

IN SEARCH OF COMFORT FOOD

BY SOBIA AMEEN



Snacks in a jiffy

As winter kicks in, wedding season has already started to gather family and friends at home. During this busy period, it is important to keep the guests entertained and well fed. Finger food is a great way to do both.

PRAWN PAAN

Ingredients

24 betel leaves (paan)
24 large prawns
8 tbsp coconut oil
2 tbsp cumin seeds
2 tbsp shallots, thinly sliced
For the sauce—
4 tbsp fish sauce
½ cup palm sugar
1 tsp black salt
2 tbsp tamarind juice
1 tbsp lime juice
2 tbsp ginger, finely diced
2 red chillies, thinly sliced

For the topping —

½ cup shredded coconut
½ cup crushed peanuts
½ cup pomegranate seeds
¼ cup coriander leaf, thinly sliced

Method

Start by washing betel leaves, then leave to dry while the prawns are being prepared. The prawns should be cleaned and deveined before being cooked. In a small-medium frying pan, heat 3 tablespoons of coconut oil. Once

the oil is hot, add the cumin seeds, when the seeds start to crackle, add the prawns and cook until the prawns are pink. Remove the prawns from the pan and add the remaining coconut oil, once the oil is hot, add the sliced onions and fry until they are nice and crunchy. Remove the onions from the frying pan and place it on kitchen towels for the excess oil to drain.

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients for the sauce and pour it over the cooked prawns, make sure to mix well.

On each betel leaf, place a prawn. Serve the assorted toppings on the side.

DHOKLA SHOTS

Ingredients

For the dhokla shots —

1 cup chickpea flour
1½ tbsp semolina
4 tbsp sugar
1 tsp salt
Pinch of turmeric powder
¾ cup water
1 tbsp Eno fruit salt, mixed



with ¼ cup water

For the filling —

1 cup fresh green peas, slightly blanched
1 cup grated cheese
¼ cup onions, finely chopped
2 tbsp mustard oil
1 tbsp cumin seeds
1 small green chilli, chopped

1 tsp salt

Garnish—

Shredded coconut
Fried curry leaves
¼ cup coriander leaves, thinly sliced

Method

In a bowl, combine the chickpea flour, semolina, sugar, turmeric and salt, make a smooth mixture by adding the water and whisking it well until the sugar granules have dissolved and set aside.

In a cup, mix the Eno fruit salt and water, add this to the mixture, the batter will froth up, and this will make it light and airy. Grease the shot moulds, and pour the batter equally. The dhokla can be cooked in the microwave on the highest setting for 2 minutes, or slowly baked at 200°C for 5-10 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.

In a medium pan, heat the mustard oil and add the cumin seeds, when it starts to crackle, add the onions and green chilli. When the onions start to sweat, add the green peas and the salt. Cook until the peas are cooked and turn off the heat, once the filling has cooled a little, add the grated cheese and mix well.

Gently remove the dhoklas from the shot glass moulds and serve on a plate, fill each dhokla with the pea filling, and garnish with the shredded coconut, fried curry leaves and coriander leaves.

Food and photo: Sobia Ameen

