Nourishing people

As part of our Meet the Chef series, we're talking to some of Cumbria's finest about their lives

Meet the Chef

SHUBHA SACHIN: co-founder and creative head chef of culinary experience at Dosa Chaska

What is your current role and what does it involve?

I'm co-founder and creative head chef of culinary experience at Dosa Chaska, Cumbria's first South Indian street food café. We operate from our Whitehaven hub at Haig Enterprise Park and are opening our new café at 46B Main Street, Cockermouth, this month. We specialise in naturally fermented dosas and zero ultra-processed vegetarian food. As a creative and thoughtful chef, I love working in the food lab, creating dishes that taste amazing while using healthy, high-quality ingredients that suit different dietary needs. My goal is to prove that vegetarian food can be truly exciting and flavourful by merging ancient Ayurvedic principles with modern quick-service dining, while following traditional fermentation techniques.

I also create one-of-a-kind experiences around food, culture, and education. I organise Sunday Social workshops and dining experiences, ensuring that each event creates wonderful memories for people. Every dish we serve is designed to nourish both body and mind.

How long have you been a chef?

I don't consider myself a professional chef in the traditional sense – my relationship with food is much deeper than culinary training. It's rooted in my childhood, watching my mum and grandmother cook incredible meals and lovingly serve our large family. From them, I learned that food is medicine, celebration, and community all at once.

How did you first get into cooking?

Cooking has been part of my life since childhood. Growing up in India, food was always at the centre of our lives. In South India, festivals and food are inseparable. Every celebration involves preparing traditional dishes from scratch, often served on banana leaves. It's not just cooking – it's ritual, it's science, and it's love.

My professional journey began about four years ago when we started serving our West Cumbrian community. Slowly it turned into a business when we realised how many people were craving real, unprocessed Indian food.

What was your first job in hospitality?

Dosa Chaska is my first venture in hospitality. Before this, I was into performing arts, fitness and a yoga teacher focused on holistic wellbeing. But I realised that no amount of yoga can counteract a diet full of ultra-processed food. So I brought the same mindfulness I taught on the mat into the kitchen. Dosa Chaska became a natural extension of my wellness practice - nourishing people from the inside out.

What is your signature dish?

Without question, our Masala Dosa. It's a complete meal in itself: a crispy, golden rice and lentil crepe naturally fermented for eight to 12 hours, filled with spiced potato masala, served with four house-made chutneys and fresh salad. What makes it special isn't just the taste – it's what it represents. It's gluten-free by default, packed with probiotics from fermentation, made with 50-plus whole food ingredients, and ready in minutes. It proves that fast food and real food aren't opposites.

What are your culinary ambitions?

To learn and educate – that healthy food doesn't have to be expensive, slow, or boring. I want to change the conversation around quick-service food.



Shubha Sachin, co-founder and creative head chef of culinary experience at Dosa Chaska



from the inside out



The café specialises in naturally fermented dosas and zero ultra-processed vegetarian food



Shubha's Uttapam recipe



Batter Ingredients
4 cups rice
1 cup urad dal
½ cup channa dal
A small handful of poha
2 tbsp fenugreek seeds
Water for soaking
Salt + hing (add only when making uttapam)

Batter Preparation
1. Soak (Overnight)
Wash well: soak rice, urad dal, channa dal, and fenugreek seeds overnight.
Soak poha for the last 20 minutes.
2. Grind
Grind urad dal smooth and fluffy.
Grind rice + channa dal + poha together.
Mix both batters well.
3. Ferment
Let ferment 8–12 hours in a warm place.

Toppings (Choose any)
Onions, spring onions, mixed peppers, grated carrots, cabbage, spinach
Sweet corn, olives, cherry tomatoes, coriander, herbs, fresh chillies
Optional: cheese, paneer, sauces

How to Make Uttapam
Add salt + hing to fermented batter
Heat tawa on medium, grease lightly
Pour one ladle of batter (keep it thick)
Add toppings, press gently
Drizzle oil or ghee around edges
Cook until golden, flip and cook topside

Serve With
Coconut chutney
Tomato chutney
Mint chutney
Sambar
Or enjoy it just as it is

