance, curcumin, a substance known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant qualities, is found in turmeric, a staple of Indian cookery (Yadav et al., 2024). Other common spices that are believed to improve digestion and immunity include coriander, cumin, ginger, and garlic. When taken as a whole, these spices provide a potent defense against diabetes, heart disease, and even some types of cancer (Mackonochie et al., 2023). The historical knowledge ingrained in Indian cuisine is supported by numerous contemporary studies, which demonstrate that these spices are more than just flavour enhancers; they are essential for bolstering the body's resistance to a range of health issues (Gidwani et al., 2022). The focus on entire grains, lentils, and legumes in traditional Indian cuisine is another important feature. These staples—rice, wheat, and other millets like ragi, jowar, and bajra—have a high fiber content that promotes digestive health, balances blood sugar, and gives you steady energy throughout the day (Dixit et al., 2011). Legumes like kidney beans, chickpeas, and lentils are frequently combined with these grains and are great providers of complex carbs, iron, and plant-based protein. These foods' high fiber content helps to decrease cholesterol, which benefits cardiovascular health in addition

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to digestive health (Messina, 2014). This grain-legumes combination has also been demonstrated to enhance glycemic management, which makes it especially advantageous for people who have diabetes or are at risk for developing the disease (Naveed et al., 2024). The use of dairy in Indian cooking, particularly in the form of paneer (cottage cheese) and curd (yogurt), enhances the nutritional value of traditional dishes (Kapoor et al., 2021). Probiotics, which are abundant in curd, help to balance the microbiota, facilitate digestion, and strengthen immunity, all of which contribute to better gut health (Saleem et al., 2024). A common protein and calcium source, paneer helps maintain healthy bones and muscles. Although dairy is frequently used in Indian cuisine, the emphasis is usually on its quality and probiotic advantages rather than on consuming excessive amounts of processed foods (Srinivasan, 2010). Traditional Indian diets also place a strong emphasis on fruits and vegetables. A range of seasonal vegetables, each selected for its flavor, color, and nutritional profile, are frequently included in meals (Minich, 2019). Other vegetables that contribute fiber, vitamins, and minerals to the diet include bell peppers, carrots, okra, and gourds. Traditional Indian meals guarantee a complete nutrient intake, including vitamins A, C, E, and K, which are critical for immunity, skin health, and cellular regeneration, by combining a variety of colours and varieties of vegetables(Knez et al., 2024) . Another essential element of Indian food is healthy fats. Traditional Indian cooking uses oils like ghee (clarified butter), mustard oil, and coconut oil, all of which are healthy when used in moderation, in contrast to Western diets that frequently highlight oils and fats rich in saturated or trans fats (Mani & Kurpad, 2016). For instance, ghee has been demonstrated to improve immunological and digestive function and is high in fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. Medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), which are readily absorbed by the body and offer a rapid energy source while promoting cardiovascular health, are found in coconut oil (Kataria & Singh, 2024). Omega-3 fatty acids found in mustard oil, which is widely utilized in Eastern India, are well-known for their ability to reduce inflammation (Kaur et al., 2019). The digestion advantages of traditional Indian meals are further enhanced by fermented foods like pickles, Idli, and Dosa. In addition to preserving these items, fermentation adds probiotics, which improve gastrointestinal health, facilitate nutrient absorption, and boost immunity (Xiang et al., 2019). Modern nutritional discoveries that emphasize the significance of a healthy gut flora for general well-being are consistent with this natural probiotic boost (Amara & Shibl, 2015). In conclusion, traditional Indian cuisine is a tried-and-true method of preserving health and averting illness, not merely a combination of flavour and taste. These meals provide a complete nutritional framework that can support contemporary health needs because of their balanced integration of macronutrients, micronutrients, and bioactive components from herbs and spices. Traditional Indian meals are a healthy complement to modern diets around the world because of their emphasis on plant-based products, whole grains, lentils, spices, and probiotics. This holistic, sustainable approach to nutrition has endured over time.

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Objectives

- Analyse the Health and Nutritional Benefits of Traditional Indian Foods and Practices.
- To study the use of regional cuisine in the treatment of particular diseases.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted in urban Patna, focusing on the health benefits and therapeutic applications of traditional Indian cuisine. A sample of 100 households was selected through random purposive sampling, aiming to represent diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Data collection was carried out using a pre-tested questionnaire, supplemented by direct interviews with household heads. Questions covered dietary habits, use of traditional foods in managing health conditions, and insights into regional culinary practices. This methodology ensures a comprehensive understanding of local culinary practices and their role in health management

Data Analysis

Table 1 – sociodemographic indicators

	Frequency(100)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
35-45	14	14
45-55	49	49
55-65	35	35
Marital status		
Married	83	83
Unmarried	17	17
Education		
literate	42	42
illiterate	54	54
Occupation		
Government employee	32	32
Non-government	39	39
Agriculture	29	29
Income		
Earning	63	63
Non-earning	37	37
Residential		
Urban	69	69
Rural	31	31

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The table 1 shows that the appropriate details about the respondents' family background can be obtained from their socioeconomic background. The majority of the respondents, particularly those between the ages of 35 to 65, were all females were Hindus by belief. 83 percent of females were married . They had a 42 percent literacy rate. About 32 percent of them were government employee and 39 percent were in unorganised sectors. Agriculture was the occupation of 29 percent of the respondents, and 100 percent of them belonged to the low income category. Almost about 69 percent respondents were living in urban areas while 31 percent were from rural area .

Table 2 - Health and Nutritional Benefits of Traditional Indian Foods and Practices.

Food recipe	Main ingredients	Health benefits	purpose	Nutritive value
Sattu drink	Sattu (roasted gram flour),water, lemon salt	High protein, cooling, aids digestion	Energy boost hydration	Protein, iron, fiber, B vitamins
Gond laddoo	Edible gum, whole wheat, jaggery, ghee	Strengthens bones, high in iron, boosts energy	Postpartum recovery, lactation support	Iron, healthy fats, calcium, protein
Daliya (broken wheat)	Broken wheat, milk or vegetables	High fiber, supports blood sugar, rich in iron	Energy, gut health	Carbohydrates, iron, fiber
Khurma (sweet snack)	Whole wheat flour, ghee, jaggery	Provides energy, promotes iron absorption	Digestive health, energy	Iron, healthy fats, carbohydrates
Rasia	Rice jaggery, milk	Provides energy, supports blood health due to iron	Blood health, energy	Iron, calcium, carbohydrates
Dahi chura	Curd flattend rice, sugar	Probiotics for gut health, calcium-rich for bones	Get healthy immunity	Calcium probiotics, protein
Bajra roti	Bajra flour, ghee	High fiber, supports heart health, blood sugar control	Satiety, heart health	Fiber, magnesium protein
Chiwda matar	Flattened rice, green peas, onions, spices	High fiber, regulates blood sugar, rich in antioxidants	Energy, digestion	Fiber, carbohydrates, protein
Makhana kheer	Makhana (fox nuts), milk sugar	Supports bone health, antioxidant-rich, easy to digest	Bone health, reproductive health	Calcium protein, antioxidants
Poha	Flattened rice, peanuts, curry leaves	Provides energy, aids iron absorption,	Morning energy boost	Carbohydrates, iron, fiber, B vitamins

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		improves heart health		
Methi thepla	Whole wheat flour, fenugreek leaves, ghee	Supports digestion, helps blood sugar control, rich in antioxidants	Satiety, immunity	Fiber, protein, calcium, antioxidants
Kheer	Rice, milk, jaggeery	Rich in calcium and protein, supports bone health	Energy bone health	Calcium, protein, B vitamins
Tilkut	Sesame seeds, jaggery	Rich in iron and calcium, supports heart health	Blood health, energy	Iron, calcium, antioxidants
Kadhi bari	Chickpea flour, yogurt, spices	Probiotic-rich, supports gut health and immunity	Gut health bone strength	Protein, calcium, probiotics
Bharta (mashed veg)	Brinjal, mustard oil, garlic	Anti-inflammatory, rich in antioxidants, improves skin health	Digestion immunity	Fiber, vitamins A, C, Iron
Aloo bharta	Potatoes, ghee, ajwain	Aids digestion, provides energy, soothes digestive issues	Energy digestives aids	Carbohydrates, healthy fats
Chana ghugni	Black chickpeas, onion, tomatoes, spices	Regulates blood sugar, improves digestion, rich in antioxidants	Immunity boost, digestive health	Protein, fiber, iron, B vitamins
Dal pitha	Rice flour, chana dal, spices	High protein, aids digestion, maintains blood sugar	Satiety, muscles health	Protein, fiber, iron, B vitamins
Litti chokha	Whole wheat, roasted gram flour, brinjal tomatoes	Rich in fiber, boosts immunity, anti-inflammatory	Digestive health, energy boost	Fiber, protein, vitamins A, C, iron

The table 2 shows that the key components, health advantages, uses, and nutritional values of traditional Bihari meals are presented in this table, which demonstrates how they meet daily dietary demands as well as particular health needs. These dishes, which are made with local ingredients, complement traditional health practices while offering nourishment. Roasted gram flour is combined with water, lemon, and salt to make the cool Sattu Drink. This high-protein beverage cools the body, promotes better digestion, and gives you a rapid energy boost. Its iron and B vitamins help keep you hydrated and maintain the function of

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your digestive system. Made with whole wheat, jaggery, ghee, and edible gum, gond laddoo is a popular postpartum snack. Rich in protein, calcium, and iron, it improves energy, fortifies bones, and is frequently used to encourage lactation and recovery for new mothers. Broken wheat, or daliya, is high in iron and fiber and can be made with vegetables or milk. It is perfect for a wholesome, energy-boosting meal because it promotes digestive health and aids with blood sugar regulation. Iron and carbs are combined in khurma, a dessert prepared from whole wheat, ghee, and jaggery that improves digestion and gives you more energy. Rasia is a sweet rice dish high in calcium and iron that is made using rice, milk, and jaggery. It is a source of sustained energy and promotes blood health. Dahi Chura is a probiotic-rich food that boosts immunity and gut health by combining curd, flattened rice, and sugar. Its high calcium content also helps to strengthen bones. Made from pearl millet flour, bajra roti is a flatbread that is high in magnesium and fiber. It is a wonderful complement to any meal since it helps regulate blood sugar, supports heart health, and gives a feeling of fullness. Chiwda Matar provides fiber and antioxidants and is made with flattened rice, green peas, and spices. This dish is perfect for long-lasting energy because it improves digestion and controls blood sugar. Made from milk and fox nuts, Makhana Kheer is a light, readily digested delicacy that promotes bone health because of its high calcium and antioxidant content. Made with flattened rice, curry leaves, and peanuts, poha is a heart-healthy breakfast choice that boosts energy and facilitates the absorption of iron. Methi Thepla, a whole wheat flatbread with fenugreek leaves, helps in blood sugar regulation and digestion. Antioxidants provide protection against inflammation, and its high fiber content boosts immunity. The traditional rice and milk dish kheer, which is sweetened with jaggery, is rich in protein and calcium, which supports healthy bones and vitality. Sesame seeds and jaggery are used to make tilkut, which is high in calcium and iron. Its nutrients support heart health, blood health, and general vitality. Probiotics for intestinal health, protein, and calcium are all found in Kadhi Bari, a yogurt-based curry made with chickpea flour that also supports the digestive system and strengthens bones. Rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory qualities, bharta, a mashed brinjal meal cooked with mustard oil and garlic, promotes healthy skin and digestion. Made with potatoes, ghee, and ajwain, Aloo Bharta relieves digestive problems and offers a convenient source of energy. The high protein and fiber content of chana ghugni, a black chickpea curry with tomatoes and onions, helps control blood sugar, promote better digestion, and boost immunity. High in protein and fiber, Dal Pitha is a steamed rice flour dumpling with chana dal that supports muscle health and promotes satiety. Lastly, the traditional Bihari cuisine Litti Chokha, which consists of whole wheat balls with roasted gram flour and mashed brinjal, offers a combination of fiber, protein, and antioxidants that support immune system function and digestive health.

In accordance with traditional customs that nourish the body with basic, healthful components, this assortment of Bihari dishes provides a wide range of nutritional advantages, such as enhanced digestion, blood health, energy, immunity, and muscle support.

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Table 3 - Use of regional cuisine in the treatment of particular diseases.

Food Recipe	Disease Treated	Purpose (Therapeutic Use)	Nutritive Value
Drumstick leaves juice, and water of drumstick leaves, lauki juice	High blood pressure	Lower blood pressure, support heart health	Iron, calcium, Vitamin A, C,K
Drumstick leaves, black berry seeds	Diabetes	Regulates blood sugar, aids in insuline management	Fiber, antioxidants, Vitamin C,K
Small pigeon meat cooked with ghee	Asthma	Reduces respiratory inflammation, provides essential proteins	Protein, healthy fats, iron
Bug with banana	Piles	Eases digestion, relieves constipation	Potassium, fiber
Giloye leaves, juice with black paper, ginger and honey	Malariya	Boosts immunity, acts as an antipyretic (fever reducer)	Antioxidants, vitamin C, minerals
Radish juice gooseberry juice sugarcane juice and papaya leaves	Jaundice	Supports liver health, detoxifies	Vitamin C, A, iron, Folate
Neem leaves, aloevera , masoor daal paste	Pimples	Antibacterial, anti - inflammatory	Antioxidants, vitamin C, E, minerals
Neem oil and neem leaves	Scabies	Antifungal, antibacterial for skin infections	Vitamin E, fatty acids, antioxidants
Tulsi leaves, black paper, ginger, cloves, boiled water	Cough and cold,	Relieves cough, boosts immunity, reduces congestion, soothes sore throat	Antioxidants, vitamin C, anti-inflammatory compounds Potassium, probiotics fiber, B vitamins
Ginger, fenugreek seeds consume yogurt and white rice, banana, plain white rice, boiled potatoes and oatmeal.	Diarrhoea and Dysentary	Soothes stomach, replenishes lost fluids and electrolytes, provide easily and nutrients	Potassium, probiotics, fiber, B vitamins, carbohydrate
Amla juice	Immunity, Respiratory health	Boots immunity, rich in Vitamin C	Vitamin C, iron, antioxidant
Bhindi (okara)	Diabetes, Digestive health	Regulates blood sugar	Fiber, vitamin C, magnesium
Turmeric milk	Cold, inflammation	Anti-inflammatory, immunity boost	Calcium, protein, antioxidant
Bael sherbet	Diarrhea, digestive health	Cooling, prevents infections	Fiber, vitamins, minerals
Laai	Anemia, postpartum recovery	Boosts energy, supports iron levels	Carbohydrates, iron

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Table 3 shows that traditional foods in Bihar are important for overall health and well-being and are frequently used as natural cures for a variety of illnesses. These local cuisine, which are high in nutrients and have therapeutic benefits, are ingrained in the state's culture. The utilization of regional foods demonstrates Bihar residents' deep awareness of health and nutrition. Here, we look at various traditional food dishes, their nutritional worth, and their medicinal use. Lauki and drumstick leaf juice is a popular treatment for hypertension. Vitamins A, C, and K, as well as calcium and iron, are all abundant in drumstick leaves. This juice is a good beverage for those with hypertension because of its constituents, which help to decrease blood pressure and promote heart health. The refreshing taste of lauki (bottle gourd) further enhances the drink's appeal while adding hydrating properties. The combination of drumstick leaves and blackberry seeds is another amazing recipe that works well for diabetic management. Because of its high fiber and antioxidant content, this mixture is well known for controlling blood sugar levels and supporting insulin regulation. The importance of this meal in a diabetic diet is further supported by the fact that vitamins C and K also support general health. Small pigeon flesh cooked with ghee is a traditional treatment for asthma that lowers respiratory irritation and supplies vital nutrients. Ghee's nutritional profile is further enhanced by the healthy fats it contains, providing a hearty meal that nourishes the body and helps control asthma symptoms. A straightforward but powerful recipe called "Bug with Banana" is believed to reduce piles' symptoms. This recipe's high potassium and fiber content helps those with piles by promoting better digestion and relieving constipation. Malaria can be cured by combining the juice of giloye leaves with ginger, honey, and black pepper. This potent concoction lowers fever and strengthens the immune system. The drink's vitamins and antioxidants strengthen the body's defenses against infections, making it an essential part of the diet when sick. When it comes to jaundice, a mixture of papaya leaves, sugarcane juice, gooseberry juice, and radish juice promotes liver health and detoxification. Rich in vitamins A and C, along with iron and folate, this mixture promotes liver function and helps in recovery from jaundice. A paste composed of neem leaves, aloe vera, and masoor dal works well for skin conditions including acne. This antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory treatment promotes healthy skin by supplying antioxidants and vitamins C and E. Because of their antifungal and antibacterial qualities, neem oil and leaves are used as a traditional therapy for scabies. This is a popular treatment in Bihar because it contains fatty acids and vitamin E, which help to relieve skin ailments. A mixture of tulsi leaves, black pepper, ginger, cloves, and boiling water is commonly used to treat colds and coughs. Thanks to its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, this beverage not only eases congestion and coughing but also soothes sore throats. A diet that includes fenugreek seeds, white rice, bananas, cooked potatoes, oatmeal, yogurt, and ginger is advised for gastrointestinal problems such as diarrhea and dysentery. In addition to offering easily digested nutrients that calm the stomach, this combination aids in restoring lost fluids and electrolytes. Amla juice, which is high in antioxidants and vitamin C, is essential for maintaining respiratory health and

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increasing immunity. Because of its many health advantages, this strong juice is a mainstay in many homes. Similarly, because of its fiber, vitamin C, and magnesium content, bhindi (okra) is known to help control blood sugar levels, which makes it good for diabetes and for supporting digestive health. Because of its anti-inflammatory qualities, turmeric milk is a soothing treatment for colds. It improves general health by supplying calcium and protein in addition to increasing immunity. Bael sherbet is beneficial for diarrhea and digestive health since it has a cooling effect and guards against infections. Its vitamin and fiber levels support the health of the gastrointestinal tract. Last but not least, laai, a ladoo prepared from roasted gram flour, helps with postpartum recuperation and anemia. This sugary confection, which is high in iron and carbs, is a vital diet for new mothers because it boosts iron levels and gives them energy. In conclusion, Bihar's wide variety of traditional foods are not only a source of nourishment but also work wonders as treatments for a range of illnesses. These dishes highlight the value of using regional resources and demonstrate a comprehensive, sustainable, and culturally appropriate approach to nutrition and health.

Result And Discussion

A review of Bihar's traditional meals shows how important they are for treating a range of illnesses. The significance of nutritional treatments in the management of chronic diseases is highlighted by recipes such as drumstick leaf juice and lauki juice, which successfully lower blood pressure and help control blood sugar levels. Drumstick leaf juice containing blackberry seeds also helps control blood sugar levels. The cultural practice of fusing nutrition with health benefits is exemplified by the usage of tiny pigeon meat cooked with ghee as a treatment for asthma. Furthermore, a long-standing knowledge of natural medicine is reflected in the medicinal qualities of traditional treatments, such as the ability of giloye leaves to strengthen immunity against malaria and the benefits of neem leaves for skin conditions. Traditional diets place a strong focus on digestive health and anti-inflammatory properties, as demonstrated by foods like turmeric milk and bael sherbet. The results reinforce the idea of food as medicine by highlighting the importance of local ingredients, which are not only nutrient-dense but also have particular health benefits. This method preserves cultural legacy while also fostering physical well-being. All things considered, incorporating these ancient foods into contemporary eating habits may improve health outcomes and promote community wellbeing on all levels. The potential of these foods in larger public health efforts might be investigated in more detail.

Conclusion And Recommendation

In conclusion, Bihar's traditional foods are essential tools for treating a range of illnesses, demonstrating the complex connection between nutrition and overall health. These

native substances' therapeutic qualities demonstrate their ability to treat conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure, and digestive disorders, highlighting the value of incorporating traditional knowledge into contemporary medical procedures.

Recommendation, It is critical to raise knowledge of these traditional meals in communities and healthcare settings. Programs for nutrition education should promote the use of local ingredients in everyday meals by highlighting their health advantages. To support their medicinal claims, more studies should examine these foods' effectiveness in clinical settings. Access to these nutrient-dense options can be made easier by partnerships between local food producers and healthcare practitioners, which will benefit local economies and health outcomes. Enhancing community health and preserving cultural heritage can be achieved by cultivating a greater appreciation for traditional meals.

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