



Mashed!

Bhorta is just another staple for Bengalis, and one that makes us say 'No' to even rich delicacies — polau, korma, kachchi, or otherwise. Bhortas come in various forms, each indigenous to the localities, cultural variations, and the supply of produces, because the ingredients of a bhorta should be as fresh as possible.

There is simply no end to the variety of bhortas that the Bangali know of. No Baishakhi meal is complete without the ubiquitous side. It's not only during the Baishakhi celebrations, hotels around the cities enjoy thriving businesses on the month of Baishakh, serving only the myriads form of bhortas.

This week, we present some recipes on these mashed delicacies. All have a signature of the cook and were collected from various people who were kind enough to treat me with their secret magic, bhortas!

RAW TURMERIC BHORTA (Kancha hould)

Cut raw turmeric into pieces and lightly fry them in mustard seed oil. While frying, add dry chillies, green chillies, garlic and 3 or 4 pieces of shrimp. After frying for some time, take it off the flame and mash them all to-



gether. After that, again take a little mustard seed oil, and this time start cooking the mix on low heat. Continue until the oil separates from the mixture. Serve as soon as the delectable aroma starts floating in the air.

GARLIC BHORTA (Roshun)

Wash whole garlcs and separate 12/15 cloves. Then lightly toast these on a fry-pan or in a wok on low heat. Do this for 30-40 minutes. This way the garlic cloves soften out slowly. In between the toasting, at around 15 minutes, add a bit of mustard seed oil and a pinch of nigella seeds.

After taking the garlic off the heat, let it cool down and take off the outer layers. Start off by breaking and mashing these by hand. Take a separate bowl, add 2 teaspoon of mustard seed oil, salt, chopped coriander leaves, a bit of chopped green chillies, some dried chilli seeds, and a good amount of chopped onions.

Add chilli according to preference. Mix in the garlic and add salt to taste.

CORIANDER LEAF BHORTA (Dhoney pata)

Chop and divide 200-250g coriander leaves into two parts. Put a little mustard seed oil in a fry on the stove. To it, add a teaspoon of chopped garlic, a small cup full of chopped onions, and toast in low heat. As it becomes slightly fried, add half of the chopped leaves. Take it off the heat after stirring it around for 4/5 times.



Now, add the rest of the coriander leaves with a bit of mustard oil and mash them together.

RAW CORIANDER LEAF BHORTA (Kancha dhoney pata)

Chop some coriander leaves and steam these in a fry pan on the stove. After it cools down, mix with chopped onions, green chillies, spring onions, salt, and mustard oil with a touch of chopped garlic.

LENTIL/PUMPKIN DUMPLING BHORTA (Daal/kumro bori)

Start by toasting the bori over low heat in such a manner that it gets cooked. Then break

the bori and add chopped onion, green chillies, coriander leaves, and mustard oil.

The bhorta can be made the same way by boiling the bori in a little water.

MASHED POTATOES WITH SKIN

In the market, small potatoes from Rangpur (also known as 'guri alu') are available. Use these to make a different type of bhorta aside from the regular one. Wash the potatoes and boil them with their skin. Many prefer to put some water in a wok and grill these potatoes in a little water on low heat.

Now, add the potatoes in a wok or fry pan with a bit of mustard seed oil to fry them lightly. Add in chopped garlic, green chillies and salt while frying. Mash all these together. After that, add more chopped onions, dry chillies and mustard oil, mix well.

YAM BHORTA (Shilbilati alu)

This type of potato is slightly on the stickier side. The best method is to boil these first before mashing them. Add a bit of ghee in a pan with onions, chopped dried chillies, garlic, and fry them until brown (like beresta). Now, add the mashed potato and stir for some time.

After taking it off from the stove, add more mustard oil, chopped onions and green chillies, and mix them together. A different, tasty bhorta is now all set!

BOTTLE GOURD LEAF AND SHRIMP BHORTA

Lau shaak or bottle gourd leaves have to be washed first before steaming them lightly. Then, add in some oil to stir them lightly. In another pan, fry 6/7 shrimps. Also fry onions, chopped garlic, green chillies, and a little bit of ginger. Now mash together the leaves, fried shrimps, the onion-garlic mix for the bhorta.

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