

Check salt and adjust seasoning. Drizzle with lemon juice and sprinkle with cilantro.

RUI MACHER GHATA

Rui or rohu is the most sought after fish after hilsa. The size can be as big as a metre long, 'paka rui'. It represents the fish kingdom in all our celebrations, and is judged as the most coveted gift. Its Latin nomenclature is in praise of its reddish (rohit) tint. Ghata is a jumble (a preparation where the ingredients are 'half-mashed' and merged), made with all types of fish and vegetables. We are a straight forward nation and love to keep basic in matters of terms and nomenclature, so a jumble (ghata) is a jumble to us.

Ingredients



- 1 rui fish, steaks
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 4 tbsp oil
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1½ tsp cumin powder
- 2 tsp gorum mosla powder
- 2 tejpata
- 1 tbsp ginger paste
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 3 tsp salt
- 6 potatoes cut into fine julienne

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- 2 aubergine, cut into small pieces
- 1 cauliflower broken into small floweret
- 2 carrots cut into fine julienne
- 5 green chillies, chopped

Method

Fry fish steaks in oil, until crisp. Strain out and let cool. Once the steaks are cool enough to handle, peel off the skin, and de-bone the fish. Flake the flesh, and set aside. Heat oil in a korai/wok. Toss in: cumin seeds and tejpata. Sauté for few seconds, lower heat and add all the vegetables and green chilli. Sauté for 20 minutes and then drizzle with ghee. Stir everything with a wooden khunti, and then stir in the following: fish, ginger, cumin powder, turmeric, red chilli, salt and ½ cup water. Bring to a boil.

Cover with a lid, lower the flame and cook until the vegetables are tender. Lightly smash the vegetables with the khunti and combine all the ingredients into a jumble.

CHITOL KOOFTA

Chitol fish has been eulogised in Ancient Indian literature as Chitrafala - as pretty as a picture; it is truly a beautiful specimen, all silver with a 'feather' running from the tip of its tail all along its underside.

The flesh is succulent and rich with soft fat. The hump is quite bony, therefore more often than not ground to a paste to be made into koofta/fish balls. The mashed fine bones lend to the rich taste and give the kooftas a spongy body, much relished by the gourmet. The remaining part that is the 'paytee' or the belly section has large thick bones with large amount of fatty meat in between. The paytee is good for bhuna.

Ingredients

- 1kg chitol fish hump (gada)
- 1½ tsp ginger, minced
- 2 tsp garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp onion, minced
- 3 tbsp cilantro, minced
- 6 green chillies, minced

- 1½ tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg, grated
- ½ cup mustard oil
- 1 cup red onion, sliced
- 4 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tsp tomato puree
- 2 tsp ginger paste
- 3 tsp garlic paste
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ½ cup cilantro, chopped

Method

Scoop out the flesh from the hump. Retain the skin. Pound the flesh in a mortar, and take out the big visible bones, set flesh aside. In a mixing bowl, combine the following: minced ginger, minced garlic, minced onion, minced cilantro, minced green chilli, 1½ tsp salt, nutmeg, and de-boned flesh. Knead to a soft paste. Set aside for 30 minutes.

Fill the skin with this spiced fish-paste and shape it into a baton; the size of the baton will depend on the size of the skin. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a korai/wok and shallow fry fish baton on all sides. Cook until the skin becomes crispy.

Transfer the baton to a chopping board and diagonally slice it into 2½ cm cubes. Set aside.

Add the remaining oil to be korai/wok; lob in the sliced red onions, sauté until translucent.

Now add the following: ginger paste, garlic paste, red chilli powder, kasuri methi, coriander powder, cumin powder, 1 tsp salt, turmeric powder, 2 tbsp water. Sauté stirring vigorously for 20 minutes.

Next, stir in: chopped tomato and tomato puree. Cook until tomatoes disintegrate. Pour in 3 cups of water and bring to a boil. Drop in the cubed fish pieces and cook until gravy reduces by ¼ of its volume. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve.

Photo: Collected

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