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University California of Riverside

Entry details

Entry Name:	Glasgow Residential Restaurant
Institution Name:	University California Riverside
Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>):	Kourtney Gilbert, Marketing and Communications Manager

Glasgow Dining’s South Asia Federation Dinner was designed to honor cultural heritage while advancing UC Riverside Dining’s commitment to sustainability. From intentional menu development to waste-conscious execution, environmental stewardship guided every decision. Approximately half of the menu featured vegetarian or vegan offerings, including fully plant-based dishes that reduced the event’s overall carbon footprint while celebrating authentic South Asian flavors. By integrating culturally meaningful cuisine with responsible sourcing and mindful operations, the SAF Dinner demonstrated how campus dining can foster belonging, education, and sustainability all within a single, impactful event experience.

Essay:

The South Asia Federation Dinner was a vibrant celebration of culture, flavor, and partnership. The menu was thoughtfully developed in close collaboration with UC Riverside’s South Asian Federation, ensuring the dishes reflected both authenticity and student voice. In the weeks leading up to the event, menu tastings were held with SAF representatives, creating space for feedback, dialogue, and refinement. This collaborative process strengthened cultural accuracy while building excitement and shared ownership of the experience.

Across all residential dining platforms, guests enjoyed a diverse lineup of South Asian dishes, including Tikka Paneer, Butter Chicken, Alu Chole, Potato Samosas, Pakora Chaat, and interactive Pani Puri. Sweet selections such as Sri Lankan Coconut Buns, Pistachio Ice Cream, and Rose Water Ice Cream provided a memorable finish. The menu balanced comforting favorites with plant-forward options, inviting exploration while honoring tradition.

Behind the scenes, Glasgow's entire Residential Dining team worked together to execute each dish with care and respect. The result was more than a themed dinner; it was a collaborative, immersive dining experience that celebrated heritage, fostered belonging, and brought the campus community together around a shared table.

Introduction:

The South Asia Federation Dinner theme was intentionally developed to move beyond a traditional themed meal and create a fully immersive cultural experience from early planning conversations to event-night execution, collaboration and cultural authenticity guided every decision. Campus partners and student leaders played an active role in shaping the menu, atmosphere, and programming to ensure the event felt meaningful and representative. Through thoughtful coordination, culinary precision, and experiential elements, the evening transformed Glasgow Dining into a vibrant celebration of South Asian heritage, demonstrating how residential dining can serve as both a cultural platform and a community-building space.

Essay:

From the earliest planning stages, collaboration shaped the event's direction. Residential Dining worked closely with UC Riverside's South Asian Federation, Residential Education, and campus partners to ensure the evening reflected cultural traditions with accuracy and respect. Student input guided not only the menu, but also the atmosphere and programming, creating a celebration that felt personal and meaningful to the community it represented.

The space came alive with culturally relevant music from a live DJ, themed mocktails, henna artistry, and student dance performances that shared the history and significance behind each tradition. The result was an evening where food, music, art, and storytelling intersected.

By centering culture, collaboration, and community engagement, the SAF Dinner demonstrated the transformative power of residential dining, proving that a campus meal can also be a moment of education, pride, and lasting connection.

Introduction:

The marketing behind Glasgow's Taste of South Asia event was designed to feel more like an experience than a traditional event promotion. From the vibrant, culturally inspired artwork to consistent messaging across UCR's Campus Events page, residential TV screens, Discord, and Instagram, the goal was to build excitement and pride across our community. What made it especially meaningful was the storytelling woven throughout the dining room. Each food platform featured signage sharing the history and cultural roots of the dishes, inviting students to learn while they dined.

Essay:

The marketing strategy for Glasgow's Taste of South Asia was intentionally crafted to create anticipation, drive attendance, and extend the event's cultural impact well beyond a single evening. Promotion was executed through a comprehensive, multi-channel campaign including UCR's Campus Events page, digital TV screens across residential communities, Discord, and Instagram, ensuring consistent visibility where our students live, dine, and engage.

What elevated this campaign was its focus on storytelling and partnership. Marketing did not stop at the entrance of Glasgow. Throughout the dining room, each food platform featured professionally designed menu signage highlighting the cultural origins and historical context of featured dishes. Students were not simply attending a themed dinner they were participating in a learning experience rooted in cultural appreciation.

Post-event engagement was equally strategic. Two collaborative Instagram Reels co-produced with the UCR South Asian Federation extended the celebration online. One captured the culinary craftsmanship and cultural

performances, while the second amplified authentic student interviews sharing their favorite dishes and experiences. This layered, student-centered marketing approach transformed the event into an immersive residential experience that fostered connection, cultural pride, and community belonging.

Introduction:

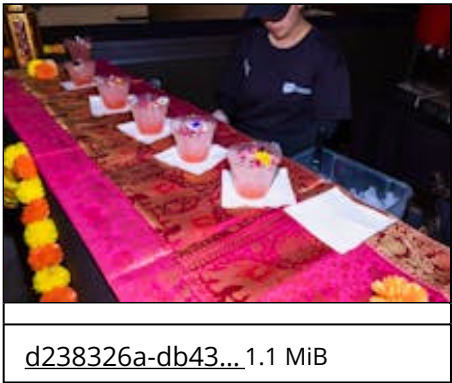
The South Asian Federation (SAF) Dinner saw an incredible turnout, welcoming 2,359 guests, well above Glasgow's typical daily attendance of 1,900–2,000. The energy in the room reflected not just strong promotion, but genuine excitement from our campus community. Feedback shared in person and through our Text-and-Tell program was overwhelmingly positive. Students described the event as "10/10," especially highlighting the desserts, and many asked for the rosewater and pistachio ice cream to become permanent features on our menu.

Essay:

The South Asian Federation Dinner was intentionally designed to celebrate culture while reflecting our commitment to environmental responsibility. Sustainability was not an afterthought, it was embedded into every layer of planning and execution. From the start, our culinary team built a menu where nearly 50% of offerings were vegetarian, including 20% fully vegan options, helping lower the event's overall carbon footprint while honoring traditional South Asian flavors. Ingredients were sourced locally and responsibly whenever possible, and beverage selections emphasized water and reduced-sugar options.

Operationally, energy-efficient kitchen equipment and mindful production planning helped minimize excess resource use. Reusable china, glassware, and service ware replaced single-use disposables, significantly reducing waste. Clearly labeled waste stations encouraged proper recycling and composting, while right-sized bins reduced contamination. Trayless dining further minimized food waste, and all viable food scraps were composted. Surplus food recovery efforts supported community partners, extending the event's impact beyond campus. Together, these efforts ensured the event honored both cultural heritage and environmental stewardship in meaningful, measurable ways.

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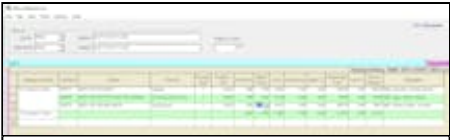
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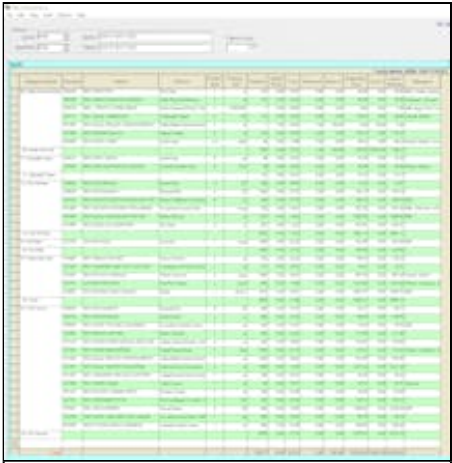
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SAF Dessert Me... 26 KiB



SAF Menu 2026 ... 125 KiB

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SAF 2026 Produ... 70 KiB

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