

**DESHI MIX**

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Food is one of the most significant aspects in any Bengali celebration. Breakfast till dinner, the menu can range from Luchi/puri, pitha, sandesh to parathas, vegetable or meat curries, khichuri -dim, pulao and chicken roast.

A great thing about Bengali culture is that no matter how big or small the festival is, we always make time to celebrate with family, friends and the loved ones.

These are some of the recipes that I have on my menu on almost every occasion along with some must haves.

## PURI

These sinful, deep fried, puffed breads are most commonly served during breakfast. Puris are little discs of whole wheat dough, deep fried in hot oil or ghee. Due to the steam, they puff up like balloons, and in a few seconds you have the most delicious fried bread. They are an indulgence, but worth every little bite.

### Ingredients

2 cup whole wheat flour  
2½ tbsp oil  
½ tsp salt  
½ cup water  
Oil for deep frying.

### Method

Combine flour, salt and oil. Rub everything together. Slowly add water and only as much as you need to make a tight dough. Knead for 5-6 minutes, form a ball, coat the ball with half teaspoon of oil. Set it aside. The dough should be stiff enough to roll without flour. Divide the dough into 10-12 parts. Roll these into balls between the palms of your hands till they are smooth and without cracks.

Take a ball of dough and roll into 4-5 inches round each. Heat oil in a wok. Put in a puri in the hot oil and immediately start flickering hot oil over the top of it with a spatula. When it puffs completely, flip the puri over and cook the other side until light brown. Drain oil on paper towels and serve hot.

## ALUR DAM

The combination of alur dam and puri is one of my most favourite dishes for breakfast. You can include this meal at any time of the day.

### Ingredients

½ kg baby potato  
¼ cup mustard oil  
1 tsp chilli powder  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
½ tsp panch phoron  
1 tsp cumin powder  
1 tsp ginger paste  
3 tbsp yoghurt  
1 tsp sugar  
2 pcs cardamom  
Salt to taste

### Method

Boil the potatoes and peel each one of them. In a heavy bottom pan, heat 2 tablespoon oil. When the oil is hot, add a pinch of salt and turmeric powder to it and shallow fry the potatoes till they are slightly

roasted. Keep all potatoes aside.

In the same pan, add 2 tablespoon oil. Add the panch phoron mix and let it splutter a little. Now add rest of the turmeric powder, chilli powder, cumin powder, ginger paste and salt with little water. Cook it for few minutes. Now add roasted potatoes, sugar and little more water. Bring to a boil. Cook for five minutes with the lid on. Finally add the yoghurt and cardamom. Cook for a few minutes till it all comes together. Serve it with puri.

## KANCHA AAMER SHERBET

What is summer without a glass of fresh kancha aamer sherbet? It is refreshing, appetising and super nutritious. It is very good for the stomach and the digestive system. Best of all; you can have it anytime you want!

### Ingredients

4 large green mangoes  
¼ tsp rock salt  
1 tbsp mint leaves  
4 glasses of water  
Sugar to taste  
Sea salt to taste  
Crushed or ice cube

### Method

Peel off the green mangoes. Wash and grate the mango. Now blend all the ingredients except the ice until smooth. Now pour in



the glasses and add ice to it. Garnish with the mint leaves and serve.

## SHADA ILISH

### Ingredients

1 pieces ilish fish  
1½ cup sliced onion  
1 tsp ginger juice  
1 tbsp white mustard paste  
10-12 green chillies  
¼ cup oil  
Salt to taste

### Method

Wash the fish and cut into pieces. Marinate the fish with ¼ tsp of salt for about 20 minutes. Heat oil in a pan. Put the sliced onions

and fry until crystal colour. Now add ginger juice, mustard paste and salt to it. Fry for 2 minutes. When oil separates from the spice, add some water, fish and green chilli. Cook for 15 minutes. When the gravy turns thick and oil floats over all, remove the pan and prepare to serve.

## BHAPA CHINGRI

### Ingredients

20 pieces big size prawn  
½ tsp turmeric powder  
1½ tsp red chilli powder  
3 tbsp white mustard seeds  
2 tbsp poppy seeds  
½ cup grated coconut  
5-6 green chillies  
4 tbsp mustard oil  
½ top sugar  
Salt to taste

### Method

Clean the prawn very well and wash them, keep them aside. Now marinate the prawns with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon of turmeric powder. Leave them for 15 minutes. Take a small spice grinder and make a smooth paste with mustard seeds, poppy seeds, 3 green chillies,



some water and salt. Pour the paste in a bowl.

Add grated coconut, sugar, red chilli powder. Add the marinated prawn in the spice mixture and keep a side for another 15 minutes. Now preheat the oven to 170° C temperature. Take an ovenproof baking bowl, apply some mustard oil inside the bowl, and pour the prawn mixture in it. Cover the bowl with an aluminium foil and bake for 20 minutes, or till the prawn are cooked and change their colour.

Turn off the oven and remove the bowl from the oven but do not open the foil. Remove the foil just before serving.

## DAAL BHARTA

### Ingredients

½ cup red lentil  
1 big onion, sliced  
1 clove garlic  
3 dry red chilli  
1 tbsp mustard oil  
Salt to taste

### Method

Boil the daal until the water evaporates and daal become soft. Toast the dry red chillies till turn dark and crisp. On a bowl, mix the toasted dry chillies, onion slices, salt and mustard oil. Mix in the cooked daal with the onion and chillies. Serve with plain white rice.

## BEGUN BASANTI

### Ingredients

2 big eggplants  
3-4 tbsp yellow mustard seeds paste  
1 tsp nigella seeds  
¼ cup curd, beaten  
4 green chillies  
1 tsp ginger paste  
¼ tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
½ tsp cumin powder  
½ cup warm water  
2 tbsp mustard oil  
Salt and sugar to taste

### Method

Wash and cut the eggplants into long strips. Rub salt and turmeric powder on the eggplants and leave for 15 minutes. Heat some mustard oil in a pan and shallow fry the eggplants till it gets a nice brown hues. Take it out from the oil and drain it. In a mixing bowl, add mustard past, salt, turmeric powder, beaten curd and ginger paste. Blend it well.

In a separate pan, heat 1 tablespoon of mustard oil and temper it with nigella seeds. Add the spice mixture, fry on low heat for some time and add the slotted green chillies. Let it fry for few more minutes. Add cumin and red chilli powder. Add salt and sugar, mix well. Add the warm water to get a saucy consistence, cover and cook for 5 minutes. When it is done garnish with freshly chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot with rice, pulao or paratha.

## ANARASH CHUTNEY

### Ingredients

1 pineapple crushed  
2 tsp oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice  
½ tsp brown mustard seeds  
2 tbsp sugar, Salt to taste

### Method

Heat oil in a non-stick pan. Add mustard seeds and let it splutter. Add crushed pineapple, sugar and salt and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and cook for another 1 minute. Let it cool to room temperature before serving.

**Photo: Collected**