

KCIFT STUDENT MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

RUCHI CHAUHAN



PHD STUDENT, FOOD SCIENCE
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-MANHATTAN
IFT MEMBER SINCE 2023

Ruchi Chauhan is a PhD student in Food Science at KSU-Manhattan. She pursued her undergraduate and master's studies in Chemistry from the University of Delhi, India before joining the PhD program of the Food Science Institute at K-State in fall 2022. Her current research explores both starch and protein chemistry of hard wheat grains.

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED IN IFT?

I got to know about IFT during my graduate student orientation at the Food Science Institute (FSI) at K-State. I won a Bingo game during orientation night, & FSI gave me a IFT student membership as my prize! As a new graduate student in Food Science with a chemistry background, I wanted to expand my network within the food science community. IFT became the ideal platform to achieve this goal.



WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF FOOD?

I started a part-time job in the Animal Sciences & Industry department, K-State during the summer. I worked on the gelatinization & retrogradation properties of corn endosperm during that summer. That was when I became fascinated by the direct application of chemistry in food science..

FAVORITE IFT MEMORY

I loved being able to wander the 2023 IFT FIRST Food Expo this past year! I enjoyed the ice cream the most.



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DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVORITE MEMORIES CENTERED AROUND FOOD?

When I think about food, my mother always comes to mind. She always cooks my favorite dishes for me when I am home.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE ON A DEGREE IN FOOD SCIENCE AND/OR A FOOD SCIENCE-RELATED FIELD?

Both words "Food" and "Chemistry" mean a lot to me. I thought it would be a good idea to try to combine both my interests & food science gave me the perfect platform to explore both. My favorite course in food science so far has been Chemical Methods in Food Analysis. It was interesting to learn several food analysis practical techniques & their real-world application..



ARE THERE OTHER AREAS OF IFT THAT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN?

I connect & engage with specific online IFT Divisions, like Protein and Carbohydrate Divisions, so I can network with professionals to enhance my knowledge & skills. This past year, I participated in the 2023 IFT Protein Division "Proteins of the Future Challenge, and I was able to attend IFT FIRST 2023 to present our student competition ideas on an innovative plant-based protein alternative. I also volunteer for the IFT Women Resource Group (WRG), which has increasingly inspired me and given me a chance to connect & network with influential women in food science & technology. I'm also a student liaison for the Kansas City IFT Section, which has been helping me to grow, learn, and network with other food professionals in my local area.

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WHAT MOST SURPRISED YOU ABOUT FOOD SCIENCE?

Food science makes you accustomed to reading labels and always being fascinated by the food products you consume.



WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS POST GRADUATION?

I am expected to graduate in Fall 2025 with my PhD. I plan to pursue a career as a food chemist in industry, specializing in the development of nutritious and innovative food products.

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

My advice is to join IFT, seek mentors, network constantly, & attend events in your field of interest. Collaborations, reaching out, learning, & networking has helped me grow both personally & professionally. Attend meetings, webinars, or other online events, meet new people, & gather information to enhance your skills for a successful career.

LASTLY...WHAT'S YOUR GO-TO SNACK?



Lemon water and nuts!

