

Déjà brew in tea lounge

TNN | Aug 22, 2021, 06:00 IST

Kolkata: There are very few things as quintessentially Bengali as 'adda'. And, no 'adda' is complete without the ubiquitous 'ek bhar cha'. Be it a debate over football or politics, the cuppa is a must. While India's [tea](#) history dates back to the early 1800s, the thinker's potion — also known as 'chai' — has entered the lounge lexicon only in the past couple of decades with entrepreneurs giving the makeshift roadside shop a hip makeover.

Ambuja Neotia Hospitality established its flagship store Tea Junction at City Centre mall, Salt Lake, in 2004. The lounge offers multiple infusions — from bubble tea to masala chai — in its signature clay 'kulhar (a variation of the bhar)'. "We realised there were not many tea lounges in Kolkata even though 'adda' sessions over 'cha' are so popular in [Bengal](#). Thus began the journey of Tea Junction," said Nitin Kohli, director, Ambuja Neotia Hospitality.

Chai Break, a bootstrap startup that was launched at Chowringhee in 2011, is today a blockbuster hit among college-goers and young working professionals. It boasts 20 outlets across Kolkata, Kharagpur, Jamshedpur and Bhubaneswar. In addition to an array of flavoured brews such as lemon iced tea, peppermint tea, 'kadak adrak chai' and 'kesar chai', it also offers Indian, Chinese, Thai and Italian cuisines. Co-founder Aditya Ladsaria said the pandemic had compelled Chai Break to Hospitality

Established in 2000 as an integral part of the Oxford Bookstore in Park Street, Cha Bar has since been the go-to lounge for anyone who wishes to leaf through bestsellers while sipping some rejuvenating beverage.

Today, it offers more than 150 varieties of blend — from Moroccan mint and South African rooibos to decaf, green tea and Ayurvedic chai. "Whether one prefers a rich, full-bodied and strong flavour or a light and fragrant taste, Cha Bar has it all," said Nitin Warikoo, the head of business development.

Cha R Baak is another emerging [tea lounge](#) that aims to augment the Bengali 'adda' culture in a pocket-friendly ambience. From Darjeeling tea to Kashmiri 'kawa', the options are many. "We also host events to provide budding talents a platform," said co-owner Kaushik Chatterjee.

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