

Durga Puja is an elaborate affair, especially in Bangladesh and West Bengal. Spread across the days of the festivities, food remains an integral part of the celebrations. The following are some of the traditional, time-tested recipes associated with Durga Puja.



# 6 traditional Bengali recipes for DURGAPUJA

## HOG PLUM CHUTNEY

### Ingredients

1 kg hog plum  
1 bay leaf  
½ cup mustard oil  
5-6 dry red chillies  
2 cardamoms  
1 cinnamon  
1 tsp chilli powder  
8-9 garlic cloves  
1 tsp five spices (panch foron)  
1 tsp mustard seeds  
½ cup jaggery  
2 tsp tamarind (as required)  
½ tsp black salt (bit lobon)  
Salt, as required  
½ cup water

### Method

To prepare the spices — take 4 cloves of garlic, 1 tsp coriander, 1 tsp five spices, 1 tsp mustard seed, and 5 pieces of dry chillies. Add water and mix in a grinder.

Peel off the hog plums and cut them into pieces. Put the hog plum in a bowl; add one tsp chilli powder and one tsp salt. Mix well and set aside.

Now, in a pan, put ½ cup mustard oil, 4 garlic cloves, 3 dry chillies, 1 bay leaf, 2 cardamoms, and 1 cinnamon; fry for a few minutes. Mix the masala paste and fry well. Add ½ tsp turmeric powder and stir well. Add marinated hog plum and keep stirring. Add tamarind, jaggery, and water. Add some black salt.

Remove from heat once the hog plum is cooked and the sugar melts. Sweet, sour, and spicy hog plum chutney is ready to serve.

## BHOGER LABRA (MIXED VEGETABLE)

### Ingredients

1 carrot  
1 eggplant  
½ cup green bean  
½ cup pumpkin  
4 pointed gourd (potol)  
2 potatoes  
1 tomato  
5-6 green chillies  
4 tbsp mustard oil  
2 tsp five spices (panch foron)

3 dry red chillies  
1 tsp ginger paste  
1 tsp cumin powder  
1 tsp coriander powder  
1 tsp turmeric powder

Salt, as required

½ tsp sugar  
½ tsp roasted spice powder

### Method

Take mustard oil in a pan; add five spices and dry red chillies. Stir well. Add vegetables, one by one and stir it well for 6-7 minutes. Add ginger paste, cumin powder, coriander, and turmeric powder. Stir well and cook it on slow medium flame. Add salt and water. When it's cooked well and the water reduced, add sugar and roasted spice. Labra is ready.

## ALU DUM

### Ingredients

½ kg potato  
½ cup plain yoghurt  
4 tomatoes, small  
½ cup chopped onions  
2 tsp ginger paste  
1½ tsp garlic paste

½ tsp cumin  
2 green cardamoms  
2 pcs cinnamon  
3 cloves  
1 bay leaf  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
1 tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp cumin powder  
½ tsp coriander powder  
¼ tsp black pepper  
2 red chillies  
¼ tsp garam masala powder  
Salt to taste  
Coriander leaves

### Method

Take the tomatoes and the chopped onions; blend to a paste. Boil the potatoes and add some salt, chilli and turmeric powder. Mix them well. Now, add 3 tablespoon oil to a pan and fry the potatoes on medium flame until golden brown. Take the potatoes out of the oil. Add another 1 tablespoon oil and put red chilli and bay leaf, cinnamon, cardamom, clove, and cumin. Fry. Add ginger-garlic paste. Add tomato paste and onion paste. Pour ½ cup water. Stir well.

Add all the dry masala powder, salt, and

½ cup water. Stir continuously for a few minutes. Add the beaten yoghurt and stir continuously to mix well. Add 1 cup water. When it starts boiling, add the potatoes. Put garam masala and mix well. Cover it and cook for 15-20 minutes on low flame. Open the cover, stir, and then cover again. After 10-15 minutes, aloo dum is done.

## DOI POTOL

### Ingredients

½ cup yoghurt  
1 tsp sugar  
½ tbsp gram flour (besan)  
6-8 black peppercorns  
500g pointed gourd  
½ tsp ginger paste  
3-4 green chillies  
1 bay leaf  
3 cloves  
2-inch cinnamon stick  
1 tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
1 tsp cumin powder  
1 tsp coriander powder  
½ tsp garam masala powder  
1 pinch of cardamom powder  
Salt to taste  
½ cup of water, for gravy  
Oil for cooking

### Method

*For the sauce —*

Add ½ cup yoghurt in a blender. Add sugar (it helps to cut the sourness of yoghurt). Add gram flour and black peppercorns. Whisk for 30 seconds until smooth. Set aside.

*For the curry —*

Cut both edges of all the pointed gourds. Peel the skin. Split the vegetable slightly with the help of a knife, from the sides (it should not get cut into pieces). Wash the pointed gourds and set them aside.

Heat a pan and make it completely dry.

Now, add oil and wait until it gets hot. Add bay leaf, cloves, and cinnamon sticks, and let them crackle. Add the pointed gourds and cook them on medium-high flame for 2 minutes. Flip the pointed gourds and fry the other side for another 2 minutes. Add salt, and turmeric powder, and give a nice mix. Add the ginger paste.

Cook in a low flame until the raw smell goes away. Add green chillies and give a nice mix. Cover the pan and cook on low flame for another 5 minutes or until they become tender. Stir occasionally in between.

Add cumin powder, and coriander powder and give a nice mix. Cook the masala on low flame for a minute. Add the yoghurt sauce to the pan and mix it properly. Cook for a minute on low flame. Add water and give a nice stir. Cover the pan and put the flame on high until the gravy simmers. Switch off the flame and add garam masala powder and cardamom powder into the curry. Stir the masala into the curry evenly. Doi potol is ready.

## CHINGRI MALAI CURRY

### Ingredients

10 large size prawn/galda chingri (medium-sized shrimps can also be used)  
2 whole cinnamon  
2 tsp green chilli paste  
8 green cardamom  
500ml liquid milk  
5-6 cloves  
300g onion paste  
1 tsp ginger paste  
1 tsp garlic paste  
1 tsp garam masala powder  
1 tsp turmeric powder  
½ tsp red chilli powder

1 tsp ghee  
1 tsp salt  
200ml mustard oil  
*Masala paste —*  
1 tsp mustard seed (black)  
1 tsp moury  
10 cashew nuts  
200 ml yoghurt  
*For the gravy —*  
300g grated coconut  
500ml hot water

### Method

*Masala paste —*

Take a blender. Add mustard seed, moury, nuts, and yoghurt. Make a smooth paste.

*For the gravy —*

Add coconut and hot water in a blender and whisk for a couple of minutes. Pour the contents into a bowl with a fine strainer, to extract the milk. Press with a spoon on the coconut shreds so that all the milk is strained.

*The curry —*

Prawns with shells work best for chingri malai curry. Wash them thoroughly and devein each and every prawn before cooking. Now, rub some salt, chilli powder and turmeric powder and leave those for 5 minutes.

Heat oil in a deep vessel. Fry prawns one by one without tempering the shell on medium flame until the prawns turn pink in colour. After straining the prawns from the hot oil, add half of the

ghee. Temper the ghee-oil mixture with cinnamon, green cardamoms, and cloves. Add onion paste. Cook for 3-4 minutes or until

the paste is cooked properly and turned pinkish-brown in colour. Add garlic-ginger paste and green chilli paste. Cook for 2-3 minutes.

Now, add turmeric powder, sugar, salt, red chilli powder, and masala paste into the mixture. Cook for 5-7 minutes on low flame until oil separates from the mixture. If required add 1 tsp water in between.

Add Coconut Milk to the mixture and mix properly. Add liquid milk and bring it to a boil. Finally, add fried prawns to the gravy.

Cover the pan with a lid and cook for 5-6 minutes on low flame until the gravy thickens to a medium consistency. Add garam masala powder and ghee to chingri malai curry and mix properly.

## SANDESH

### Ingredients

1 cup liquid milk  
1 cup powdered milk  
¼ tsp green cardamom powder  
¼ sugar cup  
1 tsp ghee

### Method

Take a non-stick pan, pour out liquid milk and stir well in medium flame. Wait till the mixture boils. Add sugar and cardamom powder and stir well on medium flame. Add ghee and mix well. Add powdered milk. On medium-low heat, stir constantly until the mixture is very sticky and a mass pulls away from the bottom and the sides of the pan.

Remove from heat. Take a mould and brush ghee. Pour the mixture into the mould and press it.

Add nuts and refrigerate for two hours. Cut into pieces (rectangular shape) as you want and serve.

By Sheulee Akter

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

