

Bori

These days you can buy commercially made "boris" in all grocery shops. Those were the days when the ladies of the village would make the 'bori' at home and sun-dry them in the 'lepa ou'than' (mud washed farm-yard). It was the fun-job of the small children to chase the crows away from the drying 'boris', with their slings, toy bows and arrows. The sun-dried 'boris' keeps for months if kept airtight and cool. The 'boris' are made to be cooked with vegetables (see recipe below) or fish.

Ingredients:

500g grass pea (khesari daal) or black gram (mashkolai daal)
 ½ tsp salt
 1 tsp cumin seeds
 3 tbsp ginger paste
 3 tsp red chilli powder
 3 tbsp coriander powder
 1 cup poppy seeds (posto dana)
 1 tsp salt
 1 tsp garam masla powder

Method:

Soak any one of the two daals overnight. Next morning drain the daal and place them in a food processor and work them into a fine paste-like consistency. In a mixing bowl, combine the following: salt, cumin, ginger, red chilli powder, coriander and daal paste.

Blend in enough water to make this mixture into a pliable paste similar to pancake dough. Spread a muslin cloth over a large flat platter; spread out the poppy seeds to cover the muslin. Scoop up one ladle full of the dough and pour 2 table-spoons amount of the dough on top of the poppy seeds, at regular intervals. Keep 2 cm space between the dough (boris). Cover with a wire mesh and let them dry under the sun. Once dried reserve these 'boris' sealed in an airtight container. Will keep for 3 months.

New and old potato gravy

Both new and old potatoes are used in this rather elaborate "aalu'r dom" recipe. It boasts of all the classic Bengali flavours of mustard, panch phoron, and posto.

Ingredients:

500g new potatoes
 500g old potatoes
 ¼ cup ghee
 ¼ cup mustard oil
 6 dry red chillies
 2 tsp panch phoron
 1 cup onion, chopped
 ¼ cup garlic, crushed
 4 cardamom pods, gently cracked
 6 cloves
 2.5 cm long cinnamon stick
 2 tbsp poppy seeds

(Posto dana) paste
 1 tbsp mustard paste
 ½ kg yoghurt, whisked with
 2 tsp cornstarch
 1 tsp turmeric powder
 10 green chillies, chopped
 2 tsp red chilli powder
 2 ½ tsp salt
 ½ cup cilantro, chopped

Method:

Boil new potatoes, keep the skin on, and cut into halves or wedges. Boil old potatoes, peel off their skins, and break them into small pieces. Heat oil and ghee in a wok, toss in dry red chillies and as soon as they acquire colour, fling in the panch phoron. After few seconds, stir in the following: onion, garlic, cardamom, clove and cinnamon.



Sauté stirring vigorously until onion turns red. Add: poppy seed paste and mustard paste. Cook stirring constantly until they release their flavour.

Next stir in the following: yoghurt, turmeric powder, green chilli, red chilli and salt. As soon as the liquid starts simmering at the edges chuck in the potatoes. With a wooden khunti/spatula, swirl the potatoes till they are coated with the yoghurt gravy. Heat through, and serve with chopped cilantro sprinkled on top.

Cottage cheese kofta curry

Ingredients:

1 kg fresh cottage cheese (chana)
 1 tsp garlic paste
 ½ tsp ginger paste

3 tbsp corn/arrowroot flour
 ½ tsp nutmeg, grated
 2 tbsp onion, finely chopped
 2 tbsp cilantro paste
 4 cups ghee
 1 cup onion, sliced
 1 cup plain yoghurt
 2 tbsp onion paste
 1 tbsp garlic paste
 ½ tsp ginger paste
 3 tbsp poppy seed paste
 2 tbsp almond paste
 ½ tsp coriander powder
 2 tsp and 3 tsp salt
 1 cup milk
 3 cups boiling water
 3 tomatoes cut into



kitchen paper to finish draining. Retain fat.*

When onions get to room temperature, grind with one tablespoon full of water to a fine brown paste (baresta paste). In a glass mixing bowl, merge this ground baresta paste with the plain yoghurt, whisk to assimilate them properly, set aside.**

In the ghee remaining in the wok*, add the following: 2 tablespoon onion paste, 1 tablespoon garlic paste, ½ tablespoon ginger paste. Sauté stirring vigorously until the spice releases its aroma. Then stir in: poppy seed paste and almond paste. Sauté stirring constantly until change of colour. Pour milk into the wok, and sprinkle with coriander powder. Mix thoroughly, and lead contents to a gentle

boil.

Stir in the yoghurt-baresta mixture ** and 3 cups boiling water. Mix up and cook until the gravy thickens. Now chuck in the tomato and cook until the tomatoes are soft and the stir in 3 tsp salt. Take wok off the flame and stir in the hung yoghurt, mix well. Pour this sauce over the fried koftas and serve.

Aubergine curry (kalia)

Ingredients:

1 kg aubergine
 ½ litre yoghurt, whisked
 ½ cup mustard oil
 3 tbsp ghee
 10 green cardamoms
 15 cloves
 2 five centimetre long cinnamon
 1 tsp ginger paste
 2 tsp red chilli powder
 ½ tsp turmeric powder
 3 tsp salt

Method:

Slit the aubergine length wise up to the base of the stalk make several slits and do not disturb the stalk keep it intact so that it can keep the slit pieces together. Shallow fry the aubergines in hot oil until they are cooked; put them into the whisked yoghurt. Let them soak.

In the meantime prepare the temper - heat the ghee and toss in: cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon; sauté for few seconds and add ginger, red chilli, turmeric and salt. Transfer the 'yoghurt-aubergine' to the cooking spices and bring it to a gentle simmer for a few minutes and serve hot.

Photo: collected

