

American Dry Fruit Store, Mumbai

Store Size: 600 Square feet

Operating Since: 1932

Current Proprietor: Sameer Thakkar

Merchandise Mix: Dry-fruits, mithai and dry snacks (namkeen), dry fruit chocolates, mukhwas

Why is it popular: Dry fruits

"We started with our operations in 1932," says Sameer Thakkar, the proud owner of one of the oldest dry fruit stores in Mumbai called as American Dry Fruit Store. The name is not alien to any Mumbaikar who at one point of time at least would have stopped by, during any festive occasion or not on any regular day to buy quality dry fruit for his home or himself. Started by Late Shri. Hariram Jairam Mevawalla Thakkar, the store has earned a reputation over the years for the quality product that it has to offer. Say Thakkar, "My grandfather began this store as a small stall which was just about 50 sq.ft and gradually today we have expanded the same stall to a store of 600 sq.ft."

In terms of sharing information on the innovations added, Thakkar says, "Very recently we have launched

our online store where we have so far managed to generate a good response. Our products are very well known in the corporate world and they are used majority for gifting. Also, we have changed our display to make it more customer friendly and have adopted the pattern as followed by modern retailers wherein a customer is allowed to touch and feel the product before buying. Earlier we used to have a counter format where a sales person behind the counter would execute the order as placed by the customer but now the customer can freely walk in to the store and buy what he wants. It is more like what you would see for e.g. at the Croma outlets." Adding further, "We have also introduced a booklet which gives detailed information on the benefits of dry fruit consumption and the quantity to be consumed and also how they have to be stored for retaining freshness for a longer time. These booklets are given to all our customers." To make their presence felt in the modern retail stores as well, they have introduced their products in a canned form and the same assurance of the quality is guaranteed by them no matter where these cans would be sold from. The first store through which they have started reaching to their customers is Shoprite.

Talking about challenges they have faced over the years, "Each business has its challenges so I would not be able to pin point on any major challenge that we have faced but yes, in this business the margins are very low as compared to other FMCG products."

Thakkar does feel that the advent of modern retail stores poses a threat to them but then he is optimistic of the market growing because of them

hence he feels they are a blessing in disguise. "I would look the establishment of modern retail stores as a more positive move since the customer is getting to learn more about new products and also is in a position to compare prices in these outlets and stand-alone stores like us."

— Zainab Morbiwala