

Perfectionist **TO THE CORE**

Chef Davinder Kumar has been instrumental in bringing the chef's profession to the forefront. A national tourism award winner himself, he is the master brain behind many popular chef awards.

Chef Davinder Kumar



Chef Davinder Kumar is currently working as the Vice President (F&B Production), Le Meridien, New Delhi

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Chef Davinder Kumar's experience goes way beyond words. He is not only well known for his great culinary passion, he is also an adventurous food connoisseur, who has travelled around extensively and regularly seeks the opportunity to explore the different kinds of cuisines while developing his gourmet knowledge. His passion for creativity in the culinary space has led him to being dedicated in food guidance and culinary refinements for over four decades. His ability to create and grasp new concepts quickly combined with an extremely strong focus and service orientation gives him a fine eye for details.

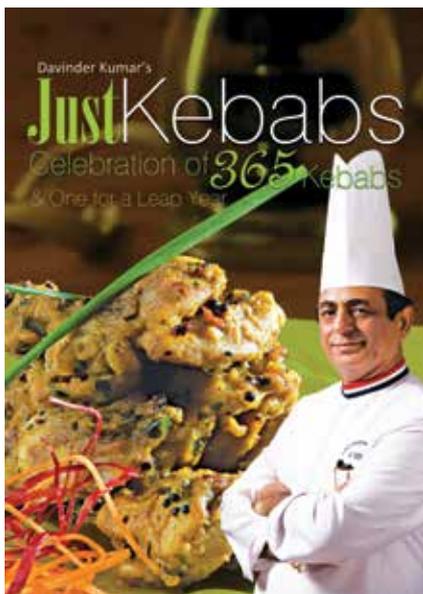
A graduate from Delhi University, Chef Davinder Kumar started his career in 1972 with the Oberoi Group of Hotels. He recounts with nostalgia what it was like in the 70s, "I was quite

fascinated by the prospect. Learning the art of cooking also became my passion. The Oberoi played the muse to turn me into a culinary artist." After completing a three-year diploma course in Kitchen Management, he was sponsored by the Oberoi Group to go to the Lychee Technique de Hotelier in Paris, where he got the opportunity to work with selected chefs who were experts in the French cuisine. He has seen the world but when it comes to making the best pick he says fondly, "nothing like the French." He is of the opinion that customers are widely experienced and knowledgeable today, so the hotel industry needs to update itself to match the expectations. This is partly the reason of his avid travelling so that he can master the intricacies of different cuisines. He says, "One has to have a progressive mind open to new ideas." Chef Davinder Kumar is a living testament of 'cherish your



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Chef Kumar is also an ace culinary author



Rosemary Scented Lamb Shank, Slow Roasted New Potatoes, Green Pea Mash and Merlot Gravy is one of the signature dishes of the chef

passion, follow your heart, do what you love to do and the money will follow.' He strongly believes that sharing knowledge and skills of the Indian cuisine and improving the image of Indian chefs worldwide is very essential. "We need to sustain our efforts and make it consistent. Today, chefs are more than cooks. They are into hiring, they act as PRs with the customers, they are artists, they have to keep in touch with the accounts and there is no hotel without branding the chefs. I would call them the culinary ambassador," says the master chef.

An aficionado in the fine art of cooking to the gourmet's delight, Chef Kumar has been in this profession for more than four decades. He was the sole Indian representative in the International Cooking Festival held in Tokyo, Japan, in 1983. In 1985, he joined Hotel Le Meridien, New Delhi, as Executive Chef and is currently working as the Hotel's Vice President (F&B Production) and Executive Chef. "Whichever cuisine you are learning or working on, understand its ingredients; practice the right methodology and processes to ensure authenticity, maintain the health

quotient and it should be engaging to people," believes Chef Kumar. He staunchly puts it simply, "Never compromise on the quality."

"Opportunities are immense. Keep pace with changing trends, be creative at the same time. Pay attention to details"

When India's most noted culinary celebrity takes a leaf out of the kitchen that nourished and inspired him since childhood and turns it into a book you have the perfect recipe for 'Cooking with Love'. It is a part of his great desire to document Indian cuisine and share his knowledge that turned the connoisseur to an ace culinary author. "I want to leave a legacy," he says with conviction. After receiving great response and appreciation for his books on 'Kebabs, Chutneys & Breads', 'Just Kebabs - 365 + 1 Kebabs, one for leap year', 'Four Season Salads and Soups', Chef Davinder Kumar he is now all set to launch another book on Indian cuisine yet untitled.

During his long career, he has excelled in kitchen planning, staff recruitment and execution of menus. He has trained a number of chefs who are now holding top positions in India and abroad. Chef Davinder Kumar's self-esteem, strong commitment and dedication for his work not only show his interest but also depict the passion he possesses for his work. He believes that not everybody gets a chance to pursue their hobby as their career and feels opportune enough that he is a lucky one to do so. "Be humble, positive; remember you learn from everyone around you, each one of us has a hidden talent. Cherish all the learning! Be patient, beginning is slow, if you have the passion and zeal, success will eventually come to your way," advises Chef Kumar to the aspiring chefs.

Chef Davinder Kumar is a portal dedicated to the ultimate presence of culinary perfectionism within the global environment keeping its presence of Indianness in his cuisine. Over the years he has been bestowed with several awards for his excellence in culinary art and contribution to the industry. He has also been conferred upon National Tourism Award for Best Chef of India by Ministry of Tourism. **fnbBUZZ**