



Food On Wheels

Description

As George Bernard Shaw says “Food is symbolic of love when words are inadequate.” Rachana Shetty and Justine Penning, owner and founder of “Tasty Food Truck” firmly believe in this school of thought.

Tasty Food Truck is a unique truck redesigned into a kitchen. A crew of four, hailing from different parts of the country, began operations on New Years Eve in 2015 at the famous Rock Beach in Puducherry.

“The idea came to us on a lazy Sunday afternoon, when Justine and me had to go to the city to have our favorite Tacos (a traditional Mexican dish consisting of corn and wheat tortilla folded or rolled around a filling.)” says Rachana, an engineer turned boss of the truck who is also freelancing as a graphic designer. “Food and travelling are two sincere loves in my life. So we clubbed it together and brought this baby (food truck) to the world.” Says Justine Penning, an Anthropology post Graduate living in Auroville.

The initial days were hard to manage as they were new entrepreneurs with very little experience of the day-to-day operations of a business and the legal procedures of the government. Their friends from Auroville were a great help in designing and painting the truck and also helped them in sourcing vegetables, meat and other necessary items from local farm houses.

“They (Rachana & Justine) found me at a bar, I was freshly unemployed from an IT company at that time. I loved the idea and yeah here we are.” Says Karthick, who is both the Manager as well as the driver of the Tasty Food Truck. Karthick hails from Bangalore who was visiting Puducherry for a soul search break when Rachana found him in a bar.

The truck is Eco-friendly with electricity generated by solar panels and the team uses paper bags for packing food. The waste is converted into manure by a farm in Auroville. The daily income of the truck averages to 3000 Rupees per day and during festival weekends the profit can go up to 10,000 Rupees per day.

Although the Tasty Food Truck is usually parked in front of the Bamboo Shoot restaurant in Auroville where it serves its regular customer base, the team travels to different locations in the city during

festivals and other holidays.

“We mostly shoot up in the rock beach area during festival weekends such as new year eve and other celebrations”, says Justine.

Mathi, the Head-Chef of the Tasty Food Truck hails from Goa, and is one of the OG members of the food truck family. Justine met Mathi in Goa a long time ago, remembering his first encounter with Justine at the restaurant where he was a waiter in Goa, Mathi recounts, “We (Justine and Mathi) were in touch for years but I never knew she will end up being my boss.”

Talking about the process of choosing the menu, Karthick explains, “The menu was decided by a small survey in Auroville and a few (cuisines) came to the picture eventually.” The truck also tours to different parts of the country attending various festivals. “Last year we attended the Sun Burn festival of Goa, Mahabalipuram and other film festivals.” adds Karthick. In these two years, the Tasty Food Truck has visited most of the southern parts of the country.

“The response of the locals was welcoming yet sometimes we face hardships in getting a proper place for parking near the roadsides either by police at times or by the owner of the land.” Says Rachana.

“We are a family, we all have left our homes for our own reasons but you never know where you can find a home.” says Karthick.

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Date Created

January 23, 2016

Author
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