

## Cuisine

Nepalese cuisine refers to the *cuisines* of Nepal. The cultural and geographic diversity of Nepal provides 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 (*achaar*) 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*).

Some foods have hybrid Chinese/Tibetan and Indian origins, for example *momo* - Tibetan dumplings with Indian spices that are important in Newar cuisine. *Momo* were originally filled with buffalo meat, but now goat or chicken are used as well as vegetarian preparations. There are also special foods such as *Sel roti* and *Patre* eaten during festivals such as *Tihar*. New food varieties have been invented such as *Taas*, similar to shish kebab. The Nepalese have even taken to Ramen noodles as fast food that can be prepared and eaten much more quickly than traditional *dhal-bhat*.



Read more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese_cuisine)

## 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"(30cm) in 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.

Although Nepalese society is moving away from caste-based discrimination and becoming less mindful of ritual pollution, these concepts can still hold sway in tradition-minded upper-caste households. In such contexts water itself is highly subject to pollution, affecting containers as well. Clay or wooden containers must be discarded, while metal containers require ritual scouring. You will often find people drinking water by



pouring it into their mouths rather than touching their lips to the container to avoid polluting the container and contents.

Dry-cooked grains (including beaten rice and roasted soybeans or corn), rice pudding cooked in milk rather than water (*khir*), and raw fruit are less subject to ritual pollution. These foods can be accepted from any clean caste but not from untouchables. However, water and foods cooked with water can be problematic. Traditionally they are not to be cooked or touched by a person of lower caste than the recipient. For this reason, even in a polygamous household the first wife should not be of lower caste than the husband.

Foreigners and members of many particularly 'Hinduized' janajati ethnic groups may occupy an ambiguous space, neither fully untouchable nor fully "clean". They may not be welcome inside upper-caste homes and should not presume to enter without being invited (and not just invited to sit outside on the porch). Upper-caste Hindus may decline to eat with them at all, or may avoid eating foods that are most subject to ritual pollution.

Breaches of dietary etiquette were made criminal offenses in Muluki Ain —the main corpus of civil law— in 1854 and not decriminalized until 1962. Since 1962, discriminatory customs have been falling into disuse among educated and urban Nepalis, yet they often prevail in the countryside. Guests and visitors should try to conform to tradition until clearly instructed otherwise by their hosts.

Read more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese_cuisine)

**Recipes begin on the next page, and are generally printed one-to-a-page**

## Momo (Meat Dumplings)

### Ingredients:

#### **Wrapper**

3 c. all-purpose flour  
 1 c. water  
 pinch of salt  
 (Alternatively, buy egg roll or wonton wrappers)

#### **Filling**

1 lb. ground or minced chicken/turkey/lamb/pork  
 1 c. onion, finely chopped  
 ½ c. shallots, finely chopped  
 ½ c. cilantro, chopped  
 ½ c. diced tomatoes  
 1 tsp. garlic paste  
 1 tsp. ginger paste  
 ¼ tsp. turmeric (optional)  
 1 tsp. cumin powder  
 1 tsp. coriander powder  
 3 fresh chilies (paste)  
 4 T. ghee or butter  
 salt to taste

#### **Filling Directions:**

Combine all ingredients.  
 Mix well, adjust seasoning according to taste.

#### **Packing Dumplings:**

Hold wrapper on one palm. Put about 1 spoon of filling in middle of wrapper. With the other hand bring all edges together to center, making the pleats. Pinch and twist the pleats to ensure the absolute closure of the dumpling. Closing the meat inside wrapper is the secret of tasty and juicy dumplings.

#### **Steaming Dumplings:**

Heat water in a steamer. Oil the steamer rack well or put cabbage leaves on bottom to prevent dumplings from sticking to rack. Put dumplings in steamer. When the water boils, close the lid on rack. Steam until the dumplings are cooked through, about 10-15 minutes.



#### **Wrapper Directions:**

In a bowl combine flour, salt and water. Mix well. Knead until the dough becomes similar to pizza dough.

Optional step: Cover and let stand for about 1 hour. Knead well again before making the wrappers.

Prepare 1" dough balls and roll between your palms to spherical shape. Dust working board with dry flour. On the board gently flatten the ball with rolling pin to about 2" diameter circle. Repeat steps again for more wrappers.

<http://www.food-nepal.com/recipe/R017.htm>

## Dal Bhat Takari

### Dal Bhat ingredients:

- 1 c. green/brown lentils
- 2 T. oil (I use coconut oil as it has a high heat point)
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp. of ginger, minced or grated
- ½ tsp. turmeric
- ½ tsp. salt, according to taste
- 4 c. liquid - chicken stock, vegetable stock, or water

### Takari Ingredients:

- 2 T. cooking oil (coconut oil or ghee)
- 1 onion, diced
- ½ tsp. cumin powder
- 1 tsp. coriander powder
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2" piece ginger, crushed or grated
- ½ tsp. turmeric powder
- pinch chili powder
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 large potatoes, cubed
- 3 c. chopped mixed vegetables - cauliflower, green beans, aubergines (eggplant), zucchinis, carrots
- 3 tomatoes, quartered

### Directions:

Dal Baht - Wash lentils and soak for an hour or more. Heat oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and fry onion until golden brown. Add drained lentils, garlic, ginger, turmeric and salt and stir to combine. Pour liquid over lentils and cook over a medium-low heat until lentils are soft and the mixture is like a thick.

Takari - Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry onion until golden brown. Stir in cumin, coriander, garlic, ginger, turmeric, chili powder, pepper and salt. Add potatoes, chopped vegetables of your choice and tomatoes. Turn vegetables over to coat with oil and spices. Cover and cook over low heat until all the vegetables are tender, turning gently from time to time. Serve with rice.



<http://www.cravingfresh.com/2012/03/dal-bhat-and-tarkari-nepalese-recipe.html>

## Chicken Bhutua (Chicken Stir Fry)

### Ingredients:

1.5 lb. chicken, cut into 1" pieces (can also be substituted with lamb)  
5 garlic gloves, minced  
1" ginger, minced  
3 fresh red chilies, minced  
1 T. cumin powder  
½ tsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. turmeric  
5 T. mustard oil (divided)  
1 c. green onions, cut in 1" lengths  
1 tsp. ground black pepper  
¼ tsp. cinnamon  
5 cloves  
1 c. peas  
salt to taste



### Directions:

In a large bowl combine chicken, 1 T. of the mustard oil, turmeric, cumin, chili powder, salt, and pepper. Toss well to coat thoroughly. In a non-stick pan heat remaining mustard oil. Add cloves and fry for 15 sec. Transfer the coated chicken to the pan, stir well to brown. Add garlic, ginger, and red chilies. Stir-fry chicken in medium heat until cooked through. You may need water to moisten, if it starts to burn. Add green onions, peas, and cinnamon, stir for 2 min. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve with stir-fried vegetables and rice.

<http://www.nepalhomepage.com/society/recipes/c-bhutuwa.html>

## Amp Ko Achar (Mango Chutney)

### Ingredients:

6 mangoes, peeled and cut  
1 c. white vinegar  
2 clove garlic, mashed  
2 T. ginger, minced  
½ c. raisins  
1 c. sugar  
1 T. cayenne pepper

### Directions:

Mix all the ingredients together in a pan and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 45 minutes. Watch and stir well, and add water if needed, because it burns quickly. Add more sugar or cayenne pepper to taste. Some like it hot, some like it sweet. Put the chutney in a glass jar and keep refrigerated.

<http://www.worldcook.net/Cooking/Miscellaneous/MX-MangoChutney.htm>



## Gajar Ko Halwa (Carrot Pudding)

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. carrots  
3 c. whole milk  
1 c. half-and-half  
2 c. sugar  
3 T. ghee  
½ tsp. cardamom powder (elaichi)  
A few flakes of saffron  
Chopped almonds

### Directions:

Grate carrots. Put whole milk, half-and-half, sugar, and carrots in a heavy saucepan. Boil until it is thick. Remember to stir continuously once it thickens. Add ghee, cardamom, and saffron. Stir on low heat. Serve hot, decorated with chopped almonds.

<http://food-nepal.com/recipe/R024.htm>



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