

# Chapter 34

## Wazwan: A Significant Draw for Gastronomic Tourism in Kashmir

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Kashmir is well-known for its delicious food, rich cultural history, and stunning scenery in addition to its natural beauty. Wazwan is one of Kashmir's most popular tourist attractions, providing guests with an enticing look into the region's rich culinary and cultural traditions. This customary multi-course feast is a cultural experience rich in history and custom rather than just a meal. Its opulent presentation and wide variety of flavors each dish painstakingly made with a blend of flavorful spices and regional ingredients draw in tourists. The immersive dining experience allows patrons to fully appreciate the complex flavors and rich textures of meals like rogan josh, rista, and yakhni. The food is typically served on elaborately adorned copper platters called trami.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kashmir was frequently portrayed by renowned Indo-Persian Sufi poet Amīr Khusrau as “Jannat-e-Kashmir,” which translates to “the Paradise on Earth.” This exquisite depiction highlights Kashmir's historical significance as one of India's top tourist destinations (Kumar, 2016). Kashmir, known for its quiet lakes, gorgeous valleys, and jaw-dropping vistas, has long drawn tourists drawn to its unspoiled beauty. The region is a perennial favorite for both local and foreign tourists because of its rich cultural heritage, which is represented in its traditional crafts, music, and cuisine. Kashmir's ageless charm has

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the ability to captivate hearts globally, despite occasional political obstacles. This solidifies Kashmir's standing as a true jewel in India's tourism crown.

The breathtaking scenery, lively culture, and rich legacy of Kashmir have drawn visitors from all over the world for years. Unquestionably, the area is important to India's travel and tourism sector. The history of tourism in Kashmir dates back to the late 1800s, when visitors and British colonial officials first became aware of the region's unspoiled beauty (Chari et al., 2011). With time, this charming area has developed into a popular travel destination, known for the majestic Himalayas, the tranquil Dal Lake, and the enchanted Mughal gardens. The region's rich cultural tapestry, which includes traditional crafts like Pashmina weaving and mouthwatering Kashmiri food, further enhances the experience of visitors. Kashmir's distinct attractiveness is further enhanced by festivals honoring the region's music and dance customs, which make it a destination that never fails to enchant and yearly draw in tourists.

On Dal Lake, the British introduced houseboats, which have since come to represent the area. Their depictions of Kashmir's allure stoked travelers' curiosity about the region even more. Kashmir has unmatched natural beauty, with its Himalayan scenery looking like a work of art. The most well-known feature of the capital city of Srinagar is the Dal Lake, which is often decked up in traditional shikaras. The lake is bordered by verdant, green mountains in the summer and snow-capped peaks in the winter. Autumn is a great time of year to see the countryside because of its abundance of natural color. Numerous artists have long drawn inspiration from these captivating vistas because they elicit strong feelings and in-depth reflection. Paintings, writing, and other visual and aural arts are some of the mediums through which this inspiration is expressed.

The state's outstanding cuisine is hidden in its historical records, which describe the Timur invasion of Kashmir in the fifteenth century AD. This caused hundreds of talented chefs to leave Samarqand in order to serve the royal palate. The state was bestowed with the unparalleled tradition of Wazwan, the delicious and fragrant meal of Kashmir, by the cooks' descendants. Under the direction of Vastawaz, Wazwan is prepared and cooked. It is roughly 36 courses, most of which are meat-based. There are three main cooking styles. Rajput, Muslims, and Kashmiri Pandits all adhere to unique culinary customs and traditions in the state. While Muslims prefer non-vegetarian foods and steer clear of asafoetida (hing) and curds, Kashmiri pandits abstain from using onions and garlic.

There are variations in recipes between the state's various areas as well. Ladakh's cooking customs are different from Hindu Dogras. This is also because the crops that are grown locally have changed. The Kashmiri cuisine that is served in restaurants nowadays has changed over time. Strongly impacted by the traditional cuisine of the gurus of Kashmir, it now incorporates elements of the cooking methods used in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Persia. Indian cuisine uses a lot of yogurt and turmeric. Kashmiri food is so delicious and enticing due to its excellent preparation and wonderful fragrant flavor that even people who are not hungry find themselves craving more. Extremely flavorful and rich in taste, Kashmiri food has gained popularity. The potent effect of the pandits of Kashmir, who are mostly meat-eaters, which helps to explain why Kashmiri cuisine features a greater number of non-vegetarian foods. The main reason Kashmiri thali is popular is because of its non-vegetarian recipes. But there are also some truly delicious vegetarian recipes that everyone enjoys. Wazwan is a staple of traditional Kashmiri thali and requires a lot of preparation.

Wazwan preparation is considered a highly accomplished technique. It takes a great deal of time and work to prepare this special feast, which has about thirty-six items. The Vasta Waza, or head chef, is in charge of making all the essential preparations. Wazwan is usually served at big family get-togethers or

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