

MEERA NAYAK'S (MOSTLY) KONKANI RECIPES



“I don't know what it is about food your mother makes for you, especially when it's something that anyone can make - but it carries a certain taste of memory.”

- Mitch Albom

Breakfast-y Foods

Idli

- 1 cup udid dal (Black gram dal)
- 2 cups rice (or 1 1/2 cups of cream of rice or rice soji)
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp cooked rice (optional)

Soak the rice and dal separately for two hours, then remove from water. Grind the rice with 1 cup of water coarsely (to consistency of cream of rice).

(If using cream of rice, just add water do not grind).

Grind the udid dal with 1 cup of water till smooth.

Add cooked rice and grind.

Mix and keep overnight. Batter should be of a thick consistency.

Add salt and steam in steel glasses (katoris) or idli pans for 10 minutes in a closed vessel. (Keep 1 inch of water for ten minutes at the bottom of the closed vessel)

Serve with coconut chutney and sambhar



NOTE: Quantities of salt, chilli powder, etc. in all recipes are approximate and should be adjusted to taste

Dosa

1 cup udid dal (Black gram dal) (soak in 2 cups water)

2 cups rice (soak in 1 cup water)

1 tsp salt

Oil to fry

Soak rice and dal separately for 2 hours.

Grind the rice and dal separately till fine and mix together. Keep overnight. Add salt and make dosas.

To make dosas, heat frying pan or griddle on medium heat, swirl 1 teaspoon of oil to cover surface. Ladle 1 scoop of batter on to pan and tilt to spread over pan surface. Cover and cook for 2-3 minutes, allow to cook for 2 minutes uncovered, gently turn over to cook on other side 2 minutes.

Serve with coconut chutney and sambhar (optional).



Masala Dosa

Make dosa as above. Before removing from frying pan, place 2 tbsp of potato bhaji (recipe below) on one half of dosa. Spread with back of spoon to occupy half of dosa, and fold other half of dosa over. Remove from pan.

Serve with coconut chutney

Soji Dosa

1 cup udid dal (Black gram dal)

2 cups soji (or Cream of Wheat) or maida (white flour)

Soak and grind the udid dal with two cups water.

Add the soji and keep overnight. Thin out if required. Add salt.

Make dosas as described above for Dosas recipe

Serve with coconut chutney

Pan Polo (Coconut-Rice Dosa)

1 cup rice

3 tablespoons desiccated coconut (or 2 handfuls of grated fresh coconut)

Grind all ingredients together with 1/2 cup of water. Add salt.

Thin out the batter and make dosas as described above. Fold over twice to serve.

Serve with coconut chutney.



Coconut Chutney

6 tbsp dessicated coconut (or 4 handfuls of grated coconut)

5 dried red chillies, fried (or 4 fresh green chillies)

1 tsp ginger powder (or 1/2 inch fresh ginger bit)

1 1/2 tsp. tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

1/2 tsp salt

2 tbsp. plain yoghurt (optional)

1 tsp mustard seeds

1 tsp dried or fresh curry leaves

1 tsp oil

Dissolve tamcon in 1 cup hot water. Add to other ingredients, excluding last 3. Grind to smooth consistency. adding more water if required.

Heat the oil and add mustard seeds. When they begin to splutter, add curry leaves.

Remove from heat after 1-2 minutes, add to ground chutney. Serve cold with dosas, iddlis.

Vegetable Upma

- 1/2 cup soji (or cream of wheat)
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp chilli powder (or 4 fresh green chillies)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 tsp turmeric (haldi) powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp cut coriander leaves (fresh)
- 1/3 cup peas, 1 sliced tomato (optional)
- 1 tsp desiccated or fresh coconut

Fry soji over low heat in 1 tbsp oil for 3-4 minutes and remove from heat.

Fry chopped onion in 1 tbsp oil till onion is transparent. Add 1 cup water, haldi powder and salt. When water boils, add tomato slices and peas. Then add fried soji and turn heat down low. Add coconut, lime juice and coriander leaves. Cover and leave on low heat for 5 minutes, till water evaporates.



Konkani Upma (Rollav)

1/2 cup soji
3 tbsp oil
1/2 tsp mustard
1 tsp curry leaves
3 dried red chillies (or 4 cut fresh green chillies)
1 tbsp lime juice
1 tbsp desiccated or fresh coconut
2 tsp sugar
1/2 tsp salt

Heat 1 cup water with salt and sugar.

Heat oil over high heat, with mustard. When mustard splutters, add chillies and curry leaves. Turn heat low, add soji and fry for 3-4 minutes. Add hot water and cover till water is absorbed. Add coconut and lime juice.

Phova Usli

1 cup beaten rice
1/2 tsp salt
2 tsp sugar
1 tbsp oil
1/2 tsp mustard
2 red chillies
1 tsp curry leaves
1 tbsp desiccated coconut

Soak beaten rice in water for 2 minutes or just till it turns soft (time varies with the type/thickness of beaten rice). Squeeze water out of the rice. Add salt and sugar to rice. Keep aside.

Heat up oil, mustard, red chillies and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, turn down heat, add beaten rice mixture, stir for 3-4 minutes, add coconut and remove from fire.

Batata Phova

- 2 medium potatoes, boiled, peeled and diced
- 2 cups beaten rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped small
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp chilli powder (or 4 cut green chillies)
- 1/2 tsp turmeric (haldi) powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp dessicated coconut
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp cut coriander leaves

Soak beaten rice in water for 2 minutes or till soft, squeeze out water. Add salt and turmeric. Heat up oil and fry onion till golden brown. Add chillies or chilli powder. Add potatoes, fry for 2 minutes, turn heat low, add beaten rice, cover for 3-4 minutes, add coconut, coriander leaves and lime juice.



Bread Usli

- 6 slices of white bread, diced
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1-2 tbsp oil
- 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
- 2 red chillies
- 1 tsp curry leaves
- 1 tsp desiccated or fresh coconut

Dissolve sugar and salt in 2-3 tbsp water. Heat up oil, mustard, chillies and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, add bread bits, sprinkle with sugared water, stir on low heat for 3-4 minutes. Add coconut.



Potato Bhaji

3 large potatoes, boiled, peeled and diced

2 onions, chopped lengthwise

4 tsp oil

1 tsp mustard

4 fresh green chillies (or 4 red chillies dried)

1/2 tsp turmeric (haldi) powder

1 tsp salt

1 tbsp lime juice

Heat oil with mustard and chillies. When mustard splutters, add onion. Fry till onion turns transparent. Add turmeric, 2 cups of water, salt, and potato. Cook covered for 10 minutes, till onion is cooked fully. Add 1 tablespoon lime juice.

If potato bhaji is for making masala dosas, then add only 1 cup water, and cook till water is absorbed/evaporates and bhaji is dry.



Undi

1 cup rice (or cream of rice)
1/2 cup coconut (fresh or desiccated)
3/4 tsp salt
1 tsp mustard
1 tsp udid dal
4 tsp oil

Soak rice (or cream of rice) in 2 cups water in water for 1 hour. Grind rice to coarse consistency. (Do not grind if using cream of rice).

Grind coconut to a paste with 1/2 cup water. Add to the cream of rice and stir. Add salt. Heat oil with mustard and udid dal. When mustard splutters and dal turns light brown, add the rice and coconut batter. On low heat, cook till water evaporates and the mixture is soft and solid. Remove from heat and cool. Make into 1 1/2 inch balls and flatten slightly. Steam for 10 minutes.

Serve with coconut chutney.

Dals and Related Things

Dali Thoy

1/2 cup arhar/toor dal or yellow split peas

2 tsp oil

1/2 tsp mustard

2 red chillies

1 tsp curry leaves

1/4 tsp asafoetida (hing) powder

1/2 tsp salt

1 tsp fresh cut coriander leaves (optional)

1 tbsp lime juice (optional)

Cook arhar dal with 2 cups of water in pressure cooker for 20 minutes, or till dal is mushy and tender. Stir vigorously with fork. (To cook dal without a pressure cooker, soak the dal in water overnight, then boil in a covered pot with 2 cups of water for 1 to 2 hours till tender.) Heat the oil with the mustard seeds, chillies and curry leaves. When the mustard splutters, add the hing powder. Remove from heat, add to dal. Add salt and green chillies to dal (and coriander leaves and lime juice if using) and boil for 5 minutes.



Sambhar

1/2 cup toor dal or yellow split peas
1 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate paste)
1 tsp sambhar powder
1 tsp mustard
1 tsp curry leaves
1/2 tsp salt

Cook dal as described above for dali thoy recipe.

Dissolve tamcon in 1/2 cup of hot water. Add tamcon, sambhar powder and salt to dal.

Boil for 5 minutes. Heat oil with mustard seeds and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, add to dal.

Vegetable Sambhar

Sambhar (from recipe)

1/2 cup chopped boiled vegetables (green beans, carrots, potatoes)

Add vegetables to sambhar and boil for 5-10 minutes.

Onion Sambhar

Sambhar (from above recipe)

2 tsp oil

1 medium onion, chopped lengthwise

1 tomato, chopped

Fry onions in oil till golden brown. Add tomato, fry for 2 minutes. Add to sambhar. Boil for 5-10 minutes.

Rasam



- 1/2 cup toor dal or yellow split peas
- 1 tsp rasam powder (or sambhar powder)
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate paste)
- 1 tsp mustard
- 1 tsp curry leaves
- 2 tsp oil
- 1/2 tsp salt

Cook dal, along with tomatoes, as described above for dali thoy recipe. Dissolve tamcon in 1/2 cup of hot water. Add tamcon, rasam powder and salt to dal. Boil for 5 minutes. Heat oil with mustard seeds and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, add to dal.

Sarupkari



- 1 cup dried kidney beans, white kidney beans, or black beans (or 1 can cooked beans)
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp oil
- 4 red chillies
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1/2 tsp asafoetida (hing) powder

Soak beans in cold water overnight or in hot water for 2 hours. Cook in pressure cooker for 20 minutes or till just cooked, but not mushy. (To cook dal without a pressure cooker, soak the beans in water overnight, then boil in a covered pot with 2 cups of water for 1 to 2 hours till just soft.) If using can of cooked beans, wash beans thoroughly with running water to remove preservative liquid.

Grind half the beans in a blender till smooth with 1 1/2 cups of water.

Heat the oil in a saucepan with the mustard seeds and chillies. When the mustard splutters, add the hing powder. Add ground beans and unground beans to the saucepan. Add salt. Boil for 5 minutes.

Ghashi



1/2 cup green peas, chick peas or kidney beans (or 1/2-1 can)

4 tbsp desiccated coconut

3 dried red chillies

1 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

1 tbsp oil

1 tsp mustard

1 tsp curry leaves

1/2 tsp salt

Cook chick peas or beans as described above for sarupkari recipe, or use a can of cooked chick peas or beans. Cook frozen green peas or fresh green peas till tender. Fry red chillies in hot oil till brown. Grind coconut with fried chillies, and tamcon dissolved in 1/2 cup hot water. Add 2 tbsp cooked peas/beans to coconut and grind to add flavor (optional). Heat oil with mustard seeds and curry leaves. When mustard seeds splutter, add coconut mixture and remaining cooked beans. Bring to a boil, then simmer 10 minutes on low flame. Add salt.

Ambat

Recipe for Ghashi

1 medium onion, chopped

1 tbsp oil

Fry onion in heated oil till onion turns brown. Add to simmering ghashi and continue to simmer for 5 minutes.

Vern

1 cup moong dal (skinned - yellow in colour)

2 green chillies

1 tsp turmeric

1 tsp jeera (cumin)

1/2 tbsp coconut

1 tbsp oil

1 tsp mustard

3 dried red chillies

1 tsp curry leaves

1 tsp salt

Cook dal in pressure cooker for 15 minutes with 2 cups of water. Mash with a fork.

Grind cumin and coconut (dry or with 1/4 cup water).

Add cumin, coconut, salt and green chillies to dal.

Heat oil with mustard, red chillies and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, remove from heat. Add to dal. Bring dal to a boil, then lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes.

Upkaris and Other Curries

Vegetable Upkari



2 cups diced vegetables (any combination of green beans, peas, carrots, corn, cauliflower, or cabbage)

1/2 cup potatoes, cooked, peeled and diced (optional)

2 tbsp oil

1 tsp mustard

2-3 red chillies (or 1/2 tsp red chilli flakes)

1/2 tsp salt

Heat oil with mustard and chillies. When mustard starts to splutter, turn heat low and add fresh or frozen vegetables. Add potato (optional) and salt. Cover and cook on low heat for 5-10 minutes, or till tender.

Potato Upkari

4 medium potatoes, uncooked, peeled and diced or chopped into matchstick lengths

2-3 tbsp oil

1 tsp mustard

2-3 red chillies

1/2 tsp salt

Soak cut potatoes in cold, salted water for 15 minutes. Drain away water. Heat oil with mustard and chillies. When mustard starts to splutter, turn heat low and add diced potatoes and salt. Cook on low heat, covered, for 10 minutes or till tender, stirring every 5 minutes. Uncover and cook for an additional 5 minutes.



Potato and Onion Upkari

Ingredients as above for potato upkari

2 medium onions, cut lengthwise into slivers

Soak cut potatoes in cold, salted water for 15 minutes. Drain away water.

Heat oil with mustard and chillies. When mustard starts to splutter, add onion and fry till transparent. Turn heat low and add diced potatoes. Cook on low heat, covered, for 10 minutes or till tender, stirring every 5 minutes. Uncover and cook for an additional 5 minutes.

Onion Bhutti

3 large onions, chopped, or 4 bunches of scallions, chopped into 1/2 inch lengths

1 medium onion, minced

2 tsp chilli powder

2 tbsp oil

3 tbsp desiccated coconut

1/2 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

1/2 tsp salt

Fry red chillies in hot oil till brown. Grind coconut with fried chillies, and tamcon dissolved in 1/2 cup hot water. Heat oil with mustard seeds and curry leaves. When mustard seeds splutter, add 1 minced onion and fry over medium heat. When onion turns dark brown, add remaining chopped onion or scallions and 1/2 cup of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer 10 minutes on low flame. Add the coconut mixture and salt. Cook on low heat till all water has evaporated and onion is cooked. Stir frequently, cooking till mixture is browned.

Potato or Okra (Bhend) Masala Upkari

4 medium potatoes, cooked, peeled and diced (or 2 cups diced, uncooked okra)

2-3 tbsp oil

2 tsp coriander powder

1 tsp chilli powder

1/4 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

1/2 tsp salt

Dissolve tamcon in 1/4 cup hot water

Heat oil with mustard seeds. When mustard starts to splutter, add coriander and chilli powders. Add tamcon and turn heat low. Add salt, potato or okra bits, and stir. Cover and cook over low fire for 5-7 minutes, stirring often.



Sukkae

1 cup boiled cauliflower, green banana, green pepper or mixed vegetables

1/2 cup potato, boiled, peeled and diced

4 tbsp dessicated coconut

3 dried red chillies

1 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

1 tbsp oil

1 tsp urad dal

1 tsp mustard

1 tsp curry leaves

1/2 tsp salt

Fry red chillies in hot oil till brown. Grind coconut with fried chillies and tamcon dissolved in 1/2 cup hot water. Heat oil with mustard seeds, urad dal and curry leaves. When mustard seeds splutter and urad dal turns light brown, add coconut mixture, vegetables and potato. Bring to a boil, then simmer 10 minutes on low flame. Add salt.

Potato Song

2 cups potato, boiled, peeled and cubed

2 medium onions, cut lengthwise into slivers

1 medium onion, minced

1 tsp chilli powder

3 tsp oil

1 tsp mustard seeds

1/2 tsp salt

1 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

Heat 2 tsp oil with mustard seeds. When mustard splutters, add 1 minced onion. Saute over medium heat till onion turns brown. Add chilli powder and fry for 1 minute. Dissolve tamcon in 2 cups of hot water. Add remaining onion, potato cubes, salt. and water to the fried onion. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes, till onion is tender. Add 1 tsp oil and stir. Remove from heat.

Vaingana Puddi Sagle

- 1 medium eggplant, chopped into cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 tbsp desiccated coconut
- 3 dried red chillies
- 1 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp curry leaves
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar

Fry red chillies in hot oil till brown (can use chili powder instead, without frying). Grind coconut with fried chillies/chili powder, and tamcon dissolved in 1/2 cup hot water. Heat oil with mustard seeds and curry leaves. When mustard seeds splutter, add chopped onion and fry over medium heat. When onion turns dark brown, add eggplant and 1/2 cup of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer 10 minutes on low flame. Add the coconut mixture, sugar and salt. Cook till water has evaporated and eggplant is cooked.



Pulikoddel



- 1 cup squash or white pumpkin, peeled and cooked
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 4 black peppercorns
- 5 menthi seeds
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/4 tsp hing (asafoetida powder)
- 1 1/2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp rice (note: optional if using just spice powders instead of grinding whole spices)
- 3 tbsp desiccated coconut
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp curry leaves

Heat 1 tbsp oil and fry coriander, cumin, pepper, menthi, turmeric, hing and rice, stirring continuously for 2-3 minutes. Add coconut and continue to stir over low heat till coconut is light brown. Remove from heat and grind.

Add to the cooked pumpkin or squash and bring to a boil. Add sugar and salt. Heat 1/2 tsp oil with mustard and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, add to pumpkin mixture. Cook for 5 minutes over low fire, stirring frequently.

Alu Mutter Garam Masala

2 cups peas, boiled
1 cup potatoes, peeled, boiled and cubed
2 tomatoes, chopped
4 tbsp oil
4 medium onions, chopped
1 inch piece cinnamon
4 cloves
3 dried red chillies
1 tbsp coriander seeds
1 tbsp cumin seeds
1/2 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)
2 green chillies
1 inch ginger root
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp salt

Excepting the first 4 ingredients, grind all the remaining ingredients with 1 cup of water.

Heat oil over medium heat, and then add the ground mixture to the oil. Fry until all the water evaporates and the mixture turns brown. Add 2 cups water, tomato, peas and potatoes. Simmer over low heat for 10 minutes

Valval

- 1 small pumpkin or acorn squash, diced, with skin on
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 10 beans, chopped
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 10 cashewnuts (optional)
- 3 green chillies, split lengthwise
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp sugar
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tin of coconut milk
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp curry leaves

Boil the first 5 ingredients in 2 cups of water till tender. Add salt, sugar and chillies. Make a thin paste of flour and cold water. Add to the simmering vegetables, stirring for 2-3 minutes till cooked. Remove from heat. Add coconut milk. Heat 1 tbsp oil with mustard, cumin seeds and curry leaves. When mustard seeds start to splutter, add to vegetables.



Corn and Cream

1 large onion, chopped
1 tbsp oil
2 cups of cooked corn
1 tsp chilli powder
1 can tomatoes or 5 skinned tomatoes
2 tbsp sugar
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup cream

Fry onion in oil till brown. Add chilli powder and fry 1/2 minute. Remove from heat. Add tomatoes. Puree mixture in blender. Add salt, sugar and cooked corn kernels. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat. When cool, add cream.

Snack Food, Fried Stuff and Odds and Ends

Bajji



1/2 cup besan (chickpea flour)

1/2 tsp turmeric

1 tsp chilli powder

1 tsp salt

1/4 tsp baking soda

2 tsp rice flour (for crispness)

Fresh vegetables - potato, capsicum, eggplant, cauliflower, or onion – cut into slices

Oil for deep-frying

Mix all ingredients except vegetables together, adding enough water to make a fairly thick batter. Heat at least 2-3 inches of oil in a deep vessel. When oil is heated, test by adding a drop of batter to the oil - it should sizzle and turn golden immediately. If batter turn brown immediately on adding to oil, then oil is too hot.

Dip the pieces of vegetable in the batter so that they are completely coated. Gently lower them, one by one, into hot oil. Turn over the batch in 2-3 minutes to fry on the other side. Remove from heat after another 2-3 minutes and drain on paper towels.

Onion and Cabbage Bajjis

Bajji batter as above but very thick

1 cup cabbage, minced

2 medium onions, minced

2 tsp coriander leaves, fresh

2 green chillies, minced

Add all ingredients. Roll into small flat balls (or fry as heaped teaspoons of batter). Fry in hot oil as above, gently lowering balls (or dropping the teaspoons of batter) into the oil. Do not fry too many bajjis at once or they will stick together. Turn over the batch in 2-3 minutes to fry on the other side. Remove from heat after another 2-3 minutes Drain on paper towels.

Spinach Vadi

1 bunch spinach chopped

1 onion chopped

6 tbsp besan (chickpea flour)

½ tsp salt

2 tbsp oil

Water (to make thick besan batter)

Mix all ingredients together. Spread in oiled pan to ½ inch thickness. Steam for 10 minutes. Cool and then shallow fry in oil.

Sannapolo



- 1 cup rice (or cream of rice)
- 1/2 cup toor dal (or yellow split peas)
- 1/2 salt
- 1/2 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)
- 5 fried red chillies (or 2 tsp chilli powder)
- 1 medium onion, minced
- Oil for frying

Soak rice and dal separately in water for 2 hours. Grind rice till a coarse consistency is reached, using just enough water to form a paste (if cream of rice is used, just add water to it till thick paste is formed – no grinding required). Grind dal to a coarse consistency, again using just enough water to form a thick paste.

Dissolve tamcon in 1/4 cup of hot water. Add salt, chillis (or chilli powder), and tamcon, and grind along with the dal. Add rice mixture and chopped onion to dal. To make sannapolo, drop 2 tbsp of mixture on heated and oiled saucepan or griddle. Flatten to 1/4 inch thickness to form small round dosa. Add 1/4 tsp oil around the edges. After 3-4 minutes, turn over and repeat procedure. Sannapolo is done when both sides are dark brown in patches.

Cauliflower Pickle

1 fresh cauliflower, chopped into 1 inch pieces
3 tbsp salt
6 tbsp lime juice
1/2 cup red chillies
1/4 cup mustard seeds
1/2 cup water

Add first three ingredients together, mix and keep aside at room temperature for a day. Grind the remaining ingredients together and add to the cauliflower mixture. Mix and keep aside at room temperature for 2-3 days. Then refrigerate.

Sannakhotto

1 cup rice (or 1 cup cream of rice)
6 tbsp desiccated coconut
6 fried red chillies (or 3/4 tsp chilli powder)
1 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup water (increase to 3/4 cup if using cream of rice)

Soak rice in water for 1-2 hours. Drain excess water and grind to coarse consistency (If using cream of rice, grinding and soaking not required.) Grind remaining ingredients together. Add to rice. Steam in katoris (or shallow glasses/cups) for 10-15 minutes or till firm.

Cabbage Ambado



Batter for Sannapolo, as above

1 cup cabbage, minced

Oil for deep frying

Follow 1st part of recipe for Sannapolo as above, adding cabbage to the mixture. Heat at least 2-3 inches of oil over medium heat in a deep vessel. When oil is heated, test by adding a drop of batter to the oil - it should sizzle and turn golden immediately. If batter turn brown immediately on adding to oil, then oil is too hot.

Drop a tablespoon of batter gently into the oil. Repeat till 4-5 balls are frying in the oil. Turn over the batch in 2-3 minutes to fry on the other side. Remove from heat after another 2-3 minutes and drain on paper towels.

Potato Ambado



5 medium potatoes, boiled, peeled and roughly mashed

1 tsp salt

1 tbsp coconut (fresh or desiccated)

3 green chillies, finely minced

1 tsp mustard

1 tsp curry leaves

1 tbsp oil

2 cup besan (chickpea flour)

1/2 tsp turmeric

1/2 tsp chilli powder

1 tsp salt

1/4 tsp baking soda

Oil for deep frying

Heat 1 tbsp oil with mustard and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, add to the potato. Add salt, coconut and chillies to potato and mix. Shape potato mixture into balls of 1 1/2 inch diameter. Form a thick batter with remaining ingredients, using as much water as required. Heat oil on medium heat. When oil is heated, dip balls in batter and gently lower into hot oil. Oil must not be too hot or batter will blacken. Fry for 3-4 minutes, turning balls over once, till covering is golden brown. Do not fry too many balls at once or they will stick together. Drain on paper towels.

Serve with coconut chutney, coriander chutney or ketchup.

Mint or Coriander Chutney



1 cup fresh, chopped coriander or mint leaves

1 onion, chopped

2 tbsp coconut (fresh or desiccated)

6 green chillies

1/2 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

1/2 tsp salt

Grind all ingredients together into a thick paste, using as little water as required to form the paste. Refrigerate.

Thoushe Pachadi

1 cucumber, skinned and cubed into 1/4 inch cubes

2 green chillies, minced

Pinch of asafoetida powder

1 tsp oil

1/2 tsp salt

Mix all ingredients together. Serve cold.

Thoushe Pachadi 2



1 cucumber, skinned and grated

1/2 cup yoghurt

2 green chillies, minced

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp mustard

1/2 tsp curry leaves

1 tsp oil

Heat oil with mustard and curry leaves. When mustard splutters, add to cucumber. Add remaining ingredients. Serve cold.

Potato Gozzu

2 potatoes, boiled, peeled and roughly mashed

4 tbsp yoghurt

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp oil

1/2 cup hot water

1/4 tsp tamcon (tamarind concentrate)

2 green chillies, finely minced

A pinch of asafoetida powder

Dissolve tamcon in the water. Mix all the ingredients together. Serve cold.

SWEET STUFF

Vermicelli Kheer



- 1 cup vermicelli
- 2 tbsp butter or margarine
- 5 cups of milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder or 3 cardamom seeds
- 1/4 cup cashewnuts
- 1/4 cup raisins

Crush vermicelli into small bits. Fry in 1 tbsp butter for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and keep aside. Fry raisins and cashewnuts in 1 tbsp butter for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Boil milk over medium heat.

When it boils, add vermicelli. Stir for 2-3 minutes. Add sugar, cardamom, raisins and cashewnuts. Bring to boil again and remove from heat. Serve cold.

Sheera

1 cup cream of wheat (soji)

4 tbsp butter or margarine

1 cup milk

3/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup raisins

Fry the soji in 2 tbsp butter over medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and keep aside.

Heat milk to boiling point, then add soji to milk and stir, over medium heat.

Add 1 cup sugar and stir till mixture becomes very thick and lumps together. Add 1 tbsp butter. Remove from heat and spread on a buttered pan, to 1/4 inch thickness. Fry raisins in 1 tbsp butter for 2 minutes and then scatter on surface of sheera, pressing raisins into soft sheera.

Cut into 2 inch squares.



Meera Nayak (with her Taster-in-Chief Raghuram Nayak)