



With a dollop of ghee

FISH BIRYANI

Classic Bengali fish biryani is enough to make one's mouth water. There is an interesting story behind this Bengali delicacy. Biryani in Bengal evolved from Lucknow when the last Nawab of Awadh was exiled to Kolkata. The Nawab brought his royal chef along. Due to recession in those times, meat was a costly item. So, the chefs prepared biryani using potatoes. Later, this became a special delicacy in Bengal. However, nowadays meat or fish is served along with it. Compared to other types of biryani, Bengali fish biryani contains few spices but tastes extremely delicious. This recipe is generally prepared using the rui fish. However, the fish may vary according to your preference and taste.

Ingredients

2½ cup aromatic rice
6 pieces rui fish
4 large onions, sliced
3 large potatoes, cut into quarters
1 cinnamon stick
1 black cardamom
2 green cardamom
3 cloves, 2 bay leaves
½ tsp nutmeg powder
½ tsp mace powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp chilli powder, 2 tbsp lemon juice
1 cup milk

Ingredients

1 tsp sugar, Salt to taste
1 tsp kewra water
2 tbsp ghee, 4 tbsp oil, 5 cup water
2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves

Method

Wash and clean the fish properly. Marinade the fishpieces with one tablespoon of lemon juice, turmeric powder, red chilli powder, cumin powder, salt and keep aside for 15 minutes. Clean and wash the rice. Heat one tablespoon of ghee in a deep bottom pan. Add the bay leaves, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves and rice one by one. Add water to it. Cover the pan and cook for about 10 minutes on low flame till the rice is 90 percent cooked. Once done, remove the rice from the flame and spread it on a plate. Keep this aside. Mix saffron with the milk and keep aside. Boil the potatoes until they become tender. Fry the potatoes on medium flame and keep aside. Now fry the fish pieces on low flame till they turn golden in colour and keep aside.

Next fry the onion slices in one tablespoon of oil for 3-4 minutes or till they turn golden brown. Keep aside. Now heat one tablespoon of ghee in a wide and deep bottomed pan. Divide the rice into two halves. Spread one half of this rice in the pan. Sprinkle sugar, nutmeg powder, mace powder, salt and saffron mixture milk, half

of the fried potatoes and fried onions and spread as a layer. In the next layer add the rest of the rice, potatoes, onions, milk, and salt. Spread it evenly.

Now add the fish pieces to this layer. Lastly add the kewra water over the layer. Cover the pan and cook for 10-15 minutes on very low flame. When it is done, garnish with the fried onion and chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot.

CHIRAR PAYESH

Payesh or sweetened rice made of pressed rice is an uncommon preparation and I have never seen it cooked anywhere outside my family, and I am not even sure of its origin. I have heard that my grandmother used to prepare this dish for her husband, which he appreciated very much. Most importantly, Pahela Baishakh is incomplete without traditional desserts.

Ingredients

1 cup pressed rice, preferably brown
2 litter milk, 1 cup sugar
2 tbsp grated almond and pistachio

Method

Wash the pressed rice and let the water drain. In a large pan, boil the milk and reduce it to half. Now add the pressed rice to the boiled milk and cook in low heat for 10 minutes. When the mixture become thick, add sugar, and cook until the desired thickness is arrived. Remove the pan from oven.

Pour in the serving bowl. Garnish with grated almond and pistachio. Serve hot or cold.

Tip: for a creamier flavour, add a teaspoonful of warmed ghee ass the cooking finishes.

SUJIR MOHONBHOG (SEMOLINA PUDDING)

Ingredients

1 cup semolina
½ cup ghee
2½ cup milk
4-5 saffron strands
2 green cardamom
1½ cup sugar
2 tbsp chopped almond for garnishing
2 tbsp chopped cashew nuts for garnishing

Method

Heat ghee in a non-stick pan. Add semolina and roast on low heat till fragrant. Heat milk in another non-stick pan. Add milk, saffron and cardamom to semolina, mix, and cook on low heat for 5 minutes. Add sugar, mix well, and cook till it melts and milk dries. Switch off the heat, add almonds and cashew nuts, and mix well. Serve hot, garnished with cashew and almonds.



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