

Half-hearted lockdown diaries



OF JILAPIWALLAS AND JILAPIWALLIS

The story of the humble jilapi starts with the Turkic invaders, even before the Mughals took over the subcontinent. A flour based twirled dessert, the jilapi is dunked in sugary syrup and devoured by the tens, and is the most sought-after sweets during iftar.

It always remained a difficult dessert to make however, and almost every one of us left it to the professionals, until recently, with Ramadan amidst this lockdown and social distancing, the iftar or iftar hopping and shopping as we knew it, has taken a massive hit and with it, changed our habit of standing in lines for jilapis and halims.

Thus, making jilapis at home is the new 'hashtag trending thing.' Thanks to YouTube cooking channels and recipe sites, making jilapi nowadays is almost like making *piyaju* — the quintessential iftar lentil croquets.

If you are on any social media platform 10 minutes prior to iftar time, you would see thousands of types of jilapi taking centre stage; some look like chicken innards,

some like a flattened bird's nest, while some are close to the real deal.

Everyone is posting their awesome jilapi pictures with great satisfaction; irrelevant of its shape or taste. We humans are an extremely spirited and adaptable race. Therefore, be it the jilapi (crunchy or soggy) or this half-hearted lockdown, we will win them all.

THE MOST MISSED ONES ARE THE BARBERS



Almost a month and a half without a grooming trip to the salon or beauty parlours have taken a toll on all of us. Slowly but steadily, we are starting to resemble our Neanderthal cousins — bushy eyebrows, thick moustaches, and an odd beard or two sticking out from under the chin, hair growing over the ears in unmanageable messes, when even the 'messy look' looks sorry.

Nails are growing out like eagle claws and sun patches are covering up the once perfectly polish face, grey hair is ruling the once shiny auburn locks. Men and women have never looked this bad in recent years. Well me, I have been calling my salon almost every week, if by any chance they are open and doing titbits of home grooming, but my husband's state is grave with his unruly mane, sticking up like they got a jolt of static electric shock.

He has been running after me to trim his hair with kitchen scissors due to the lack of a proper grooming one. Thus, when he saw our driver sporting a new haircut from the random roadside barber, he grabbed a bottle of disinfectant and ran to him for a trim and now, he is happily convinced that a Tk 30 cut is as good as his specialised barber.

DESHI FRUITS FOR IMMUNITY

Java apple, or as the good old Bengal calls it, *jamrul*, is one of my May favourites. Crunchy, watery, slightly sweet *jamruls* are the green jades of the fruit world and are in stiff competition with another Baishakh delight, the green mango.

Unripe mangoes, which are in season for a longer period of time are tangy, sour and sweet, and can be made into a drink, a chutney, or stirred in mustard for achaars; while *jamrul*, in season for two to

three weeks, is almost bland in comparison. Yet, the cool, insipid juicy fruit has a subtle sweetness to it that cannot be denied. Thus, *jamruls*, never a hot favourite *deshi* fruit among the masses, always had a special second preference stand after green mango for me.

Wood apple, guava, water melon — all of which are harvested between late April till mid-May and then in June, the king of all *deshi* fruits, ripe sweet mangoes, are reigning alongside blackberries, another short-lived fruit of Bengal.

I love the gooseberries, the Bengal currants or *koromcha*, the pale yellow *orhor* — all of which are in season from early to mid-Bengal summer. The *deshi* fruit platter



is so varied and packed in vitamins and antioxidants that they are nature's way of telling us to try these immune boosters. So, skip the one apple a day and try our *deshi* seasonal bounties.

Don't forget to read our listicle of online shopping in this week's Star Life-style. Remember, buy *deshi* this Eid, and support our local designers.

—RBR

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Your life could be in upheaval. Help co-workers with difficult projects. Hard work and dedication will pay off. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Stress can lead to other problems. Don't let anyone pressure you. Opportunities for travel are evident. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Spend time with loved ones. Make time for yourself. Stick to basics. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Beware of misunderstandings. Don't make hasty decisions. Creative hobbies will be good outlets. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Children can cause problems. Friends will have your back. Deceit is evident. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Things can change at any moment. Stay on top of things. Your partner may not be trustworthy. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Rely on your partner. Avoid making changes at home. Offer suggestions for fundraising events. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Don't let emotions cloud your objectives. Be clear with loved ones. Start saving for a rainy day. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Make time for family. Promote your own interests. Real estate investments will pay off. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Someone may betray you. Don't divulge secrets. Anger may cause you grief. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Act on accurate information. Reach out to loved ones. Try not to stress out too much. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Learning new things will be most stimulating. Don't gamble unnecessarily. Get to the bottom of things this week. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.