

Indo-Bangla Cooking

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Bangladesh and India are part of the Indian Subcontinent and have had a long common cultural, economic and political history. The cultures of the two countries are similar; in particular Bangladesh and India's states West Bengal and Tripura are all Bengali-speaking. However, since the partition of India in 1947, Bangladesh (formerly East Bengal and East Pakistan) became a part of Pakistan. Following the bloody Liberation War of 1971, Bangladesh gained its independence and established relations with India. The political relationship between India and Bangladesh has passed through cycles of hiccups. According to Bangla fundamentalists: 'A Bengali Hindu is culturally closer to a Bangladeshi Muslim, yet they are supposed to be "foreigners" to each other' they believe in Hindu-Muslim Bhai Bhai, which means that Bangladeshi Hindu-Muslims are brothers. Bangla cuisine refers to the Bengali cuisine prevalent in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi cuisine incorporates many Persian-Arabic elements and the usage of meat greatly sets it apart from the cuisine in West Bengal in India. It also has considerable regional variations. A staple across the country however is rice, various kinds of lentil, which is locally known as dal & fresh water fish is also eaten regularly. Bangladeshi food varies between very 'sweet' and mild-to extremely spicy, many tourists even from other South East Asian and Sub continental countries find the food spicy. It resembles North East Indian and South East Asian food more closely than that of any other part of the Subcontinent, most probably due to geographic and cultural proximity. The most important flavors in Bangladeshi cuisine are garlic, ginger, lime, coriander, cumin, turmeric, chili, cardamom and cinnamon are amongst the natural flavors.



Ras Malai



Ingredients:

½ litre whole milk
2-3 tbsp lemon juice
1 cup sugar
1 cup water

For Cream Sauce:

¾ litre milk, condensed milk
5 tbsp sugar or to taste
4 cups water
Sliced almonds and pistachios, saffron to garnish

Instructions:

Heat milk in a pan and bring it to boil with constant stirring. When it boils add lemon juice. The milk will split up. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Strain the curd and place in muslin cloth to drain the whey out. One can hang it over the sink for a while so that the whey drips away for about 4 hrs.

Mash the curd for 5 mins and then knead into a dough.
Make about 20 balls.

For Syrup

Put 4 cups of water in a sauce pan and add sugar. Boil to dissolve and add the curd balls and boil for 20 mins. The balls will get spongy.

In a separate pan boil the milk on low heat for 2 hrs with. Take the curd balls out from sugar syrup and add it to milk. Add on 4tbs of condensed milk and garnish with pistachios and saffron.

Veg Pulav



Ingredients:

2 tbsp oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
½ tsp ground cumin
1 cup Basmati rice 200gms
2 cups water
salt or to taste
5-6 cardamom
3-4 bay leaves
½ inch ginger
Shan Biryani Masala
Vegetable- Cauliflower, Carrot and peas
Dry fruits, saffron and nuts to garnish

Instructions:

Stir fry vegetables separately in a little oil and keep aside.

In a large pan heat oil over medium heat and sauté onions till golden brown.

Keep aside some onion for garnish.

To the rest add water and boil with bay leaves and cardamom and rice. Salt to taste in water. (Please note that before you add rice, wash the rice with cold water).

When rice is done add in cumin powder, Shan masala powder and stir fried vegetables.

Garnish with 1 tsp of Ghee, nuts and dry fruits, green chillies and saffron.

Kosha Mangsho

(Bengali mutton Curry)

Ingredients:

1kg/ 2pounds of goat/lamb meat
3-4 medium size potato cut into half and fried (optional)
3-4 onions, 6-8 green chillies / jalapenos

For marinating the mutton

garlic 10 pods
ginger-1½ inch
½ tsp of turmeric powder
2 tsp of red chili powder
1½ tsp of salt
4 heaped tbsp of yogurt
1 tsp of garam masala powder



For tempering

10- 12 black pepper
3 bay leaves
4 whole cardamom
5 cloves (long)
½ inch long cinnamon stick, ½ tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp of sugar
½ cup of mustard oil

Instructions:

Marinating the mutton

First make a smooth paste of Garlic and Ginger by grinding, add little bit of water also. Coarsely grind onions .

Marinate the mutton with Turmeric powder, salt, Coriander powder, Red pepper powder, Yogurt and 1-2 tbs of mustard oil and the garlic /ginger paste and half of the onion paste. Let it sit there for 1-2 hrs.

Heat up a kadai/ heavy bottom pan, add 1-2 tbs of mustard oil and fry the potatoes till brown on every side. Take out and keep aside.

Tempering the oil, meat frying and cooking.

Add rest of mustard oil and temper it with Black pepper, Cinnamon stick, Bay leaf, whole Cardamom, cumin, Cloves and sugar .

Caramelization of sugar gives a nice deep red-black color to the Mutton gravy. Fry at low for 1 min. Add the rest of the onion paste, green chillies and fry for 3-4 mins till the rawness of the onions is gone. Add the marinated mutton at this point, cook at medium heat for 20 min, (TIP- If the oil comes out by the side of pan, Mutton is fried well).

Add 1-2 cups of water (we want a thick gravy so don't add much water)

Add 1tsp of garam masala at this point, cook first on high flame and then lower the flame and cook till tender. Alternately you can cook the entire thing at low for 1hr and make sure it's covered, you don't want the gravy to be too dry.

Add potatoes and let it cool and sprinkle fresh chopped coriander leaves. Serve with rice of your choice .

Pineapple - Mango cold salad

Ingredients:

1 ripe pineapple
4 ripe mangoes
1 big red onion
2 tbsp lemon juice, pinch of salt
Fresh mint and cilantro, chopped fine



Instructions:

DO NOT USE CANNED FRUITS. Cut the pineapple into quarters, then slice the middle off of each to remove the pit. Lay each quarter on its back, cut into thirds length-wise, then chop into chunks. Place the pineapple chunks in a large bowl.

Peel the mangoes and cut the flesh away from the seed. Chop the flesh into chunks and add to the bowl. Add diced onions, herbs, lemon juice salt and stir until combined. Cover and refrigerate. Serve well chilled.

Alu Chop



Ingredients:

3 medium potatoes
½ chopped onion
1 tbsp ginger garlic paste
½ tsp chili powder
Pinch of turmeric
2 green chillies
Cooking oil
Salt to taste
Bread crumbs
1 Beaten Egg

Instructions:

Boil the potatoes, then peel off the skin and mash them.
Heat oil in a frying pan
Add the chopped onion, cook till the onion wilts and is pinkish brown. Add green chillies
Add the ginger garlic paste, chili powder and a pinch of turmeric to it. Take off from flame.
Next add the mashed potatoes to it. Add salt according to your taste. Mix the masala well with the potatoes.
Now after cooling make small balls of that mixture. Flatten them between your palms and place them in another dish.

Dip in egg and coat with breadcrumbs
Heat fresh oil in shallow frying pan.
Now gently release the dipped balls in the hot oil and deep-fry them.
Fry them till both sides are golden brown.
After frying you can place the fried balls in a tissue paper in order to soak the excess oil.

Ghugni / Chole

Ingredients:

1 cup canned Garbanzo beans /Kabuli chana (chickpeas)
1 onion- chopped
1 tomato- chopped
1 bay leaf (tej patta)
½ tsp cumin seeds
Pinch of turmeric powder
½ tsp red chili powder
½ tsp coriander powder
1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
Handful of mashed Potatoes
Tamarind juice
1½ tbsp oil
Salt to taste



Instructions:

Heat oil in a kadai/ wok. Add bay leaf, and cumin seeds and let them splutter.
Add onion and sauté till light brown.
Add ginger-garlic paste and sauté for 1 min.
Add tomato and rest of the spices and salt. Cook till oil begins to separate.
Add handful of mashed potatoes and add along with chickpeas.
Boil on a high heat for 3-4 minutes. Lower heat and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Cook till you get the desired gravy consistency.
Garnish with onion, cilantro and tamarind juice
Serve ghugni hot with rice.

All Ingredients can be purchased from any Indian/Afghan grocery store in Charlottesville and local grocery from Kroger/ Sam' club