

Cuisine

Food of India is characterized by strong aroma and bold tastes where spices are of the utmost importance. The spices determine the flavor, appearance and taste of every meal. However, in India measurements are not used while cooking. A cook relies on his or her senses while sprinkling the spices on preparations because it is believed that it is the LOVE of the cook that brings taste to the food rather than the spices themselves.

In Rajasthan, meals are predominately vegetarian. The simple cuisine is dictated by the desert landscape and arid climate. As a result, the food is more robust and provides added strength, evidenced by the use of cereals and lentils. Broadly there are two categories of Indian food, Namkeen and Meetha. Namkeen is salty-spicy and Meetha is sweet.



Customs

Dining etiquette in India is quite different to Western countries. There it is considered proper Indian etiquette to eat with your hands; this is how the majority of the Indian people eat. It is tradition and part of the Indian culture; it is also an accepted part of Indian etiquette. Although very few people practice this part of Indian etiquette when dining in the 5 star Westernized hotels and restaurants - but try to remember, it is good etiquette to fit in with the culture wherever you may find yourself. If dining with Indian people who do not use cutlery, and at least try to eat in the traditional Indian way and fit in with Indian etiquette. However, if you really cannot participate, even the simplest restaurants will be able to provide a spoon for you to use.

Indian etiquette and good manners vary from region to region. For instance, in North India it is impolite to dirty more than the first two segments of your fingers. Since North Indians eat mostly rotis and drier curries, this isn't too difficult. Whereas in the South, where they eat lots more rice, and enjoy very wet curries, it is permitted to use your whole hand. As you can see Indian etiquette differs from region to region, so if you are not sure what to do, just observe or ask.



If you do join in and eat with your hands, try not to use your left hand. In Indian etiquette this is usually considered 'unclean' and quite offensive.

Part of the traditional Indian etiquette and culture is to share food. Especially on long train journeys, Indian families will be carrying heaps of food and will invite you to have some. Even when only 2 people are dining in a restaurant it is customary to order two different dishes and in keeping with Indian etiquette, share the dishes between you.

While sharing is an important part of Indian etiquette, it is poor and offensive etiquette to share a fork or spoon or to drink from someone's glass. This also applies to taking a bite of someone else's sandwich, ice cream or chocolate too. Also, never, ever 'double dip'!

It is not difficult to eat with your fingers, but there are a few rules of Indian etiquette that have to be observed:

1. The left hand is not used for eating (even if you are left-handed), this is considered offensive and unclean.
2. Wait to be served. Remember you are eating with your hands and your right hand will be messy, therefore you will leave the serving spoon all sticky and messy too. Don't be tempted to use your left hand as it is bad Indian etiquette and considered offensive.
3. The hygiene of jootha:
4. While sharing is good Indian etiquette and manners, sharing a glass, spoon, drinking bottle etc., coming into contact with another's spit is called jootha and is considered offensive in many parts of India.
5. In Indian etiquette never offer anyone food from your thali, even if it is in one of the little bowls and you haven't touched it. All the food that is placed on your thali becomes jootha. There is no precise English equivalent of jootha. I suppose 'contaminated' comes closest in meaning. Mostly Indian etiquette has the same basic rules as Western etiquette, for example: Wash your hands before and after a meal.
6. Ask for whatever you want instead of reaching out directly or pointing at dishes.
7. Don't make too much noise; don't talk with food in your mouth.
8. Wait until everyone else is sitting down before starting to eat.
9. Help clear the dishes, unless it is not acceptable in that particular custom.

Source materials:

- **Cuisine** information and **Recipes** were prepared by Anchal's NGO partner, Vatsalya, and bring to you some of the common daily food and drink preparations of Rajasthan, India.
- **Customs:** <http://www.a-to-z-of-manners-and-etiquette.com/indian-etiquette.html>

Recipes – from *A*nchal

Chipati

Chipati is usually eaten with some Daal or Sabji. You break a small piece of it, dip it in Daal or Sabji and enjoy!

Makes: 10-12

Ingredients: 1 cup whole wheat flour, one pinch of salt and ghee (clarified butter)

How to make it:

- Mix flour and salt
- Add water (approx. ½ c) until you have a dough
- Make 10-12 balls of dough (walnut size)
- Roll the balls into flat, small circles
- Dry roast them first on a hot griddle or frying pan and then on direct fire of stove. If rolled well, they will puff up.
- Apply ghee evenly with spoon
- Serve hot



Paratha

Depending on the weather or your mood, paratha can be eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner. It is shallow fried in a pan and tastes best when served hot with pickles or plain yogurt.

Makes: 8-12

Ingredients: 1 cup whole wheat flour, one pinch of salt, ¼ tsp. ajwain (carom seed), oil

How to make it:

- Mix flour, salt, ajwain and two tsp oil
- Add water until you have a dough
- Make 8-12 balls out of dough
- Roll the balls into flat, small circles
- Put oil on one side. Fold into half, add oil again and fold again
- Roll it flat once again
- Shallow fry it on a frying pan with oil



- Serve hot

Sweet Rice

This is always part of the main course although it is sweet.

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of rice
- 1 ½ cups of sugar
- 3 T. ghee (clarified butter)
- 3 cups water
- 6 cardamom seeds
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup cashew nuts



How to make it:

- Put the rice into cold water. Leave it there for 20 minutes
- Cut the nuts and the cardamom seeds
- Put ghee in a big fry pan
- Add cardamom and rice
- Add raisins and nuts
- Add 3 cups of water and put on lid
- After 10 minutes add the sugar
- When the rice is done, serve at room temperature

Daal

Daal is traditional lentil dish always served with rice or chapatti.

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients:

1 cup of lentils	2 tsp. red chili powder
2 tsp. salt	½ tsp. turmeric powder
2 tsp. coriander powder	1 big onion
1 big green chili	½ tsp. mustard seeds
2 T. tamarind	1 tbs. oil
2 cups water	



How to make it:

Boil the lentils with some salt, until they are tender

- Put tamarind into water for 10 minutes
- Mash the tamarind. Throw away the tamarind seeds – we only use the flavored water
- Add the tamarind – water to the lentils
- Put oil on a frying pan and add mustard seeds
- Cut onions and green chili into small pieces and add them to the frying pan
- When the onions are golden brown, add all the spices
- When the mix is ready add the lentils
- Serve hot

Aaloo Sabji

This is part of the main course lunch or dinner and should be served with chipati or paratha.

Serves: 2-4

Ingredients:

1 cup Aloo (potatoes)
2 T. Oil
¼ T. turmeric powder
2 green chilies
4-5 curry leaves
½ tsp. mustard seeds
salt to taste



How to make it:

- Boil, peel and cube the potatoes
- Heat oil in a pan, add the mustard seeds
- Slit green chilies, curry leaves, fry till the seeds start spluttering then add salt and turmeric powder and cubed aloo
- Add little water so that the aloo absorb the masala and simmer for 4-5 minutes until well blended
- Serve the aloo sabji hot
- For a different taste in aloo sabji, you can substitute mustard seeds with cumin seeds

Chhole

Chhole is a delicious savory dish made with chickpeas. In India, it is part of the main course and is often eaten with plain rice, puri or bread.

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

1 cup chickpeas	1 large onion
2 large tomatoes	2-3 chilies
Small piece fresh ginger	20 black peppercorns
5 cloves	5 one inch pieces of cinnamon
3 or 4 bay leaves	½ tsp. red chili powder
½ tsp. turmeric	½ tsp. tamarind
½ tsp. coriander powder	¼ tsp. cumin seeds,
2 T. sunflower oil	Small glass water

How to make:

- Soak chickpeas overnight (or use canned)
- Shallow fry chopped onion and all spices except salt in the sunflower oil
- Cook soaked chickpeas in salt water until soft
- When fried mixture is pale brown, add chopped tomatoes, chili and ginger
- Add chickpeas to the mixture
- Add small glass of water
- Cover and leave on slow heat for 15 minutes
- Serve hot



Fruit Yoghurt

This is a healthy fresh dish served as a dessert

Serves: 3-4

Ingredients:

2 1/4 cups of Greek yogurt

Fresh apples and bananas

5 T. sugar

6 chopped almonds

1 handful of raisins

5 green cardamom (ground)

A few strands of ground saffron

7 finely chopped pistachios



How to make:

- Cut fruit into pieces
- Add sugar to the yogurt and blend well
- Add the fruit pieces and spices and mix
- Sprinkle the pistachio on top and serve chilled

Tip: Use any sweet fruit in season such as mango, pineapple, or strawberries.

Masala Chai

Masala chai is a refreshing hot tea, popular in all North Indian households. This a personal favorite of the Anchal team.

Serves: 6 cups

Ingredients:

1 ¼ cups of water
1 cup milk
3 tsp. chai tea
3 ½ T. of sugar (or to your own taste)
1 tsp. grated fresh ginger
1 pinch fresh ground black pepper
1 pinch cinnamon powder
2-3 cloves



How to make it:

- Boil the water
- Add the grated ginger, pepper, cinnamon, and cloves
- Add tea and sugar to taste
- When the water is chocolate brown, add milk
- Boil it for 2 minutes
- When it is done filter it and serve it steaming hot

Indian Stir Fried Noodles

If you are interested in more Indian fusion cuisine, visit our dear friend, Prena, from IndianSimmer.com. She has wonderful tasty recipes that range from light sweet treats to warm filling entrées! Here is a noodle recipe that looks perfect for an October day and easy to make for a big group.

Ingredients:

2 cups thick vermicelli (wheat vermicelli that you can find in any Indian market if not in your local store)
1/2 cups finely chopped onion
2 T. curry leaves (roughly chopped if the leaves are too big for you)
1 tsp. black mustard seeds
1 tsp. coriander powder
1/2 tsp. curry powder
2 T. oil
1 tsp. lemon juice
Salt



How to Make it:

- In a saucepan boil some water. Add salt to taste. Set aside.
- Heat oil in a separate wide pan or my mom-in-law uses an Indian wok.
- Add mustard seeds.
- Once they start to pop, add curry leaves. Step aside after adding the leaves as they can pop and splatter oil on you.
- Add chopped onion and cook until its translucent.
- Add coriander and curry powder. Mix and add the vermicelli (if you got long vermicelli, break them smaller - 2 to 3 inch in length).
- Fry the noodles for a couple of minutes for them to nicely coat in oil.
- Start adding water slowly. A little less water can leave the noodles undercooked and a little extra can make them soggy. So the trick is to add a little water, keep stirring for noodles to cook and at the same time extra water to evaporate. Keep doing the same until the noodles are just a touch undercooked.
- Turn off the heat, add a splash of lemon juice, mix and cover the noodles for a few minutes. Steam trapped in the pan will cook the noodles through.
- Serve hot.

Recipes contributed by Anchal, Inc.
www.anchalproject.org





Recipes – from DFW Chapter in Solon, OH

The following recipes were submitted by Minnie Gautam and Guniya Bafna, and their Dining for Women chapter in Solon, Ohio, all of whom are Indian expatriates or immigrants to the United States. We thank them for their hard work and generosity in sharing these great Indian recipes with us!



Top Row, Left to Right: Poonam Punwani, Charita Adhia, Vimmi Jain, Minnie Gautam, Kusum Mainthia, Anna Singh, Shama Abraham, Sangita Bafna

Bottom Row, Left to Right: Rayeka Sitabkhan, Ritu Mahna, Neeti Sharma, Ruby Mandair, Seema Sharma, Guniya Bafna, Savitri Juneja, Sumita Kedia, Ineka Kumar.

Salad / Chaat

Recipe from Sanjeev Kapoor

Ingredients:

2 large potatoes
1 large sweet potato
2 green chillies
½ bunch fresh coriander
1 ½ T lemon juice
1 large banana
2 T Tamarind pulp
1 tsp. chaat masala
Salt to taste

Instructions:

Wash and boil potatoes and sweet potato in sufficient water till cooked. Cool and peel. Wash, trim and finely chop coriander leaves. Wash, remove stem and finely chop the green chillies. Peel, cut ginger into thin strips, add half teaspoon of lemon juice and a pinch of salt to it, keep in the refrigerator. Cut potatoes and sweet potatoes into one inch sized cubes. Peel and cut banana into one inch sized pieces, apply half teaspoon lemon juice and keep aside. In a mixing bowl take potatoes, sweet potatoes and bananas. Add remaining lemon juice, tamarind pulp, green chillies, chaat masala, salt, chopped coriander leaves and toss lightly. Serve garnished with ginger julienne.

Raita

Recipe from Linda Bladholm, Dining for Women member

Ingredients:

1 medium cucumber
1 tsp cumin seeds
2 cups plain, whole-milk yogurt
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
2 T fresh coriander or mint leaves, chopped
Cayenne or paprika to garnish



Method:

Peel cucumber. Cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch strips, then into thin slices crosswise. Blot off moisture with paper towels. Toast cumin seeds for a few seconds in a small, heavy frying pan over high heat. In a bowl, stir yogurt until it is smooth. Mix it with the cumin, garlic and coriander or mint leaves. Combine mixture with cucumber slivers; sprinkle with cayenne or paprika, and chill before serving.

SPRING ONION PULAO/RICE

Recipe from Sanjeev Kapoor

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups basmati rice, soaked
6 spring onions, sliced
3 T Oil
1 T Cumin seeds
8-10 cloves of garlic, sliced
Salt to taste
1 T Lemon juice
Additional green onions, chopped to equal 1 cup

Method:

Heat oil in a pan and add cumin seeds. As they begin to change colour, add spring onions and garlic and sauté until brown. Stir in rice and mix gently. Add three cups of water, salt and mix. Cover and simmer until water is absorbed and rice is cooked. Sprinkle lemon juice and serve hot garnished with spring onion greens.

CHICKEN CURRY

Recipe from Sanjeev Kapoor

Ingredients:

1 ½ lb. chicken
4-5 medium onions
1 T Ginger
1 T Garlic
4-5 medium tomatoes
1 Tb. Fresh coriander leaves chopped
1, 1" cinnamon stick
4-5 cloves
4-5 Green cardamom pods
½ tsp turmeric powder
2 T coriander powder
2 T Cumin powder
1 tsp red chili powder
1 T garam masala seasoning



Method:

Heat ghee/oil in a thick-bottomed pan. Add cinnamon, cloves and green cardamoms and sauté for half a minute. Add onions and sauté till golden brown. Add ginger paste and garlic paste and continue to sauté for two to three minutes, stirring continuously. Add turmeric powder, coriander powder, cumin powder and red chilli powder. Mix well. Add pureed tomato and stir. Cook till oil separates from the masala. Add the chicken pieces and salt. Sauté on high heat for five minutes. Add two cups water, bring to a boil, cover and cook till the chicken is fully done. Sprinkle garam masala powder and garnish with coriander leaves and serve hot.

MASOOR DAL

Recipe from Kusum Mainthia, Dining for Women member

This pink colored pulse is the most common item for Bengalis. Masoor Dal is a must when you are making a major meal in Bengal. It is very healthy- easy to prepare and easy to digest.

Ingredients (Serve for 2 -3):

Masoor dal 1 cup
Garlic clove (chopped) 2
Cumin seed 1tsp
Turmeric powder ½ tsp
Mustard oil 2 tsp
Red chili 1
Bay leaf 1
Green chili 3
Salt to taste



Method:

Wash masoor dal properly.

Take the washed dal in a pan and add 3 cups of water.

Cut the green chilies along the length and put it in the pan along with the dal and water (If you prefer less fire remove the seeds).

Add turmeric powder.

Put it on a low flame and cook till the dal become tender. (Don't put the lid otherwise it might spill over).

Masoor dal cooks, very fast and overcooking might destroy its taste.

Add salt to taste.

Remove the pan from the flame.

Take another pan and put it on medium flame.

Add oil and heat till smoke starts coming.

Lower the flame and immediately add garlic cloves, red chili, bay leaf and cumin seeds.

Stir for a few seconds and add the cooked dal immediately.

Cook for another 2 minutes on high flame.

Serve with rice and (Aloo bhaja) potato fry or brinjal (eggplant) fry (Baigan Bhaja).

MASALA POMFRET

Recipe from Sanjeev Kapoor

Ingredients:

1 to 1 ¼ lb. pomfret fish
Salt to taste
Crushed black pepper corns to taste
1 tsp. red chili powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
6 T Olive oil
1 T Garlic paste
1 T Red chili paste
1 T Fresh coriander leaf paste
1 T Tamarind pulp
½ tsp cloves powder
½ cup rice flour
1 T Fresh coriander leaves, chopped
1 medium onion, sliced into thin rings
Lemon wedge



Method:

Make one centimeter deep slits on either side of the pomfrets. Apply salt, crushed black peppercorns, red chill powder and turmeric powder and set aside to marinate for fifteen minutes. Prepare another marinade with two tablespoons olive oil, garlic paste, red chili paste, fresh coriander leaves paste, tamarind pulp, clove powder and a pinch of salt. Apply this on the pomfrets on all sides. Set aside for another fifteen minutes. Heat a tawa (griddle). Roll each pomfret in rice flour and place on the tawa. Drizzle some olive oil all round the fish and cook for two to three minutes. When the underside is golden flip over, drizzle some more olive oil all round and cook till the other side is evenly golden. Garnish with coriander leaves and serve hot with onion rings and lemon wedges.

JEERA ALOO/CUMIN POTATOES

Recipe from Sanjeev Kapoor

Ingredients:

4 large potatoes, cut into 1 " pieces and boiled
4 T Oil
1 tsp. cumin seeds
Salt to taste
1 T Coriander seeds, crushed
1 tsp. roasted coriander powder
½ tsp. Dry mango powder (Amchur)
2 T Fresh coriander leaves

Method:

Heat oil in a pan. Add cumin seeds and sauté till it changes colour. Add salt and stir. Add red chili powder, crushed coriander seeds, roasted cumin powder and dry mango powder. Add potato cubes and stir carefully till the masala covers all the potato cubes well. Add coriander leaves and stir. Serve hot.

TOMATO CHUTNEY

Recipe from Kusum Mainthia, Dining for Women member

Tomato Chutney is a favorite in all Bengali families, particularly the kids. This is often prepared and stored in an airtight container inside the refrigerator to use throughout the week.

Ingredients:

Tomatoes – 4-6, large, cut in quarters
Mustard Seeds – 1 tsp.
Oil – 2 T
Bay Leaves – 1-2
Turmeric Powder – ½ tsp.
Sugar – ½ cup or more, according to taste
Salt – to taste
Raisins – 1/4 cup, soaked in warm water



Method:

- 1) In a bowl, soak the raisins in warm water for 15-20 minutes. Drain the raisins and place aside.
- 2) Add the oil in a skillet and heat over high heat.
- 3) Add the mustard seeds and bay leaves; wait for the splattering of the mustard seeds. Often the panch



- phoran masala is added to the oil (this is fennel seeds, cumin seeds, Kalongi-nigella seeds, Fenugreek seeds and black mustard seeds)
- 4) Add the tomato pieces and sauté in hot oil.
 - 5) Reduce the heat to medium and season the tomatoes with turmeric powder and salt.
 - 6) Cover the skillet and simmer for 10 minutes. Occasionally check the tomatoes and stir well, so that they do not get stuck to the skillet.
 - 7) Remove the cover, add the raisins and blend the tomatoes with a spatula.
 - 8) Add the sugar and combine thoroughly, until it completely dissolves.
 - 9) Cook the chutney for another 5 minutes or so, until it reaches desired consistency. The chutney should be thick and sticky.
 - 10) Transfer on a bowl and allow to cool at room temperature before placing inside refrigerator to chill.
 - 11) Serve the Tomato Chutney chilled at the end of any Bengali meal or with paratha or luchi or khichuri.

Tips

You can add soaked cashew nuts and dates to the chutney to make it more delicious. For extra flavor, sprinkle roasted cumin seed powder on the chutney, as garnish.

MANGO ICE CREAM

Recipe from Manjula's Kitchen website

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh mango pulp
- 1 tsp. lime zest
- 1 tsp. lime juice
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 T corn starch (arrowroot)

Method:

Peel and slice the mango and scrape out the pulp from the seed.

Mix cornstarch with 2 tablespoons of water.

Boil heavy cream, cornstarch mix, and sugar over medium-high heat. Stir continuously otherwise cornstarch will become lumpy.

After cream mix comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium low, and then cook for an addition 2 minutes. Let it cool.

Mix in mango pulp, lime juice, and lime zest to the cream mix.

Transfer the mixture into a bowl or container to freeze; the container shouldn't be very deep. I like using a glass bowl with a lid.

After about 2 hours remove the ice cream from the freezer and mix it until its smooth, this will give it a creamy texture.



At this point you can choose to freeze the ice cream in the same bowl or freeze the ice cream in individual serving cups.

Ice cream will take 6 to 8 hours to freeze.

Serving Suggestion - Serve ice cream with slice of freshly sliced mangoes and few pieces of sliced almonds.

Recipes Resources:

www.sanjeevkapoor.com

www.manjulaskitchen.com