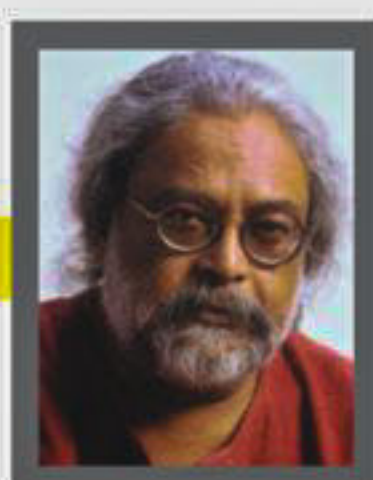




AAPPAYON
BY SHAWKAT OSMAN



ALL HAIL THE EGG!

Whether it is to add something familiar to the table spread, or to whip up something in the absence of anything in the fridge, the power of an egg is too numerous to mention. Whether you battle from the side of the boiling or frying camp, you have one important thing uniting them both; they are both fussing over the egg. For many, the egg plays a huge role as comfort food, picture an omelette with khichuri and fried aubergine, and most people reading this is probably salivating right now.

MUMLET

The trouble of making Deshi Mumlet (omelettes), is that the outside gets cooked, and the middle remains runny, a classic mistake in Deshi mumlet. One must

remember that an omelette is made from scrambled eggs. Yes, you scramble the eggs, and then set the omelette. Deshi omelettes are rolled, as opposed to flat, and generally have a completely smooth, deep golden surface and are well done in the middle. In my opinion, this is the very best way to make an omelette. Like 'Dim Chawra', the egg mixture for an omelette also has added herbs and spices. However, you certainly can add cream or milk if you like to make them fluffier. Remember to cook omelettes just before eating; they cannot be held successfully.

Ingredients

2 eggs
½ onion, chopped
2 green chillies, chopped
¼ tsp salt
1 tbsp ghee

Method

Break eggs into a bowl, whisk well with a fork. Then blend in salt, chilli and onions. Mix well with the fork. Place a large non-stick 20-cm saucepan over medium flame. The bigger the pan, the more surface there is for the eggs to spread, and the faster they will cook. Pour in the ghee, when hot, tip in the eggs, and let the mixture set for about 30 seconds. Now stir continuously with a wooden khunti or a rubber spatula if you prefer. Cook until the eggs are at a runny scramble egg stage; brush the uncooked egg towards the edge of the pan so it cooks evenly. Spread the eggs out evenly over the surface of the pan, stop stirring and let them set over low heat (the point at which you stop stirring is the key to having a smooth omelette without any brown colouring). Moreover, don't cook the eggs too long, or they go rubbery. About half a minute per side is all that's needed. When the edges of the omelette turn light and opaque, fold the edge of the omelette over into itself, tilt the pan from the handle side, and lightly tap the handle so that the omelette moves up from the pan. Shape the omelette with the khunti/spatula. Roll the omelette onto a serving dish seam-side down.

EGG KORMA

As is customary in certain areas, the term korma is used if the gravy contains yoghurt. This is a unique dish, where the egg is first drained, mixed with spice, refilled and then boiled. The resulting 'egg shaped' eggs are a wonder to the diner.

Ingredients

8 (6+2) Eggs
1 tsp onion paste
½ tsp red chilli powder, ½ tsp salt
½ tsp cumin power
½ tsp ginger paste, 1 tsp garlic paste
1 large surgical syringe, without needle
4 tbsp ghee
5 cardamom pods, cracked
3 cm long cinnamon stick
4 cloves
1 tbsp onion, sliced
1 tsp ginger paste
2 tsp ginger paste
1 tsp garlic paste
1 tsp cumin, power
2 tsp white pepper, freshly grounded
1 tbsp almond/sashew paste
1 cup yoghurt
2 tbsp double cream
2 tbsp raisins, rinsed
3 tsp salt

Method

With the pointed end of a small knife, pierce the bottom end of an egg. Tap the egg repeatedly but gently to avoid cracking the shell. With a large surgical syringe (the needle removed), draw out all its contents. Thrust out the contents of the eggs into a mixing bowl. Repeat with 5 more eggs, and retain the shells. Whisk the eggs with a fork to blend the white and yolk properly, do not fluff. Set aside. In a food processor/grinder, grind the following

to a fine paste-- onions paste, red chilli powder, salt, ½ teaspoon cumin powder, ½ teaspoon ginger, and 1 teaspoon garlic. Transfer them to the mixing bowl and mix well to assimilate with the eggs. Draw in this spice-egg mixture with the syringe, and refill the 6 empty eggshells. Do not fill to the brim; leave a little space for the egg mixture to expand. Cover the puncture on the shell with flour dough or a piece of adhesive tape. Place the eggs in the egg carton, with the sealed/taped end facing up. Place the carton in a steamer, and steam them for 10 minutes. Once done, set aside to cool. Once cool, shell the steamed eggs, and set aside. To the remaining egg mixture, break in 2 eggs, and whisk until fluffy. Heat 1 tablespoon ghee in a saucepan and make an omelette with this egg mixture, cut the omelette into thin long strips, set aside. Heat 3 tablespoons ghee in a korai/wok and toss in the following-- cardamoms, cinnamon, and cloves. Gently sauté undisturbed for a minute. Lob in the sliced onions and sauté until translucent. Now stir in 1 teaspoon ginger, 2 teaspoon garlic, 1 teaspoon cumin, pepper, almond/cashew paste, and 3 tablespoons of water. Sauté, stirring constantly until water evaporates. Pour in another 3 tablespoon water and dry off the liquid again, stirring and scrapping the bottom of the korai/wok with a wooden khunti. As the oil starts to separate from the spice, whisk the yoghurt and pour in, lower the flame, and stir to blend the yoghurt with the spice. Pour in ½ cup water, salt, raisins, and simmer for 3 minutes. When the gravy is slightly reduced and the oil starts to float, gently slide in the 6 prepared eggs, and stir to coat the eggs with the gravy.

Pour in the cream, and cook only up to the point to heat through the cream. Serve with the omelette strips arranged on top.

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

