

DESHI MIX

BY SALINA PARVIN



Bengali's bhartas

Along with dal, bhartas are possibly the quintessential Bengali food, a staple in our diet. Here, they are rarely served on formal occasions and in celebrations, but such is their charm that expatriates regularly serve these even in their grandest parties, for the taste of home.

The key elements present in all bhartas are mustard oil, onions and chillies. Every other ingredient takes a second stage, and may be boiled, roasted, steamed, even charred!

Charred eggplant bharta with egg

In South Asia, eggplant is known as brinjal. Charred eggplant is very popular in Bangladesh and most Indian states, where the pulp of this vegetable is mixed with onion, chilli, salt and mustard oil.

Sometimes other ingredients, like eggs, are added to give it a different taste.

Ingredients

2 eggplants
2 chicken eggs
2 tbsp thinly sliced onions
½ tsp thinly sliced garlic
1 tsp red chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
4 green chillies
3 tbsp mustard oil
Salt to taste

Method

Wash and char the eggplants in a gas oven or charcoal fire in low heat. When it is done, peel the skin. Mash eggplant with red chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt. Beat eggs with a pinch of salt and keep aside.

Now heat oil in a pan and add onions and garlic. Fry them till golden brown.

Put the mashed eggplant in it and stir few minutes. Now add the beaten eggs slowly in it. Keep stirring. The eggs will soon create small lumps. When oil floats over the surface, remove the pan and prepare to serve.

Tips

Brush oil on the surface of the eggplant before charring. This will make peeling the skin easier.

Tomato bharta

Tomato is essentially a winter vegetable, however they are now grown throughout the year by means of greenhouse farming.

Ingredients

5 tomatoes
2 medium finely chopped onion
3 clove garlic, chopped
½ inch ginger, finely chopped
1 bunch chopped coriander leaves
1 tbsp mustard oil

Method

Wash the tomatoes; wipe it dry. Apply little oil on its surface and roast them over the flame till its outer surface turns blackish and flaky. Peel off the burnt skin off the roasted tomatoes. Add onion, ginger, garlic, coriander leaves, salt and mustard oil. Mash everything well. Serve with rice, khichuri or roti.

Taki macher bharta

Ingredients

4 pieces of a large fish
Pinch of turmeric and red chilli powder
3 medium onions; thinly sliced
5 dry red chillies, toasted

¼ tsp chopped ginger

3 tbsp mustard oil

Salt to taste

Method

Cut and wash the fish thoroughly. Now rub turmeric, chilli powder and salt on the fish pieces. Leave it for 15 minutes. Heat oil in a pan. Fry the fish pieces until light brown. Allow it to cool down. Take out the bones from the fish. Now using your hand mix all the ingredients with the deboned fish. Mix well and serve.

Chapa-shutki bharta

Unlike other shutkis, it is not dried under the sun and hence technically not a shutki. It is kept in an earthen pot for about 5-6 months buried underground. Hence the name chapa. Chapa-shutki is usually made from puti fish.

Ingredients

100g chapa shutki
½ cup grated onion
1 tbsp grated garlic
10 dry chillies
Salt to taste
2 tbsp oil

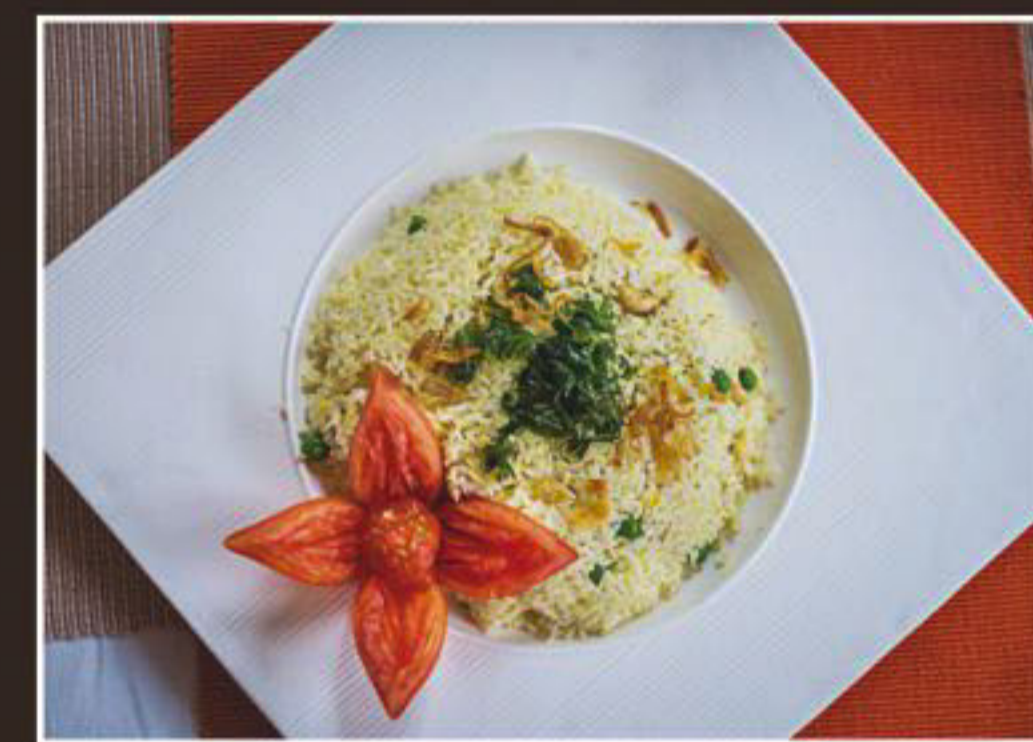
Method

Wash chapa-shutki properly. Blend all the ingredients except oil. Make a smooth paste. Now heat oil in a pan. Add the paste and stir continuously. When the oil floats on the surface, remove the pan and serve with hot plain rice.

Data shaker bharta

Ingredients

Sprigs of daata shak
1 tbsp chopped onions



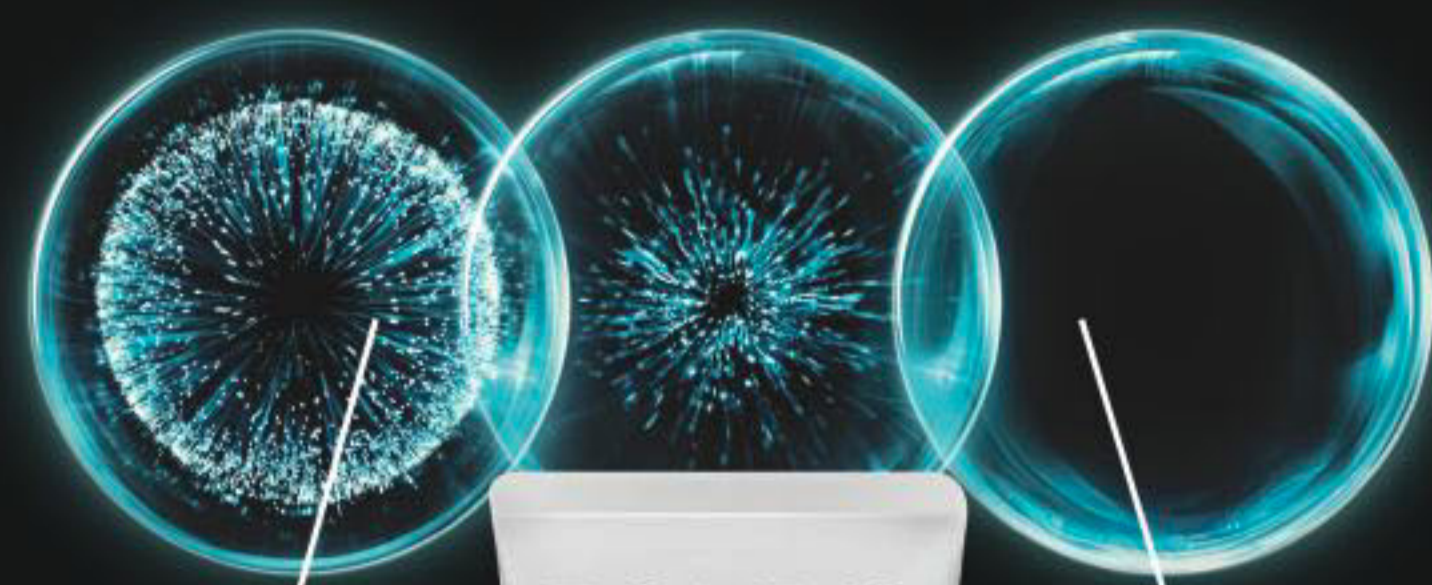
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