

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Restaurants rattled by diktat

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### FOOD SHOCKS



➤ In September, a centipede was found in a vada paav purchased from a shop in Surat's Rustompura area.

➤ Worms, spider and cockroaches were found from the gharis in a sweet shop in Surat's Bhagal area in October

➤ Insect found in paneer curry of a famous hotel in Surat in October

“The decision is welcome as it will bring in fairness in the industry and streamline kitchens. But we are also afraid that some fringe elements may take undue advantage of this move



**Nitin Nanavati** | RESTAURANTEUR

“There have been a couple of incidents recently where insects were found in food. Now, with the kitchens being accessible to all, it will build trust between restaurants and the customers

**Urvi Paradkar** |  
ATLADARA



Ahmedabad: The decision by Gujarat Food and Drug Control Administration (FDCA) allowing customers at restaurants to enter kitchens to check whether food is prepared in a hygienic condition, has sent ripples across restaurateurs in Ahmedabad. While owners of restaurants and eateries appreciated it as a move aimed at bringing transparency and empowering consumers, their concerns over safety and hygiene continue to remain. “For years, kitchens in restaurants are invariably a restricted area and this is not because of any malicious intent. The idea is to ensure safety of customers because restaurant kitchens are often cramped spaces with huge vessels and various burning stoves. Entry of unauthorized persons only puts them at risk,” said Dilip Thakkar, partner of a city-based restaurant.

Owners of eateries and restaurants have termed the decision arbitrary. “Keeping a glass window to let people see how food is being prepared is a welcome idea as it increases transparency on part of restaurant. However, the government should have consulted the

restaurateurs and taken their views into consideration before taking a call,” said Rohit Khanna, member – food committee, Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI).

Restaurateurs feel that allowing unauthorized persons in the kitchen would also put hygiene at risk. “The food safety and standards authority of India (FSSAI) mandates that chefs and supervisors in restaurant kitchens have to undergo a medical check-up for parameters like skin diseases and hairfall, before they are allowed inside. If a customer enters and does not follow hygiene standards, it could mean compromising hygiene,” said Rohit Khanna, member – food committee, GCCCI.

Restaurateurs said that the industry is reeling under a lot of stress to run the business, amid market pressure, declining footfalls, rising inflation and even the proposed ban on single-use plastic without an alternative. Amid such a situation, such a decision by the FDCA would have a huge impact on the brand reputation of restaurants too.

“I run a restaurant which serves vegetarian and non-vegetarian food and we have strict norms in place. However, if a vegetarian customer enters the veg section of the kitchen he will also get to see the non-vegetarian section next to it, and may not visit the restaurant again. Besides, if someone uses social media to malign the restaurant, our brand reputation would be at stake,” said Samir Patel, owner of a city-based restaurant.

“Such a decision will only encourage people to visit restaurants with an eye of suspicion. It will only give a tough time to the fraternity,” said Saurin Sheth, a caterer.