

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. Why should I choose Mahika Foods over established commercial brands?

**Answer:** Large commercial brands mass-produce in factories, often relying on chemical stabilizers and artificial additives to keep their products on shelves for a year. Mahika Foods is an independent startup built on transparency. We treat your food exactly like we treat our own family's meals. We choose small-batch care and authentic heritage over industrial shortcuts to give you pure, honest quality.

### 2. Do you use vinegar, tasting salts (MSG), or chemical preservatives?

**Answer: Strictly No.** We do not use a single drop of vinegar, chemical preservatives, artificial colors, or tasting salts to force flavor. We preserve our pickles completely naturally using time-tested methods: a precise salt balance, fresh lemon juice, and pure oil which acts as a natural protective seal. What you taste is 100% real, wholesome food.

### 3. Most non-veg pickles are rubbery and hard. Why is your meat so tender?

**Answer:** This unique texture is the result of months of extensive culinary research and kitchen trials. Commercial brands often over-fry meat to forcefully extend shelf life, which ruins the texture. We developed a timed, gentle slow-cooking method that cooks the meat perfectly, keeping our chicken and mutton soft, juicy, and beautifully infused with flavor.

### 4. I worry about the fishy ("neechu") smell in seafood pickles. How do you fix this?

**Answer:** Eliminating that unpleasant odor completely is our proudest specialty, perfected after countless kitchen trials. We use a traditional lemon-salt brining process to clean every batch. Our prawns are fully deveined, and our fish fillets are 100% skinless and boneless. This rigorous preparation ensures you get a clean, premium, and delicious coastal spice flavor.

### 5. What kind of meat and seafood cuts do you use in your pickles?

**Answer:** We never compromise on our ingredients by using low-grade meat scraps or frozen seafood. For our chicken pickles, we select only **100% fresh, lean chicken breast fillets**. For our prawns, we use **meaty, select 60-count size prawns**. We hand-inspect every single cut so you enjoy high-quality protein and a premium bite in every spoon.

### 6. Do you reuse the oil after deep-frying the meat?

**Answer: Never.** Reusing oil is a common way to cut costs, but it produces harmful compounds and ruins the clean taste of the spices. We maintain an unshakeable **"No Re-use of Oil" policy**. Every single batch is prepared with 100% fresh, premium-grade oil. It increases our preparation costs, but protecting your family's health is entirely non-negotiable for us.

### 7. What is the secret behind the consistency of your flavor?

**Answer:** Our taste is driven by a precise, mathematically tested kitchen formula, not guesswork. We spent months running kitchen experiments to perfect the exact weight ratios of our hand-ground Guntur spices, salt, and raw-processed ingredients. This strict cooking formula and precise temperature control guarantee that the jar you buy today tastes exactly as authentic and rich as the jar we made four years ago.

### 8. How do you maintain hygiene in your kitchen setup?

**Answer:** We maintain strict, gold-standard hygiene protocols from sourcing to sealing. Our kitchen operates with mandatory hairnets, gloves, sanitized stainless-steel equipment, and a meticulous washing cycle for every ingredient. Combined with our fresh oil policy, we ensure that Mahika Foods delivers the cleanest and safest food possible.

#### **9. Why does my order take an extra day or two to ship sometimes?**

**Answer:** Because we refuse to warehouse old inventory. We maintain a carefully managed stock made regularly in small batches to guarantee absolute freshness. If your item is available in the current batch, it goes out the same or next day. If a fresh batch is actively under prep in our kitchen, dispatch might take an additional 24 to 48 hours. We always prioritize real quality over rushed shipping.

#### **10. Why is there no refund if a delivery fails?**

**Answer:** Our pickles are freshly packed and contain zero chemical preservatives, making them highly sensitive to transit conditions. If a package is permanently returned due to an incorrect address or the buyer's unavailability, the food inside gets compromised. Because we strictly **never resell or restock returned food** for safety reasons, a failed delivery means total product wastage. Please ensure your delivery details are 100% correct.

#### **11. How do you handle orders for NRI customers who want to take pickles abroad?**

**Answer:** While we accept online payments, our direct courier tracking operates **strictly within India**. For our NRI community, we securely pack your jars in our premium leak-proof packaging (complete with secure induction seals) and **hand them over directly to your suggested international logistics partner or carrier operating inside India** to manage your overseas transit.

#### **12. How should I store the pickle once I open the packaging, and what is the shelf life?**

**Answer:** Because we add absolutely no artificial shelf-life extenders or chemicals, **we cannot give a blanket guarantee on a fixed duration**. Freshness and safety depend entirely on how the product is handled and stored. Detailed usage and storage instructions are printed clearly on every single label. For absolute safety, please follow these strict rules:

- **Store in Refrigerator:** Once you break the induction seal of our food-graded jar or open our 3-layer food cover pack, store the product inside your refrigerator strictly at **-5°C (minus five degrees)**.
- **Oil Floating Rule:** Always ensure the meat chunks stay completely submerged beneath the top floating oil layer to maintain a natural freshness barrier.
- **Zero Moisture:** Never use a wet spoon or an unclean utensil. Any introduction of moisture will instantly cause natural spoilage.