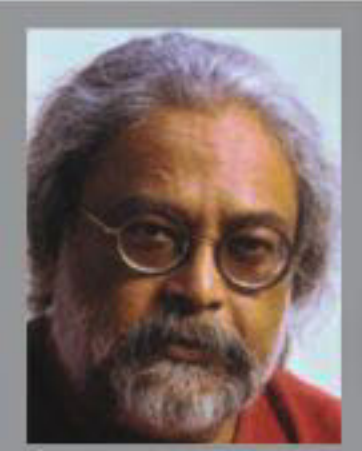


AAPPAYON
BY SHAWKAT OSMAN



DESHI VEG DELIGHTS

THE neem tree has diverse use in the traditional medicine and thus earned its just designation - 'Sorvo Rog Nivaroni' (the one that can cure all ailments). Neem's traditional use is based on its detoxifying benefits that help maintain healthy circulatory, digestive, respiratory, and urinary systems.

Neem is one of the most powerful blood purifiers and detoxifiers in Ayurvedic medical usage today. Scientific studies indicate that neem boosts the immune system by energising lymphocytes (type of white blood cells) to respond to infection and other challenges to the body's immunity. Young neem leaves contain 60 percent water, 23 percent carbohydrates, 7 percent proteins, more than 3 percent minerals and 1 percent fat and have been used as a tonic and astringent that promotes wound healing.

Sautéed neem leaves

Ingredients:

2 cups of tender neem leaves
½ tsp mustard oil
½ tsp salt
½ tsp turmeric powder

Method:

Heat oil to a smoking point. Toss in the salt and stir until they dissolve. Chuck in the turmeric powder and mix up. Immediately throw in the leaves-sauté stirring all the time for few seconds.

Transfer leaves to a serving dish. Longer cooking time will strip the leaves off its therapeutic values.

Tip:

Dry fry the neem leaves, crumple them between your palms, and sprinkle them over any vegetable item like fried aubergine; you get an instant bitter (teeta) dish.

Pointed gourd dolma

In European cuisine 'dolma' is an edible leaf (e.g. grape leaf or cabbage) cooked with a filling of ground meat, herbs, or rice. In Bangladesh and West Bengal it is stuffed vegetables. The word 'dolma' (plural: dolmades), is from the Greek process of wrapping food in grape leaves, to cook. We term stuffed vegetables as dolma, because it is convenient to do so for stuffed leaves already had a name in Bangla: paturi.

40 Servings

Ingredients:

40 (2 kg) pointed gourd (potols/parval)
250g split peas (boot'er daal), soaked, boiled and ground to a firm paste (daal paste)
8 tbsp coconut grate (½ coconut)
1 cup coconut milk, 1st extract
2 cups coconut milk, 2nd extract
3 cups coconut milk, 3rd extract
200g raisins
4 tbsp ghee
8 tsp garam mosla powder
1+1 tsp ginger paste
1 + 1 tsp sugar
1 tsp cumin seeds
4 tsp cumin powder
1 kg yoghurt
10 green cardamom pods, gently cracked
6 bay leaves (tejpata)



15 green chillies
Paste of ½ tsp
Turmeric powder
2+2 tsp red chilli powder
1 tsp + 1 tsp + 2 tsp salt
6 tbsp + 2 tbsp soya oil

Method:

Scrape out the outer membrane of the potol's rind with a very sharp knife (do not peel the rind). Heat 6 tbsp oil in a wok; when hot, toss in the following: daal paste, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 tbsp ginger, green chilli paste, 2 teaspoon red chilli, raisins, coconut grate, 4 teaspoon cumin powder and green cardamom.

Cook stirring and scraping constantly with a rubber spatula/wooden khunti, until

the raw smell of ginger fades away, (say after 5 minutes) and the mixture emits a pleasing aroma. Transfer cooked daal paste to a bowl and set aside.*

Heat 2 tablespoon oil in a wok; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt, and chuck in the potols (pointed gourd). Sauté them until they become a few shades darker, (overcooking will wrinkle the rind). Strain out the potols from the wok, and set aside to cool.

When potol reaches room temperature, top and tail them. With the tip of a sharp knife slash a lengthwise slit alongside the middle section of the potol. Press slit. With a

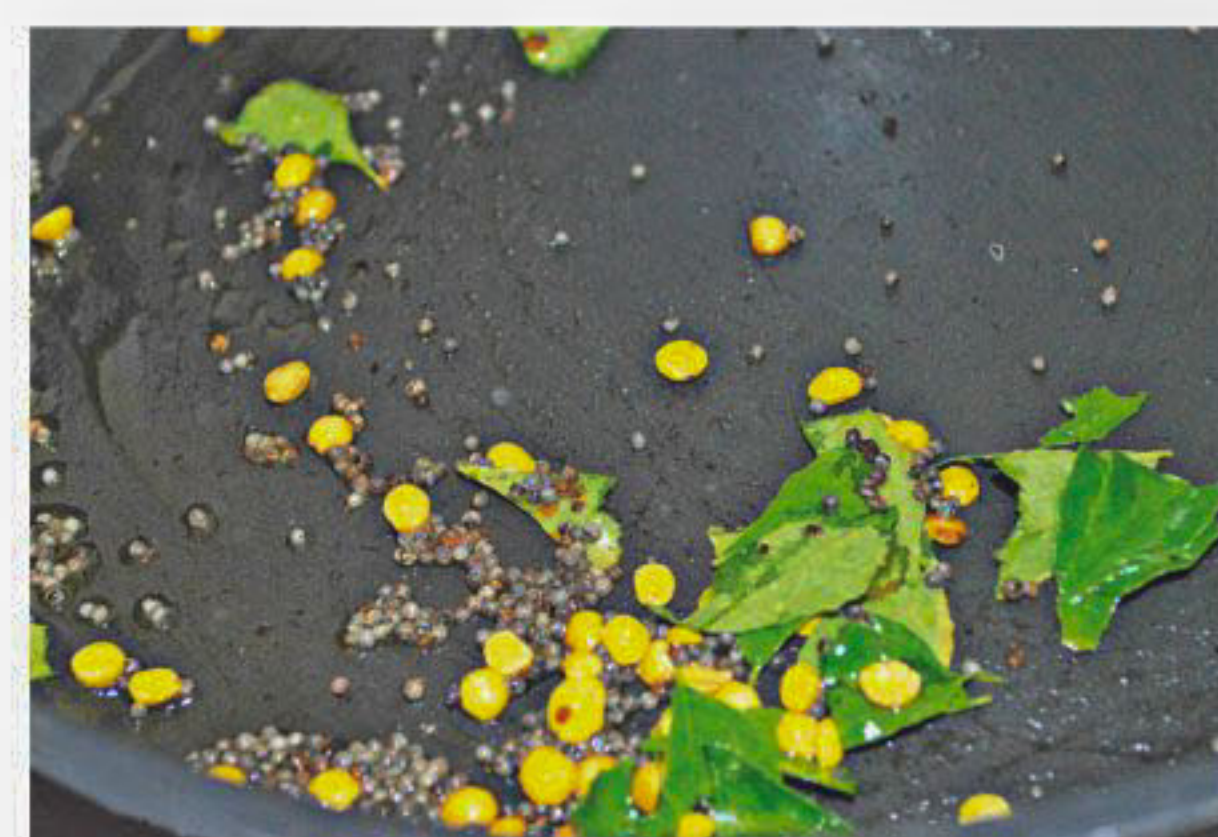


'khaishsha'. This recipe uses the dried form of the broad bean seeds.

The dried beans are not a daal, through other split/un-split dried beans, such as 'rajma' (kidney beans) and 'moong beans' (green gram) are called daals. Technically daal is the split halves of legumes.

Ingredients:

250g dry broad bean seeds
2 bay leaves (tejpata)
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp cumin powder
10 green chillies, chopped
2 tsp ginger paste
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 cup vegetable stock



teaspoon scoop out the seeds and discard them.

Stuff the potols with the cooked daal paste*, press to close the slit. Arrange them on a serving dish, the slashed side facing down. Pour the coco-sauce (recipe given below) over them, and serve.

Coconut sauce:

Heat ghee in a pan, toss in the following: bay leaves, cumin seeds, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 tablespoon ginger, turmeric powder, 2 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon red chilli. Sauté stirring vigorously until spice releases its flavour.

Pour in: yoghurt, coconut milk (1st 2nd & 3rd extract). Mix up, bring it to a boil and cook for 5 minutes. Pour sauce over the cooked potol. Sprinkle with garam mosla.

Dried beans curry

The seeds of the broad beans called 'sheem bichi' in Bangla and the dried form is called

2 tsp salt (optional if stock is unsalted)

Method:

Soak the dry beans overnight in enough water. Boil the soaked beans to tenderness, cool and then peel off the dark skins and discard. You will now have tender beans ready for cooking. Heat oil in a wok, when smoking hot, toss in: bay leaves and cumin seeds. Cook undisturbed for a few seconds. Chuck in the green chillies and cook for a minute. Add the following: beans and cumin powder, turmeric powder, ginger, salt (optional) and the stock. Bring contents to a boil, and cook until beans are ready and flavoured with the spices.

Note: If you want thicker gravy, take out 2 tablespoon of cooked beans and grind them to a smooth paste. Merge this paste with the cooking gravy, and mix up to assimilate.