



DESHI MIX
BY SALINA PARVIN



Kochu! (You can say that again...)

Taro, or the humble 'kochu' as we know it, is versatile – if not anything else. Although cynics will pursue their argument --poison food-- others will vouch for its taste and the variation this can offer to a Bengali lunch, or dinner. Come to think of it, 'kochu' can serve just well as a snack! This week, our recipe columnist Selina Parveen puts the spotlight on this famous vegetable, but of course with her own little, magical twist.

OL KOCHUR CHIPS (ELEPHANT FOOT YAM)

Elephant foot yam is known more popularly in Bangladesh as 'ol kochu.' It tastes a lot like sweet potatoes and is a healthy alternative to regular potatoes - high in vitamin B6, omega 3 fatty acids, high in fibre and minerals like minerals like copper, selenium, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium.

Ol kochu grows abundantly in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and in other Southeast Asian countries. In Bangladesh it is used mostly in curries and mashed forms, and rarely as pickles.

The leafy part of the elephant foot yam is also eaten as a green vegetable and is called 'ol shaak.'

Ingredients

250g elephant foot yam, washed and sliced
1 tsp red chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tbsp lemon juice
Salt per taste
Oil for frying
A few coriander leaves and lemon wedges for garnish

Method

Uniformly mix the elephant foot yam with the rest of the spice powder, lemon juice and salt in a bowl. Marinate the yam slices for 20-30 minutes. Shallow fry the slices in oil in a flat pan. Drain the yam chips on paper tow-

els to remove excess oil. Garnish with coriander leaves and lemon wedges; serve hot.



MAAN KOCHUR MALAIKARI (TARO ROOT IN COCONUT MILK GRAVY)

The maan kochu or pani kochu (taro root), is a tropical root also known as colocasia or alocasia, the corn of which is edible. It is a seasonal vegetable, available widely during monsoon.

Maan kochur malaikari remains one of the most favourite dishes in the Bengali household. The high content of carbohydrates, proteins, minerals and vitamins make taro root with high nutritional value.

Ingredients

1 large maan kochu (taro root)
Salt per taste
10 gooseberries (amlakis)
1 tbsp tamarind pulp
2 tbsp ghee
1 tsp turmeric powder
2 tsp red chilli powder
2 tbsp ginger paste
1 tsp garam masala powder
2 cups coconut milk

Method

With a sharp knife cut out the rough outer rind of the maan kochu. Slice it into 4 pieces. Bring water to a boil in a big pan. Boil maan kochu, 4 tsp salt, amlakis and tamarind pulp until the kochu is slightly tender.

Strain the kochu and cut into 2½ cm-long pieces. Discard the water along with amlakis and tamarind pulp. Heat ghee in a wok; add the kochu pieces, and sauté. Add turmeric powder, red chilli powder, ginger paste and garam masala powder.

Sauté the mix, stirring for a minute. Pour coconut milk. Mix well and bring to a boil. Sprinkle salt. Mix well and simmer, stirring occasionally until kochu is spongy and ready to eat.

