

steam-baking. Instead of steam-baking these can also be baked in oven.

Sometimes rural women bake them in earthen pots.

## PALM AND COCONUT LADDU

'Laddus' – the quintessential snack for every festival – are ball-shaped sweets popular in the Indian subcontinent and Bangladesh.

Common ingredients used for laddu are chickpea flour, wheat semolina and ground coconut. These are combined with sugar and other flavourings, cooked in ghee and moulded into ball shapes. I made these with fresh coconut, palm, fried pressed rice and sugar. This easy and traditional preparation needs just three ingredients – coconut, sugar and palm pulp. Even rookies can make this with ease.

### Ingredients

2 cup scraped fresh coconut  
2 cup palm pulp  
1½ cup dry roasted press rice powder  
2 cup sugar, ½ cup condensed milk  
½ cup mixed nut  
2 tbsp palm oil

### Method

Heat palm oil in a non-stick pan. Add scraped coconut, palm pulp and sugar, cook for 10 minutes. When the water dries up add 1 cup pressed rice powder and condensed milk to it. Mix well and cook until it turns sticky and you can make 'laddu' from the mixture. Now add mixed nuts and turn off heat. Mix continuously for 2-3 minutes. Transfer the prepared mixture in a bowl and set aside to cool. Divide the



prepared mixture into equal portions shape them into 'laddus'. Coat the 'laddus' in remaining roasted, press-rice powder. Store or serve.

## TAL-ER KHEER (PALM KHEER)

This is a traditional dessert made with ripened, fibrous, palm fruit. Addition of 'taal' extract adds a bitter flavour to it; a welcome change for our palate.

### Ingredients

2 cup palm pulp  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup grated coconut  
1 litre milk

### Method

Heat milk in a heavy bottomed pan on low flame. Keep stirring continuously to prevent the milk from burning at the bottom. When the milk thickens add the palm pulp and sugar. Stir steadily and add coconut. Cook for one hour and stir continuously. Now the mixture should thicken and the distinct and flavourful smell of palm should be released. Pour the 'kheer' on a serving dish. Cool in a freezer and serve.

## PALM SHAKE

### Ingredients

1 cup palm pulp  
½ litre chilled, thick milk

¼ tsp cardamom powder

2 tbsp sugar

### Method

Blend all the ingredients, until smooth, in a food processor. Pour into glasses. Add ice cubes and serve.

## HEALTH BENEFITS AND NUTRITION FACTS

Palm is a natural coolant for the body and an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin B-complex and vitamin C. It has significant portions of minerals like zinc, potassium, iron, and calcium. Palm is also used in the treatment of nausea, worm infestations and is also thought to have expectorant, anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties. Its sap has long been used to treat gastric ulcers and liver problems.

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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