

FLAVOURS OF SUMMER

A feast of authentic Bengali dishes

Summer brings with it an array of flavours that are rich and diverse. Bengali cuisine, known for its bold spices, fresh ingredients, and intricate cooking techniques, is a true reflection of the region's culinary tradition. From tangy, smoky mangoes to the delicate sweetness of desserts, each dish listed below tells a story of love for food.

BEL-ER LASSI (WOOD APPLE YOGHURT DRINK)

Ingredients

2 cups bel pulp, without seeds and fibre
3 cups yoghurt
1 cup sugar
2 tbsp mixed nuts, grated
6 glasses of water
Crushed or cubed ice

Method

Blend the pulp, yoghurt, sugar and water in a food processor. Make a smooth and thick lassi. Now pour in the glasses and add ice. Garnish with the grated nuts and serve.

KASUNDI HILSA

Ingredients

1 kg hilsa fish
¼ cup mango kasundi
1 tbsp mustard paste
2 tsp red chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
¼ cup mustard oil
Salt to taste

Method

Cut and wash the fish. Marinate with salt, turmeric and keep aside for 10 minutes. Heat oil in a pan, put all spices and pastes.



Cook for a few minutes. Add a little water to it. Add salt, jaggery, and mango-kasundi. Stir it for 5-6 minutes. Put hilsa and some water in it, if required. Cook with the lid on low heat. When the gravy is thick, remove the pan and serve.

BINDI POLAO

Ingredients

For bindi —

2 cups beef mince
2 tbsp corn flour
1 tbsp ginger paste
1 tsp garlic paste
1½ tsp garam masala powder
½ tsp black pepper powder
2 eggs

½ cup fried onion
Salt to taste

For polao —

4 cups aromatic rice
1 tbsp ginger paste
5 pieces cardamoms
4 pieces cinnamons
½ cup fried onion
3 bay leaves
1 tsp kewra water
1 tsp rose water
8 pieces green chillies
½ cup ghee
8 cups water
Salt to taste

Method

Rinse the aromatic rice and let the water drain. Mix all the bindi's ingredients except the oil. Now give them small, round bindi shapes with your hand. Heat oil in a pan and fry the bindi

until brown. Keep aside.

Now, heat the ghee in a separate pan. Add cinnamon, cardamom, bay leaves, ginger paste and aromatic rice. Fry them for 5 minutes. Add water, green chilli, salt and cook until the water is reduced.

When water is completely reduced, add rose water and kewra water. Mix well, put the lid back and leave it on low heat for 10 minutes. When it is done, garnish with fried onions and serve on a platter.

BEGUN SHIRAJI

Ingredients

500g plump eggplant (diced into 2½ inch pieces)
1 kg fenugreek leaves, finely chopped
½ tbsp ginger paste
1 tbsp turmeric powder
1 tsp red chilli powder

1 tsp cumin powder
½ tsp coriander powder

2 tbsp tomato puree
100g peanuts (ground)
1 ½ tbsp mawa (grated)
4 tbsp oil
Salt to taste
Sugar to taste

Method

Heat oil in a pan. Add eggplant pieces and stir-fry over medium heat until half done. Add fenugreek leaves and mix well. Make a paste with ginger, turmeric, chilli, cumin, coriander and water. Add it to the pan with tomato puree. Mix well and stir-fry until spices are well blended.

Stir in peanut paste, salt, and sugar. Mix and continue to cook until the eggplant is soft and all the moisture has evaporated from the pan. Check seasoning, remove from oven and sprinkle with mawa before serving.

HILSA PATURI

Ingredients

One piece hilsa fish
3 tbsp mustard paste
2 tsp green chilli paste
1 tsp turmeric paste
¼ cup mustard oil
Salt to taste
1 banana leaf

Method

Cut the banana leaf into suitable pieces and soak them in lukewarm water to soften. Wash the fish and cut it into pieces. Mix all the ingredients and leave them for half an hour. Now take a piece of fish, fold it inside the banana leaf and tie with a piece of thread. Brush oil on a fry pan, put the paturis (wrapped fish) in it and cook on low heat for 10 minutes with the lid on. Cook the other side of the paturis for another 10 minutes, the same way. Remove the pan from the stove, untie the threads and prepare to serve.

