

Recipes, Customs and Cuisine of Nepal July 2013

Cuisine

The cultural and geographic diversities of Nepal provide ample space for a variety of cuisines based on ethnicity and on soil and climate. Nevertheless dal-bhat-tarkari is eaten throughout the country. Dal is a soup made of lentils and spices. This is served over boiled grain, bhat—usually rice but sometimes another grain—with vegetable curry, tarkari. Condiments are usually small amounts of extremely spicy pickle known as achar which can be fresh or fermented. The variety of these is staggering, said to number in the thousands. Other accompaniments may be sliced lemon (kagati) or lime (nibua) and fresh chili peppers, khursani.



Dining Etiquette

Meals are traditionally eaten seated or squatting on the floor although urban restaurants have tables and chairs. A large mound of bhat (boiled rice or other grain such as cornmeal or barley) or a pile of roti (rounds of thin unleavened bread) is served on a thali—a rimmed brass or stainless steel plate about 12"/30 cm. diameter. The rice is surrounded by smaller mounds of prepared vegetables, fresh chutney or preserved pickles, and sometimes curd / yogurt, fish or meat. Soup-like dal and vegetables cooked in sauce may be served in separate small bowls, to be poured over the rice. Food is brought to the mouth with the fingers of the right hand. The left hand—traditionally used for certain toilet purposes—should never touch food but may hold cups and glasses. The right hand should be rinsed before and after eating.

Read more: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese_cuisine

Customs

Teej is one of the biggest festivals of the Hindu religion. It is a three-day women's fasting festival that begins on the "third day of bright moon fortnight" of the Shraavana month of the Hindu calendar - normally between late July and early September. Dedicated to the Goddess Parvati and commemorating her union with Lord Shiva, the festival is celebrated for marital bliss, well-being of spouse and children and purification of the body and soul. On the first day married women go to their paternal house to enjoy singing and dancing. On the second day, the women dress in finery and spend the day singing and dancing while they fast. At night they worship the God Shiva, wash their husband's feet and take sips of water to break their fast. On the third day of the festival women pay homage to various deities and bathe with red mud found on the roots of the sacred datiwani bush, along with its leaves. This act of purification is the final ritual of Teej, after which women are considered absolved from all their sins.

Festival information submitted by staff of One Heart World-Wide

Recipes

Chatāmari (usually eaten as a snack)

Ingredients:

1 cup rice flour
1/3 cup lentil paste
1/4 teaspoon salt

Topping:

1/2 pound ground chicken/turkey/other meat
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup green peas
1 tablespoon diced tomato
1 teaspoon diced hot green pepper
1 teaspoon diced garlic
1/2 teaspoon grated ginger
1 tablespoon oil
1 egg



Directions:

Soak lentils in water overnight or until the coating is easily removed. Remove coating by rinsing with water. Mix lentils with rice flour to make a thin paste - not too watery. Mix together all topping ingredients except egg.

Heat a flat pan on medium heat. Put the lentil paste on the hot pan in a rolling action clockwise, making as thin a sheet as possible. Put all the topping on the paste. Break one egg and put it carefully in the middle. Try not to break the yolk. Cover the paste and cook on medium heat. (Chatamari is cooked from only one side.) Cook until the paste is done and serve hot.

Chicken Haku Choila (Chhoyela – Newari Hot & Spicy Chicken Chili)

Ingredients:

2 pounds boneless chicken thighs
2 tablespoons roasted cumin seed powder
1 tablespoon red paprika
1 tablespoon crushed dried red chili
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 gingerroot, thinly sliced
1 whole red onion, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons mustard oil or vegetable oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1 bunch coriander leaves, finely chopped
1 tablespoon coriander powder
1 or 2 freshly squeezed limes
3 green chilies, finely chopped



Directions:

In a bowl, marinate the chicken in 1 tablespoon oil, 1 tablespoon roasted cumin powder, salt, pepper and 1 tablespoon of coriander powder. Set aside for at least 30-45 minutes.

Grill the chicken directly over charcoal. If you don't have a grill, you can also use the oven. Once the chicken is cooked, set it aside for 10 minutes. If you cut the chicken as soon as you take it off the grill then it will lose its moisture. Dice the chicken in small pieces.)

In a mixing bowl or tray, layer the chicken with roasted cumin powder, paprika and crushed chilies, onions, 3 cloves garlic, ginger, coriander leaves and chopped green chilies. Season with salt and pepper. Heat the other tablespoon of oil in a pan. Add the cumin and fenugreek seeds and roast until they turn brown. Add the rest of the chopped garlic. Now pour the mixture on top of ingredients in the mixing bowl. This process in Nepali is called "Jhanu" or "Jhaneko".

Mix everything together and add the fresh lime juice. Keep it in a covered bowl for about 10 – 15 minutes, before serving.

Potato Achar

Ingredients:

2 pounds small red potatoes, washed
5 dried red chili peppers
5 fresh green chili peppers, julienned
1 teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds, ground
1/4 teaspoon asafetida (found in Indian markets)
2 tablespoons lime juice
3 tablespoons mustard oil
1/2 cup water
Salt to taste



Directions:

Place the potatoes in a medium saucepan and enough water to cover. Boil potatoes until cooked. Do not overcook. Remove skin and cut into small pieces. Do not rinse the potatoes.

In a large bowl, combine chunked potatoes, turmeric, chili powder, ground sesame seeds, asafetida, lime juice, half of chopped cilantro, salt and water; mix thoroughly. Heat oil in a small pan. Add fenugreek seeds, cumin seeds and dried red chilies. Fry until brown and then add julienned green chilies. Remove the oil mixture from heat and pour over potato mixture; mix thoroughly. Add more water if potato achar seems too dry.

Garnish with remaining chopped cilantro.

Submitted by Laxmi, One Heart World-Wide Nepal Staff

Dal Fry

Dāl (also spelled *dahl* or *daal*) is a preparation of pulses (dried lentils, peas or beans) which have been stripped of their outer hulls and split. It also refers to the thick stew prepared from these pulses.

*Starred ingredients are found in Indian markets

Ingredients:

1/8 cup Bengal gram dal (channa dal)*
1/8 cup red split lentils (masoor dal)*
1/4 cup yellow pigeon peas (toor dal)*
1/4 cup split yellow peas (yellow moong dal)*
4 tablespoon ghee (clarified butter)
2 teaspoon cumin seeds
1/2 teaspoon asafetida*
1 teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon coriander powder
1/2 teaspoon garam masala powder *
Salt to taste
1 tomato, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon grated garlic
1/2 teaspoon grated ginger
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
2 teaspoons coriander leaves, finely chopped



DIRECTIONS:

Mix all the dals together and wash them properly – remove any grit. Soak them in 3 cups water for 30 minutes before cooking, then drain. Slowly cook the dal in 2 cups of water with salt and 1 tsp turmeric powder.

In a frying pan, heat the ghee and add the cumin seeds. When the cumin seeds start to crackle, add asafetida. Stir and add chopped onions. Fry on medium heat until onions turns pinkish in color. Add garlic, ginger and green chili and cook until they turn burnt brown in color. Add the chopped tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes are a little soft. Add coriander powder, garam masala, a little turmeric powder and cook for another 4-5 minutes, adding a little water to ensure the mixture does not burn. Add cooked dal and mix well. Add a little more water to thin the mixture. Bring to a boil and simmer for at least 10 to 15 minutes.

Put dal in a serving bowl, add lemon to it and garnish it with the coriander leaves. Serve hot with rice.

Submitted by Laxmi, One Heart World-Wide Nepal Staff

Rice Pudding

Ingredients:

6 cups milk
1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 cup medium grain rice
2 three-inch cinnamon sticks

Directions

In a 4 quart saucepan, bring $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and the butter to a boil over medium high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add rice and cinnamon stick, return mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low, cover and simmer 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat, discard cinnamon and transfer to a 2-quart baking dish.



Submitted by Sunita, One Heart World-Wide Nepal Staff