

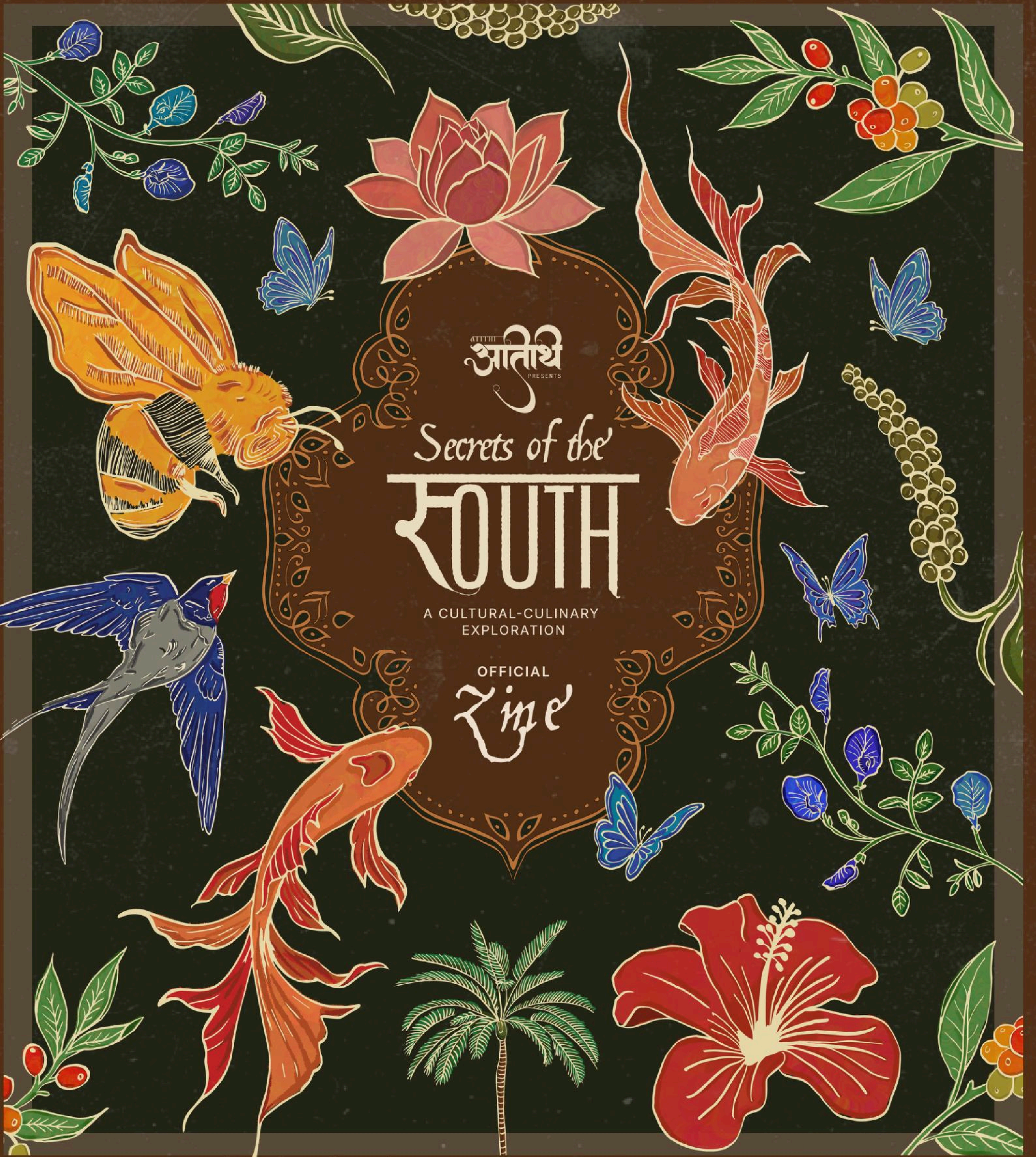
EDITION 009

अतिथि
PRESENTS

Secrets of the SOUTH

A CULTURAL-CULINARY
EXPLORATION

OFFICIAL
Tine





Atithi

Atithi means guest. Not a customer, not an audience - a guest. Someone who arrives, sits down, and is fed with a meaningful conversation.

We're a storytelling brand built at the intersection of food, identity, and memory. We're interested in how people carry stories with them - in the recipes that survive a migration, the rituals that outlast a generation, the meals that hold a place together long after the people have scattered.

Food is never just food. It's soil and season, memory and movement. Every dish carries a story that has travelled - across kitchens, across coastlines, across the people who kept it alive.

Atithi exists to trace those stories back to where they began, and to set a place at the table for anyone who wants to listen.

This is a project about belonging, and about the in-between - the space you occupy when you no longer belong to just one place. We don't think that space needs resolving. We think it needs a meal, good company, and someone to tell you where the dish came from.

*You are the guest.
And you have arrived.*



Secrets of the SOUTH

A CULTURAL-CULINARY
EXPLORATION

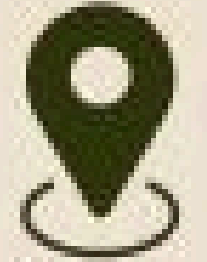
the film

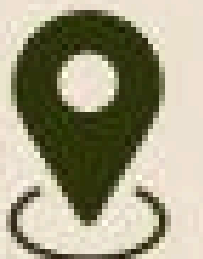
Our debut season follows us through South India - into its kitchens, its markets, its forests, and the tables where strangers become familiar.

Secrets of the South is a journey through kitchens, coffee estates, farms, and family tables across Coorg, Kerala & Tamil Nadu - tracing the quiet knowledge systems that continue to shape everyday life. Through conversations around food, cultivation, ritual, sustenance, community and hospitality, the season explores how memory is carried not only in stories, but in taste, touch, and repetition.

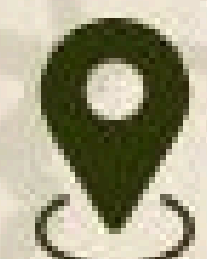
What emerged was not a search for the "hidden" but a deeper attention to the intimate: a beekeeper speaking about conservation through pollination, a Kodava lunch prepared from instinct and inheritance, coffee understood through patience and terrain. At its heart, the season asks what it means to belong - to land, to lineage, and to one another around the table.

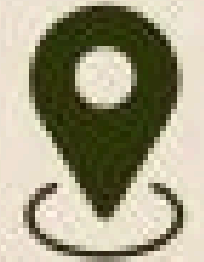
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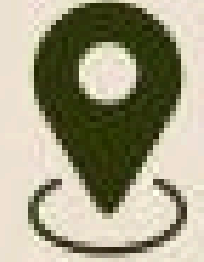
 ⁰² Mini Episode

 ¹² keepers
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from the South.

Mini Episodes

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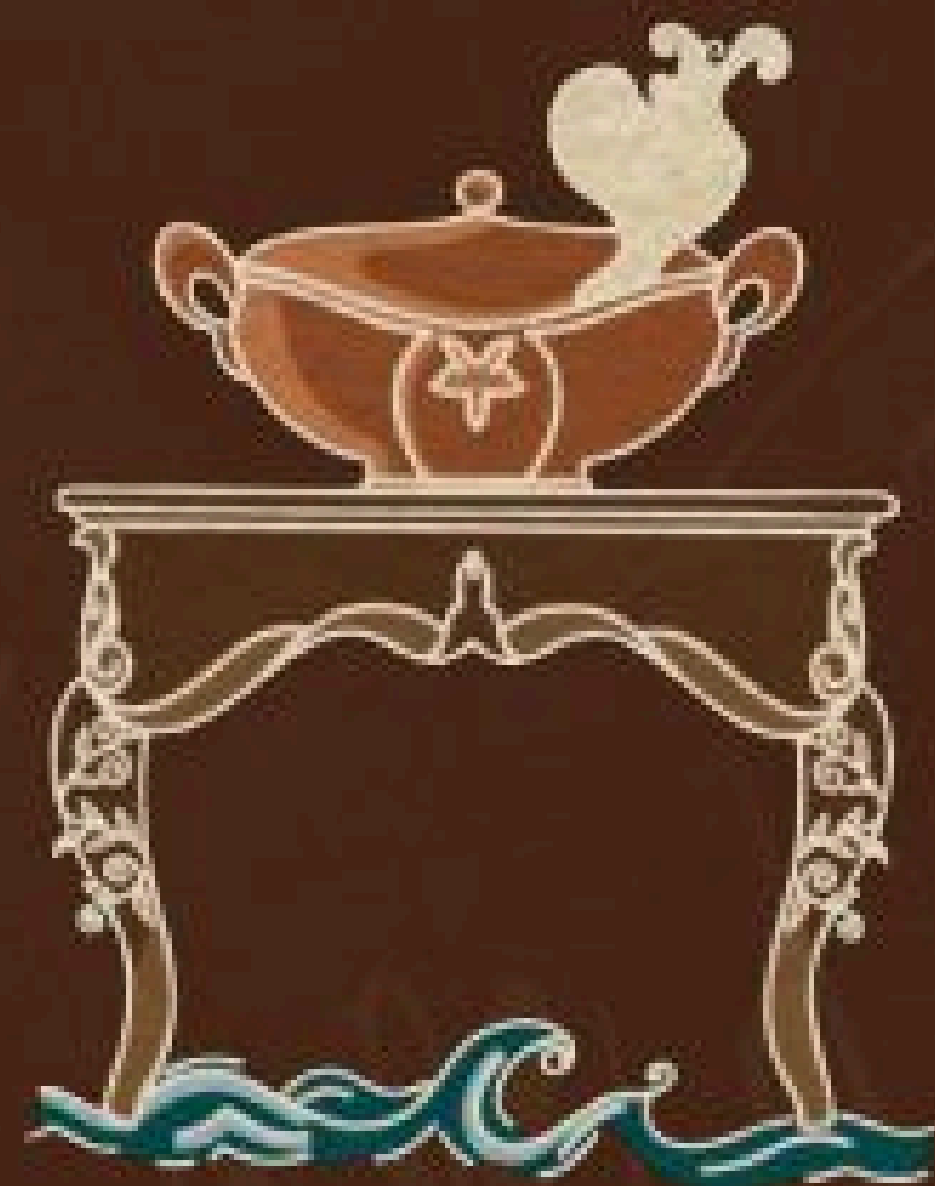
One season. One film at its centre, surrounded by eight shorter chapters that double back into the places that deserved more room. A library of context you can enter from any door.

*This is Where
the journey starts...*



Wisdom of the bees

An intimate journey into the world of bees, honey, and the quiet relationship between land, season, and those who tend the hive.



Set by the river

Inside a Kodava home in Coorg, a meal opens into a deeper understanding of a culture defined by place, seasonality, and the refusal to waste.





The living archive

A walk through a living archive of medicinal plants, where a meal grown entirely on-site becomes a conversation about balance, digestibility, and the preventative wisdom embedded in everyday ingredients.



Ecology reclaimed

Once abandoned mining land, Greenara is now a thriving Kerala ecosystem: a story about regeneration, belonging, and what it means to build something that nourishes rather than extracts.



Shared Ground

A space where food, craft, and ecology belong to everyone: at Farmer's Share, self-reliance isn't ideology, it's the daily practice of growing, making, and sharing with the people around you.



'Balance' not perfection

Nestled in the hills of Tamil Nadu, an Ayurvedic sanctuary offers a counterpoint to modern life: exploring what it means to eat, move, and live with intention rather than urgency.





The Lost Recipe

Inside a Kodava home in Coorg, a meal opens into a deeper understanding of a culture defined by place, seasonality, and the refusal to waste.



Coconut Country

In Kerala, literally, the land of coconut, one ingredient traces itself through every kitchen, ritual, and meal, revealing the quiet architecture of an entire food culture, economy, and ecology.



keepers of the South



Every place has its ingredients. Every ingredient has its keepers — not experts or custodians by title, but people who have lived with a place long enough that its rhythms have become their own.

Some preserve what is centuries old. Others quietly reimagine it. All know that nourishment begins long before food reaches a plate. These are the keepers of the South.

Not because' they own its stories.

Because' they continue' to live' them.

Anita Aiyappa

MATRIARCH. FARMER. MEMORY.

At 85, Anita Aiyanna has watched Coorg move through more seasons than most people can count: the British Raj, the hunting culture, the slow drift of younger Kodavas toward cities, and the quiet adaptation of everything that remained.

She lives far from Coorg's commercial circuits, in a family home that has stood since Indian independence, and she speaks the way a farmer does: without philosophy, without performance. When we asked why they intercrop, she looked at us like the question was embarrassing.

How do you not know this when you are a mango farmer? She was the first to face a camera and the last person who needed one to hold the room.

What she carries into the film is something no research trip can manufacture: a living archive of Kodava identity, told without nostalgia and without apology. In her, you understand that culture doesn't disappear, it shapeshifts.

And the food she cooked, Pandi curry, Kadambuttu, rice bread, was less a meal and more a lesson in what it means to cook from memory so deep it no longer needs to be remembered.





Niran Ponappa

THIRD-GENERATION FARMER.
RELUCTANT CITY BOY.
RETURNED ROOT.

Niran left. Like a lot of younger Kodavas, he did what the city asks of you: traded the land for a livelihood, Bangalore for something resembling a career. And then, like the most honest version of that story goes, he came back. Not out of failure, but out of reckoning. His coffee fields are a living argument: that the land waits, and that returning to it isn't a retreat, it's a decision.

Walking Niran's farm, watching him pour a cup straight from where it was grown, you feel the full weight of a simple idea: that what the land holds, it holds for you specifically, if you're willing to show up for it. He's the counter-narrative to the idea that modernity and farming are incompatible. He's proof they're just a conversation waiting to happen.

Subbaiah Nadikeriendda

BEEKEEPER. FARMER.
PROTECTOR OF POLLINATORS.

Subbaiah runs the Beekeeping Association in Coorg, a coalition of about a hundred farmers trying to preserve something most people don't notice until it's gone. Robusta coffee depends on bee pollination. Cardamom is 90% dependent on it.

Subbaiah has spent years making sure the ecosystem understands its own stakes. Our first conversation with him lasted an hour and a half and never once felt like it was enough.

He speaks like a friend who happens to know everything: about bugs, bees, what grows here and why, what disappears when the hive thins out.

Through him, the film makes its quietest argument: that the tiniest creatures are the ones holding the terrain together. That the honey you taste carries the landscape of every flower the bee chose to visit. That protecting pollination is, in every practical sense, protecting the plate.





PJ Chakkochan

FARMER. COOPERATIVE FOUNDER.
UNLIKELY EXPORTER.

In 1991, Chakkochan and thirteen other farmers in Wayanad came together with a simple, charitable intention: to protect the region's indigenous medicinal plants.

What they built instead was Vanamoolika, a cooperative now staffed primarily by women, owned by 375 of them, and counted among the reliable sources for gourmet retailers and chocolatiers across Europe. Thirty stable buyers a year. Organic certified. Globally trusted.

His workshop smells like everything Ayurveda ever promised: roots, barks, the slow reduction of a Chyavanprash that takes time as an ingredient as seriously as it takes amla. What stayed with us wasn't the scale of what he'd built, but the hospitality underneath it.

The food was simple, nourishing, cooked with intention. The real medicine in that room, beyond the herbs, was the warmth of his family and the generosity of a man who never stopped thinking his work was ordinary.

Musthafa P.A

BUILDER. ECOLOGIST.
HOST WHO SCREENS HIS GUESTS.

Musthafa lost everything before he built Greenara. That backstory matters because Greenara, a thriving tropical ecosystem carved from what was once a barren quarry, isn't an accident of wealth or vision. It's the specific result of a man deciding what home should feel like.

I wanted to build a space where people truly felt at home, like I did when I was a kid. He serves what grows there, cooked by his wife, and he doesn't accept every visitor. Months can pass without a booking, just to protect what the land has become.

Whatever enters Greenara eventually finds its way to the table. The fish in the blue pond, the fruit in the trees, the herbs that grew back when the mining stopped: all of it cycles through the kitchen.

He is proof that regeneration is possible, and that the most radical act of hospitality is creating a place so worth preserving that you have to be selective about who gets to stand in it.





Ambrose Kooliyath

FORMER MAOIST. FARMER.
COMMUNITY BUILDER.

There is a particular kind of person who converts anger into architecture. Ambrose, Ambrose chetta in Malayalam, was once a revolutionary.

Now he tends clay, hibiscus, butterfly-pea flowers, and the people who come to learn from them. Farmer's Share is an intentional community rooted in the principle that resources should be consumed in ways that let the rest of nature sustain itself. Low-water crops, handmade pottery, pickled imperfect produce: nothing wasted, everything made with intention.

What you take from Ambrose is the understanding that community isn't an event or a gathering. It's a practice, repeated daily, in the act of growing, making, and sharing with the people around you.

The communal singing at Farmer's Share isn't performance. It's what happens when people build something together long enough.

Krishnan Master

TEMPLE PRIEST. KEEPER OF THE SADYA.

His family temple is 250 years old. He speaks English, and he can explain the biochemistry of a banana leaf meal with the same ease he explains its ritual significance.

That combination, ancient custodian and contemporary voice, is exactly what the Sadya needed. Not as tradition. Not as nostalgia. As a working system of nourishment that has survived because it actually works.

Through Krishnan Master, the film unpacks what the Sadya is: six tastes, a complete nutritional architecture, a meal that feeds a community in the most literal and metaphorical sense. Everyone sits the same way. Everyone eats from the same leaf.

The leaf folds inward after celebration, outward after grief. It is, as he makes clear, not ceremony for its own sake. It is centuries of understanding the body, served on something that grew from the ground and will return to it.





DR Abhilash

AYURVEDIC PRACTITIONER.
TEACHER OF ATTENTION.

What made Dr. Abhilash stand out immediately was what he didn't say. He didn't ask us to renounce modernity. He didn't frame Ayurveda as mysticism or as a corrective to Western medicine. He spoke about food science: about what the gut holds, what the mind reflects, what the body tells you if you're patient enough to listen.

The Vedas, through his reading, are less a spiritual text and more a field manual for paying attention to yourself.

Maitreyi Vedic Village sits at the foothills of the Western Ghats, and through him, the film makes its case that Ayurveda isn't an alternative. It's a precursor. That the idea of food as medicine isn't ancient wisdom at odds with science; it's ancient wisdom that science is still catching up to.

The Shirodhara. The sattvic meals. The six tastes of a balanced table. All of it is a system, and Dr. Abhilash is its most lucid translator.

field notes



Every journey leaves behind more than footage. A sentence spoken between takes. A meal that explains more than any interview. A detail scribbled down before it disappears.

These are the fragments that rarely make the final cut, but stay with us the longest. The pages that follow are drawn from conversations, observations, and moments gathered along the way — not comprehensive histories, nor definitive guides. Invitations to look closer.

Atithi began with a simple curiosity: what can food teach us about the people and places it comes from?

*These' notes are' part
of that ongoing answer.*

*That curiosity didn't end with the films.
It went deeper.*

Field Notes is where it kept going — past the meal, into the why. The etymology behind an ingredient. The reason a practice survives. The science a single gesture in the kitchen carries without naming.

Each one a small, exact card: one idea, one fact, one question worth following. Where the films show the surface, Field Notes is the root system beneath — the part you have to get your hands dirty to find. Eight sets, one for each chapter of the journey. A library of context you can enter from any door.

And it's alive. Season by season it grows, and never expires.



The Kodava Table Has No Head

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The Kodava people of Coorg are among India's most distinct indigenous communities... with their own language (Kodava takk), their own martial traditions, their own calendar of festivals, and a food culture rooted so completely in the surrounding forest that the two are almost indistinguishable. Pork and bamboo shoot. Kachampuli and black pepper. Rice wine made from estate-grown fruits. These dishes, ingredients, and preparation techniques are acts of identity.

Anita Aunty cooked pandi curry by the river. She did not measure anything. She did not need to. Her recipes live in her body and innate wisdom, learned through proximity and repetition across generations. It's the same way the Kodavas have always learned and retained their practices: by being present and connecting deeply with the rhythms of nature.





Kaveri Sankramana, the festival of the river goddess, and Kailpodh, the harvest celebration, are both at the center of the table. In Kodava culture, a meal is treated as the beginning of a celebration.

What Anita aunty's son's toast made clear, opening the first Atithi table in Coorg, is that Kodava hospitality is a natural extension of a culture that has always understood the table as common ground. It is a place where whoever is sitting down is offered what's grown on the land. It's the great equalizer. Eating with your hands is intimacy and a way of connecting your senses with your food.

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Coconut as an Ecosystem

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Kerala's name lends itself to its terrain: kera, coconut palm; alam, land. The coconut tree literally constitutes Kerala's food culture. It's grated raw into vegetable dishes, ground with chilli and tamarind into chutney, pressed into milk for curries and payasam, reduced to oil for cooking, and for hair, and for skin. It's fermented into toddy, the palm wine that has been drunk along these backwaters for as long as anyone can trace. Every part of the tree is in use.

The shell is used as a vessel and for fuel. The husk can be turned into rope. The fronds create roofs and baskets. The water inside, before its flesh forms, is a natural electrolyte that has kept people hydrated through centuries of heat. In Ayurvedic medicine, coconut oil is cooling, anti-inflammatory, and deeply penetrating. It's one of the few fats that crosses the blood-brain barrier... How wild is that?





At the Greenara table, Musthafa spoke about why coconut oil is used for everything: for cooking, post-sun skin, in the scalp before sleep. It's a tradition steeped in the innate wisdom of our bodies in relationship to land. Our bodies are reflections of ecosystems. At a sadhya, coconut appears in every recipe served on a banana leaf. On a houseboat, coconut trees line the waterway so densely they look like walls, holding soil together and preventing erosion. Kerala does not use coconut. Kerala lives inside it.

SADHYA: The great Kerala feast; served on a banana leaf, eaten with the right hand, and often comprising upward of 24 dishes including sambar, avial, pachadi, pickles, pappadam, and payasam. Traditionally served at Onam.

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The Healing Forest Garden

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Mr. Chakkochan set out to conserve endangered plants while feeding his family and providing healing to his community.

At Vanamoolika, the meal on the table is also the medicine cabinet: red rice that packs fiber and doesn't spike glucose, banana flower that supports hormonal balance, pumpkin leaf rich in iron. Fermented pepper. Freshly caught fish.

The menu at a Vanamoolika table reads like a medicinal apothecary, but it is simply the seasonal harvest of a farm that also acts as ecological restoration. All the food and medicine here is rooted in balance and digestibility.





Chakkochan spoke lovingly about rare forest plant species he actively conserves: herbs that improve insulin sensitivity, roots that support kidney function, plants that are routinely cleared by farmers who do not recognise their value. The tragedy of monoculture is not just ecological, but also pharmaceutical. We are clearing forests, understories, and fields of medicine that have been tending human bodies for thousands of years.

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Recipes

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A way of carrying knowledge from one pair of hands to another.

Across this journey, we were welcomed into kitchens where measurements lived in instinct, where ingredients reflected the terrain outside the window, and where cooking was participation rather than performance. The recipes here come from those encounters. Some are everyday meals. Some appear only at celebrations. All of them tell a story about the places they belong to and the people who still make them.

Cook them slowly. Not for perfection, but for understanding. Because sometimes the quickest way to know a place is to prepare its food and invite someone to share it.

It is memory made practical.

A recipe is rarely just instructions.

Pandi Curry

In Coorg, pandi curry is a rite more than just a recipe. Bone-in pork is slow-cooked and darkened with kachampuli, a smoky-sour vinegar pressed from *Garcinia gummi-gutta*, a fruit that grows wild across the hill forests of the Western Ghats. As the curry simmers, the fat renders into the spice paste and the paste blackens into something older and richer than its parts...

A colour and smell Kodava cooks can easily recognise before they taste it. Traditionally eaten with kadambuttu (steamed rice dumplings) or akki roti, pandi is the dish Kodavas make for weddings, harvests, and the return of loved ones after long journeys. It is, in every sense, the curry you cook to greet an Atithi at your table.



Anita's Pandi Curry

Coorgi Pork Curry - Karnataka

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 1 kg bone-in pork shoulder, cut into large pieces
- 3 tbsp kachampuli (Coorg vinegar / Garcinia vinegar)
- 2 tbsp coconut oil or lard
- 2 medium onions, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp black pepper, coarsely ground — use generously
- 1½ tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, toasted and ground
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 4-5 dried Kashmiri red chillies, soaked and ground to paste
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste
- A few fresh curry leaves

Kachampuli Note: *If unavailable, use 1½ tbsp tamarind concentrate loosened with 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar. It will be slightly brighter and less resinous, but still good.*

Method

STEP 1. Toast cumin and coriander seeds dry until fragrant. Grind with the soaked chillies, ginger, garlic, black pepper, and turmeric into a dark, coarse paste. Add a splash of water if needed.

STEP 2. Heat oil in a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium-high. Brown the pork in batches, without crowding. This step builds the base of the curry's colour. Set aside.

STEP 3. In the same pot, cook onions low and slow until deep gold (15 to 20 minutes). Add the spice paste and fry hard, stirring constantly, until it darkens and the oil begins to separate. 8-10 minutes.

STEP 4. Return the pork. Stir to coat completely. Add kachampuli and just enough water to come halfway up the meat. Season with salt.

STEP 5. Cover and simmer on low for 1 hour 15 minutes, turning the pieces occasionally. Remove the lid for the final 20 minutes and let the gravy reduce until it coats the pork thickly, almost dry at the edges.

STEP 6. Finish with a few curry leaves dropped into the hot oil at the side of the pot. Rest 10 minutes before serving.

You can optionally marinate the pork in a few teaspoons of kachampuli mixed with cooking oil and spices overnight to achieve an even deeper flavor.

Alongside: Green Coconut Chutney

Blend $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fresh grated coconut, a small handful of coriander, 1 green chilli, 1 tsp roasted chana dal, a thumbnail of ginger, juice of half a lime, and salt with just enough water to bring it together.

It should be thick, not runny. Temper with mustard seeds and a curry leaf in hot coconut oil. Serve cool alongside the curry. The freshness will cut the fat cleanly, and the coconut will bring a cooling element to the heat of the curry.



Panam Pathri

The palmyra palm, or Kodappana in Malayalam, is one of the oldest cultivated trees on earth, and along the Malabar coast, nearly nothing of it is wasted. Panam pathri has its roots in the Muslim households of this coastline, where it appears at Iftar tables and weddings, passed hand to hand on brass platters still warm from the kitchen.

The batter is made from panam maavu, a flour ground from the dried palmyra fruit, lending the pathri a faint caramel sweetness and a nutrient density that rice flour alone doesn't hold. This version comes from Aunty Saneera, who taught it to us in her home kitchen in Kerala, folded around a paste of toasted coconut and palm jaggery. It's eaten warm, with black chai, and is the kind of dish meant to be enjoyed slowly while seated around the coffee table. This, of course, is the whole point.



Panam Pathri

Palm Powder Pancakes with Toasted
Coconut Filling - Malabar, Kerala

Serves: 8-10 pathris

For the Pathri:

- 1 cup panam maavu (palm flour)
- ¼ cup rice flour
- 1½ cups warm water
- 1 tbsp palm jaggery, dissolved in the warm water
- 1 tsp ghee, plus more for cooking
- Pinch of salt

For the filling:

- 1½ cups fresh or desiccated coconut, grated
 - 3 tbsp palm jaggery, grated or crumbled
 - ¼ tsp cardamom or ginger, freshly ground
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Method

STEP 1. Make the filling first. Toast the coconut in a dry pan over medium heat, stirring constantly, until it turns golden and smells nutty (5 to 7 minutes). Add the grated jaggery and stir until it melts into the coconut and the mixture clumps warmly. Add cardamom/ginger and optional pinch of salt. Set aside off heat.

STEP 2. Whisk palm flour, rice flour, and salt together. Pour in the warm jaggery water gradually, whisking to a smooth, thin paste. Rest for 15 minutes. Stir in ghee.

STEP 3. Heat a flat tawa or non-stick pan over medium. Brush lightly with ghee. Pour a small ladle of batter and swirl immediately into a thin circle (6 to 7 inches). Cook until the surface is set and the edges begin to lift, about 90 seconds. Do not flip.

STEP 4. Spoon a generous tablespoon of filling along the centre. Fold the pathri in half, then half again into a quarter (or roll it loosely, as you prefer). Slide off the pan.

STEP 5. Repeat. Stack the finished pathris on a warm plate, covered with a cloth. They soften as they sit. This is correct, and good.

SERVE Warm or at room temperature. A small cup of black chai alongside is the traditional company in Malabar homes.

Meen Pollichathu

Along the backwaters of Kottayam and Alleppey, meen pollichathu is the dish that signals a Syrian Christian table at its most generous and abundant. It's served at a Sunday lunch after church, or even at a wedding sadhya (or celebratory feast). It's a meal that is cooked when a relative returns from the Gulf after years away. A whole karimeen, the pearl spot fish that thrives in Kerala's brackish lagoons, is marinated in a fiery red masala, then wrapped in a banana leaf with a second layer of shallot-and-coconut gravy and cooked slowly until the leaf blackens and perfumes the fish from the outside in.

The soul of the dish is kudampuli, a Malabar tamarind (and a smoke-dried fruit cousin to the kachampuli of Coorg), which gives Nasrani cooking its distinctive sour-resinous depth. But its sourness is more intentional than just a flavor choice. Before refrigeration reached the coast, kudampuli's dried rind was rubbed into fish with salt to slow bacterial spoilage and keep the catch edible for days. The banana leaf provides a similar, slightly more subtle function: its polyphenols resist bacterial growth and its waxy surface seals in moisture, so the wrapping is less a presentation and more a preservation technique that predates cling film by centuries. Atithi devo bhava, or "the guest is god", has always meant feeding a visitor generously. In a kitchen like this one, it also meant doctoring the food to provide literal and figurative nourishment to the people eating it.

Karimeen is Kerala's state fish, but decades of barrier construction across the backwaters disrupted the brackish-to-freshwater migration pearl spot need to spawn, and pollution and illegal fishing in lakes like Vembanad have shrunk both catch sizes and numbers. Cooking this dish now is also a small act of paying attention to the ecological changes that have occurred in the region over the past few decades.

You open the parcel at the table, surrounded by friends old and new, and the aromatic steam will welcome everyone.





Meen Pollichathu

Banana Leaf-Wrapped Fish - Syrian Christian Kerala

Serves: 4

For the marinade:

- 1 whole karimeen or pomfret (about 600–700g), cleaned and scored on both sides
- 1½ tsp Kashmiri red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste

For the masala gravy:

- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- 8–10 shallots (or 1 large red onion), finely sliced
- 1 tbsp ginger, julienned
- 6 garlic cloves, sliced
- 2 green chillies, slit
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 1 medium tomato, finely chopped
- 3 pieces kudampuli, soaked in ¼ cup warm water for 20 minutes
- 1½ tsp Kashmiri red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp fennel seeds, lightly crushed
- ½ tsp black pepper
- Salt to taste
- ¼ cup thick coconut milk



For wrapping:

- 2 large banana leaves, passed briefly over an open flame to soften (or warmed in a dry pan until pliable)
- Kitchen twine or toothpicks

Fish Note: This dish traditionally uses Karimeen, but pomfret, tilapia, or any small whole white-fleshed fish works. This swap is worth making if karimeen isn't sustainably available where you are. For fillets, use kingfish or seabass and reduce the cooking time.

Kudampuli Note: Should be available at South Indian and Sri Lankan grocers, or online as "Malabar tamarind" or "fish tamarind." If unavailable, you can substitute 1 ½ tbsp regular tamarind concentrate with a pinch of smoked paprika to approximate the smokiness, though you'll lose the gentle digestive bitterness Ayurvedic cooking prizes it for.





Method

STEP 1: Pat the fish dry inside and out. Whisk the marinade ingredients into a thick paste and rub into the scored fish, working into the cuts and the cavity. Rest for 30 minutes while you build the gravy.

STEP 2: Heat coconut oil in a wide pan over medium. Fry the marinated fish for 2 minutes per side, just until the masala sets and the skin firms. Lift out carefully. Keep the oil in the pan.

STEP 3: In the same oil, add shallots and cook low and slow until deep brown at the edges, 10–12 minutes. The colour here matters; it will carry the final dish. Add ginger, garlic, green chillies, and curry leaves. Fry until fragrant.

STEP 4: Stir in the chilli powder, turmeric, coriander, fennel, and pepper. Cook for a minute until the oil takes on the red of the spices. Add the tomato and cook down until it collapses into the masala, 5–6 minutes.

STEP 5: Add the soaked kudampuli along with its soaking water. Season with salt. Simmer until the gravy thickens and the oil begins to separate, 8–10 minutes. Stir in the coconut milk and remove from heat. The masala should be thick enough to cling, not pour.

STEP 6: Lay a softened banana leaf shiny-side down on a flat surface. Spoon a third of the masala into the centre of the leaf, slightly larger than the fish. Place the fish on top, then spoon the remaining masala over and into the cavity, packing it generously. Fold the leaf over the fish into a tight parcel (sides first, then ends) and secure with twine or toothpicks. Wrap a second leaf around for insurance.

STEP 7: Heat a heavy flat pan or tawa over low heat. Place the parcel seam-side down and cook for 8 minutes. Turn carefully and cook for another 8 minutes on the other side. The leaf will darken and char in patches. The kitchen will smell of smoked banana leaf and coconut oil... this is when you know it is done.

STEP 7: Rest the parcel 5 minutes before opening. Bring it to the table whole. Cut the twine and open the leaf in front of the people you are feeding.



Alongside: Steamed Red Rice and Moru Curry

Serve with Kerala matta rice (the short-grain red rice native to the region) and a small bowl of moru (buttermilk thinned with water, tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves, dried red chilli, and a sliver of ginger in coconut oil, finished with a pinch of salt).

Pour the moru over the rice at the table and eat the fish alongside. Use the last of the rice to scrape the remaining masala off the banana leaf. In Syrian Christian homes, this is the traditional order.



Beyond Digital



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Every story in this publication began the same way. Someone opened a gate. Someone pulled up a chair. Someone shared a meal.

Atithi was never meant to live only on a screen. The films, essays, and recipes are invitations — but hospitality can only be experienced in person. It lives in the passing of a serving bowl, in conversations that continue long after a meal ends, in arriving as a stranger and leaving familiar.

As Atithi grows, so will the spaces where these encounters happen. Around tables. Across journeys. In kitchens, farms, forests, and homes.

The next chapter of this project is not something to watch.

*The next chapter of this project
is something to participate in.*



ATITHI Tables

Gathering around a table is one of humanity's oldest ways for belonging together.

Atithi Tables are intimate gatherings built around food, conversation, and cultural exchange. Each one brings together a small group of people to share a meal inspired by a particular region, ingredient, story, or journey.

There is no audience. Only guests.

Some arrive knowing one another. Most do not. By the end of the evening, those distinctions tend to matter less.

What happens around the table changes every time. The intention remains the same: to create space for curiosity, generosity, and meaningful connection through food.

Coming soon.

The first Table

NEW DELHI, MARCH 2026

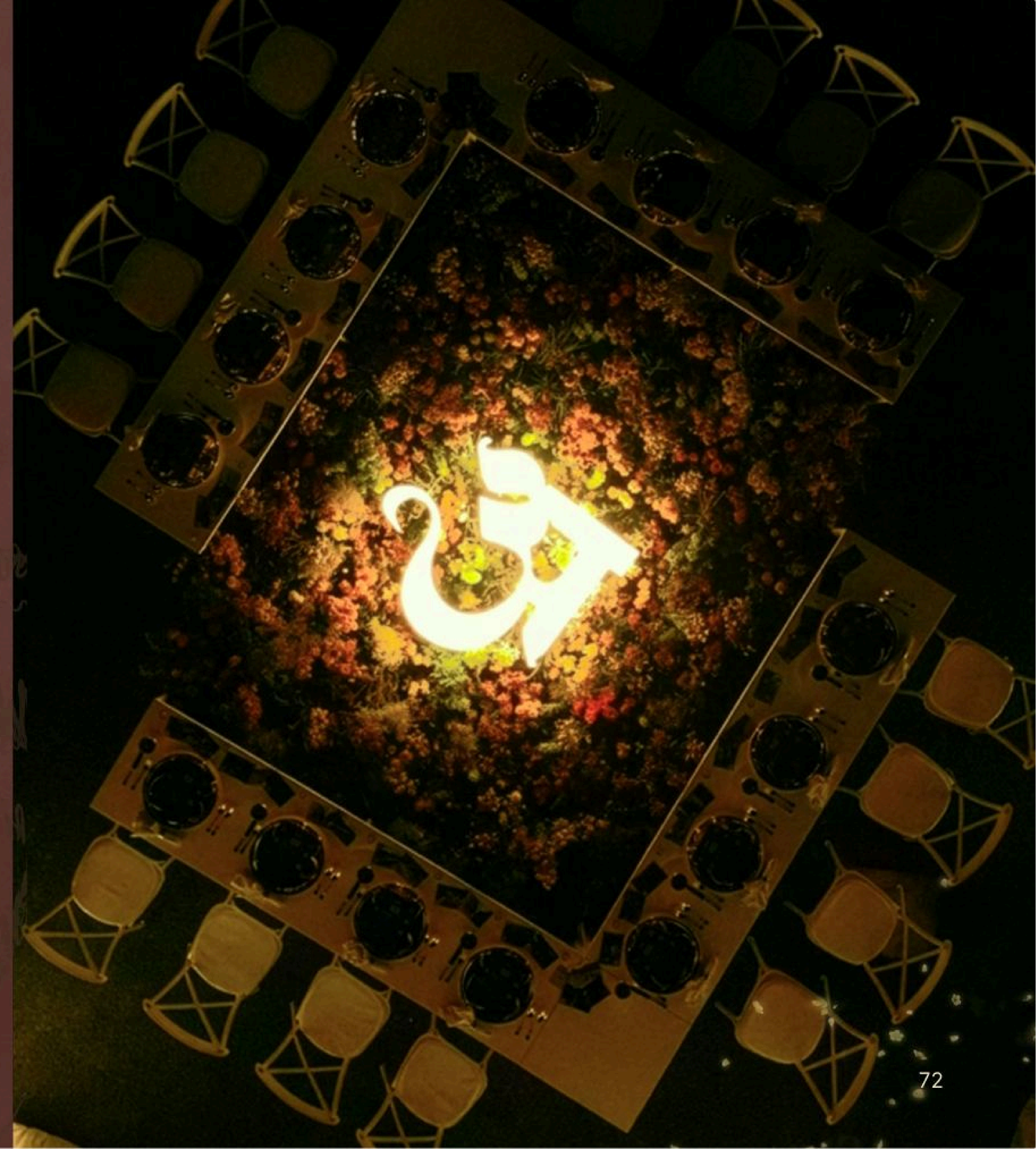
Before there were plans, there was a dinner.

In Delhi, friends and strangers gathered around a shared table for the first Atithi meal. There was no stage, no formal programme, and no expectation beyond showing up with curiosity.

Food moved through the room. Stories followed. Conversations drifted between memory, migration, family recipes, childhood kitchens, and the places people still considered home.

The evening reminded us of something simple. Hospitality scales differently than most things. Its value isn't measured by how many people are present, but by how deeply they are able to arrive.

That night became a small proof of concept for everything Atithi hopes to become. A table. A meal. A room full of people discovering common ground.





ATITHI *Experiences*

Some stories can be told around a table.

Others require a journey.

Atithi Experiences are immersive gatherings designed to bring people closer to the landscapes, food cultures, and knowledge systems that shape a place. They may unfold across farms, forests, villages, kitchens, markets, or community spaces, guided by the people who know them best.

Not tourism. Not retreats.

An opportunity to slow down, pay attention, and participate in ways of living that are often overlooked. Each experience will be built through collaboration with local hosts, farmers, artisans, cooks, and knowledge keepers, ensuring that encounters remain rooted in place and reciprocal in spirit.

Coming soon.

team note

In a world moving faster each day, choosing to spend time with a story is no small thing. We hope these pages have encouraged you to look more closely at the meals in front of you, the people around your table, and the places that continue to nourish both.

Atithi is still at the beginning of its journey.

There are more roads to travel, more tables to gather around, more ingredients to understand, and more stories waiting to be told. If something in these pages resonated with you, we invite you to continue the journey alongside us.

Watch the films. Join a table. Share a story. Attend an experience. Introduce us to a farmer, cook, artisan, or knowledge keeper whose work deserves to be remembered.

Every chapter of Atithi grows through participation.

Until we meet again around a table,
With gratitude,
The Atithi Team

पोस्टcards

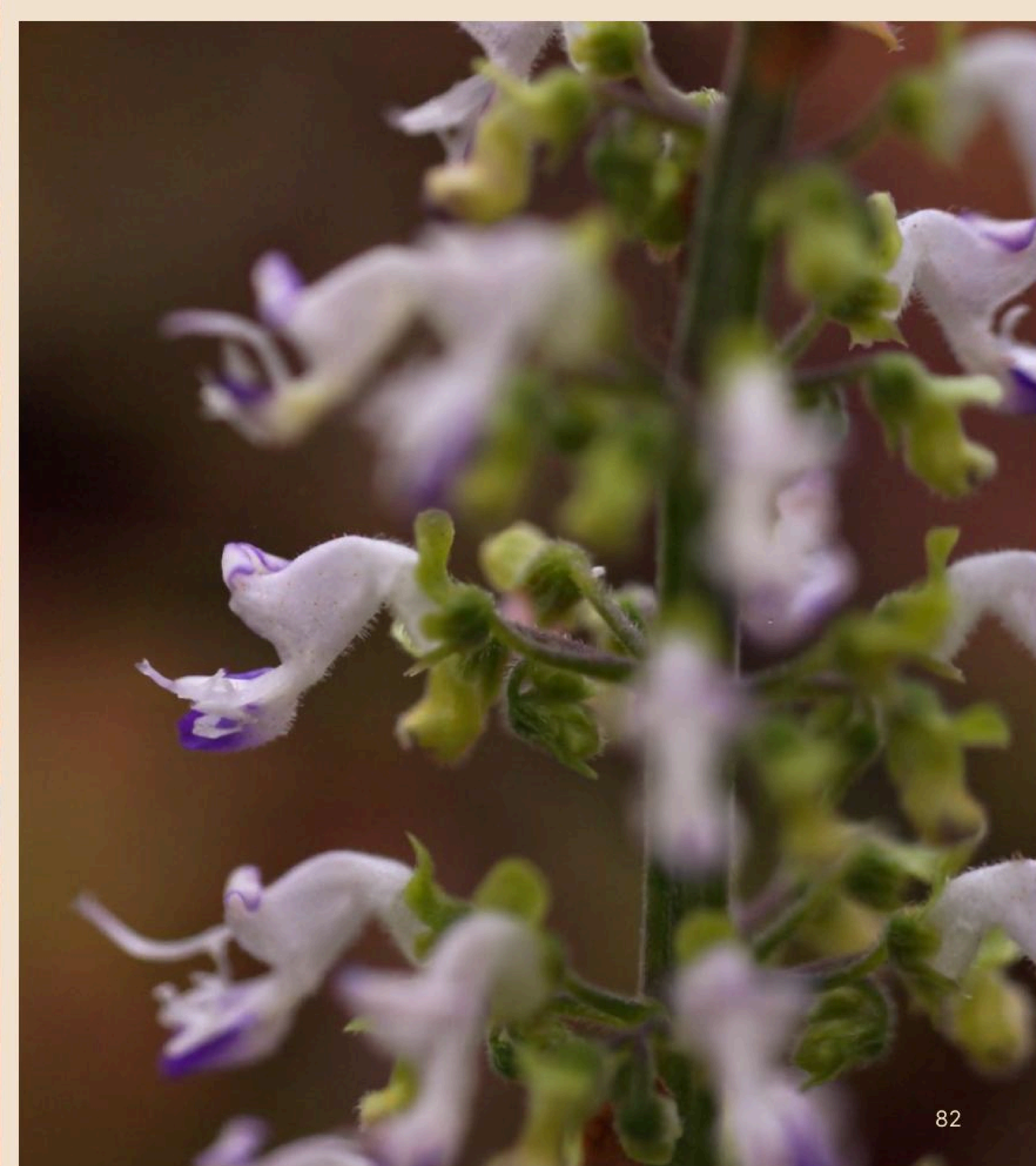
from the South.



These are the frames that stayed with us — not records of where we went, but what the journey looked like when no one was speaking. Small enough to carry. Quiet enough to return to.

*Some' images don't explain.
They linger.*

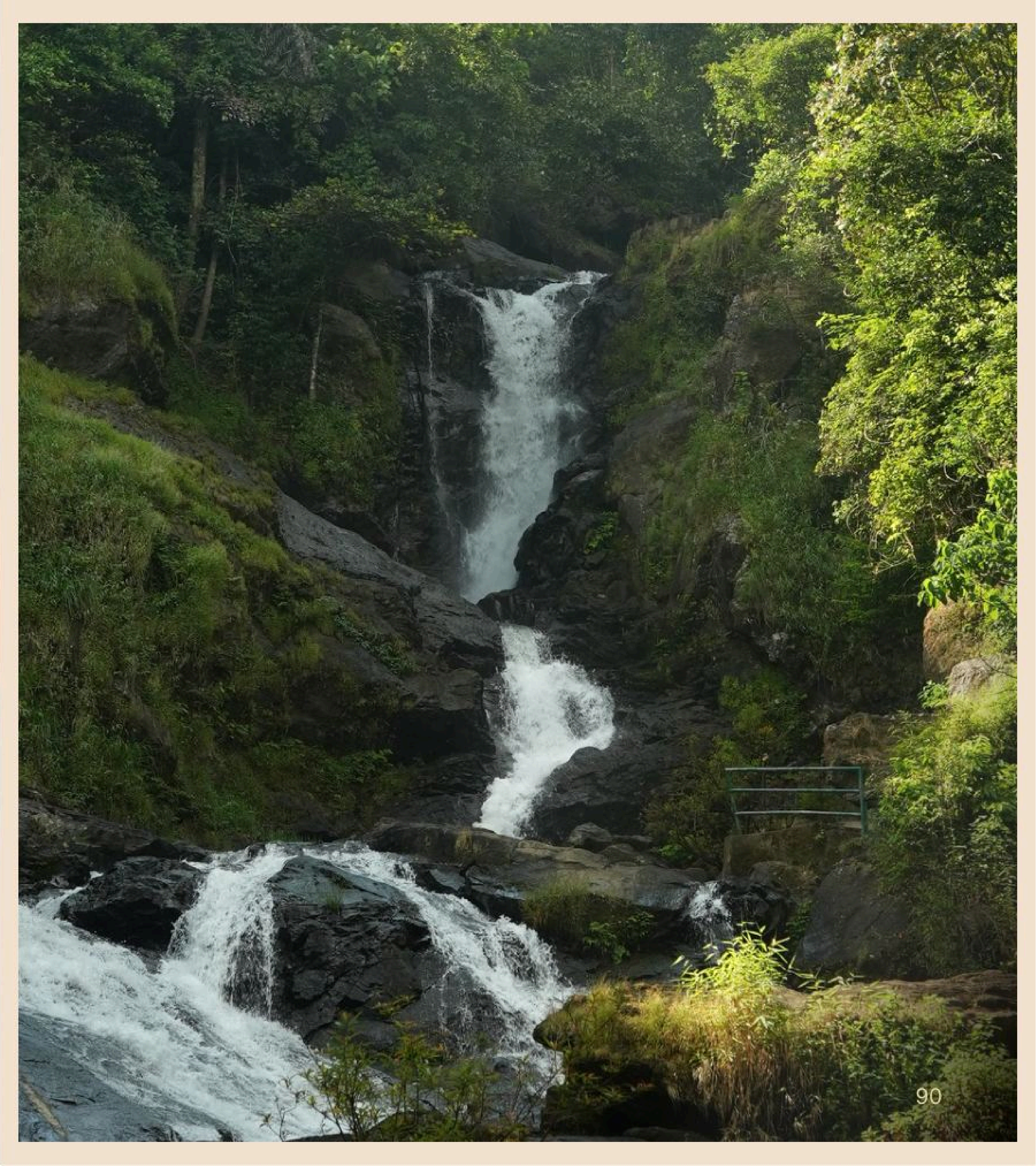










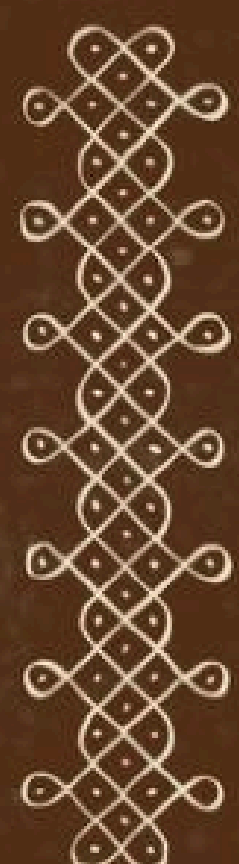
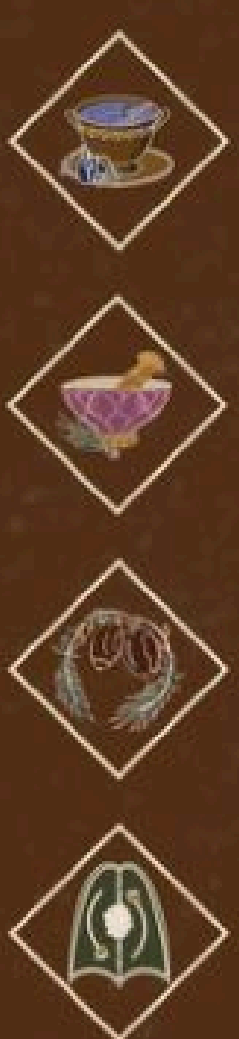
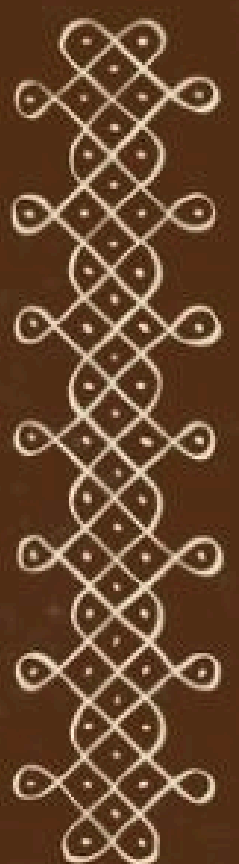
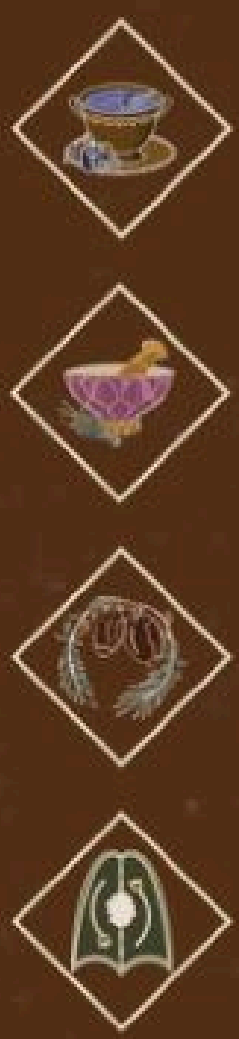
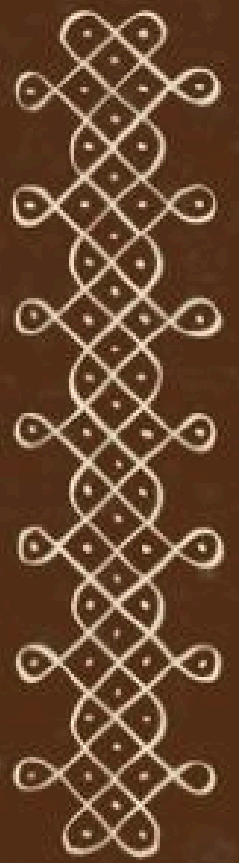


Follow the
Journey
as it
unfolds.





EDITION 009



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