



GREENS WITH A TWIST

Wholesome recipes for a vibrant puja feast

Leafy vegetables, also known as leafy greens, are packed with nutrients and play a vital role in a balanced diet. They are versatile, easy to prepare, and essential for a nutrient-rich, healthy diet. These are typically rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibre while low in calories. When it comes to cooking with leafy vegetables, there are countless ways to enjoy their flavours and retain their nutritional benefits. Here are some recipes to help you prepare leafy greens in delicious and creative ways during this Durga Puja.

#FOOD & RECIPES



CRISPY RED SPINACH FRITTERS (LAL SHAKER KURMURI)

Ingredients
1 bunch whole red spinach leaves (washed and dried)

½ cup gram flour (besan)
¼ cup rice flour (for crispiness)
½ tsp carom seeds (ajwain)
1 tsp red chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
Salt to taste

Method
Water as required
Oil (for frying)
Mix gram flour, rice flour, carom seeds, red chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt in a bowl. Add enough water to make a smooth, thick batter. Heat oil in a deep pan. Dip the whole red spinach leaves into the batter, making sure they are coated evenly. Deep fry the spinach leaves in hot oil until they turn golden and crispy. Remove and drain on paper towels. Serve hot with chutney or as a snack with tea.

NEEM PATA BHAJA (FRIED NEEM LEAVES)

Ingredients
1 bunch neem leaves (young and tender)
½ tsp red chilli powder
Oil (mustard oil preferred)
Salt to taste

Method
Wash the neem leaves thoroughly and

let them dry. Heat oil in a pan, and fry the neem leaves until crispy but not burnt. Drain the fried leaves on a paper towel and sprinkle with a little salt and red chilli powder. Serve with hot steamed rice and ghee as a traditional pre-meal dish.

SHUKTO WITH PALONG SHAK (BITTER MIXED-VEGETABLE CURRY WITH SPINACH)

Ingredients
1 bunch spinach (palong shak)
1 bitter gourd, sliced
1 green banana, sliced
1 sweet potatoes, sliced
1 radish, sliced

3 drumsticks (optional), 3-inch sticks
5-6 bori (sun-dried lentil dumplings)
1 tsp mustard seeds paste
1 tsp poppy seed paste (optional)
½ tsp panch phoron
1 tsp ginger paste
1 tsp ghee
1 tsp mustard oil
4 green chillies
Salt and sugar to taste

Method
Fry the "boris" in mustard oil until crispy and set aside. Fry the bitter gourd slices and keep them aside. Heat mustard oil, add panch phoron, then add all the vegetables and sauté. Add mustard paste, ginger paste, salt, sugar, and water, and let everything simmer. Add the spinach at the

end along with the fried boris, bitter gourd and green chilli. Finish with a drizzle of ghee, and serve hot with steamed rice.

STEAMED HILSHA WITH BOTTLE GOURD LEAVES (LAU PATAE BHAPA ILISH)

Ingredients
6 pcs bottle gourd leaves (whole)
6 pcs fish fillets (hilsha)
1 tsp mustard seeds
5 green chillies
¼ cup mustard oil
½ tsp turmeric powder
2 tbsp coconut paste (optional)
Salt to taste

Method
Grind mustard seeds and green chillies into a paste. Marinate the fish fillets with mustard paste, salt, turmeric powder, coconut paste, and a dash of mustard oil. Place the marinated fish on a bottle gourd leaf and wrap it securely. Steam the wrapped fish in a steamer or pressure cooker for 10-15 minutes. Serve the fish in the leaf parcel with steamed rice.

PUI DAL (LENTILS WITH MALABAR SPINACH)

Ingredients
2 cups Malabar spinach (chopped)
1 cup arhar dal (pigeon pea)
1 tomato, chopped
1 onion, chopped
3-4 slit green chillies

3 cloves garlic, crushed
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp red chilli powder
½ tsp mustard seeds
½ tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp curry leaves
1 tsp tamarind pulp
Salt to taste
2 tbsp ghee or oil

Method
Pressure cook arhar dal with turmeric powder and water until soft. Heat ghee or oil in a pan, add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, garlic, and curry leaves. Add chopped onions, tomatoes, and green chillies. Cook until the onions are soft and the tomatoes break down. Add the chopped Malabar spinach and stir well. Cook until the Malabar spinach wilts. Add the cooked dal, tamarind pulp, red chilli powder, and salt. Simmer for a few minutes to let the flavours combine. Serve with rice for a comforting and nutritious meal.

PALAK CHICKEN (SPINACH CHICKEN CURRY)

Ingredients
For the chicken marinade —
500g chicken (bone-in or boneless)
2 tbsp yoghurt
1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp chilli powder
1 tsp coriander powder
Salt to taste

For the spinach puree —
300g fresh spinach leaves (palak)
1 green chilli
1 tsp oil (or butter)
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 clove garlic, minced
1 small onion, finely chopped

For the gravy —
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 tomatoes, pureed or finely chopped
2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp garam masala
1 tsp coriander powder
½ tsp chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp cream (optional)
Salt to taste
2 tbsp oil or ghee

Method

Marinate the chicken —
In a bowl, mix chicken with yoghurt, ginger-garlic paste, turmeric, chilli powder, coriander powder, and salt. Let it marinate for 30 minutes.

Prepare spinach puree —
Boil water and blanch spinach for 2-3 minutes until soft. Drain and immediately transfer to cold water to preserve the colour. Blend the spinach with the green chilli into a smooth puree. Set aside.

Cook the chicken —
Heat oil in a pan, and add cumin seeds until they crackle. Add the marinated chicken and sauté until browned on all sides. Cook for about 10-12 minutes or until nearly done. Set aside.



Prepare the gravy —

In the same pan, heat more oil/ghee if needed and add cumin seeds. Add onions and sauté until golden brown. Add ginger-garlic paste and cook until the raw smell disappears. Add pureed or chopped tomatoes and cook until the oil separates. Stir in the turmeric, chilli powder, coriander powder, and salt. Cook for a minute.

Combine chicken and spinach —
Add the browned chicken to the gravy and mix well. Pour in the spinach puree and simmer for 10-12 minutes, allowing the flavours to meld. If the gravy is too thick, add water to adjust the consistency. Stir in garam masala and cream (optional) for a rich finish. Simmer for 2-3 minutes more,

then turn off the heat. Serve the palak chicken hot with naan, ruti, or rice. Enjoy your delicious and healthy palak chicken!

KOCHU SHAK ER GHONTO (TARO LEAVES CURRY)

Ingredients
1 kochu shak (taro leaves)
½ cup coconut (grated)
6-8 bori (sun-dried lentil dumplings)
2 tbsp mustard oil
½ tsp panch phoron
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp red chilli powder
Salt to taste

Method
Boil the kochu shak in water; this prevents allergic reactions to the kochu shak. Drain

then turn off the heat. Serve the palak chicken hot with naan, ruti, or rice. Enjoy your delicious and healthy palak chicken!

Salt to taste
Method
Wash the jute leaves and chop them roughly. Mix the mustard paste, green chillies, salt, and a little mustard oil. Coat the jute leaves in this mixture. Steam the mixture until the leaves are soft and flavourful. Serve with rice for a traditional Bengali meal.

THANKUNI PATA BATA (PENNYWORT LEAF PASTE)

Ingredients
1 small bunch thankuni pata (pennywort leaves)
2 green chillies
1 tsp mustard oil
4 garlic cloves
Salt to taste
2 tsp grated coconut

Method
Wash the thankuni pata thoroughly in running water to remove dirt or impurities. Blanch the leaves, if you want to reduce the raw flavour, you can blanch the leaves by dipping them in hot water for 1-2 minutes and then quickly transferring them to cold water. In a mortar and pestle or grinder, add the washed or blanched thankuni leaves, green chilli, garlic and a pinch of salt. Grind them into a fine paste and set aside. Once ground, add grated coconut and mustard oil. Mix properly and adjust the salt to taste. Serve the thankuni pata bata as a side dish with rice.

KALMI SHAK ER PATURI (WATER SPINACH WRAPS)

Ingredients
1 bunch kalmi shak (water spinach)
1 tsp mustard paste
2 tsp chopped garlic
4 green chillies (slit)
2 tsp mustard oil
Banana leaves (for wrapping)
Salt to taste

Method
Mix the kalmi shak with mustard paste, chopped garlic, green chillies, and salt. Wrap the mixture in banana leaves and grill the wraps. Drizzle with mustard oil before serving. This unique preparation adds a delightful, smoky flavour to the greens. Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel

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