

Black Garlic Making

Viral Business Ideas series by Paisa Stack. A practical starter guide for India.

What is this business?

Black garlic is regular garlic that is slowly aged at 60-75°C and 70-90% humidity for 2-4 weeks. The Maillard reaction turns the cloves black, soft and sweet (like balsamic and tamarind). It is sold as a gourmet ingredient and health food.

Why it works in India right now

Very few Indian producers exist, while demand is growing from gourmet stores, health-food buyers, gyms, cafes and export. India is one of the world's largest garlic producers, so raw material is cheap and available year-round.

Who should start it

Home-based food entrepreneurs, farmers in garlic belts (MP, Rajasthan, Gujarat, UP), and anyone with Rs 1-3 lakh and patience for a 3-week cycle.

Investment needed (approx.)

Item	Approx. cost
Black garlic fermenter (10-20 kg/cycle)	Rs 60,000 - 1,50,000
Raw garlic for first 3 cycles	Rs 10,000 - 20,000
Packaging (jars, pouches, labels)	Rs 10,000 - 15,000
FSSAI registration + Udyam	Rs 500 - 3,000
Samples, photos, listing	Rs 10,000
Total	Rs 1 - 2 lakh

Step-by-step setup

- 1 Buy a dedicated black garlic fermenter (search 'black garlic fermenter machine' on IndiaMART; ask for a live demo video).
- 2 Choose single-clove (snow mountain) or large, firm, low-moisture bulbs. Avoid sprouted garlic.
- 3 Run 2-3 test batches at 70°C / 80% humidity for 15-21 days. Record weight loss and taste.
- 4 Dry for 3-5 days after fermenting to reach a chewy texture and longer shelf life.
- 5 Pack in airtight jars or nitrogen-flushed pouches. Typical shelf life is 6-12 months.
- 6 Make value-added SKUs: peeled cloves, black garlic paste, powder, and garlic honey.

Registrations and licences

- FSSAI Basic Registration (turnover under Rs 12 lakh) or State Licence above that
- Udyam (MSME) registration, free
- GST registration once goods turnover crosses Rs 40 lakh, or earlier if selling on marketplaces
- Trademark for your brand name (optional, recommended)

Costing, pricing and margin

About 10 kg raw garlic gives 6-7 kg black garlic. At Rs 150/kg raw cost, input is about Rs 250 per finished kg including power. Wholesale to stores at Rs 1,200-1,800/kg and retail at Rs 2,000-3,000/kg (often sold in 100-250 g jars at Rs 299-699). Gross margin is typically 60-80% before marketing.

Where to find your first customers

- Gourmet and organic stores in metros
- Restaurants, cafes and cloud kitchens (send free 100 g samples to chefs)
- Amazon, Flipkart and your own Instagram store
- Gyms, nutritionists and Ayurveda clinics
- Export buyers in the Gulf (later, with an IEC code)

Risks and how to avoid them

- Mould from wrong humidity: log every batch
- Buyers don't know the product: lead with recipes and tasting samples
- Power cuts mid-cycle: use an inverter or a machine with memory restart

Your first 30-45 days

- Week 1: register FSSAI and Udyam, order the machine
- Week 2-4: run test batches, fix your recipe
- Week 5: shoot product photos, make Instagram and marketplace listings
- Week 6: send 20 samples to chefs and stores, follow up after 5 days

Need help setting it up?

Udyam, GST, FSSAI registration, project costing and tax planning for your new business. Book a 40-minute call with a Chartered Accountant at paisastack.com (Rs 500). More free guides:

paisastack.com/business-guides

Disclaimer: Costs, prices and margins are indicative estimates for 2026 and vary by city, scale and supplier. Verify machine quotes, licence rules and local demand before investing. This guide is for education, not financial or legal advice.