

THE FEARLESS OLIVE BY REEMA ISLAM



Awash in yellow and a burst of colours as spring arrives in full bloom, I look at some recipes that incorporate some of the Falguni elements of this season. Greet the change of season with a healthy and traditional menu. Let the marigolds adorn your house, your hair and some on your platter too!

Ginger-carrot soup

The 11th-century Khonar Bochon (Khona's aphorisms) on agricultural themes noted that ginger was one of the main ingredients to any Falguni menu. As the dying days of winter end, this spice warms up the body and is a cure to an immense list of ailments. So here is my ode to this amazing spice which is consumed by millions of Bangladeshis!

A season for carrots and one for ginger, mix the two up and surprise your guests with this new taste on the first day of Falgun.

Ingredients:

Carrots about ½ kg
Ginger thickly diced about half a cup
¼ the amount of chicken stock to the soup that the carrots produce
Salt, pepper and white vinegar to taste
Pinch of dried basil, dill and rosemary
Olive oil about 2-3 tbsp

Method:

For the chicken stock, boil a whole chicken with salt, white pepper, celery and a dash of garlic paste.

Boil the carrots with a sprig of celery and once softened, blend the mixture to required smoothness. Add the stock and all but 1 pinch ginger then boil for 5 minutes. Fry the remaining pinch of ginger in olive oil for about 2 minutes until slightly browned then add all this to the soup and cook for another 5 minutes before adding the rest of the spices. Cook until the aroma spreads in the kitchen.

Serving:

Serve it with a sprig of mint on top, Dhaka poneer and brown bread.



Health focus:

Ginger has a never ending list of remedies to even being an active aphrodisiac. Yet, the form above is the best way to rid those spring chills and flus and ginger is also an active absorber of vitamins. So stock up on your ginger and fight those change-of-weather ills!

Blooming Bruschetta

King Tut was sent off to his eternal sleep with sacks full of this ancient spice found all over North Africa and the South European coun-

Spring delights

tries, up to India. Known to have been mixed with a grape juice by the Ancient Romans, 'shorisha' is now such an integral part of our cuisine. Today we add a dash of colour to our Falguni menu with flowers in the kitchen and on our plates. This recipe is very simple so it brings out the flavours of the mustard flowers and adds that touch of spring to something we eat everyday: eggs!

Note: Please use organic flowers as the ones sold at flower shops may have pesticides sprayed on them for longevity, which are especially harmful.

Ingredients:

4 boiled eggs (with some salt)
2 carrots boiled and roughly mashed (boiled with pinch of salt, pepper and celery)
1 cup boiled flat/hyacinth beans or shim (boiled with pinch of salt, pepper and celery)
Few mustard flowers
Pinch of salt, pepper, dried basil leave and mint leaves
Whole grain bread (available in shops)

Method:

Dice the boiled egg and on a piece of toasted bread cut in a perfect square, add one layer of mashed egg. Sprinkle some pepper and crumbled mustard flowers on this. Add the layer of carrots and then the beans on top. Sprinkle salt, pepper, basil and mint leaves and a generous squeeze of lemon. Add the crumbled mustard flowers on top and you may heat this in the oven to give it a crunchy texture.

Serving:

Serve it on a plate strewn with mustard flowers and enjoy the hint of spice that these yellow flowers add to a simple snack.

Health focus:

A rich source of minerals, mustard flowers help oxygenate the body with the extra iron required to empower the red blood cells' capacity to carry oxygen in the body.

Marigold and vegetable casserole

One of Ukraine's national symbols, considered the flower of the dead by Aztecs and considered to be a sign of Falgun in Bangladesh, the evergreen 'gada phool' or marigold joins us on our platters in this recipe.

Ingredients:

2 sweet potatoes (boiled with salt and pepper till partly soft)
1 zucchini sliced in round discs
Half cup Dhaka poneer, crumbled
4-5 marigolds or gada phool either sun dried or dried in an oven and crumbled
Salt and pepper to taste
Pinch of basil, mint leaves, squeeze of lemon
3-4 tbsp olive oil

Method:

In a casserole dish grease the base with olive oil then slice the potatoes in discs and place them as a bedding. Add layer of all the zucchini discs. Sprinkle some oil, salt and pepper on this. Lay the crumbled cheese on top of this and generously squeeze the lemon on top of this and also sprinkle of pepper, basil, mint leaves and a little more salt. Sprinkle remainder of oil and stick it in a preheated oven (at 180 C for 10 minutes) at 200 C for 15-20 minutes until the top layer is slightly browned and a sizzling sound is emanating.

Serving:

Serve it with the dried marigold on top as it adds a zing to this already sweet and sour dish and also adds much needed color to this filling variation of a Falguni snack.

Health focus:

Marigolds or gada phool are not just colourful when sprinkled over food in their dry form, but these flowers also contain carotene, which provides us with the much needed vitamin A, a winner for good eye-sight.

Photo: Collected