

#FOOD & RECIPES

TAAL ER ROSH, TAAL ER GUR: Bengal's Sweet Summer Tradition



In Bengal, summer is incomplete without the sweet allure of palm fruit and its golden counterpart, palm jaggery. Known locally as *taal er rosh* and *taal er gur*, these age-old gifts of nature are more than just seasonal indulgences. Whether warming up a cup of coffee, binding sesame into laddus, sweetening celebratory pongal, or blending into a refreshing milkshake, palm fruit and jaggery find ways to surprise both the palate and the body.

COFFEE WITH PALM FRUIT EXTRACT

Ingredients

2 cups water
1/4 cup palm jaggery
1 pod cardamom
1 tsp instant coffee powder

Method

Bring the water to boil then add the jaggery and let it simmer for up to 3 to 4 minutes or until the jaggery is properly mixed. Add the coffee and cardamom and brew for another 2-3 minutes or until it smells just the right amount of heavenly!

Serving —

Strain it and serve. You may add milk to this.

PALM JAGGERY AND SESAME LADDUS

Ingredients

1/2 kg palm jaggery
250g white sesame seeds
1 tbsp pure ghee
100g cashew nuts powder

Method

Roast the sesame in a frying pan for up to 30 seconds. Break the jaggery up into a malleable powder and add the powdered cashew nut, the ghee and the sesame seeds and mix them well. Roll them up into small balls. You may add some extra ghee if you feel the laddu is looking to dry or the laddus keep flaking off.

Serving —

Place a chopped almond or a raisin on top before serving.

SHAKKARA PONGAL

Ingredients

100ml pure ghee
30g cashews
2 tbsp raisins
150g split yellow lentils (moong dal)

250g basmati rice
350ml milk
150g-200g jaggery
1/2 tsp ground cardamom
1/4 tsp ground star anise

Method

Melt the ghee in a large frying pan over medium heat; fry the cashews and raisins in the melted ghee until the cashews are brown, about 5 minutes. Remove the cashews and raisins from the frying pan, set aside and add the lentils to the frying pan and fry in the ghee until fragrant. Stir in the rice, milk, jaggery and cardamom with the lentils. Cook like any normal 'polao' or until the rice is tender, adding water as needed to keep moist, about 30 minutes.

Serving —

Mix the cashews and raisins into the mixture to serve and sprinkle some mint leaves on top.

PALM FRUIT MILKSHAKE

Ingredients

3 ice apples or palm fruits
1 cup chilled milk
Few saffron strands



1 tsp jaggery
Lots of ice

Method

Blend the ingredients together except for the saffron. Use the saffron sparingly so as not to overpower the entire taste of the fruit with that of the fragrant saffron.

Serving —

Serve chilled with a spring of mint on top!

Note

Palm juice or "taal er rosh" is the sweet sap extracted from the fruit of palm trees during summer. This is a symbolic and well-known food in Bengal. It contains vitamin A, B, C and the elements zinc, calcium, potassium, and iron. It also contains antioxidants.

How to extract the palm pulp —

Peel the fruit, separate the seeds (there are usually three segments) and cut off the fibre with a pair of scissors. Just rub the fibre over colander holes until the pulp passes through. Now pass the pulp through a sieve. The juice is ready to use.

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed