

FEATHER FOOD

IS THAT EMU ON YOUR PLATE?

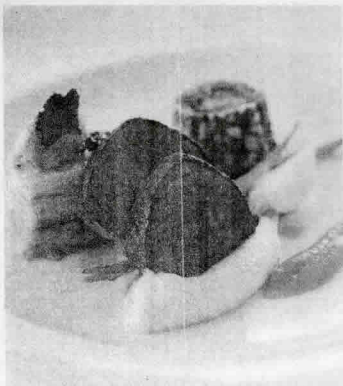
New Delhi's high-end restaurants are ready to serve Emu meat to their clientele. Will a Butter Chicken-loving city take to a flightless bird, we wonder

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NARENDRA Modi may have gone on a well-publicised fast not too long ago, but an entrepreneur from his state is making sure you don't go denying yourself the pleasure of good food. Even if that involves changing New Delhi's Butter Chicken-loving palate to try out something really exotic. Like Emu. If things go according to plan, Baroda-based Vinay Sharma, founder and CEO of Tallbird Farms, will be supplying Emu meat to New Delhi's restaurants by the end of the month.

Sharma has invested close to Rs 2 crore to open a farm in Vadodara in Gujarat from where he will supply the meat to connoisseurs and restaurants in the Capital.

At present, he is sending samples to hotels and restaurants in the Capital and is in talks



Not only does Emu meat reduce Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), better known as bad cholesterol, it is also packed with protein and has lower calories

beef has 16.4 g of fat, while Emu meat has 4.7g. The good thing though, is that it tastes exactly like red meat.

Emu oil extracted from its body fat is the only animal extract that comes with Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids. It has been known to thicken the skin and act as an anti-ageing agent. It also helps heal burn injuries and reduces keloid scarring. Its anti-inflammatory properties mean that it is an effective cure for arthritis and has been recognised by sportsmen.

The meat is interesting for chefs

MEET EMU

- ▶ it's a relative of the Ostrich, another flightless bird
- ▶ it's native to Australia
- ▶ Emus have a nail on their toes, which is used to kick predators. Their legs are strong, and can even rip metal wire fences

because it lends itself to various preparations. It can be grilled, pan fried or sautéed. Nishant Choubey, executive chef of Cibo in Connaught Place, recently drummed up a spicy biryani that had chunks of Emu, instead of mutton, or chicken. His only grouse, is that the meat takes a while to cook. "Emu meat is very similar to beef and duck. I had to cook the meat for nine hours at 80° C," he says.

The Emu meat starter he prepared had to be marinated for over a day. "The meat is tough, so I used raw papaya to make it tender," says Choubey.

The meat is a rage in Chennai. Local farmers are farming the bird in farms, slaughtering them for their meat and selling them to the local markets. Chefs in Delhi too, are hopeful that it will catch on. "Since it is low on fat, it should do well. Emu is a good substitute for red meat," says Ravi Saxena, corporate chef, The Claridges, New Delhi.

Saxena says you can cook any