



#FOOD & RECIPES

A TASTE OF WINTER: 5 classic pithas and kheers to warm the season

Winter in Bengal is inseparable from the tradition of pitha-making, a craft passed down through generations, where simple ingredients like rice flour, coconut, milk, and molasses transform into delicacies that define our culinary heritage.

From the luxurious richness of zafrani kheer patishapta to the earthy simplicity of chhita pitha, these recipes celebrate both nostalgia and flavour.

Here are 5 beloved winter treats that continue to bring families together.

ZAFRANI KHEER PATISHAPTA

Ingredients

For the batter —
1 cup rice flour
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup liquid molasses
1 cup liquid milk
For the stuffing —
2 litres milk
2 tbsp rice flour

Saffron, soaked in milk
Sugar to taste
Chopped dried nuts, pistachios, almonds, walnuts, and raisins

Method

Prepare a thin, smooth batter using all the batter ingredients. It should be neither too runny nor too thick. Cover and rest for at least 1½ hours.

To make the stuffing, heat the milk with sugar and stir continuously until it reduces by half. Soak the saffron in a little warm milk. Add the sugar and the rice-flour-mixed milk to the pan. Keep stirring until the mixture thickens. Add the chopped nuts and raisins, mix well, and remove from heat. Allow it to cool.



Heat a non-stick pan and lightly grease the surface. Pour a small amount of batter and spread it into a thin circle. Place two spoonfuls of stuffing on one side and roll the pitha into a cylindrical shape. Arrange on a plate and serve.

BHAPA PULI

Ingredients
1 cup rice flour

3/4 cup water
Salt to taste
For the filling —
2 cup grated coconut
1 cup date palm jaggery

Method

Prepare the filling by cooking the grated coconut and jaggery together, stirring continuously until the mixture turns sticky.

To make the dough, boil 3/4 cup water with salt. Once it comes to a boil, add the rice flour and mix well. Allow it to cool slightly, then knead into a smooth dough.

Roll the dough into a medium-thick roti on a rice-flour-dusted surface. Cut into small circles using any round cutter. Place a portion of the filling in the centre and seal the edges with your fingertips.

Steam the pithas for 3–4 minutes. Lightly grease the steaming tray beforehand to prevent sticking. Serve hot.



CHAK-HAO KHEER (BLACK RICE KHEER)

Ingredients
1/4 cup black rice
1 1/2 kg milk (full fat)
1/4 tsp cardamom powder
Sugar, to taste

Method

Rinse and soak the rice for 5–6 hours. Drain and transfer to a pot with the milk. Cook on very low heat, stirring occasionally, until the rice becomes soft. Adjust the amount of milk based on the kheer consistency you prefer.

Add sugar, raisins, and cardamom powder. Cook for another 5 minutes on low heat. Remove from heat when done. Serve either hot or chilled.

DUDH CHITOI PITHA

Ingredients
1 cup rice flour (parboiled rice)
1/2 cup white rice flour (atop chaal)
1 1/2 cup lukewarm water
Salt to taste
1/2 cup date jaggery
2-3 cardamoms
2 cinnamon sticks
3 litres of milk

Method

Mix the rice flours with lukewarm water and a pinch of salt to make a smooth, thin batter. Achieving the right consistency is essential for perfect chitoi pithas.