

TANGY & HEALTHY
BY ASTHMA AZIZ



A twist to iftar traditions

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is about restraint and sacrifice. This time of the year also brings special culinary traditions and memorable meals. It is important to control the temptation of over-



Starting with something light, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and taking plenty of fluids, makes for a tasty and healthy iftar. While some rich iftar dishes have become common tradition, I am sharing some lighter and more unusual options you can try this Ramadan.

MANGO ICED TEA

Ingredients:

1½ cup mango pulp
2 to 3 black tea bags
4 cups water
½ or ¾ tsp lemon juice (or according to taste)
Sugar as required
Mint leaves for garnishing

Method:

Puree the pulp in a blender and refrigerate. Boil water, remove from heat and add tea bags. Cover and leave for 5 to 7 minutes. Take out tea bags and keep tea in the fridge

until cold. Take out mango puree and tea from the fridge and put in a blender. Add lemon juice and sugar. Blend together till smooth. Serve in tall glasses with ice cubes. Garnish with mint leaves.

DATE ROLLS

Dates are an iftar staple taken at the start of iftar, and are naturally sweet and full of nutrients. Although diabetics should still be aware of their sugar consumption, a measured serving will satisfy your sweet tooth without any harm.

Ingredients:

½ tsp ghee (clarified butter)
¾ cup finely chopped dates (deseeded)
1 tbsp chopped almonds
1 tbsp chopped pistachio
1 tbsp chopped walnuts
2 tbsp sesame seeds or poppy seeds (for coating)

Method:

Heat ghee in a small non-stick pan. Add dates and cook over low heat, stirring continuously, for 5 to 7 minutes or till they turn into a soft lump. Remove from heat and add in almonds, pistachio and walnuts. Mix well. Divide into six equal portions and shape each portion into a roll. Coat each roll with the poppy or sesame seeds, and refrigerate to set.

PALAK (SPINACH) PAKORA

While fried iftar starters are very common, they should be taken in moderation to avoid indigestion. Some iftar pakoras, including this one, can be baked instead of fried, as a healthier option.

Ingredients:

1 cup besan (grind chickpeas coarsely at home to make it tasty)
1 or 1½ cup spinach (finely chopped)
1 onion (medium size, chopped)
1 tsp ginger (chopped)
1 green chilli (chopped)
1 tsp fennel seed powder
¼ to ½ tsp red chilli powder
1 tsp coriander powder
1 tsp cumin powder
A pinch asafetida (hing)
2 tbsp sesame seeds
½ or 1 cup water
Salt to taste
Oil for frying

Method:

For fried pakora -

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Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel
Food prepared by Dhaba, Dhanmondi

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