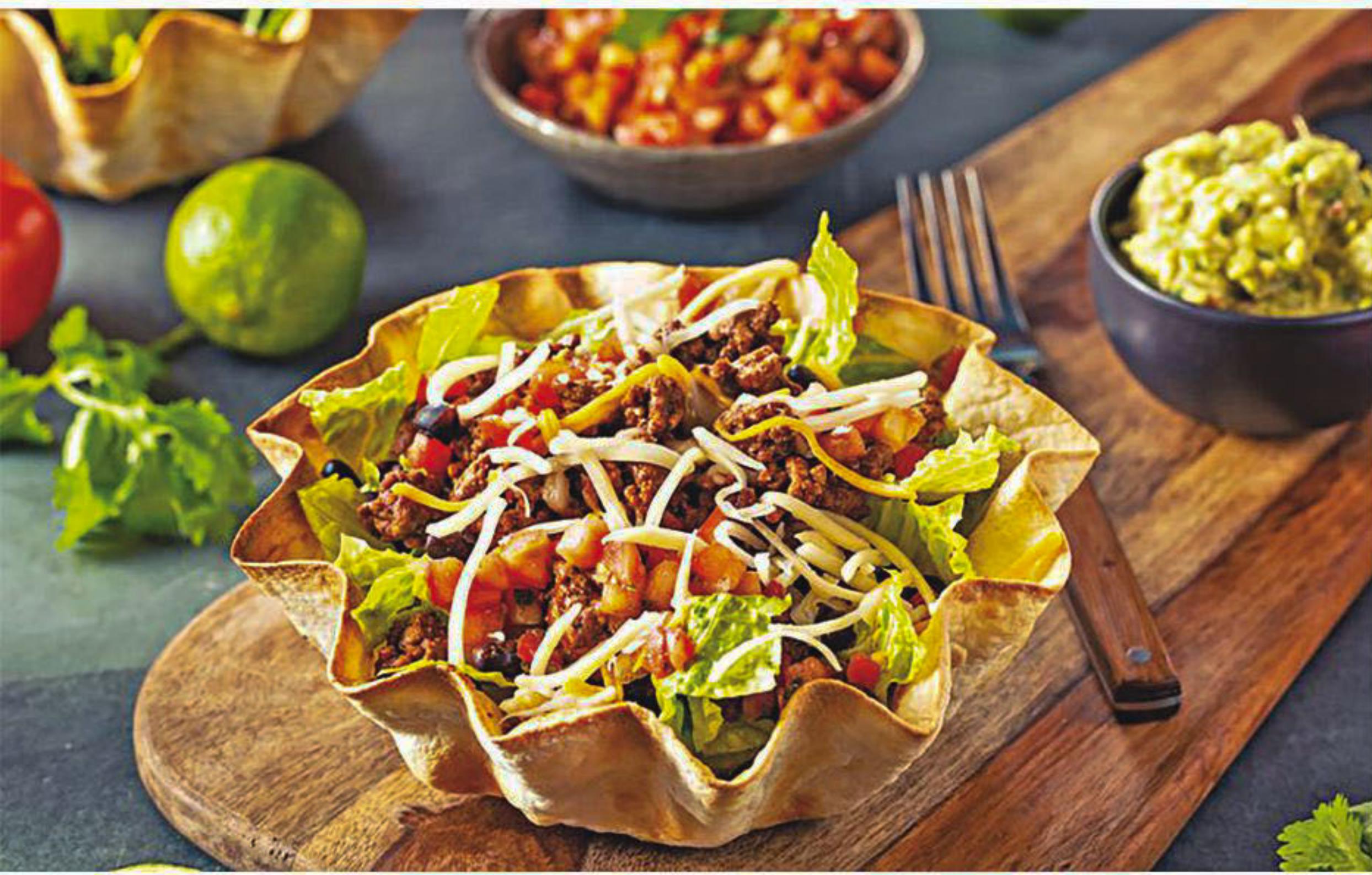


THE FEARLESS OLIVE
BY REEMA ISLAM



Seasoning Halloween



Come October and our senses start to focus on the last day when we can watch the best horror movies on repeat as we try to spook ourselves with a variety of scares. October also heralds cooler days and the arrival of pumpkin season, in all its gourdy gloriousness!

This Halloween, allow me to help you think a little out of the box as children start pestering for recipes and innovative ways to showcase the gruesome on a platter.

Headlong he charges down the wood, and falls

With roaring brain — agony — the snap't spark

*And blots of green and purple in his eyes.
Then the slow fingers groping on his neck,
And at his heart the strangling clasp of death.*

— Seifried Sassoon (The Haunted)

HALLOWEEN GRAVEYARD

Taco shells on a bed of beans and other dead matter

Ingredients

For taco shells —

1½ cups water, cold

1 cup flour

½ cup cornmeal

¼ tsp salt

1 egg

For beans —

250g of red kidney beans

250g beef, or chicken minced (you can keep it vegetarian too)

½ kg tomatoes, peeled and chopped

2 green capsicums and 1 red capsicum

200g green onions, chopped

Chilis, suited to your taste

A pinch of rosemary

1 tbsps basil

A pinch of coriander, or parsley if possible

Salt and pepper, to taste

2 tbsps apple cider vinegar

250g diced onions

200g diced garlic

Tamarind Sauce —

Mix some tamarind with water. Take out the pits, mix some salt, brown sugar and pepper to suit your taste. You can boil this to get the desired thickness.

Method

Mix all the taco ingredient with a beater and roll them out with a rolling pin, into tiny chapatis or tortillas. Then, deep fry them. Take them out and cut them into the shape of a tomb stone, or a skeleton hand sticking out, a large skull or even, a mangled tree.

Fry the onions and the garlic with the minced meat until slightly browned then add the tomatoes, capsicums, and herbs (except coriander and parsley) and cook for another 4-5 minutes until the tomatoes are





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tender and the meat looks cooked. Blend the beans, but don't make them into a paste. Fry with some of the garlic and onion and add apple cider vinegar and green onions.

Serving

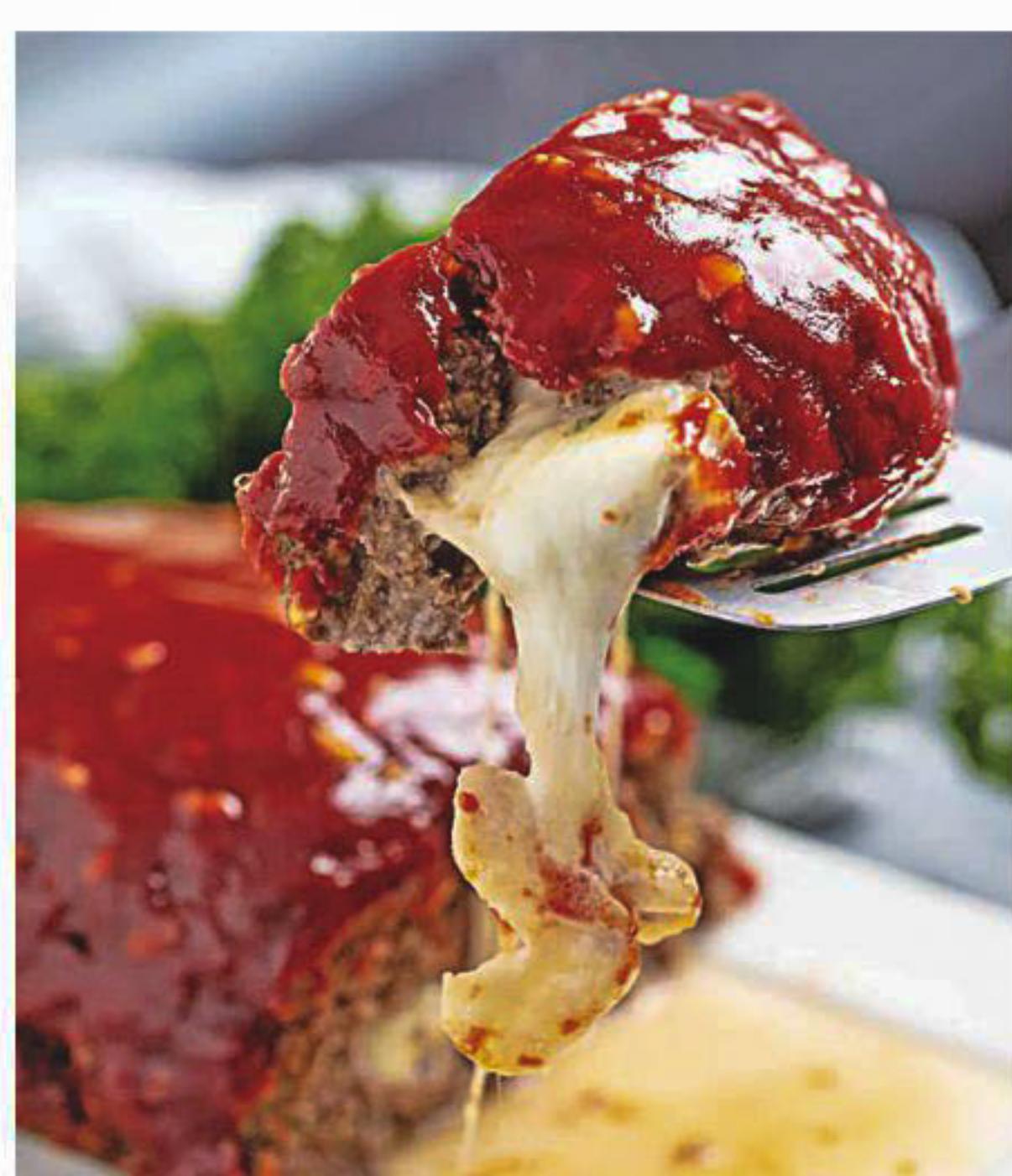
The bottom layer can be meat with the top layer being beans, or you can mix them up to look as much as possible like soil, with all the colour of brown and red and rust coming out. Stick the taco tombstones, skulls or the tree in between and with the tamarind sauce, either draw scary faces or write RIP on the tombstones or other messages.

DISMEMBERED LIMBS AND FACES

Meat loaf

Ingredients

500g minced beef (you can try this with red kidney beans for vegetarian option)
250 beetroots, boiled (roughly chop half the amount and juice the rest)
250g minced onions and half the amount of diced garlic
250g diced tomatoes
250g diced capsicums
1 tsp mustard paste
½ cup flour



1 cup bread crumbs

2 tbs corn starch (you can use potato starch)

200g of parsley and mint leaves, chopped

Salt, brown sugar, and pepper, to taste

Pinch of rosemary and oregano

1 egg

½ cup oil (you can adjust this per preference)

Method

Mix the meat, roughly chopped beetroot, and all other ingredients in a bowl, with the eggs and oil as well. You can shape the meat into a hand, using large pieces of diced onions as nails. Cut thick diced shapes for the nails. At the wrist, you can leave it looking messy and use the beetroot juice to give it a bloody look.

Smear the juice anywhere to make

it look even more gruesome. Make a round meatball and stick slices of olives as eyes and small onion teeth. You can also let beetroot blood drip out of the onion mouth or shape lips around the teeth with beetroot juice. Pre-heat oven at 180° C for 10 minutes, and then bake the dismembered body parts for about 15-20 mins at a lowered heat and keep checking.

Serving

Serve this on a bed of chopped vegetables and draw scary faces with the beetroot juice or the tamarind chutney from the previous recipe.

MUMMY FACES

Filo striped vegetable slices

Ingredients

Pumpkin and beetroot, cut into round, thick, ½ inch slices
Dhaka poneer, cut into ½ inch slices
3-4 strips of filo pastry sheets
Few round slices of olives
Egg wash (beat 1 egg with about 2 tbs of water)
2 cups sugar syrup (boil 2 cups sugar with 1 cinnamon stick, ¼ star anise, 1 tbs lemon juice)

Apple sauce —

1 cup diced apple

½ cup sugar

1 tsp cinnamon powder

¼ star anise

A pinch of nutmeg

1 tbs lemon juice

Method

Take the round slices of vegetables and leave them marinated in the mixture of sugar syrup for about 1 hour. Cut the sheets into long strips of about ½ inch width. Take the rinds out of the syrup and put the olives in the place for eyes. Wrap strips of filo round like a mummy, some on the forehead and rest on the lower part of the face. Smear the filo with the egg wash, using a brush. Place these on baking paper and bake them in a pre-heated oven, at 120 degree C, for 10 minutes, then bake at lower heat for another 10 mins.

For the apple sauce, boil the apples with the sugar and spices and once reduced, roughly blend with some lemon juice.

Serving

Serve the mummified faces, smeared with extra beetroot sauce from the above recipes as blood stains. You can also tear at the edges to make them look particularly bedraggled. Serve with the apple sauce in a way that the faces stand out alone and they can be dipped into the sauce for added flavour.

Serve the Dhaka poneer mummy with some tamarind sauce from above.

Photo: Collected