

Everyday recipes from the heart

No matter how much we love the acquired tastes of noodles, pastas and pizzas, traditional dishes that were once the norms in Bengali households once time was a much less limited resource, still hold their charm over our culinary whims. Here are some such recipes for you to try when the mood for the good old strikes.

ALOO POSTO (POTATO CURRY WITH POPPY SEEDS)

Ingredients

1/2 kg potato
1/2 tsp black cumin
4 dried red chillies
4-5 green chillies
2 tbsp mashed poppy seeds
3 tbsp mustard oil
Salt to taste
Sugar, if preferred

Method

Mash or blend the poppy seeds and the green chillies together, and make a paste. Keep aside. Peel the potatoes and cut into small dices. Steam or half-boil the potatoes. Keep aside.

Heat mustard oil in a pan. Add black cumin seeds and dried red chillies and sauté until fragrant. Add the half-boiled potatoes. Season with salt. Sauté for 2 minutes. Add the poppy seed and green chilli paste. Sauté for a minute. Add 1 cup of water and turn the heat high. Cook until the water evaporates and the gravy thickens. Check the seasoning. Add a little bit of sugar if needed. Turn off the heat.

Enjoy with warm and fluffy luchies!

POTOL ER DOLMA (STUFFED POINTED GOURD WITH COCONUT AND SHRIMPS)

A Greek dish which has become staple in our Bengal cuisine!

Ingredients

5 potols (pointed gourd)
250g shrimps
250g shredded coconut
125ml coconut milk
1/2 tsp turmeric powder
1/2 tsp red chilli powder
1/2 tsp garam masala powder
250g onions (thinly sliced)
1 tsp ginger paste
4 tbsp vegetable oil

Method

Shell — Wash the pointed gourds and scratch the



outer skin with a zigzag knife or fork. Cut the pointy sides of the gourd and take out the seeds/meat of the gourd and make it like a hollow shell for the stuffing.

Stuffing —

Take a small pan in medium flame and add 2 tablespoons of oil. After the oil is heated properly add half the sliced onions and sauté for 3 minutes or until its golden brown. Add 1/4th of the ginger paste and sauté for a minute. Add rest of the spices in the pan, cook with a little bit of water and 1 teaspoon of coconut milk.

After the oil separates stir in the shrimp and add the shredded coconut. Season with salt. Now add 125 ml of coconut milk and bring it to a boil. After the shrimps are

cooked, take the pan off the stove and keep it aside.

Fill the gourd shells with the stuffing.

Take another pan and add the remaining oil in medium flame. Add the remaining onion and sauté. After the onion is slightly browned, add the remaining ginger paste and 1 pinch of red chilli powder and sauté till the oil separates. Add 2 tablespoons of coconut milk and a pinch of garam masala. Sauté the masala for 2 minutes and add the stuffed gourds. Turn the heat into medium low.

Cover the lid for 10 minutes or till the outer skin of the gourd is properly cooked. Take the pan off the heat. Garnish with some shredded coconut and serve!

CHINGRI MALAI CURRY

Almost every Bengali household has their own version of chingri malaikari recipe. No matter how much we want to claim this as our own, some believe this dish was originated from Malaysia. That's why it's called Malay/Malai Curry. This is also a puja staple and usually served with luchi.

Ingredients

1/2 kg king prawns
1/2 litre coconut milk
1 tbsp shredded coconut
1 tsp ginger paste
2 tbsp onion paste
2 onions thinly sliced
4/5 green chilli
1/4 tsp turmeric powder
1/4 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp cumin powder
Whole spices
3 cardamoms
1 small cinnamon
1 bay leaf
Salt, to taste
Sugar, to taste

Method

Properly clean and devein the prawns. You can keep the shell on or remove it. Totally up to you. Set aside.

Heat oil in a medium sized pan. Add sliced onions. Sauté for 3 minutes. When the onion is golden brown, add the whole spices. When the whole spices are slightly fried, add ginger paste and sauté for 2 minutes. Add rest of the spices and sauté. Add 2 tablespoons of water and 1 tablespoon of coconut milk in the sautéed spice mixture and allow it to blend properly. After the oil separates, add the prawns; season the prawns with salt and cook it for 10 minutes in low flame. Add the remaining coconut milk after 5 minutes. Then add the green chillies. Keep the lid on for 2 minutes. Add a little bit of sugar if needed. Check the seasoning. After the gravy reaches your desired consistency turn off the heat.

Garnish with some shredded coconut and fresh coriander leaves.

GUR ER PAYESH

No Bengali celebration is ever complete without a sweet dish and payesh is something we all love!

Ingredients

1 litre milk
4 tbsp powder milk
1 cup chini gura polau chaal
1/2 kg jaggery (sugarcane or date)

Method

Evaporate the milk and reduce it from 1 litre to 1/2 a litre. Mix in the powder milk. Add the rice and keep stirring until the milk thickens and turn into a porridge-like consistency. Add the jaggery and bring it to a boil. Turn off the heat after the payesh reaches your desired consistency.

Dish the warm payesh into small dessert cups and allow it to cool. After it reaches room temperature, keep it in the fridge for a few hours to set. Garnish the payesh with nuts and raisins and serve!

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