



Traditional & Contemporary Nepali Home-Cooking

*A UK South Asian culinary educational resource
created by the UK Nepal Friendship Society through
support by the National Lottery Heritage Lottery
Fund*

Alan Mercel-Sanca

Principal content contributor: Deepak
Tamrakar.



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Editor & Compiler: Alan Mercel-Sanca

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Rice (boiled rice) -- *Bhat*

Nutrients and particularities:

Rice is a good source of fibre, protein, iron, B vitamins, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, manganese and magnesium. Research suggests that it is weight loss friendly if eaten in modest quantity as part of a healthy balanced diet, but fattening if eaten in excess and in conjunction with an unhealthy diet. On rice types* these include but are not limited to:

- Uncooked rice: *Chamal*
- Boiled rice: *Umaaleko bhaat*
- Fried rice: *Bhuteko bhaat*
- Beaten Rice: *Chiura*
- Puffed rice: *Murai*

NOTE: Uncooked rice is called 'Chamal' NOT Bhat (which is boiled Chamal)!

Foreword by Sarah Ali Choudhury



I am honoured to provide this dedication in my capacity as a British national level 'ambassador & multicultural cohesion' for food being a powerful mechanism for assisting in creating authenticity in the UK within the next few years. Together with the UKNFS we plan to expand within town high streets and villages, a nation that is enthusiastically embracing a more diverse and multicultural communities and culture as a great strength of 2019/2020 Britain.

Foods of Nepal: Home-made, authentic Nepali Cuisine has been so badly needed and is embraced by the nation. It brings together communities and strengthens the whole of our nation through the art of Nepalese cuisine.

The UK Nepali community's cultural heritage project's food component certainly informs and educates in terms of some fantastic recipes and information resources as well as bringing together in such a long overdue way, Nepali and different ethnic minority communities through the medium of sharing South Asia's great culinary arts at 'in the home, not in the restaurant,' and sharing these with the broader population of the United Kingdom. Exciting our early 21st Century British population, to not only experiment in the home kitchen, with Nepali traditional home setting dishes, but learn more through this until now, little-known but highly important South Asian cuisine.

In support of this project, it has been a great honour to work with Deepak Tamrakar. This project has taught us both so much, at technical Nepali & South Asian cookery and authentic home cooking levels!

I am privileged to know Deepak and over the past three years we have built an incredible relationship as friends through our cooking, and passion for food. He has the qualities, professionalism and love for food as many of us who are in the chef world. Deepak is an inspiration in all forms and we love working together on projects around combining traditional British cuisine with fusion Nepali food.

Home cooking experimentation has always been and remains as the pioneering starting point of given world cuisines. Famous (from high street restaurant, to Cordon Bleu / 5 Stars level contests) dishes. This has been the case with Deepak Tamrakar whose perfectionist grasp and experimentality on aspects of such dishes, and many much less [outside of Nepal, and/or parts of Nepal] well-known dishes and side dishes is an inspiration to me, reminding me of myself when I was just starting out on the journey of being a passionate and enthusiastic food expert.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my good friend Mr Pashupati Bhandari (of Everest Inns Group/Ltd) for his ever present encouragement in sharing my work and profile within the Nepali community.

As UK Nepal Friendship Society (UKNFS) Public Relations Representative It gives me great pleasure to record here my very great appreciation to Alan Mercel-Sanca, the lead /CEO of the UKNFS, coordinator and compiler/editor of the Heritage Lottery Fund supported *Foods of Nepal* project booklet & website.

My final word is given to highlighting a phenomenon that is well-known across many of Britain's Indian restaurants, and that concerns the renown for perfectionism and technical expertise that appears to be in the blood of most Nepalis, where the culinary arts are concerned.

I am excited to play my part, a technical education and national and South Asian UK cuisines PTR level through this brilliant project, to raise this profile across the UK Asian and especially South Asian restaurants sectors and associations, so that Nepali dishes can take at last their rightful place alongside much better known Indian cuisine types..

Preface



Food is the source of sustaining life, so therefore a matter of importance to all and the preparation and consumption of food from the earliest prehistoric times to those of today in which the world has largely become for most of the Earth's population, a 'global village' in which our lives are infused, happily and to our great benefit, by aspects of daily living in which cultures from across the planet feature.

For a range of different reasons there are times when, uniquely, through food and the intrinsic social bonds of fellowship that surround consumption of food, the cuisine of the culture of peoples and lands greatly distant from those of ones birth, emerge and come to be greatly loved by those not of such lands and cultures. There are many examples of this phenomena from the conquest of countless British hearts – and indeed of 21st century British supermarket world foods ranges -- of Indian curry, and indeed other iconic dishes from across the world.

With this phenomenon from the pioneer days there has been ever greater discernment on variations and types, quality, and interest in the nutritional and health benefits of such world cuisines. Going to any Western (British, European, North American, and other) nation's Indian, Chinese, Italian ... high street restaurants or takeaways, great diversity in terms of dishes available and sought, is to be found. It is long overdue that the story of Nepali foods, which for those who have been fortunate enough to have been introduced to authentic home-cooked Nepali cuisine can testify to as being exceptional, diverse in range and types, and indeed a cuisine that swiftly conquers the taste buds leading to life-long enjoyment, be at last addressed.

This book does this and substantially contributes to providing a solid basis on which from those who understand and enjoy home-cooked specialist world cuisines across to those in the restaurant world, to supermarkets and to catering colleges students and lecturers, can properly engage with, taste, and gain knowledge on Nepali cuisine which in consequence deserves to take a much more prominent place in the world, South Asian cuisines known in the UK and the broader West. This information resource is therefore no directory of restaurants, but fulfils the much more important purpose indicated, and plays its part in initiating the cultivation of a much greater awareness of how the choice, preparation, and consumption of food opens a very effective door to understanding a given culture, including its key day-to-day living social dimensions.

It is a privilege to have the opportunity, under the UK Nepal Friendship Society and through the greatly appreciated support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and most of all the readily expressed enthusiasm and assistance on guidance and content provided by the Nepali community, particularly the main contributor and the other contributors, to provide this preface as editor and compiler of this book. The three strands of support referred to have enabled through this book and information resource to address the long overdue need for a focused and comprehensive profiling of the Nepali cuisine to the broader public, and indeed the broader Western world. I hope you will enjoy the book, and through it learn a little about the great, ancient and diverse culture of Nepal and the Nepali community, and in particular take up the opportunity to taste this beautiful and delicious South Asian, world cuisine.

Alan Mercel-Sanca

Compiler & Editor of 'Traditional & contemporary Nepali Home-Cooking'
Chief Executive Officer, UK Nepal Friendship Society

Part A:

Introduction:

There can be no doubt that authentic home style Nepali cuisine is little known to UK / Western lovers of South Asian cuisine. A little known to the general population testimony to the very high level of Nepali expertise in the domain of food, is that in the UK, the Indian catering restaurants sector commonly holding the view that to secure a Nepali chef is one of the great benefits for success and reputation of a restaurant. There are of course many other reasons why in the West, Nepali cuisine is long overdue for much better profiling. This e-book/PDF has as its one of its main purposes to provide an information resource and point of reference by which this goal can be realised.

Beyond the technical level, looking at authentic traditional to contemporary Nepali foods extremely wide, comprehensive range of dishes and side dishes and related topics, this e-book/PDF seeks to explain the special role of food in Nepali culture. Regarding this, this book and accompanying website -- <http://foodsofnepal.com/> -- is a standalone component of a larger project, the UK Nepali community cultural & social heritage information resource, facilitated by the UK Nepal Friendship Society in partnership with major UK Nepali national to smaller local area and particular Nepali communities, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), whose support for enabling the main project, and this Nepali cuisine component, is greatly appreciated.

As the title of the **book** indicates our approach has been to look at Nepali cuisine from a home cooking perspective. We also hope *Nepali Cuisine: Discovering a little-known but important South Asian Cuisine* will provide a basis for UK culinary schools and colleges to embrace Nepali cuisine as a major UK South Asian cuisine, incorporating its study into their curricula.

In addition, knowledge of authentic Nepali home cooked food, which has always informed the menus of our British Nepali restaurants, **this book** will make visiting the latter a richer experience. It will in particular provide important and little known outside the community, knowledge on various aspects of customs and culture of the Nepali community. Further, and relating to the latter it provides an invaluable resource for those who wish to visit Nepal and enjoy these delicious special dishes and types of food in the land of their origin. Food tourism is certainly a de-facto major element to all international travel, ranking alongside the cultural arts, and often leaving life-long passions for and enjoyment of the types of food tasted when abroad.

The book details main and secondary ingredients (the **book** contains a dedicated section regarding these) used in popular and lesser known Nepali home cooking, giving Nepali as well as English names for these, to share with the reader valuable knowledge on ingredients by encouraging the learning of the terms in Nepali. Knowledge of such terms is a main route to learning in more depth about the culture of other peoples and lands; something commonly connected to learning words and phrases in the given language of origin.

Some of the ingredients terms are similar to but only a very few exactly the same in Hindi, whilst others are distinctly Nepali, which spans culinary cultural zones from the Upper Himalaya (Sherpa) through to Gurkha and Newari (mainly across central Nepal and the Kathmandu Valley, including regional variations) and through to the Terai (Nepal – India Gangetic plains, with year-round warm to hot temperatures) region of the south, bordering India.

As with China and the Far East and South-East Asia, food ingredients have a direct health and wellbeing purpose in addition to being building blocks for the taste and texture of dishes and accompaniments. There is a distinct medicinal and health maintaining or restoring dimension therefore to Nepali food, and this relates to properties and specific nutrition effects of different ingredients, which can have prescription type dimensions ('cooling, warming' etc.) to match the health needs that particular, often extreme and very different climatic zones cause. As well as in response to individuals' overall health and specific health conditions. In addition, ingredients often relate to the particular types of plants or animals that are commonplace in, but sometimes rarely found elsewhere, in certain climatic zones and geographical locations.

The ingredients section of **this book** provides nutrients information for each of the main and some of the more rarely used ingredients in Nepali cuisine with reference to these nutrients health & medical benefits: each of the dishes and side dishes, main component of **the book** starts with a section detailing the nutrients & their health benefits of the main ingredient(s) of the given dish.

About the book: information & structure, and contributors:

Structure of the book:

The book comprises two parts: an introductory section (A), including about contributors, and articles covering a number of themes, and a second section (B) that covers dishes & side dishes (Part 1), and ingredients information (Part 2).

Structure and particulars of the main, recipes & dishes section of the book:

A set of dishes and accompaniments are detailed, including ingredients, guides to quantities, description (texture, flavours, tastes, reasons for popularity, and where known, origins, etc) and core preparation methods.

Dishes / Food types descriptions format followed:

Name (in Nepali [unless international term used] and English), qualities & taste description & background, ingredients, how to make (preparation, cooking and serving), and where appropriate, stories included in background information.

Measurements used:

These are mainly provided in metric, according to how the given dish or side dish preparation & cooking were learned. Where used, tablespoon = Tbsp, and teaspoon = Tsp

Quantities: as a general guide for most dishes unless otherwise stated, these are enough for 4 people or two people for two separate sittings, with ample portions being provided.

Content contributors:

Main contributor & deputy editor (technical): Deepak Tamrakar – principal contributor of dishes content. Deepak was a co-initiator of the UK Nepal Friendship Society's arts section, where he is a volunteer officer.

Other content contributors:

Mr Sana Sherpa (President of the UK Sherpa Association) on behalf of the UK and Ashford (Kent) Sherpa community

Captain Gopal Saru (Blandford Camp Gurkha community lead, with input from the broader Gurkha community of the camp)

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Ms Sarah Ali Choudhury: national figure for South Asian cuisine, and TV chef

Fatima Adjilani

Rico Costanza

Other contributors – community groups & organisations: these include but are not limited to, a range of Nepali community groups & organisations from Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community to the Non-Residential Nepali Association UK, to Tamu Dhee UK and Sahara UK, amongst others.

Editor and content compiler -- Alan Mercel-Sanca: CEO of the UK Nepal Friendship Society, and writer (author of the second edition [2020] of the Nepal edition of the internationally renowned culture orientated leading global guides series *Culture Smart*).

Note on images used:

Almost all of the images provided in the book are the property of the main contributor, taken during preparing or cooking dishes. A small number of other, supportive images have been sourced from copyright-free images and/or with the permission of the owners. We have sought to be comprehensive in regard to topics and activities covered in the **book**, from utensils used and in some cases raw ingredients, to preparation of ingredients and phases during the cooking of some of the dishes, and in some cases the given completed dish itself. Due to space considerations, with one or two exceptions and preparation of ingredients images, we have not included images of each of the individual ingredients in the dedicated ingredients section of the **book**.

Nepali food -- spiritual and cultural dimensions



Because many in our UK Nepali community are first generation settlers, the traditions secular and spiritual/religious around food and drink are particularly strong and vibrant. In this section of the information resource some of these customs and traditions are detailed. Knowledge of home cooked Nepali cuisine is however very limited outside the community and although the country has almost 200 Nepali restaurants, these still largely concentrate on providing a range of South Asian dishes closely aligning with Britain's Indian restaurants menus, rather than – with very few exceptions – concentrating exclusively on Nepal cuisine.

To experience Nepali home cooked traditional and contemporary cuisine is therefore almost entirely inaccessible to the broader general public unless you work with UK Nepali community members or have Nepali friends or a Nepali husband or wife. Culture is inextricably linked to home cooked food in Nepal and in the UK Nepali community, with homes providing the ideal setting to discover that culture, which is very difficult to access in restaurant settings. Here we provide information about the spiritual & cultural dimension that permeates Nepali food.

Universally, the belief is shared across all sections of the Nepali community that once food and drink have been touched by the lips and mouth, they become unclean for others to eat or drink. So, situations where food that can't be eaten is offered to be shared with others, is unheard of. This is unsurprising since especially food and to a certain extent drink is regarded as a gift of Heaven, the gods and goddesses, and the ingredients that make up food dishes, gathered with great effort and care.

To leave food therefore is regarded as an unspiritual act, and disrespectful to those who have provided it. The principle extends to always leaving the plate completely clean, through hand or use of flatbreads (roti); this particularly so with those from Bahun [Brahmin] Chettri castes. One practice that has had much more reduced transfer to the UK from Nepal is that of the requirement to wear fresh, clean clothes & linen when preparing food.

This is still common, traditional practice across much of Nepal, particularly outside the capital and the bigger cities, and in some older generation UK Nepali families this practice is maintained where able. Although becoming less commonly practiced in UK Nepali families, rules of food transfer (who gets served first) have been in Nepal traditionally hierarchical, to reinforce the social hierarchy and interdependency of family and broader social relationships.

In addition, a further traditional ritual purity practice, concerns women during their periods of menstruation, not being allowed to cook or in the kitchen. This practice is still quite widespread in Nepal (but it is lessening gradually, particularly in parts of the Kathmandu community and in those more subject to Western education and related perspectives), but much less common in the UK Nepali community, partly for practical reasons and partly due to UK Nepali female academics educating on the topic to explain it is not justified on hygiene and ethical grounds.

Use of the hand (right hand) as a utensil for eating, and the customary washing of mouth after a meal. Both these practices are still widespread and much honoured across much of the UK Nepali community, and concern cleanliness, hygiene, and also partly in the case of the use of the hand (only the right, never the left which in traditional culture is associated with cleaning after using the toilet) because of its utility for mixing food together.

Food is combined by the hand, and to eat once the palm is moderately filled with the food portion, the thumb is used to push up/scoop the latter into the mouth. In addition, when drinking water from a bottle, a common accompaniment to Nepali meals, the mouth shouldn't touch the top of the bottle.

In the UK it is still common amongst Nepalis, including young Nepalis, practicing traditional customs to if staying for any length of time with friends, including Western/British ones, to offer to cook, or help in cooking. This is a mark of respect towards the host and considered superior to providing material thank you gifts only, as care and effort goes in to cooking.

There is substantial transfer of the important role of food as a focal point of Nepali community socialising in the UK. Presentation of food whether as a snack or a feast (*bhojan*) gives the setting for leisurely catch ups on news, or even watching a favourite Nepali TV programme (talent shows, etc. often also from India) via the internet. A favourite food-focused social occasion is the momo (see recipe LINK) party in which this famous, delicious Nepali dumpling is served with golbedaa achar (see LINK). News from Nepal on friends and family feature large at such social gatherings, as well as news of Nepal and about developments and events in the UK Nepali community. Dal bhat tarkari and (for non vegetarians) dal bhat tarkari and chicken, the national dish, is the normal fare for a main meal for such socialising occasions.

Some special foods including some with special spiritual associations:

In addition to meals and snacks per se, there are also special days of festivity, many of which are festival, cultural and/or spiritual related; on these occasions there are often special types of food prepared. There are many of these and some examples are provided below.

Sel Roti: Described as the 'Nepal Donut' the Sel Roti is a circular, ring-shaped special bread prepared in many UK Nepali homes for in particular the Dashain period (particularly Maghe Sankranti and Tihar) in October. Sel roti often includes banana in its ingredients; it has a delicate sweetness. Sel Roti are also very popular due to their convenience for eating standing as well as seated, at major UK Nepali cultural and other gatherings such as the annual Gurkha Football Cup in Aldershot, or at societies (samaj) annual dinners and functions, which of course also always include dal bhat served on a come up and fill your plate basis from large heated containers.

Chiura: Chiura, or beaten rice is also commonly available on those major special event occasions, as well as in social settings. This for practical reasons has to be imported, and is rice beaten flat which is an ideal accompaniment to the sauce of curry. In the stomach, Chiura expands, which means that is very filling, yet light to store and carry, and with a long life, which has made it an ideal food to carry with one in Nepal, especially in earlier times when out in the fields or to this day when travelling far from home or villages and towns. It is certainly very popular in Nepali households in the UK and at large community events.

Gundruk: Gundruk is made from fermented vegetables (particularly leafy ones) radish and bamboo shoots. It is extremely popular in Nepal due to its piquancy, mushroom type taste, and its saltiness, and makes an ideal accompaniment to dal bhat, but also dhindo (see below). It is one of the most regularly sought food items to be brought from Nepal to the UK and gives great delight when part of the food available on social occasions in Nepali homes in Britain.

It has a legend relating to its origin, and that is that in ancient times, when what was eventually to be come Nepal, especially the Kathmandu Valley, used to be invaded from north and south for its riches (including particularly agricultural produce, including radishes and leafy vegetables, the farmers of Nepal came up with a solution. Knowing that such raids were temporary and of quite short duration, the farmers would bury vegetables, including leafy greens and radish, in the ground to be retrieved later, rather than letting their produce be taken.

It appears that one such raid lasted longer, and by the time it was safe to recover the buried agricultural produce, the latter had started to decompose through a combination of moisture and warmth. This is said to be the accidental cause of the discovery of Gundruk (and the closely related Sinki).

Bara: Bara (pronounced Bada) – a Newari food item of functional kind-- are small circular pancakes (known as the Nepali pancake) that are made of according to the classic Bara recipe, rice flour, black lentils, cumin, Asafoetida (known in Nepali as 'Hing'), turmeric, fresh chopped ginger and salt, with cooking taking place in a frying pan with oil. They are very popular and often cooked in Nepali UK households for snacks; delicious on their own, often they serve as the base for a spoonful of achar/spicy pickle on top and can also incorporate egg (sunny side up placed on a bara) and meats (in Nepal minced buffalo meat is especially prized) for non-vegans and non-vegetarians.

Chatamari: Also of Newari origin, this functional snack (styled by some as the Nepali pizza) is similar to a bara, but thinner, and has been compared to a French crepe. It is more for holding toppings (such as diced onion, egg, chopped chili, meats that are minced, but fresh chopped dhania/coriander too) than eating on its own.

Yomari: Yomari (again, Newari) are rice pastries filled with coconut or molasses – a type of Nepali sweet pastry. However they are much more than a snack, but have a spiritual very ancient context, as the food is an integral part of an actual festival (which takes place in November/December on a Lunar calender Full Moon day) known as the Yomari Punhi; Yomari are made and consumed on the

same, festival, day. Yomari Punhi celebrates the interconnection of humankind and Nature through food, in marking the end of the rice harvest. In the UK, Yomari are relatively rarely found as they relate to ancient beliefs of specifically Newa Nepali community members.

Dhindo: Dhindo (a famous Thakali staple dish), known as ‘mountain fuel’ – a type of gruel (formed through beating with a wooden spoon, until the latter can literally stand up once sunk in it) made of ground millet -- is not a regular food to be found in UK Nepali homes (except and rarely in some Tharu Nepali homes here), but is worth a brief description. Visually dhindo, a light grey colour, looks like grey mashed potato or porridge. It is not spicy or with a strong flavour, but is very important as source of energy and nutrition (building and maintaining stamina) for those in the middle and higher Himalaya. Fresh chilis, gundruk (including in a soup) are ideal accompaniments, as are meat (especially spiced chicken) broths.



Momos: the origin of the creation of Nepal’s favourite food, momos, lies back in ancient times. There had always been extensive trade related interaction with the Kingdom of Tibet to the north of Nepal, with that kingdom reaching its greatest territorial extent (at the least half the size of modern China) circa 800, when Nepal itself was for a while included within the kingdom. So we know that at least from then and probably earlier, there was extensive trade between Newari merchants of Kathmandu Valley and the capital of Tibet, Lhasa, in which Newari merchants found in Lhasa ‘momocha’ – yak meat filled dumplings. It was by these means, international

trade, that momocha were introduced to Kathmandu Valley and underwent a major transformation. This involved the filling but functional Tibetan dumplings being developed in to the Nepali momo. Tibet, a land of hard, forbidding terrain, had little indigenous food culture that had use of spices as its main feature, unlike in Nepal in the South Asian, very different food cultural zone. Consequently momos had the key element of multiple spices and ingredients being added, with buffalo meat becoming more important than yak, and substantial vegetarian variants created too.

The Nepali momo spices and ingredients are very distinct, but certainly have parallels with the Chinese dumplings (including on shapes: round or crescent) – *Jiaozi* -- and therefore the East Asian food cultural zone, that like its South Asian counterpart greatly valued extensive use of spices and seasonings as both these great regions had far more options for both of the latter available locally, compared to the arid cold Tibetan Plateau. As many UK Nepali community members share, there were important arts and crafts interactions between Nepal and the Yuan (Mongol) Empire of China, of Nepali craftsmen – most famously Araniko (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Araniko>) – including to the capital of China and the Court of the Chinese Emperor.

As it is not yet clear exactly the chronology of the Tibetan momocha becoming the famous, Nepali momo, it is quite possible that some of the direct Kathmandu Valley craftsmen travels to and from the capital of the Yuan Emperor, may have played some part in regard to creating the momo, renowned for its artfully combined spices and ingredients. It is almost certain that the Nepali craftsmen in their works and travels would have encountered the Chinese *Jiaozi*, and noted their spicy nature and varied fillings – fillings including ginger and garlic: important ingredients in Nepali & South Asian cuisines.

The story of the momo is not however complete without reference to its classic and delicious accompaniment (itself made of multiple ingredients and spices): Tomato Achar/spicy pickle, dabbed

on momos, or with momos dipped in the latter. The Chinese accompaniments to their *Jiaozi* are either chili oil or soy (often mixed with fresh chopped chili): these are very different to Nepali Tomato Achar.

Gaura Festival:

The Gaura Festival (Gaura Parva) – which involves a five-day fast -- is associated particularly with the Far West and parts of the Mid West of Nepal, and takes place in late August/September in the month of Bhadra (Nepali months are linked to the Lunar calendar and begin and end in the middle of Western calendar months). The festival, which takes place over five days and is particularly celebrated by women, is named after the goddess Gaura, the wife of the Lord Shiva, and is celebrated by rituals (these can vary according to the location the festival takes place in) and festivities to wish Shiva good health and longevity. As such it epitomised marital devotion from the side of the wife, and across the festival women chant mantras and folk songs are performed – powerful bonding, spiritual activities that preserve and continue Far Western (Doteli) identity.

It has a special, major connection with food however, through Biruda, which is a mixture of five seeds (initially kept together in water in a copper pot) associated with the different elements (from fire, to air): Biruda gives health and long life. The five-day festival culminates on the final day with the Paancha Biruda mixture, breaking the festival fast by swallowing the five types of combined seeds, whole, and with afterwards the remaining Biruda being made as a stew, which is the final day's special dish. The cereals and pulse used are: wheat, Gahot and Gurao (two types of lentils), Black Gram, and Peas, which as mentioned each conform to the Five Elements. Gaura Parva is also famous for the Deuda Dance; a dance in which all participants hold hands (women and men separately) and form a circle (this can often involve more than a hundred people at a time) and perform a step dance, symbolising interconnection of individuals within the broader community. At the end of the festival new sacred threads are taken by married women; Gaura Parva can therefore be rightly said to fill the role of an annually performed act of devotion towards ones husband and marriage. Beyond the Doteli people and culture there is a nationally celebrated annual festival, the Janai Purnima, the Sacred Thread changing festival: again this is associated with a special food, the delicious and nutritious *Kwati* (comprising nine types of beans) dish.

Sagan Ceremony:

We conclude with the topic of the Sagan Ceremony (performed by both Nepali Hindus and Nepali Buddhists), which is imbued with spiritual purpose albeit of different kind to that of Gaura; with rites around food being at the heart of the spiritual devotion and related contemplative purposes of both through the interconnection of Nature & life, and humankind, through symbolically and spiritually important foods.

The Nepali Tantric Five Elements: Again, as with the Gaura there are five, and they relate to spiritual concepts of pure Tantric kinds. The Panchatawa (the Five Tantric Elements) are: Fire (Agni Tatwa), which is symbolised through rice wine; Earth (Privithi Tatwa), symbolised by meat; Water (Jal Tatwa) symbolised by fish; Ether (Akash Tatwa), symbolised by lentil cake, and Air (Wayu Tatwa) symbolised by egg (eggs may be replaced by sweet ball Laddu or by meat balls (Lagwah). The concept is that living entities, humankind, animals, etc. whilst alive hold heat and warmth (fire), and when dead, become earth, from which are found and released, water; breath is air and exists in both space and ether.

The Sagan Ceremony is a very important Newari spiritual & religious practice, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley. The ceremony takes place not on a fixed day in the calendar, but on a range of different special occasions such as New Year's Day at the start of the Nepali New Year, birthdays, weddings, and in old age. In addition, the Sagan ceremony is performed often when setting out on or returning from a long journey or one of special importance. It is also performed if one has survived nearly losing one's life in an accident, or for achieving some exceptional accomplishment. The ceremony focuses on the honoree (but with other participants too) who will sit cross-legged or seated while the rites take place, including daubing of tikka on the forehead and the one honoured and participants also receiving a daub of dahi/yoghurt on the forehead.

Food and trade – Thakali Cuisine:

After Newari cuisine, Thakali, the cuisine of the Tharu people is famous for its contribution to Nepal's food culture; as with the momo, it is a cuisine type directly linked to trade. It is renowned for not only its dishes and types of cooking, but also utensils which in the case of the Thali, a brass tray, brass cups, bowls and cutlery (sometimes also in copper or silver) is the most famous image of Nepal's food culture. The story of Thakali cuisine relates directly to the Tibet to Terai (and Hindustan beyond) trade routes (Thakali people being renowned merchants from very early times), with Pokhara being a particularly important centre, whilst the home district of Thakali is the Thok-Khola Valley populated by Thakali people. Staple Thakali ingredients include from the north, millet, buckwheat, barley and dal, and from the lowlands, rice, other forms of dal, as well as maize.

Thakali dishes (a blend of Tibetan and Lowland derived foods) are predominantly meat ones, from yak, to sheep breeds imported from Tibet. Poles are fixed near fires with thin slices of meat attached to the poles, to cook and dry. These meats are then often added to curries. They are often also sautéed in ghee (butter), and made particularly flavoursome when dipped in the Thakali mix of Szechuan pepper, local herbs (many varieties of these throughout the different valleys and mid-hills) and chili powder which combined are known as *timur-ko-choup*. The latter is also used to season omelettes, potatoes and boiled eggs. The grey Dhindo is perhaps the most famous Thakali food.

Thakali culture is also renowned for the famous hot millet alcohol drink, *Tongba*, served in bamboo drums/flagons that have a metal drum in the centre in which millet ferments and hot water is added, and the resulting heady brew drunk through a straw, and topped up with more hot water. Thakali cuisine was and continues to be provided at inns, known as *Bhattis*, by the Thakali people along the north – south trade routes.

Utensils and preparation items of Nepali home-made food



Knives -- various sizes and types, such as carving knife for meat preparation, through to small knives to chop and slice raw ingredients such as chilis, garlic, ginger

Chopping board – for dicing and cutting vegetables, herbs, and meats

Spatula / wooden cooking spoon -- for stirring and turning

Saucepans -- with and without lids, and in a range of sizes

Mortar & Pestle – made of stone, and very heavy, these are an essential utensil used in Nepali home cooking, as they are the traditional implements for turning finely ground ingredients to pulp, particularly for creating the more liquid forms of *Achar* (such as accompany *Momos*)

Bowls -- glass and/or ceramic, for mixing ingredients

Frying pans – for fried dishes, heating *Rotis* (flat-breads), making omelettes, etc

A pallet-type container -- usually metal and circular, for spices in use

Scissors – to cut and trim some meats, and for some vegetables' preparation (such as spring onions)

Forks and spoons – also used to stir ingredients, as well as eating utensils

Electric Blenders -- alternative to mortar & pestle)

Storage containers -- usually plastic, in various sizes, for containing opened packets of spices

Other: non-utensil Nepali home cooking apparatuses:



Rice cooker: rice cookers are indispensable for most main Nepali home-made dishes, as rice is the staple accompaniment. Rice cookers have two settings (illustrated above) of 'cook' and 'keep warm' and have on the inside of the metal container, measuring marks for quantities (such as for two people, five people, etc). With rice cookers comes a plastic rice portions measure (see above), and in the lid of the rice cooker itself are small holes (the key part of the rice cooker) to release the steam as the rice comes closer to its final stage of steaming



Pressure (multi) cooker: Pressure/multicookers are commonly used now, especially in settings such as UK Nepali diaspora community members homes, and cut down on the number of stoves, hotplates, pans needed



Dumpling steamer: traditional Chinese bamboo two-tier example illustrated above are often used in diaspora [non-Nepal] settings such as the UK; these have the same (at more convenient for domestic cooking purposes size) function of the large pan metal steamers used in eateries in Nepal (Kathmandu setting example also included above) and elsewhere

The microwave oven: essentially used for warming food that has been stored in the fridge

The right hand:



Eating with the right hand is the traditional method of taking most Nepali dishes, rather than using a knife and fork. Hygiene is a distinct part of Nepali food and eating culture. Washing of hands before and after eating is a fundamental of Nepali culture, and it is felt that nothing should be cleaner – therefore more appropriate to eat with – than one's hand. The right hand is used for eating, whilst the left in earlier times was associated with using the toilet: this two-hands, different purposes, method is according to the right or the left-hand known in other ancient cultures in regard to hygiene.

In Nepali diaspora communities in the West, such as the UK, the use of the right hand is making place for

Western cutlery such as the knife, fork, and spoon, especially amongst younger and second generation community members, and sometimes where those eating the meal may be Western guests as well as Nepali.

On finishing eating, it is customary for Nepalis to rinse out the mouth too with water.

Other:



Thali:

Thali (above) -- Traditional Nepali mixed tray of dishes, bowls and cups, often in brass.

Anti:

The Anti is the traditional Newari alcohol jar. Commonly made from brass, these can range from the functional to the elegant

Note on Traditional Newari utensils:



Newars have traditionally and still largely cook, store and serve food and drinks in containers and utensils made of gold, silver, copper, brass, iron, clay pottery, dried rice stalks. They have also traditionally used corn/maize leaves and also the leaves of particular trees, sewn together using wood toothpicks, to make plates and bowls.

- Bata -- basin
- Chupi -- knife
- Hasa -- a circular winnowing tray
- Khola -- bowl
- Sali -- a small ceramic bowl
- Dhampo -- water pot
- Karuwa -- water jug
- Soma -- an earthenware wine pitcher
- Anti (to left) -- an alcohol containing jar
- Thali -- tray of dishes & bowls, often in brass

Note on Traditional Sherpa Cooking Utensils:

The Sherpas use wood, stone, bamboo, and ceramic in household food making and serving utensils. Mr Sana Sherpa, President of the UK Sherpa Association lists the most commonly used and important utensils as:

- Tipli: A kettle used to making tea
- Jama: ceramic pot used for preparing tea
- Sawjom: wooden container for curd
- Kayu: ceramic cup or bowl
- Cheni/Churo: this is a wooden cup used for drinking tea and other liquor
- Takyo/Thakya: silver teacup
- Dermang: dining plate
- Pong: wooden vessel for liquor containers portage
- Som: wooden vessel used to carry water
- Gogchung/Gogchumg: this wooden implement is used to grind chilis, salt and other spices
- Dongmu: this is a cylindrical wooden vessel with a plunger – important for brewing Sherpa Tea
- Chema: wooden frame sieve in rectangular shape mainly used to filter roasted maize and wheat from sand
- Kurkim: this is a special stone pan used in the process of bread baking
- Aril: wooden vessel used to prepare dough
- Tolum: this is a butter churning wooden bucket
- Melang: charcoal brazier

Wooden and bamboo utensils are made by Sherpas, but iron ones are purchased. In the early 21st Century most Sherpas have some Western modern cooking utensils in the home kitchen, which have in some cases superseded traditional Sherpa ones.

Interviews – special thematic and particular perspectives on Nepali cuisine:

This is an important section of this book, as it gives special thematic (a Western/UK Asian food-store, and a Western/UK further education catering faculty's) and particular Nepali communities (serving Gurkha, British Army, and Sherpa community) perspectives through sets of questions provided to each, to give direct and rare, invaluable insights on the role of food in regard to Nepali cultural & social heritage, and concerning world cuisines exceptional insights into inter-cultural awareness and understanding.

Content List:

- Asian food store perspectives
 - Nepali food in the context of the British Army
 - Sherpa culinary heritage
 - Bournemouth & Poole College Catering Faculty lecturers and students' discussion
-

An Asian food store's perspectives on Nepali & South Asian cuisine interest by British audiences:



About the specialist knowledge of the Asia Shop team, and range of cooking ingredients provided, including South Asian -- experiences & points of view of home cooking by people of different ethnicities:

Our team provides specialist guidance on ingredients for home cooking. About 80% of our customers are Asian, including Middle Eastern, with 20% being British, European, South American and African. The three most popular current cuisine types are Indian, Vietnamese and Thai; Chinese used to be included in this group of

most popular food types. We stock a full range of ingredients from covering all needed to make a dish through to ready meals where you just add water. An example is noodles. There are actual noodles, of many kinds; these are the main but just one of often many other ingredients for home cooked noodles. Then there are packet noodles which have sachets of dried and powdered contents to add to the noodle with water; and finally, just basic pot noodle where only boiling water is added.

How Asia Shop feels home cooking differs from restaurant menus dishes ranges?

We know that there is a major difference between restaurant food and home cooking. Restaurants for cost and economies of scale reasons operate on set menus, whereas home cooking comes a huge range of types of home cooked dishes and foods. The main difference between the two is that restaurant food is about making money, which means limited ranges of food on menus and concentrating on things like visual presentation, where glazing and colour and not having emphasis on health giving nutrients in the dishes, comes first, and MSG is too widely used.

Home cooking is totally health and taste focused. In addition, home cooking is often the only way in Western countries like the UK that special specific culture related dishes, foods, of the home country and often particular parts of the home country. Types of special foods for festivals and with spiritual and religious heritage are a good example. About this, Nepal is a good instance: in the UK Nepali dishes are still rare, and only some of the dishes in Nepali restaurants will be actually classical Nepali ones. In the case of regional, ethnic or special occasion foods, dishes and side dishes, the only option is for home cooking.

What are the common questions Asia Shop / Maulatheen members receive about making a successful curry?

We find that English and European customers often come to Asia shop for ingredients to make curries at home rather than getting curry ready meals in the supermarkets; some of these have South Asian friends and have clearly had experience with these of home cooked curries. The main interest from these customers is that they want to make their own curries as it links to making a change to their health through what they cook and eat. As mentioned, there is particular demand for making Indian, Thai, and Vietnamese curries.

The choice to make home cooked food for health change reasons, especially with British particularly but other Western people too who are our customers, is something we are seeing more and more with particularly Millennials. I think that the food culture of the West as we have particularly in Britain, is seeing many turning to the East, to Asia where from the earliest times we have always had food cultures directly linked to keeping and restoring good health and relating to this wellbeing.

How often do Nepali dishes & curries feature in questions from customers?

Extremely rarely. Outside of the Nepali community, apart from some within our Indian and Bangladeshi communities, Nepali food is very little known of and therefore not asked about. However, when we have Nepali customers visit us they know what they need and often have firm favourites where brands of ingredients are concerned. Deepak Tamrakar is an example. On his regular visits to Asia Shop, when he needs assistance on ingredients he always has particular brands in mind and knowledge of the different spices and ingredients, and knows what he wants and needs. In terms of Nepali customers we have quite a few who are students of the university, but other community members too.

Guidance provided by Asia Shop on health benefits and nutrients of ingredients:

In the shop we have literally a whole world of ingredients, in many forms, and of many kinds and brands

To give an example, poverty in some parts of some countries across Asia, as well as pollution, can be major causes for shortening life, but, comparing with the West, such as the UK and USA, basic body health is much better and people can live to great ages with their bodies basically in much better shape and condition compared to those in the West who follow diets and take fast foods where the ingredients can be very processed, low in nutrients and health benefits. I believe this contrast is a real part of why population growth and numbers are so different, for example in China or India. In these food cultures there is direct connection to health preserving and restoring ancient philosophies and concepts, where food, and particularly food nutrients play a major part; there is not the same approach in the West.

Regularly having foods with different very important nutrients, so that those nutrients are absorbed on a daily or almost daily basis is much better than pills and supplements many of which have unknown effects or are much less effective compared to taking the nutrients in the natural way of through foods and dishes. This is the big strength on health of Asian cuisines particularly.

For example on health we in South Asia often don't use sugar, which has energy value but many bad costs to health, especially cardiovascular system; instead we use Jaggery powder to give sweetness without the harm. Turmeric is a main and essential ingredient in curries because of its colouring element, but in Asia we know it much more for being one of the most powerful natural sources of combatting cancers. Cancers are in comparison to Asia, considerably more commonplace and even growing in known types and scale in the West. There is another very important South Asian ingredient that is very good for health maintenance and restoration, and that is Amla Powder.

Another very health beneficial product we stock comes from Thailand – Thai Holy Basil. As its name suggests health benefits are closely linked to many special foods, and as such are recognised as spiritually important.

Favourite special vegetables – What generally is stocked?

Our customers are mainly people who are largely passionate about home cooking, and as such we cater for providing rarer ingredients, fruits, vegetables, spices, special ingredients. There is often a short shelf life for some of these ingredients, which means we have to take care on how much or many to purchase. For us having these foodstuffs available matters a lot for we like to make our customers happy as our business is not exclusively about making money.

Asia Shop -- other relevant information provided:

We are really pleased to have learned of this project and provide information for it. It is an educational project that also has true value as promoting multicultural society building in an important way in real peoples lives! One thing I want to share is that the customer service and range of stock including rarer items, is very different to contemporary supermarkets.

I and the Asia Shop team feel that in fact the approach we take is much closer to that of British grocery stores of much earlier kinds before the late 1960s and 1970s, before the supermarket age. We have heard so much about how this culture of ours used to be the norm in England from villages to corner stores, and are proud when our own approach is recognised by more elderly British people from time to time, as reminding them of the very different times of their youth in this way.

About Asia Shop:

The Asia Shop approach is to value the customer in meaningful ways, as I have explained regarding rare and special foodstuffs and ingredients, and special brands of important ingredients used in home cooked food. Beyond this we whenever possible do not believe in just throwing food away, so provide a basket where food that is close to its use by date can be taken at no charge by shoppers. This relates to our culture of reverence for food as something of health value and a true gift of Heaven, that therefore cannot just be thrown away. Were able we also encourage our customers to bring their own, or use, bags and reusable bags for Nature, the environment is the source of the sacred gift of food, and in the age of climate change we all for spiritual and practical reasons have to do our best.

We only receive foodstuffs from quality providers, who come from across the world, and so there is careful planning on orders and time for arrival in the case of fresh foodstuffs.

I am a Bournemouth University graduate taking my Masters (this is in IT and data, including particular emphasis on data analysis: this is something we use on a daily and detailed basis, as I showed and shared with you on our Asia Shop monitor screen). Beyond this I work part-time at Asia Shop not only serving customers but also managing stock and orders. I love the work, and especially because of my 15+ years background in Indian restaurants (in the kitchens as chef), including five star hotels and high-end restaurants in India. I have a real passion for food culture as an ancient art in South Asia, and particularly so as from an early age I started to appreciate the role of nutrients in spices, fresh ingredients, meats, vegetables, and therefore understand food, the right types of food prepared in the right ways, as the fundamental to a healthy body and good health.

Maulatheen

Asia Shop Bournemouth

Interviewer: Alan Mercel-Sanca. Interview date and location: 23rd August 2019 at Asia Shop

Nepali food in the context of the British Army:

As part of the Nepali food component of the project we were able to conduct an engagement with the Gurkha officers and soldiery of Blandford Camp, doing so via a set of specific questions for the community. The questions are provided below along with responses conveyed by community leads. The interest we had was to see to what extent in conjunction with multicultural values and learning for the broader army community, is taking place presently, and could take place in the future in regard to the opportunity to learn about and enjoy Nepali food, due to the presence of the Gurkhas.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES:

What types of Nepali khanaa are cooked in the Mess [compound], and in conjunctions with adjacent Mandir religious & cultural occasions / special days?

Both in the Offrs'and Sgts' Mess, normal British foods are served on a daily basis on a pay as you go system. When we hold temple service and cultural events, we make ourselves or Gurkha Chefs prepare for us but nothing is funded by the Army.

What types of Nepali khanaa are cooked in the soldiers domestic, family settings?

Normal British breakfast and lunch served on a pay as you go system for Phase 2 trainees Bhai haru, Phase 3 soldiers and permanent staff. Their evening meal will be a mixture of British and basic Nepalese curry (Bhat).

Are there any particular meat dishes prepared in Nepali cuisine styles, that are considered to be 'power foods' for Gurkha soldiers?

Due to contractor supplying food on behalf of Army, they don't just target for the Gurkhas, they sell basic Nepalese style curry made from chicken, Pork and may be lamb sometimes. The contractor needs, we understand to make profit by selling food to all, and on this basis at this time there is not such a messing facility in Nepali food for Gurkha soldiers.

Your thoughts on Nepali maasu ra tarkari [meat & vegetable] dishes being included in selections of Blandford Camp canteens?

As it is targeted for the wider audience, the food contractors currently do not provide such a full version of Nepalese type and standard of food. All our trainees (indigenous British as well as Gurkha) love Gurkha Curry: the standard is ok, but it is felt it would be better if my Gurkha soldiers are supplied with full version of Nepalese-style Masu, Daal, Bhat, Tarkari and chutney (achar; spiced pickle). This would add extra morale and motivation to the soldiers, but we understand that this may raise the food costs soldiers need to pay.

What provisions are made by the British Army at camps such as Blandford, for provision of Gurkha / Nepali staple foods ingredients (chamal, masala, etc.) provision?

*The Army has hired a contractor service that controls everything; Gurkha chefs, rations, type of food available, labour etc. they are a profitable company and supply basic food for a charge. However standards of food could be improved. They provide some basic rice but this is **not Basmati (our core and only type of rice eaten by Gurkhas in Nepal and outside the army)**, ingredients are ok, however we still have Gurkha Chefs,*

Do you have any experience of British soldiers and officers at Blandford Camp joining in Mess or Gurkha soldiers domestic settings and on-camp Nepali festival occasions, eating and enjoying Nepali khanaa?

Yes, senior British officers are invited to join our key festivals such as Dashain, Tihar and New Year and they know exactly what our full Gurkha Curry looks and tastes like. They enjoy very much our Gurkha Dinner. The standard of food we serve during the key festivals referred to is far better than the one cooks serve to our Gurkha soldiers.

Question responses provided on behalf of the Blandford Garrison Gurkha community by Captain Gopal Saru, with additional support from Sergeant Major Saindra Chemjong, involving liaison with garrison Gurkha officers & soldiery.

I am responsible for looking after Gurkha community, serving soldiers, trainees and families. My Deputy is WO2 Saindra. We eat our food at our own homes. Captain Gopal Saru

Summary:

The Blandford Camp Gurkha community responses show that in terms of quality of authentic Nepali food, there is some room for improvement. Having through the Gurkha community actual Nepali chefs to cook is a huge strength, as Nepali people have as a people a great reputation for expertise in cookery. There is clearly great potential for development of Nepali food being more widely available and promoted within the British Army generally as there are many army bases across the UK where Gurkhas are based, and therefore the opportunity to experience and enjoy Nepali culinary heritage exists for the British Army officers & soldiery in general in all of those bases.

At present, at least at Blandford, ordinary rice which is NOT the staple, Basmati rice represents a cultural sensitivity matter that it would be really valuable to address in terms of a global change to just using Basmati which will make Nepali food provision much more authentic and be so well received for morale reasons by our Gurkhas.

Uniquely, through this component of the Nepali culinary heritage information resource, we see in some responses of the interview questions responses, the specific topics of morale, and enhanced [military] performance linked unambiguously to food and type of food. In this special setting such matters transcend the role of food as just nourishment and a pleasure, per se, raising to key concepts at the heart of military performance. In the final part of the last section of the interview, this question of morale and food type & quality is reiterated in the information volunteered about making food at home; clearly a really important matter for the two considerations referred to.

It is exciting to learn of the involvement of senior British Army officers being invited to and clearly appreciating experience of attending key Nepali cultural festivals, a major aspect of which includes Nepali food (some types of which – Sel Roti, etc. – are particularly popular at and associated with some of these festivals), which through the Gurkha Curry and Gurkha Dinner they discover, and which stands out for its quality due to the culinary prowess of the Gurkha chefs.

In summing up the interview responses show that there is an element of culturally appropriate food available within the British Army for our Gurkhas and, importantly that the broader British Army officers and soldiery can and do enjoy this too. There are clearly areas where improvement can be made, particularly on the culturally sensitive matter of advisability for morale reasons (a Respect factor from the army food servicing provision point of view) of instituting Basmati rice. There are very extensive opportunities as well for multicultural learning benefits to be expanded for all British Army personnel on using the feature of Nepali food on menus to share more about the broader cultural heritage (festivals, language, history, etc.) of the Gurkhas. Such learning can only further extend the elan and camaraderie in military operation contexts between the British Army Gurkha community and the broader British Army community that have such respect and admiration for the former on their courage and famous capabilities in battle.

Sherpa culinary heritage:



The details I provide of interest for the Nepali foods project from our Sherpa perspective, largely refer to our culinary arts in the Solu-Khumbu districts of the Everest region of Nepal, such as I and other members of the UK Sherpa community were brought up to enjoy and use in our youth. In the UK food options are very different of course because of British/Western culture, modern convenience, and of course on climate, terrain, and availability or non-availability of traditional Sherpa staples of food and drink and ingredients.

Where able, and particularly on our Sherpa people's special occasions of family importance or our main festivals (these are Losar, Dumje, and Mani Rimdu), of which three are of major importance to us to honour for our own culture even if far from the land and mountains of our birth, we try where able to cook and enjoy some of our Sherpa foods. The warmth of social occasions matter greatly to us, and include particularly for festivals drinking and feasting accompanied by song and – where space permits – dances; this in home and family settings, but also in bigger, community ones: feasting and drinking go together in our culture, rather than separately. In the UK our socialising takes place in our homes with friends and relations often and on special occasions joining, and news being shared on the doings and matters of importance that are taking place with our community here (we have most of our people based here in Ashford in Kent) and in Nepal, the Himalaya.

Some information on Sherpa cuisine and related topics:

Main ingredients in Sherpa foods include potato, radish (important for its heating nature and spiciness), carrots, and butter (ghee) features a lot. Potato is though our staple food, taking the part enjoyed by rice in the lands to the south of our Nepal and of course in Hindustan beyond. Because of our homeland's extreme climate, food has a special health preserving role, rather than just for nourishment and taste and so has to be filling in a way that fortifies against the cold, which is why the benefits of butter are so great as they help develop necessary fat to insulate; here though there isn't the same physical health need, so it is not used so much in what we eat compared to in the high mountains, but ghee still features on special occasions to keep touch with the traditions & culture of the land of our birth.

As with our friends the Newars, we also have our own particular utensils for preparing and cooking our foods, and in addition food and drink portage and storage. I am pleased to share names and descriptions of the main cooking and drinking related items with this important project's audiences in the utensils section of this information resource. In this functional practical topic, in sharing, I and the

UK Sherpa people preserve our culture, as here and in the main part of the UK Nepali cultural & and social heritage project share it with our friends the British. Here in Britain we have adopted replacements for some of our cooking utensils, but I feel that this is being just practical; the foods taste just the same though!

Famous recipes:

The most ancient, and/or popular of Sherpa dishes and types of food include, but are not limited too: Potato pancakes (Riki Kur), Sherpa Noodle Soup (very similar to Tibetan noodle soup and Thukpa) known as Shyakpa or Thenthuk , and Sherpa Salted Butter Tea. I have provided a classic recipe for Riki Kur in the main recipes & dishes section of this information resource.

I provide from our Sherpa community a set of images from our food, including Riki Kur, Sherpa Mo-Mo, stew, and some further images including of our homeland. I hope these will be of educational value and interest to all who read this important information resource and e-book on Nepali cuisines.

Sana Sherpa

President, UK Sherpa Association

Sherpa dishes (Riki Kur)



Riki Kur, Sherpa-style potato pancake, with spicy green sauce and Yak Butter



Sherpa MO MO (Meat Dumpling)



Sherpa Stew

Shyakpa (Sherpa Stew)





Churi Gai (Himali Cow)



Everest Base Camp



Sherpa women in traditional dress

College lecturers and students interview, Q&As, and discussion:



On 19th November Mr Deepak Tamrakar, the main contributor to the Nepali cuisine home cooked Nepali traditional and contemporary foods component of the UK Nepali cultural & social heritage project provided sets of cooking demonstrations to students, lecturers and the head of the SW England renowned Escoffier Catering School of Bournemouth & Poole College, one of the UK's best culinary schools.

Including the head of the School, Mr Christophe Baffos and five teachers and lecturers, some 70 students from initial to advanced levels attended the two slots provided for the Nepali cookery

demonstrations at the Escoffier School's campus at the Lansdowne, Bournemouth. More detail on Escoffier can be found at: <https://www.thecollege.co.uk/what-to-study/curriculum-areas/hospitality-and-catering/what-we-do>

The impact Deepak's demonstration of Nepali cookery home cookery skills had on attendees was extraordinary not only in regard to teaching of a set of dishes from preparation to completion, but in the major very successful and revelatory impacts of the tasting of the dishes by all attending, from Mr Baffos and the lecturers and teachers, but across all of the students: all found the food delicious and a new experience. The dishes made were:

- Nepali classic chicken curry
- Nepali classic potato curry
- Nepali cucumber & potato pickle

Questions were taken and answers provided, including on spice and herb combinations through to when major ingredients were cooked in comparison to when they would be in western cuisines: such as incorporating onion in its use as one of the major ingredients, towards the end of dishes. Also, the food ingredients handling and cleanliness of approach on preparations were noted with admiration, and the important practice of the numbers of times the Basmati rice was washed (to enhance textural impact when eaten, and remove starch). The 'clean' direct taste of the essence of the main ingredients of the dishes and side dish from potato, chicken, onion and tomato through to cucumber were perhaps most commented on with real admiration: spices and herbs accentuating such taste rather submerging it.

The purposes of the demonstrations were to introduce to non-Nepali / Western and international attendees this little-known delicious cuisine in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian forms and through both main dishes and a side dish, the uniqueness of Nepali food (khanaa) in terms of taste, cooking techniques, and foods philosophy. The feedback was unambiguously enthusiastic and positive in regard to not only taste and combinations of ingredients and cooking techniques, but also on the fact that the cuisine is truly unique in its own right, including in comparison with much better-known [in the UK & West] South Asian/Indian dishes and cuisines.

On 7th January 45 – 50 students of the college under the supervision and support of Mr Tamrakar, with two lecturer/teachers working with him, are for the day going to be learning how to cook a set of Nepali home cooked classical and contemporary dishes. This as with the 19th November demonstrations & Q&As mark the first time at such a level that Nepali cuisine has been profiled, assessed, tasted by a UK nationally important catering school!

We include below a set of images from the 19th November 2019 cookery demonstrations provided at Escoffier, by Mr Tamrakar:







Christophe Baffos, Director of Learning, Sixth Form and Service Industries

Deepak's demonstration was very informative for our students and staff. It helped showcase the use of spices which can be so alien to a classically trained European chef. Learning the gastronomy of Nepal and the ways of eating food, is so important to help anyone to better grasp some of the combination of flavours particular to that cuisine.

Thank you to both Alan and Deepak for organising these great sessions at The Bournemouth & Poole College.

Regards

Christophe Baffos
Director of Learning
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David Marshall, Senior Chef Demonstrator/Instructor

On behalf of the students that were present may I say a big thank you to Deepak and yourself for an interesting session during our CPD week.

We have a number of students that on the mention of spices have worried looks on their faces, but during your session and particularly when it came to the tasting were converted and pleasantly surprised as the softness, rounded and depth of flavours having used a limited number of ingredients. They enjoyed the freshness and delicate accents to all the dishes that were prepared and surprised at the ease that they could replicate each dish. again many thanks.

Best regards
David

David Marshall
Senior Chef Demonstrator/Instructor
Catering and Hospitality
Service Industries

Bournemouth & Poole College
Meyrick Road
Bournemouth
Dorset



Part B:

1. Main section

Introduction:

The choice of dishes and side-dishes described has been necessarily for the purposes of the e-book/PDF not been intended to be exhaustive and comprehensive, but to give a thorough range of different types of dish across a number of categories, and to cover the traditional to contemporary spectrum that comprises in Nepal and in diaspora communities like the UK, Nepali home cooking with its many variations and core food philosophies.

For those seeking a comprehensive list of recipes and dishes, **Jyoti Pathak's** *A Taste of Nepal*, in which some 350 individual dishes are detailed, is highly recommended as the definitive study resource.

Culinary home-cooking background and statement by main contributor, Deepak Tamrakar:



From a very young age, brought up in the Far West (Dadeldhura, Mahakali) of Nepal in my home and village environment, I came into contact with Nepali home cooking and loved the scents of the foods in their various stages of preparation, from fresh ingredients being prepared to the aromas and tastes of the final stage of the meal, dish or snack. I think I am not uncommon in having this fascination as a child for the foods of our great, beautiful country, but I found cooking something of wonder, and quickly wanted to watch and learn as foods came together in our home kitchen made by my mother and grandmother, my grandfather. And also, in some cases simple single food dishes (Kerala / Bitter Gourd fried, etc. – we had Kerala growing from one of the walls of our garden; very good for health) made by my father when I accompanied him out on travel and activities in the country.

These were all magical memories for me, and I felt core parts of my family and broader social lives. I think too that as in Nepal we are so blessed with having almost all our main cooking ingredients found growing or existing nearby, and often near to ones' home and village – meaning extremely fresh and aromatic – that food for us is something sacred connecting us, with broader Nature itself. This is something that is not so easily appreciated for those living in major cities, especially in the West.

Soon I was asked to help sometimes in the preparation stage of ingredients, and even aspects of making the main dish itself, under helpful eye and supervision of family, and sometimes at friends' family homes, or on festival, broader social and religious celebration occasions. Still when young, at home, I learned just how important it is to check on and know about the freshness of ingredients and understanding why essential to get this just right. Otherwise, if the quality is poor, taste and sometimes texture of part of a dish is changed, and ruined. Mastery of amounts, blending, and combinations of different spices is perhaps the greatest contribution Nepali cookery makes to the broader world of food.

In my early 20's I went to study in Kathmandu, taking my passion for learning about cooking with me. This was a huge learning experience for me, as Kathmandu is famed across the whole of South Asia, not only Nepal for the quality, richness and great range of its types of foods, as the capital, although mainly Newari, was the centre of the nation from which so many different types and traditions of food from the high Himalaya to the Terai (Thakali, Tharu) are present, and the very best experts in these, thriving. I learned so much from living and socialising with friends in the capital, and studying new forms of Nepali home cuisine, and in due course understanding about how to experiment with, refine these whilst keeping the essential ingredients and respecting the traditional cooking processes.

I had started to learn as a child, but now in Kathmandu had the full realisation on what ingredients were compatible with each other within a dish, about the pace of adding/incorporating ingredients, the big matter of ensuring bringing out the natural taste and/or aroma of individual ingredients in dishes. And also, about getting salt and chili balances right, and that these relate to Not swamping ingredient natural flavours, and when cooking for others to know how salty or chili hot they want their food. On this the options I thought best were to also keep to a minimum, but still sufficient, and to have fresh chilis and salt available for adding at need by those eating the dish.



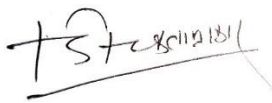
Coming to the UK I have continued to advance my knowledge and technique in Nepali home-cooked dishes, and have not been surprised to learn how prized are Nepali chefs in British Indian restaurants because of their grasp of knowledge of a very wide range of South Asian dishes, and as most Nepali are first generation, the value of still fresh contact with the land of origin and its culinary cultures being particularly powerful in informing cooking capability, and especially a very real reverential passion for the culinary arts.

Here, I have found in some ways, far fewer fresh ingredients and the full range of these I have been used to in beautiful Nepal, except for the value of South Asian grocery shops that provide some mitigation of this drawback. But on the other hand, other ingredients (frozen peas, broad beans, and particularly fresh fish), including a really good range of types of potato, that enable refinements and experimentations with aspects of traditional Nepali dishes. This is exciting, for ultimately home cooked food is the source from which classical dishes have been born over millennia, and those dishes to evolve into many different variants.

I am honoured and proud to be the main contributor to this booklet and culinary arts educational project, and know there are others like me with the same passion and abilities where the Nepali home cooked foods are concerned – I hope this book and information resource will encourage them to be proud of and share their skills in the Nepali culinary arts more broadly outside our community. Food is though more than flavour, texture, taste, it is also about good health or poor health.

We are aware of this in Nepal and South Asia and broader Asia, perhaps more than in the West, but this is changing. This is why looking at existing Nepali and South Asian food guides the Heritage project initiated and facilitated by the UK Nepal Friendship Society opened up the opportunity to explain this through ingredients health and nutrition sections, explaining why foods have certain health and medical benefits that can be gained, making one feel good, as well tasting delicious. Our Asian ancient health & wellbeing systems such as Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine, have major food philosophy components.

I am excited about through this project and book, sharing this from a layman's perspective, and also playing a small part in promoting Nepali foods, especially home cooked forms, to be profiled to, it is hoped, become greater features in different restaurants menus, and to boost the number of Nepali restaurants here in Britain, and in Ireland, and in the broader West.



Deepak Tamrakar

UKNFS Arts section co-founder and officer

Example comment on Deepak's Nepali cuisine expertise:

"I had the pleasure to taste Deepak wonderful home cooked food.

All I can say is I have never tasted anything as good as what he cooked for us, all the flavours and spices were delightful.

His food is very authentic and delicious, full of wonderful spices and aroma. I love spicy food so this was just perfect for me. I tried his Momos (Nepali Steamed Dumplings) Oh my God this was something special, truly tasty, I loved it. I also had the tomato achar, smooth and fiery in a delicious flavoursome way, as an accompaniment and it went really well with the Momos I even asked him to give me some of his recipe as it was so nice, and have asked him a number of times to provide some for me to eat at home."

Fatima Adjilani. President of Bournemouth Volleyball Club, and French national

I first met Deepak at a volleyball club and we got on straight away; I could see he was a kind and genuine man. As a result, we became friends and found we had cooking and food in common.

I was brought up in an Italian family and food and cooking was a big part of our culture.

I was interested in Deepak's culture and food as I know the difference between Italian home cooked and restaurant food. One evening Deepak invited me and some friends to his house for dinner.

When we sat down to eat Deepak brought out this awesome spread of home cooked Nepalese food. There must have been 6 different types of food on the table, and all were delicious. I was especially fond of the little dumplings, called Momos. We had 2 types: a veggie version and also a pork version. Both were amazing. They had a very delicate pastry with a full-flavoured filling.

A couple week later and I still couldn't get the Momos out my mind, so asked Deepak if he would teach me how to cook them. He was happy to share his knowledge of cooking with me, and was a very good teacher as I have since made them myself and they are now one of my favourite foods to prepare and share.

Rico Costanza

[Dishes & recipes index:](#)

Bhat Bhuteko -- Nepali fried rice

Bitter Gourd Kerela dishes

Chanaa Aloo Tarkari, and Paneer Aloo Variant

Chicken Curry

Classic Nepali Dal dish

Dal and mixed dal fry dishes

Cucumber Potato Pickle

Egg Curry

Fish Curry

Fried Chau Chau

Masala Omelette

Nepali French Beans ko Aloo dish

Nepali Mushroom Tarkari dish

Nepali noodle vegetable -- meat soup Thukpa

Nepali Pakauda (Pakorras)

Nepali Pani Puri

Nepali Sel Roti and Halwa

Nepali fried spicy eggs

Nepali style Chinese Cabbage Pak Choi dish

Rina Adhikari classic Nepali chicken curry

Shredded Potato Dish

Tomato pickle Golbeeda Achar

Traditional Sherpa Potato Pancake -- Aloo Roti (Riki Kur)

Vegetable Curry (Tarkari)

Bhat Bhuteko - Nepali fried rice:



Main ingredient: the dish's main ingredient, rice' nutrients and health enhancing benefits include but are not limited to being a good source of fibre, protein, iron, B vitamins, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, manganese and magnesium. Research suggests that it is weight loss friendly if eaten in modest quantity as part of a healthy balanced diet, but fattening if eaten in excess and in conjunction with an unhealthy diet.

Dal is, unlike with boiled rice, not used with fried rice. Chicken or other meats (diced) and already precooked, can be added to make meat versions of this Nepali vegetarian dish

Taste description & background:

Nepali fried rice makes a tasty meal in which you enjoy its spices and seasonings in a perfectly blended way keeping their flavours but in combination making an exceptional dish to savour. Its taste is not lost, unlike some other fried rice dishes, because the oil used is minimal. Bhat Bhuteko (there are many versions such as including Ramja, Red Kidney Bean, illustrated in the image above) was another one of the dishes I learned from my father when I was a child: I saw him make this one day when we still had some remaining umaaleko bhat (boiled rice) and a quick meal was sought at the end of that day.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 25 minutes.

Utensils needed:

Frying pan, and a stirring spoon (wooden) / spatula

Ingredients:

- Boiled rice (umaaleko bhat) – 2 to 4 portions
- Oil for frying- 1 table spoon
- Freshly chopped garlic – half a clove
- Fresh finely chopped chili
- Finely chopped ginger (optional) – to taste
- Salt- a pinch to taste
- Chili powder- about ½ a teaspoon
- Cumin (jeera) seed (optional)- 1 teaspoon
- Turmeric (optional) – a pinch

Method:

Heat frying pan, then add the oil. After this add, heat and gently toss garlic, chili, ginger (and jeera if used) and then add the boiled rice, and the salt and spices. Stir thoroughly, then cook for 2 – 3 minutes. Pre-prepared/cooked meat can be added (advised time 4-5 in total)

Accompaniments:

Achar/spiced pickle, you can also add vegetable curry/tarkari as a side dish or for mixing into the rice when the dish is served

Bitter Gourd Kerala dish:



Main ingredient: the dish's main ingredient, is Bitter Gourd (or Bitter Melon), better known as Kerala which is closely related to cucumber, pumpkin, zucchini. It is particularly rich in vitamin C, vitamin A, provides folate, and has traces of iron, zinc, and potassium. It also contains some important acids such as catechin, epicatechin, and chlorogenic acid, and gallic acid.

The Nepal-Indian *Kerala*, has a naturally bitter taste (hence the English name), and is quite narrow (like a cross between a courgette and a cucumber) and thickest in the middle, with spikes and pointed ends, and is a staple vegetable in many Asian cuisines.

Taste description & background:

The delicious Nepali Fried Kerala dish was learned from my father. Once fried the natural bitter taste of the Kerala transforms into a predominantly smoky, nutty flavour of a strong clean kind, going in the cooking process from green hue to dark brown and complete when a crunchy texture on the outside is reached. Perfect as a dish on its own, or as a side dish to complement a main course.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 15 minutes

Utensils:

Frying Pan
Spatula (wooden stirring spoon)
Chopping board.

Ingredients:

- Fresh Bitter Gourd (Kerala) – 5 to 6 small, or 3 to 4 medium to large
- Oil- 3 tablespoons
- Red or green Birds Eye chili (1 or 2 whole) - finely chopped, with seeds retained
- Cumin seeds and/or coriander powder- 1/2 tablespoon
- Salt- to taste

Method:

You cut the fresh Kerala into circular slices (2-3 mm) and take out the seeds and inside flesh. Heat the pan, and when hot (cooker medium heat setting) add the oil, then add cumin, and fresh finely diced chili (sometimes masala is added once the Kerala is starting to fry). Then once the ingredients and oil start to brown add the Kerala slices (the juice from the Kerala helps unify all the ingredients) and stir gently. When complete the Kerala will be quite crisp.

Chanaa Aloo Tarkari, and Paneer Aloo variant:



Main ingredient: the dish's main ingredients are potato (aloo) and chickpeas (chanaa).

Potatoes are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C. When prepared in healthy ways (minimal to no oil basting or frying) and moderate quantities, they are said to not be harmful to weight loss regimes.

Chickpeas contain calcium, iron, phosphate, manganese, zinc, and vitamin K. They are a good source of carbohydrates, fibre and are known to contribute maintaining strength and bone structure.

Paneer variant: There a number of forms of Paneer (from cow milk, etc.): the one most well-known in Nepali home-cooking cuisine, is buffalo paneer (a cheese derived from buffalo milk). It is high in calories, sodium, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. It is however also high in calcium, vitamin A, and also has some traces of potassium and iron.

Taste description & background:

Chanaa Aloo Tarkari (Chickpea Vegetarian Curry): the secret of this dish's fantastic taste lies in the combination of the flavours particular to chickpeas with their mild tanginess, and potato, and especially with these being heightened through seasonings and the chickpeas in particular being added at the right stage in the pan. Together they make an unforgettable dish which is very moreish.

Paneer Vegetarian Curry: there are many Western dishes that combine cheese and potato, such as the English classic, Cheese and Potato Pie, where a usually strong cheese is melted into the potato. However, our dish treats the cheese (Paneer) very differently with its form being kept and absorbing the essences of herbs and spices and being completed with gently fried crisp exterior that you crunch then sink your teeth into. For those who may not like plain Paneer, this dish gives a very different gastronomic experience leaving you with a hunger for more.

I learned both these dishes through friends in Kathmandu, who showed me the methods.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about an hour

Utensils:

Frying pan and lid
Glass bowl (for overnight soaking of chickpeas)
Chopping board
Knives for chopping and dicing
Spatula / wooden stirring spoon

Ingredients:

- ½ a kilo of chickpeas (left overnight in boiled water prior to use in cooking)
- 2/3rd of a kilo of potatoes
- 4 tablespoons of oil (extra virgin olive oil, sunflower, melted ghee, etc.)
- 2 to 2.5 Birds eye fresh green chilis (finely sliced)
- 1 Diced Brown or Red (Red popular in Nepal) Onion
- 2 Diced red cooking tomato
- Salt -- to taste
- Black pepper -- to taste
- ½ tbsp of turmeric
- Fresh chopped garlic (half a bulb)
- Fresh chopped ginger 1 tbsp
- Cumin powder ½ tbsp
- Coriander powder ½ tbsp
- Fresh chopped coriander to garnish

Paneer variant (as above but paneer exchanged for chickpeas)

¼ of a kilo of paneer

Method:

Soak dried chickpeas overnight in boiled water (you can also use good quality tinned chickpeas).
Boil chickpeas (if chanaa is tinned, incorporate once also cooked) put aside
Clean/wash and then boil potatoes until starting to soften, and then remove skins
Heat the pan, add 5 tbsp of olive oil.
Add ½ tbsp of fenugreek seeds.
Add diced brown onions and green chilies, then toss until they are brown
Add salt and pepper to taste.
Add boiled chickpeas and potatoes.
Add ½ tbsp of turmeric powder.
Add chopped fresh garlic and ginger and stir for couple of minutes.
Add 1 tbsp of cumin and coriander powder and add ½ tbsp of red chili powder and stir for 2 minutes.
Add diced tomatoes and the broth and cook until for 10-15 minutes until all tomatoes are cooked
Add freshly chopped coriander to garnish



Paneer variant (as above but paneer exchanged for chickpeas)

Cut paneer into small cubes, and fry in seasoned (salt, and – optional – masala) oil. Take out of pan and set aside to cool, and incorporate 3-5 minutes in final stage of main dish cooking process above.

Chicken Curry:



Main ingredient: the dish's main ingredient is chicken. Chicken provides much greater protein density than red meats and is a good source of creatine (this is produced naturally by the human body and is a compound three important amino acids). Chicken meat provides substantial quantities of all the essential B vitamins, such as niacin (B3), which are essential for having a healthy brain and for energy metabolism.

Taste description & background:

This is a classic Nepali main course, and eaten with boiled rice and with other accompaniments: I learned how to make the dish from my mother in the family home when young, and have since learned how others make the dish, with variants on amounts and in some cases, types, of seasonings and

spices. Unlike most Western chicken dishes, we find it important to include the bone (not essential though) to give additional savour to this delicious meal which is characterised by the meat being suffused by the seasonings. Again as with most other main courses that have multiple components, the hand (thumb and fingers) is commonly used to blend together meat and vegetable ingredients, and a touch of delicious spiced achar/pickle before eating.

Quantity: Serves 2 people twice, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 35 to 40 minutes

Utensils:

Frying pan
Chopping board
Knives

Ingredients:

- A kg of chicken (from a whole chicken, cut into medium size pieces)
- 4 tbsp of oil (vegetable, or extra virgin olive oil)
- 1 large brown onion, finely diced
- 5-6 garlic cloves -- finely diced
- A tbsp of fresh ginger, finely grated
- 2 medium-size tomatoes, chopped
- A tsp of turmeric
- A tbsp cumin powder
- A tbsp coriander (Dhania) powder
- A tsp of chili powder
- 4 Cloves
- 2.5 cm of Cinnamon (Dalchini) stick
- A tsp Cumin (Jeera) seeds
- A pinch of Salt -- to taste
- Some chopped fresh Coriander (Dhania) leaves or Cilantro to garnish

Method:

We use a whole chicken cut into medium size pieces (including bone: this is regarded as very popular in Nepal because of its extra concentration of flavour: you can though just use the chicken meat with the bones removed)

Heat the oil in a pan, then add the cumin seeds, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon and bay leaf and fry for about 15-20 secs. Add the chopped onions and fry the onions until they soften and become light brown till, then include garlic and ginger and fry for a further 4 - 5 minutes.

Then add the chicken pieces and fry until they become lightly browned, then add the chopped tomatoes, turmeric powder, chilli powder, cumin powder, coriander powder and salt and mix well

with the chicken. Fry for 3-5 mins, then lower the heat and cover the pan and cook for 10 mins. No need to add water at this stage as the chicken and tomatoes will leave water.

When the chicken is tender, and the oil starts separating from the gravy you add about 250 ml (you can vary this with a little less or more depending on how strong you wish your stock to be) of water. Then let the chicken simmer for 10-15 mins. Finally, add freshly chopped coriander to garnish.

Accompaniments:

Main accompaniment: boiled rice

Dal

Vegetable curry side dish

Saag (boiled spinach)

Pickled vegetables / achar

Classic Nepali Dal dish:



One half of Nepal's most internationally famous dish; Dal – Bhat (lentil soup with boiled rice).

Main ingredient: the main ingredient of these dishes is dhal (lentils). Dhal's nutrients and health enhancing benefits include being a major source of vitamins B, potassium, zinc, and magnesium, iron, of protein.

There are a number of types of Dal, and of different colours: the best known of which are:

- Yellow and red: nutty and sweet in flavour, they cook swiftly because split – famous as the main lentil types for making dal They're great for making dal and have a somewhat sweet and nutty flavour.
- Urad dal – black lentils (also known as 'Beluga': see below): popular in some Nepali dal dishes

Other types of Dal:

- Puy: green in colour, and named after the French region of Le Puy. Peppery in taste.
- Green: a less expensive version of Puy, and often larger in size
- Brown: In the West these are perhaps the most often used type of lentil, especially used in stews.
- Beluga: tiny black lentils, often used as a base in warm salads

Taste description & background:

It was, as with almost all Nepali people the first main dish I remember having as a very young child, and is a fundamental component in the Nepali classical and home cooking foods repertoire. Over the years I learned how to cook different versions, including Urad Dal (Black Lentil), composite dal dish with simee (beans), and various degrees of thickness (from soup to more like a stew) of consistency, and spiciness from adding chilis. Getting the spices just right is the foundation for successful dhal.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: after initial overnight to one day soaking stage for the lentils, the preparation and cooking time takes about 1.5 hours (15 minutes approximately for preparation of the ingredients)

Utensils:

Pressure cooker or large pan with lid
Chopping board
Knives
Deep-based frying pan and lid
Spatula / wooden stirring spoon

Ingredients:

Please note: Usually the lentils (Dal) are left in boiled water (*umaaleko paani*) overnight ahead of being cooked the next day.

- 250g of dal, rinsed until the water runs clear
- 3 tbsp of vegetable oil
- 2.5 to 3 medium size tomatoes
- A finely chopped small to medium sized onion
- ¾ teaspoon of garam masala (Nepali and most forms of Garam Masala, which is a composite of different spices, often includes fiery Szechuan chili pepper, dried cumin and ginger)
- 2-3 finely chopped green birds eye chillies (retaining or discarding seeds depending on whether you want your dal fiery hot or mild)
- 2cm width piece of finely diced/cut into small strips of fresh ginger
- ½ a bulb of garlic, chopped into large chunks (part of their infusion role in the dal as it cooks)
- ¾ teaspoon of turmeric
- A tbsp cumin seed (optional)
- ½ teaspoon of ground dhania/coriander (optional)
- Fresh chopped coriander leaves (optional) – for garnishing
- A pinch of salt– to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper (Maric) – to taste
- Lemon (Kagati): optional – a squeeze

Method:

The lentils are soaked overnight in boiled water. Put lentils in a litre of water in a pressure cooker and simmer for 45 minutes, then take out, allow for some time to cool and thicken. Then prepare a deep-based frying pan that has sides and bottom prepared with heated oil, add in spices ginger and chillies, followed by tomatoes and onion directly or from having been blended separately first, and then the other spices/masala and seasoning including turmeric.

Then add the lentils and a little more water depending on the thickness of the dal you desire, and simmer and stir on a medium heat for about 15 minutes.

Include red peppercorns or Szechuan dried chilis* and a little salt and black pepper to taste, and add, if you wish, some fresh chopped coriander to garnish, and a squeeze of lemon if preferred (this can be on individual servings if requested)

** NOTE: red chilis are prepared for Szechuan dried style (you can buy them already dried too, but they will not be so freshly prepared as in this method), by placing and turning on a hotplate*

Dal and mixed dal fry dishes:

Main ingredient: the main ingredient of these dishes is dal (lentils). Dal's nutrients and health enhancing benefits include being a major source of vitamins B, potassium, zinc, and magnesium, iron, of protein.

There are a number of types of Dal (sometimes spelled as Dhal), and of different colours: the best known of which are:

- Yellow and red: nutty and sweet in flavour, they cook swiftly because split – famous as the main lentil types for making dal They're great for making dal and have a somewhat sweet and nutty flavour.
- Urad Dhal (Black Lentil/Gram) is a popular alternative to yellow and red lentils.

Other types of lentil:

- Puy: green in colour, and named after the French region of Le Puy. Peppery in taste.
- Green: a less expensive version of Puy, and often larger in size
- Brown: In the West these are perhaps the most often used type of lentil, especially used in stews.
- Beluga: tiny black lentils, often used as a base in warm salads

Taste description & background:

Dhal is a staple Nepali food, famous for its contribution to making 'Dhal – Bhat' and is placed on boiled rice and then mixed together, and combined with other main ingredients such as Tarkari (curry). This is one of the first foods I learned about as a child, watching my mother and other family members preparing and cooking it in the family home's kitchen. Depending on your degree of passion for chili hot food, dhal dishes can be mild to very hot; this depends on if, and how many, red Szechuan dried chillies you incorporate when preparing the dish.

Dal is also important for mentioning the traditional custom of mixing dish ingredients together between thumb and fingers, with dhal being liquid rather than solid making it the ideal dish ingredient to combine with others. To explain about this custom from a gastronomic point of view; compared with the Western method of taking via spoon or fork different parts of a meal into your mouth, the use of hand, fingers and thumb means the mixing has already taken place before the dish starts to be savoured, making in effect a different taste compared to eating individual parts of a meal on their own. Dal therefore taken in this way has a unique role for savouring flavour.

Plain Dal:

See also Classic Nepali Dal dish.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: after initial overnight to one day soaking stage for the lentils, the preparation and cooking time takes about 1.5 hours (15 minutes approximately for preparation of the ingredients)

Utensils:

Pressure cooker or large pan with lid
Large bowl for soaking the lentils
Chopping board
Knives
Deep-based frying pan and lid (if used to add in to a main course in final stage of cooking)
Spatula / wooden stirring spoon

Ingredients:

- 250g of dal, rinsed until the water runs clear
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2.5 to 3 medium size tomatoes
- 1 finely chopped small to medium sized onion
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of garam masala (Nepali and most forms of Garam Masala often include Szechuan pepper, dried cumin and ginger)
- 2-3 finely chopped green birds eye chillies (retaining or discarding seeds)
- 2cm width piece of finely diced/cut into small strips of fresh ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ a bulb to 3 garlic cloves peeled and cut into large chunks left whole
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of turmeric
- 1 tbsp cumin seed (optional)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of ground coriander (optional)
- Fresh chopped coriander leaves (optional) – to garnish
- Salt– to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper – to taste
- Lemon (optional) – a squeeze

Method:



The lentils are soaked overnight in boiled water. Put lentils in a litre of water in a pressure cooker and simmer for 45 minutes, then take out, allow for some time to cool and thicken. Then prepare a deep-based frying pan that has sides and bottom prepared with heated oil, add in spices ginger and chillies, followed by tomatoes and onion directly or from having been blended separately first, and then the other spices/masala and seasoning including turmeric.

Then add the lentils and a little more water depending on the thickness of the dal you desire, and simmer and stir on a medium heat for about 15 minutes. Dried red, Szechuan chillies are commonly added towards the end of the dish preparation, and final touches can also include a sprinkling of fresh chopped Coriander (Dhania) and a squeeze of lemon to taste.

Mixed Dhal Fry:

Fried rice with dhal incorporated in cooking process rather than added separately after serving.

Ingredients as above.

Method:

Fried rice component; see Bhuteko Bhat recipe and same preparation steps. Dal (already cooked just prior to completing the main, fried rice part of the dish; see dal dishes for preparation. Incorporate dal in to the fried rice, stir and mix, or present dal in a bowl as a side dish for mixing in the quantities desired (like dal being added to bhat).

Accompaniment:

Golbeedaa Achar (spiced tomato pickle):

Cucumber Potato Pickle:

Main ingredient: the dish's main ingredients are cucumber and potato.

Cucumbers are a type of fruit and a good source of phytonutrients. Phyto nutrients are chemicals found in plants that have disease preventative and protective properties. In the case of cucumber, the phytonutrients are lignans, flavonoids, and triterpenes, which are antioxidants, and have anti-inflammatory effects, and are said to have anticancer benefits.

Potatoes are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C. When prepared in healthy ways (minimal to no oil basting or frying) and moderate quantities, they are said to not be harmful to weight loss regimes.

Taste description & background:

A classic side dish with crisp clean tastes through the potato & cucumber combination, and because it is served cold to accompany a main dish. I learned how to cook Kakoo ra Aloo ko Achar when I settled in the capital, at a friend's home, and have since experimented with quantities of ingredients to suit different preferences on the mildness to sharpness scale; most, as with myself prefer this side dish in its sharper form as it makes a perfect accompaniment to vegetable and meat curries and other main courses.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 20 – 25 minutes ...

Utensils:

Frying pan
Bowls for mixing
Chopping board
Knives,
Spatula / wooden cooking spoon for stirring

Ingredients:

- Diced freshly boiled, firm consistency potatoes
- Diced fresh cucumber
- Chopped brown onion
- Finely chopped fresh ginger
- Finely sliced green birds eye chili
- Fresh, finely chopped garlic
- Chopped tomatoes (optional)
- Salt to taste
- Oil (vegetable or extra virgin)
- White sesame seeds
- Fenugreek seeds (*methi*)
- Turmeric powder
- Fresh lemon

Method:

Boil (not too soft/keep firm but not too hard) and then peel potatoes, cutting into cubes. Chop cucumber (the moist heart and seeds removed first) into cubes. Slice fresh chili finely, then toast sesame seeds (white/brown/black) in a pan and grind to powder. After this combine potatoes, cucumber and green chili in a bowl, and, finally add salt, garlic ginger, fenugreek, and sesame seed powder. Delicious eaten cold as well as warm.

Egg (Andaa) Curry:

ADD IMAGE

Main ingredient: egg. Eggs are a source of high-quality protein, riboflavin and selenium (mainly egg white), with highest concentrations of nutrients found in the yolk. These include in particular vitamin D (eggs are one of the very few foods that contain this important vitamin naturally), which is beneficial for immune functioning and bone development and health.

Taste description & background:

This is a popular home curry main dish but often served in many eateries in Nepal. The boiled eggs, added whole in the final stage of cooking, make this dish particularly flavoursome as the frying technique used in their preparation stage give a delicious exterior, spicy and mildly salty, and with a great crisp texture to bite into. Often once served we divide the eggs in to halves and blend with the curry. I learned how to make this dish at my family home in Dadeldhura.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 20 – 25 minutes ...

Utensils:

Frying pans

Saucepan

Spatula

Knives for chopping the curry ingredients

Ingredients:

- Eggs (4)
- Cooking Oil (vegetable or Extra Virgin)
- Potatoes (a 1/3rd to ½ a Kg)
- Chopped Tomatoes (3)
- Chopped onion (1, large or 2 medium)
- About 3 finely chopped chilis
- Finely chopped Garlic
- Finely chopped Ginger
- Cumin (raw) – a sprinkle / half a teaspoon
- Masala – sprinkle / half a teaspoon
- Turmeric – a teaspoon
- Fresh chopped Coriander (optional, and for presentation)
- Coriander powder – a sprinkle
- Salt – to taste
- Cloves (optional)

- Green Cardamon (optional)

Method:

Fry the eggs in oil and with a little masala and a pinch of salt and pepper seasoning: then put aside. In the main frying pan use oil to heat. Then take the finely diced ginger, turmeric powder, finely chopped chili, cumin powder, coriander powder. You stir this combination in the frying pan for about a minute. You need to check that the oil has separated. After this you should add a cup of water, and then simmering for 2 – 3 for a minutes. At that point you bring in the chopped tomatoes and potatoes and then tomato; cook for about 8 - 10 minutes (depending on how firm you like your potatoes). Then add in the already seasoned eggs you cooked earlier, simmering all on a low heat setting for about 3 minutes. You should then gently stir -- keeping the eggs from breaking up -- and then to complete the egg curry you can garnish with freshly chopped dhania/coriander.

Accompaniment:

Boiled Rice

Fish Curry:

Main ingredient: Fish. Fish contains vitamins B2 (Riboflavin) and D, is rich in phosphorus, calcium, iodine, iron, potassium, magnesium, zinc, and is a major source of omega-3 fatty acids.

Taste description & background:

This meal has a lovely distinct taste, as in fact curry combined with fresh, seasoned fish (chunks/slices) work really well together because of the carefully chosen spices (cardamom, etc. see below) and Szechuan chilies and white sesame. I first tasted this dish when I came to Kathmandu and later there was able to observe the cooking technique when the dish was made by a friend for a social group of friends gathering at his home. In the UK I have made it a number of times because of the ease in which fish can be found.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 20 – 25 minutes

Utensils:

Frying pan
Chopping board
Knives
Spatula / wooden cooking spoon for stirring

Ingredients:

- White fish (half a Kg)
- Oil (Vegetable or Extra Virgin)
- 2 large brown onions (chopped medium to fine)
- 3 medium sized chopped tomatoes
- 2 fresh finely sliced chilis
- Finely chopped fresh garlic (half a bulb / 4 cloves)
- Finely chopped fresh ginger (thickness about 2cm)
- Fish curry powder - to taste
- Cumin (Jeera) – a sprinkle
- Coriander powder – a sprinkle
- Turmeric powder – a third of a tablespoon
- Salt – to taste
- Chili powder – a sprinkle
- A tbs of white sesame seeds
- Red peppercorn or Szechuan dried red chili (optional)
- Freshly chopped coriander (optional) – as garnish
- 3 – 4 cloves (optional)
- Green cardamon (optional)
- Half a lemon (optional)

Method:

Cook the fish in oil in a frying pan and once cooked through (making sure firmness maintained) with seasoning (salt, etc.): then put aside.

Place oil in the frying pan on medium heat, and progressively add spices (turning the oil brown) then onions and tomato, and when both the latter are soft add turmeric and herbs, and water as needed. Finally incorporate the fish pieces and leave them to absorb the flavours from the curry; then gently stir. Add a garnish of freshly chopped coriander if you wish, and then serve, including the option of a squeeze of fresh lemon.

Accompaniment:

Boiled rice, and on the side achar/pickle of your choice

Fried Chau Chau:



Main ingredient: noodles. Rice noodles are white in colour (there are variants to this where additional very small quantities of other ingredients can cause them to be brown in colour, etc.), very mild in flavour, and are made from rice flour. They originated in the Far East / China (existing there for some 3000 years, and famously discovered by Marco Polo, who introduced them to Europe, where they formed the genesis for pasta. They are low in nutrients (the only vitamins are B ones, such as B6 and folate, niacin), but high in carbohydrates and in calories, and in regard to their important carbohydrate content have similarities as a meal-base, with rice itself, and comparable to the potato in terms of roughage content: as such modest quantities are advised.

Its fibre is not easily assimilated by the stomach, hence giving a filling effect. Egg noodles are considerably higher in calories. Rice noodles are very low in sodium, making them quite a healthy option; Soy Sauce is often used to adjust this in East Asian dishes, and in Nepali / South Asian dishes such as Chau Chau. Great care has to be taken with the amount of cooking oil used with fried noodles; these should never be presented swimming in oil, but only present to taste in very modest amount. Deepak Tamrakar's version of Nepali fried Chau Chau follows this rule rigorously, for example.

Taste description & background:

Chau Chau is a mildly salty very flavoursome filling dish, in which texture (firm noodles that are suffused by the moderately spicy seasonings) is an important feature of the culinary experience. A common fault and danger with making this dish is to use too much cooking oil when preparing, and serving with excess oil, which gives a greasy taste and smothers the seasoning; I always make sure that minimal oil is used in cooking and on the finished dish, so you can savour Nepali Chau Chau's wonderful taste whether in its vegetarian or meat forms.

I first saw this really popular, easy to make dish being made during my childhood at my family home, at friends houses, and it being a frequent feature on street stalls and bistro menus in my home town.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 20 – 25 minutes ...

Utensils:

Frying pan
Saucepan
Spatula or wooden spoon for stirring
Bowl for mixing

Ingredients:

- Noodles (thin white, Japanese Udon and Chinese equivalents are particularly suitable, rather than Italian pasta/Spaghetti vermicelli)
- 1.5 to 2 chopped brown onions
- 200 grammes of Sweetheart cabbage
- Spring onions (3-4)
- Soy sauce – to taste
- One to one and a half large sweet chilies
- Masala – to taste
- 4 tablespoons of Oil (Vegetable or Extra Virgin)
- Salt -- to taste
- 1 finely chopped fresh chili -- to taste
- Chili powder -- to taste
- 100 grammes of chopped carrots (optional)
- 100 – 150 grammes of Broccoli spears/sections (optional)
- 150 grammes of French green beans (optional)
- Fried / chopped eggs [for Non-Vegan option]
- Green sweet chili pepper slices or half slices to decorate on top of dish (optional)

Nepali Chicken chau chau / chow mein variant:



Include 100 grammes of skinned and cut into small chunks or strips, chicken breast to the above in the final cooking stage, with the chicken cubes, seasoned with salt & black pepper, cooked in a frying pan

beforehand. Incorporate into the noodles in the frying pan and stir gently, during the final 3 – 5 minutes of cooking the noodles.

Method:

Boil water (about a litre) and then add noodles, and once cooked (leave in for shorter time if you prefer your noodles firmer), strain and run through cold water if you wish, and leave in a bowl. If you wish to include eggs, make these separately as an omelette, and then shred, ready to incorporate towards the end of the dish preparation. Then add oil to frying pan covering sides as well as base. Then add in salt and pepper, then spices & seasonings and main ingredients progressively, with noodles being added (later if preference is for firmer noodles); cook and stir for about 5 – 6 minutes. Your Nepali chow mein is ready to serve. You can be garnished with slices or finely sliced segments of sweet green chili.

Accompaniments:

Soy sauce
Tomato Sauce (Western/British)
Nepali spicy achar (often green in colour)

Masala Omelette:



Main ingredient: these dish's main ingredients are Egg and Masala and fresh chopped chili, whose nutrients and health enhancing benefits are detailed below.

Eggs are a source of high-quality protein, riboflavin and selenium (mainly egg white), with highest concentrations of nutrients found in the yolk. These include in particular vitamin D (eggs are one of

the very few foods that contain this important vitamin naturally), which is beneficial for immune functioning and bone development and health.

Spices have from the earliest times been used as a natural medicine and are known to have antimicrobial properties. Spices come in different forms from seeds, bark to roots. Common major spices include, Coriander, Cumin, Turmeric, Ginger, Chili pepper, Rosemary, Black pepper, Red pepper, Saffron. Spices come on their own or in combinations of various kinds (one of the hotter kinds being Garam Masala). In cookery spices are famous for their various flavours, but also colours. Spices are said to be effective in improving various health conditions and needs, including but not limited to Alzheimer's, Arthritis, cancer, and low mood.

Fresh chilis: Green (hariyo), Red (raato), dried (as with Szechuan cuisine in China), and powdered are the main culinary forms of chili, which come in different sizes and degrees of heat intensity (birds eye and scotch bonnet being some of the hottest): they are commonly used as a spice to heat dishes. Chilis contain large quantities of vitamin C (especially red chilis), vitamin B6, provitamin A beta-carotene. Chilis originated from Mexico and Central America, and spread through Portuguese merchants, to Asia where they quickly became a major ingredient in South and East Asian cuisines, particularly in curry dishes: in Nepal, India, China and other Asian lands, homes commonly keep a good stock of fresh green finger chilis.

Taste description & background:

This famous omelette is commonly a major component of Nepali breakfast in Kathmandu and elsewhere. I learned how to make this dish when I moved to Kathmandu. It is a filling dish, piquant and flavoursome due to its combination of spice (Masala) and fresh chopped chilies, and easy to make – how hot you wish it to be is determined by how many or how few fresh chilies you include.

Quantity: Serves 2 people

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 20 minutes.

Utensils:

Frying pan
Chopping board
Bowls (for separated yolk and white of egg, and mixing)
Knives
Fork (for mixing)
Whisk
Turning forks

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- 2 tablespoons of oil (sunflower, extra virgin olive oil, ghee)
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- 1 small tomato finely chopped (optional)
- 2 cloves of finely chopped garlic

- 1 – 1.5 teaspoons of masala (Garam, or milder, including Caribbean)
- 1 green chilli finely chopped
- 1 – 1.5 tablespoons of ground coriander (optional)
- Half a teaspoon of chili powder (optional)
- Half a tablespoon of turmeric (optional)
- Salt -- to taste
- Black pepper – to taste
- 1 tsp lemon juice (optional) – added at end of cooking, at serving stage

Method:

Break and separate the three eggs, placing the whites and yolks in separate bowls; whisk the white and once frothy (minimal liquid in bottom of bowl) add in the yellow/yolk slightly seasoned with pepper and salt. Finely chop onions, green chillies, and garlic, then add in masala, chili, coriander, turmeric and mix in a bowl, adding in the combined yolk and white egg mix, and adding salt & pepper seasoning to taste.

Heat oil in frying pan, covering sides as well as base, and incorporate a third of the egg and seasoning mix, moving around in the pan to give good even covering. Ensure the base is a light brown, and flip over to cook the top, and cook on a medium heat. Remove the omelette and place folded on a warmed plate, then repeat two more times for the other two omelette portions.

Now your omelette is ready to serve, and you can garnish with freshly chopped coriander and add a squeeze of lemon if you wish

Accompaniments:

You can use lemon juice, tomato sauce, additional salt & pepper, and also fold and eat in a roti/flatbread.

Vegetarian Momos, and Momo Soup:



Main ingredient:

This dish has multiple main ingredients, rather than one or two main ingredients. We recommend for this dish's ingredients information that you visit our Ingredients & Nutrients page, to learn more about the health-related aspects of the dish's individual ingredients.

Momos (also often written as Mo-Mo) can be presented steamed, fried, or in a soup broth (vegetarian or meat)

Taste description & background:

TBA

Quantity: Serves 2 people, to have 10 – 12 momos each or 4 people having 5 to 6 each

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 1 hour 20 minutes, an hour to prepare and 20 minutes to cook.

Utensils needed:

Chopping board for dicing/chopping the fillings
Bowl for preparing the dough
Bowl for mixing the filling
Knives
Rolling pin
Steamer
Pan for boiling water for the steamer to be placed on top of
Frying pan

Ingredients:

- Rice flour (Maida), or ordinary flour --
- Chopped onion (brown cooking onions): 1.5 onions
- Spring onions: 50g
- Fresh chopped Coriander (30g)
- Sweetheart cabbage (whole)
- Chopped fresh Ginger or Ginger paste
- Chopped fresh Garlic or Garlic paste
- Soy Sauce: a taste
- Masala: a taste
- Salt to taste
- Fresh green Chilli: 2.5 (whole, chopped)
- Water

- Chopped Paneer (an addition to all of the above as a main item to give Paneer taste; substitution of paneer in place of cabbage gives a further taste variation): 400g

Method:

There are three stages to momo creation: making the dough and preparing this for the momo cases. The momo filling. Steaming and/or frying (the latter for fried momos, known as momo kothey).

Preparing the dough and cases:

Decide how large you wish your momos to be in order to use the correct amount of flour., then combine the later with water, some salt and a little oil in a bowl, and kneed for about 10 – 15 minutes until the dough is uniform in consistency. You then cover in the bowl and leave for about half an hour. You are then ready to make the wrappers which should be about 3 inches in diameter, and prior to preparing should kneed the dough afresh.

Each momo case will be circular (although can also be elliptical for the crescent-shaped momos) and should start as a dough ball an inch in diameter. On the board flatten within your hand until you have a lense-shaped piece of dough about 2 inches in diameter: make a few of these, and again cover. After this you flatten into a circle with a rolling pin until about 3 inches in diameter and thinner on the outer edge -- this is important for once the filling goes in this has to be held on/in the thicker main part, but the outer edge thin to be crimped together (using a little water where required) so that the join is finer and not too thick.

Fillings preparation:

All the ingredients are chopped fine, and in the case of the paneer option, the paneer is cut into very small pieces. In a large bowl combine all filling ingredients. Stir well, adjust for seasoning with salt and pepper. Cover and allow at least half an hour to mix and impart their unique flavors completely.

Steaming:

Add the filling in the middle of the momo case, and crimp the outer edges together. Place on steamer trays with an even space around each momo, and steam for about 15 minutes checking after 10 – 12 minutes on how steamed and soft the momos are by pricking with a sharp knife. When all soft, remove and serve on plate with an accompaniment of tomato achar.

Frying / Kothey:

If frying your momos (Kothey variant) steam for about 5 – 7 minutes and then transfer to a frying pan with heated 3-4 tablespoons of oil, and turn occasionally and keep a lid on the pan to enable enable even cooking from inside to out of the momo. It should be complete when sides of the momo, and especially the base are largely a light golden brown.

Accompaniment(s):

Golbeedaa Achar (spiced tomato):

Tomato Chili

Nepali French Beans ko Aloo dish:



Main ingredient: This dish has two main ingredients: French green beans and potato. Beans (*Simee*) are cholesterol-free, fat-free, and sodium free, and are major sources of manganese, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, and especially potassium (which promotes good blood pressure).

Potatoes (aloo) are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C. When prepared in healthy ways (minimal to no oil basting or frying) and moderate quantities, they are said to not be harmful to weight loss regimes.

Peas (kherau) are optional as the third main ingredient*: Peas are a good source of protein, vitamin A, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, folate, magnesium, phosphorus, manganese, copper and vitamin C, vitamin K, thiamine, and are very low in saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.

Taste description & background:

This tasty vegetarian dish will not be found in Nepal's ancient cooking repertoire, but is highly popular in contemporary times home cooking: bringing the cooling taste of French beans together with that of potato ranks as a major innovative discovery. This because the discovery of the use of French beans has been much more recent, and found to be absolutely delicious seasoned and combined with spicy potato. It is a good example of a hybrid dish, demonstrating Nepali home cooking as not static, but innovative (the most famous examples

of Nepali cuisine innovation being perhaps the much better known Momos, and the less well known outside of Nepal, Tibetan Noodle Soup, Nepali version known as Thukpa).

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 40 minutes.

Utensils:

Chopping board
Knives
Frying pan
Spatula / wooden cooking spoon

Ingredients:

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1/4 tsp fenugreek seeds
1 small to medium sized onion, thinly sliced
2 chopped cloves of garlic
1/4 tsp ground turmeric
12th teaspoon of asafoetida (optional)
1 pound green [French] beans, trimmed (and cut into 1 inch pieces if desired)
2 medium size potato, cut into cubes
About 1/3rd of a cup of peas* (best from frozen for freshness) -- optional
1 tsp minced fresh ginger
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp black pepper

Method:

Heat oil in a saucepan at a medium to high setting. You Add fenugreek seeds and fry until dark brown and highly fragrant, about 5-10 seconds. Add the onion, garlic, turmeric; cook and stir gently but regularly for about 3-4 minutes and then incorporate the onion pieces: when these have softened you are ready for the next stage. You then add the main ingredients the French beans, potatoes, followed by the seasonings of ginger, cumin, salt and a little black pepper, combining with a 1/4 of a cup of water, combining all thoroughly: you can add some peas* (optional) too towards the end of this stage of cooking. You then lower the heat to medium, cover, and let simmer giving an occasional stir: the potatoes and beans mustn't stick to the pan. You can add a little more water if required or preferred. Let simmer, until all the liquid has evaporated (takes about 15 minutes): your dish is now ready.

Nepali Mushroom Tarkari dish:



Main ingredient: mushroom, although it has a number of secondary and tertiary ingredients (learn more about these in the **Ingredients section**). Mushrooms are low in fat, calories, and cholesterol: they are rich in antioxidants such as selenium (which reduce inflammation, chronic diseases, and counteract damage to cells) and many vitamins (especially B vitamins) and minerals, such as folates, magnesium, copper, potassium and zinc.

Taste description & background:

I learned how to make this dish initially when I came to Kathmandu, through eating it at a friend's social gathering, and then getting more practiced with it and being able to experiment and refine quantities, and including the addition of French beans when I moved to the UK. It is a very tasty dish which can serve as an alternative to classical aloo tarkari served with bhat, or as a side dish with the latter. The seasoned mushrooms with their mildly smoky flavour, combined with the sweet peppers and succulent French beans make it a really popular dish with both Nepali and British friends.

Quantity: Serves four people for one occasion.

Preparation & cooking time: to prepare and cook takes about 15 minutes, 10 minutes for preparing, and 5 for cooking.

Utensils needed:

Frying pan
Chopping board

Ingredients:

- ½ a kilo of mushrooms (button or other types)
- 2 -3 chopped medium sized tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons of oil (vegetable, extra virgin olive oil, or oil of your choice)
- A large red sweet pepper (can be green or yellow, but red is ideal for visual presentation)

- 1/8th to ¼ of a kilo of French green beans
- A large brown/cooking onion, sliced
- 4 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 2-3 finely sliced green chilies
- A tablespoon of coriander (powder)
- A tablespoon of cumin powder
- A tablespoon of cumin seeds
- A teaspoon of chili powder
- 1/2 a tablespoon of turmeric
- 1/4 tsp of Szechuan red chili (optional)
- Salt – to taste

Method:

Wash the mushrooms and chop them into large pieces, then heat oil in frying pan, and incorporate seasonings, finely sliced green chilies, and the chopped onions; fry for ½ a minute to a minute, making the onion light brown. Prepare the sweet red peppers, by washing, cleaning out the centre and slicing the skin in long strips. After this add the mushroom pieces, combining well and place on high heat for about 2 minutes to prevent too much water from the mushrooms coming into the mix (but don't overcook the mushrooms). To conclude, add the chopped tomatoes, red sweet chili slices, and French/green beans, season with salt, and incorporate coriander, turmeric, cumin, and chili powder. Fry all together for another couple of minutes, and the dish is ready.

Accompaniments:

None really needed, as this can when provided as a side dish can be an alternative to achar.

Nepali noodle vegetable -- meat soup Thukpa:

Main ingredient: This dish has multiple main ingredients (rice noodles, vegetables, meats), rather than one or two main ingredients. We recommend for this dish's ingredients information that you visit our Ingredients & Nutrients page, to learn more about the health-related aspects of the dish's individual ingredients. [LINK](#)

Background to where the dish recipe was learned:

Thukpa, Nepali noodle soup is fiery and flavoursome and particularly good for your health in terms of warming effects in cold regions and weather, and for perspiration in hot ones and weather. A popular dish in Nepal I had first as a child and have seen the different versions prepared in locations across Nepal, but due to its history, very famous in the higher Himalaya bordering Tibet. Thukpa is a traditional part of the Nepali food range, and we believe it existed in ancient times and came to our land from eastern part of Tibet (it is better known in English as 'Tibetan Noodle Soup'). Since coming to the UK I have tried Chinese noodle soup which has many similarities to Thukpa, but slightly different on flavour and some seasoning ingredients.

Quantity: Serves four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about an hour, with cooking stage about 15 – 20 minutes.

Utensils:

Spatula or wooden spoon for stirring
Two big pans
Chopping board
Bowl for serving
Knives

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a kilo of rice noodles
- $\frac{1}{2}$ a pound of fine, thin slices of grilled chicken breast (exclude for vegetarian version)
- A tablespoon of oil
- About 5 cups of cooked chicken broth (exclude for vegetarian version)
- A red bell pepper cut into medium-sized pieces
- One large carrot cut into small slices
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- A tablespoon of chopped cilantro, to garnish

Ingredients for Soup Paste

- Two cloves of finely chopped garlic
- About 1cm x 1,5cm of fresh finely chopped ginger
- 2 fresh red birds eye chilis (or more if desired)
- 3 chopped tomatoes (reduced to pulp)
- A tablespoon of fresh chopped cilantro
- A teaspoon of slightly toasted cumin seed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoon of turmeric
- $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoon of Szechuan red pepper (known as Timmur)
- A trace (a 15th of a teaspoon) of Asafoetida (Hing) powder
- A tablespoon of juice from a freshly squeezed lime

Method

You boil half a litre of water and add the rice noodles. You then use an electric blender or pestle and mortar to combine the ingredients until a moderately thick paste is formed; put this aside in a bowl. Once the rice noodles are soft take off the heat and drain the water, running the noodles through cold water.

Add oil to into the saucepan, heat this and gently swirl so base and sides are covered. Next you add the paste and heat on high temperature for half to one minute to get the mixture frying slightly then set to a low heat; after this you add the chicken broth and simmer/cook and bring back to the boil mixing thoroughly, and season with salt and black pepper.

Next you add vegetables, cooking until tender, and then incorporate the rice noodles. You can add more water, if preferred, and add further seasoning of salt and pepper. You pour the completed dish into a large bowl; include the grilled chicken slices for the meat version of Thukpa. You can add more fresh chopped chili and chili seeds for extra heat if you wish.

Accompaniments:

Tomato spicy achar

Chili pickle

You can also add chili seeds and use Chinese chili oil

Nepali Pakauda (Pakoras):



Main ingredient: onion and potato. Onions have high protein quality, no fat, and are low in sodium: they are also a good source of fibre, vitamin C, calcium, and iron. Potatoes are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C.

Taste description & background:

In the West, pakaudas (pakoras) are along with onion bajis and samosas the most well-known Indian snacks. The Nepali pakauda is very similar but differs at a refined taste level due to some of the seasonings we use with the Nepali version. A really delicious savoury snack with a wonderful aromatic taste and spiciness, this home cooked Nepali food is particularly flavoursome when warm and freshly fried. I had first in Kathmandu, where after I learned the Nepali recipe; I have had in the UK and in Mumbai, but in both the taste is not quite as delicious as our Nepali version.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 25 minutes.

Utensils needed:

Mixing bowl
Frying pan
Spatula / wooden cooking spoon for stirring
Chopping board

Ingredients:

- ½ a cup of Plain flour
- ½ a tablespoon of baking powder (optional)
- 2 small to medium size potatoes
- A medium size brown onion
- A cup of oil (add more if required)
- ¾ of a cup of water
- ½ a tablespoon of coriander
- ½ a tablespoon of cumin
- 1-2 fresh finely chopped birds eye chillies

Method:

Mix flour with water in a glass bowl, and combine to become a thick batter, then set aside for about 15 minutes. Then add the coriander, cumin, chili powder and some salt as well as the chopped chilis, to the batter, combining well. Then add sliced onions and [pre-boiled] potatoes – optional – and place and mix in the batter. Heat oil in the frying pan on a medium heat, and then dip the mixture in pieces (about the size of half your hand) into the batter, until light brown. Shake the pakora to remove excess oil, and place on kitchen paper to remove further oil; the pakora is now ready, and particularly delicious when warm.

Accompaniment:

Tomato sauce/Achar

Nepali Pani Puri:

Main ingredient: This dish has multiple main ingredients, rather than one or two main ingredients. We recommend for this dish's ingredients information that you visit our Ingredients & Nutrients page, to learn more about the health-related aspects of the dish's individual ingredients. [LINK](#)

Taste description & background:

Very spicy and with great feature being the crunchy texture of the puri, exterior of the snack and the pleasant mix of the ingredients with the pani puri water. I have had these more as snacks at festivals and sometimes from street stalls rather than at home, but a Nepali friend in Kathmandu showed me the cooking method, and I later found that on moving to the UK a couple of my Nepali friends (all of these were females) also knew how to make. The pani puri in Nepali culinary culture has a tradition of being mainly popular with children and girls. There are no equivalent hot snacks in the UK/West, and you will find them on virtually no Nepali or Indian restaurant menus in the UK.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 15 – 20 minutes.

Utensils:

Chopping board
Mixing bowl
Frying pan
Knives for chopping & dicing ingredients
Spatula or wooden cooking spoon for stirring
A teaspoon for adding ingredients to the puri

Ingredients:

Puris (made from plain flour)
4 tablespoons of oil for cooking
A large brown onion
4 – 5 medium sized potatoes
2-3 fine sliced birds eye chillies
1 tablespoon of masala
1 tsp chilli powder
½ tsp of cumin powder
½ tsp of roasted Coriander powder
1 cup of fresh coriander (chopped)
Fresh lime or lemon (optional) – to squeeze
Salt -- to taste

Methods:

Puris can be bought already part cooked (you just add to fry in a frying pan to complete), and used at need. However, you can make them too, from plain flour, with use of baking soda, and water, with some salt; you knead together until firm and soft, use a rolling pin to flatten thin and cut to a small circle (about 2-2.5 cm). Store or put aside, and then when ready to use fry in oil in a cooking pan – the puri will rise to become a small crisp very light ball (size of a walnut).

Making the filling: Boil potatoes (you can do this before starting to make the snack) and remove skins then chop and reduce to mashed pieces, then finely chop onions, chillies, finely chopped coriander leaves, chili powder, chopped chillies, and incorporate to the mix coriander and cumin powders -- mix

all of the ingredients in a bowl, to give even mixture of ingredients. You can include other ingredients too such as chanaa (chopped), etc. The paani puri liquid is made separately: you use about half a litre of water, some oil, a little masala powder stirred in, and also lime or lemon juice (optional).

To serve push a hole in the top of your cooked puri (finger easiest, and customary) then push filling inside with a teaspoon until almost full, and finally add the paani puri liquid by teaspoon. All is ready to now eat this tasty snack.

Nepali Sel Roti, and Nepali Halwa:

Sel Roti:



Main ingredient: The main ingredient is derived from rice. Rice is a good source of fibre, protein, iron, B vitamins, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, manganese and magnesium. Research suggests that it is weight loss friendly if eaten in modest quantity as part of a healthy balanced diet, but fattening if eaten in excess and in conjunction with an unhealthy diet.

Taste description & background:

Sel Roti are delicious because of their sweet texture, but especially when eaten warm. They are a famous snack available at festivals, especially during Dashain, which was the occasion that I first had when a young child in Dadeldura.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about an hour.

Utensils needed:

Bowl for mixing
Frying pan

Mortar & Pestle (or electric blender)
Measuring spoon

Ingredients:

1 ripe banana
3 cups of boiled rice
3/4 cup butter or clarified butter (ghee) peeled and mashed
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup rice flour as needed
4/5 cups of vegetable oil

Method:

Soak the rice at least 4-5 hours or overnight. You should take the soaked rice and prepare through pestle & mortar (or electric blender) adding in some sugar and/or banana, ghee (or margarine) and water: combine and mix and blend or pummel until the ingredients are combined as a semi-liquid mix (5 – 15 minutes depending on whether you use mortar & pestle or an electric blender).

Then put this in a mixing bowl and beat until the mixture becomes light and fluffy. You need to do this for about 20-30 minutes; then mix afresh until you are sure all the ingredients are combined and evenly distributed. If the mixture is too liquid and not fluffing up you can add in some two to three tablespoons of rice flour (Maida). Then place the oil in the frying pan and heat, making sure the bottom and sides of the pan are evenly covered. You can test the right heat by placing a little of the mix in and seeing how it reacts; it should sizzle and start to go a light gold.

Heat the oil in the frying pan, and test whether the temperature is ready or not by pouring a small amount. Once you are happy the oil temperature is right, add in the mixture. You can place in, in circles and rings to make the distinctive shaped Sel Roti. Take out of the oil when the rings are light golden on all sides.

Halwa:



Main ingredient: Rice flour. **Rice** is a good source of fibre, protein, iron, B vitamins, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, manganese and magnesium. Research suggests that it is weight loss friendly if eaten in modest quantity as part of a healthy balanced diet, but fattening if eaten in excess and in conjunction with an unhealthy diet.

Taste description & background:

Halwa is a delicious sweet, sugary fudge-like in look and consistency, dessert and can take many shapes and forms. My favourite one incorporates cash nuts in small pieces and some larger ones to dress and taste. The dish is presented in a bowl, furrowed with a fork, and with the larger pieces of cashew nut distributed throughout. A very tasty dessert, with 2-3 teaspoons worth being sufficient, energy giving and naturally filling. I first tried Halwa in the form described when a child.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 55 minutes to an hour.

Utensils:

Bowl for kneading
Chopping board for preparation of the flour & ingredients
Saucepan
Fork
Measuring spoon

Ingredients:

- Half a cup of plain [not roasted] cashew nuts
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups of water
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

Method:

I use a small saucepan to make Halwa, first pouring in the water and bringing to the boil. After this I introduce first the sugar (cheene), stirring regularly and consistently with the wooden spoon, which has to be dissolved. Next, I reduce the heat of the solution to medium setting, cooking for some 30 minutes. At this point we will have created a thick syrup. Then add in the ground cardamom and ground cinnamon, and (optional) lime juice. Next, either in mortar & pestle or electric blender bowl, combine the syrup mixture rose water, and tahini paste, making sure the latter is well beaten; this stage of the process should take about 5 minutes; after progressively incorporate the rest of the syrup AND the chopped cashew nuts, mixing for about 15+ minutes until the mixture is quite stiff. You can then put in a serving bowl, furrowing the top of the Halwa with a fork.

Nepali fried spicy eggs:

Main ingredient: egg. Eggs are a source of high-quality protein, riboflavin and selenium (mainly egg white), with highest concentrations of nutrients found in the yolk. These include in particular vitamin D (eggs are one of the very few foods that contain this important vitamin naturally), which is beneficial for immune functioning and bone development and health.

Taste description & background:

This very delicious snack is nutritious and combines the taste of boiled egg (in quarters or halves) with a seasoned spicy exterior fried in the pan with seasoning of masala, cumin, chili powder with salt to taste; the turmeric and red chili powder giving a lovely colour. I first enjoyed fried spicy egg in my home in Dadeldhura as a young child, and have had many times since elsewhere in Nepal, particularly at festivals.

Preparation & Cooking time: about 25 minutes to prepare and cook.

Serves 6 (1 for each person as a snack)

Utensils:

Frying pan
Pan for boiling eggs
Spatula or wooden cooking spoon for stirring
Chopping board
Knives

Ingredients:

- 6 boiled eggs with their shells removed
- About 2 tablespoons of cooking oil for frying
- About ¼ of a teaspoon of cumin (Jeera) seeds
- About ¼ of a teaspoon of Red chili powder (it is optional if you don't like it)
- About ¼ of a teaspoon of masala
- About a ¼ of a teaspoon of turmeric powder
- 2 cloves of a finely chopped garlic bulb
- A ¼ of a teaspoon of salt – to taste
- A ¼ of a teaspoon of black pepper (maric) – to taste
- Some fresh chopped dhania (coriander) – to garnish

Method:

Boil eggs until hard (takes about 5 - 6 minutes), then leave the eggs to cool for a further 5 – 10 minutes, and cut into halves, or quarters. Then place the egg pieces in the frying pan that has oil heated to high, and gently fry for about 8 minutes for the eggs on medium heat, gently turning the egg pieces from time to time in the oil that has had the seasonings and chopped garlic added to infuse so the full taste of the masala, chili (optional), cumin seeds (these should go in first) and garlic and a little salt to taste, blends to coat the egg pieces, that will develop an attractive golden exterior skin forming on their outsides. Take from the pan after about 8 minutes once the eggs have turned golden all round. You can add some fresh chopped coriander to garnish if you wish. Present in a bowl where your guests can add more salt if they wish.

Nepali style Chinese Cabbage (Pak Choi) dish:



Main ingredient: these dish's main ingredient is Pak Choi. Pak Choi (also known as Bok Choy) is a classic Chinese cuisine vegetable (two main dishes being, to use oyster or soy sauce for Chinese Pak Choi dishes) but at Nepali home cooking level is sometimes used (as with Deepak's dish described below). It is low in calories (this changes if too much cooking oil is not removed from the final stage dish), and contains a good supply of nutrients, and is said to be a vegetable which if consumed regularly, can help protect against cancer, can assist on metabolism and digestion. Pak Choi contains folate, which plays a major part in DNA repair and generation. It also contains vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, as well as selenium.

Taste description & background:

This is a Nepali version of a classic Chinese vegetable dish. I first tried the dish towards the end of my time studying in Kathmandu, and have since refined it when I sometimes cook it for friends in the UK as a surprise. Pak Choi is a wonderful, cooling vegetable and this dish makes it supple yet retaining in part its crunchiness, which is part of its charm; the seasoning, fresh chopped ginger and stock make it delicious and a perfect accompaniment to a Nepali vegetarian or meat curry.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times as a main dish, or four people as a side dish.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 15 minutes.

Utensils needed:

Saucepan
Frying pan
Chopping board
Spatula / wooden cooking spoon for sharing
Knives

Ingredients:

- ½ a kilo of pak choi
- 2 tablespoons of oil (sesame oil particularly appropriate, but extra virgin olive oil too is good)
- A teaspoon of cumin
- A teaspoon of coriander seeds
- A teaspoon of fresh, finely chopped ginger
- Salt -- to taste

Method:

Clean/wash pak choi, then place in saucepan and gently cook in ½ a litre of water brought to the boil. Remove and put aside. Heat oil in frying pan, and then add seasonings and sauté until oil turned light brown; then add pak choi, and stir and simmer for 3 – 4 minutes. Your pak choi Nepali style is ready.

Rina Adhikari's classic Nepali chicken curry:

Main ingredient: the dish's main ingredient is chicken, but is a meal that has multiple secondary ingredients so for these please see our **ingredients section**. Chicken provides much greater protein density than red meats and is a good source of creatine (this is produced naturally by the human body and is a compound three important amino acids). Chicken meat provides substantial quantities of all the essential B vitamins, such as niacin (B3), which are essential for having a healthy brain and for energy metabolism.

Taste description & background:



One of the most internationally known Nepali dishes, Nepali chicken curry has always been one of my regular most favourite home cooked meals, which I first had as a child at home: image to left is of me starting preparation of ingredients for the dish.

Home cooking is one of my passions, but this particular Nepali dish which I serve with boiled rice (bhat), dal, saag (spinach) and sometimes achar and with vegetable tarkari to accompany, has a special place

in the story of my life.

It was the first dish I cooked for my partner Andy (pop music musician Andy Bennett, of Ocean Colour Scene fame, and an internationally renowned Western pop music vocalist) when we first met. Since that time, I have cooked Chicken curry for Andy regularly, he loves it and describes it as the most delicious South Asian meal he has ever had. He has also been, from the outset when I first made for him, devoted to Nepali lamb and chicken momos with spicy Nepali tomato pickle, and to Choila (a traditional Newari dish of barbequed meat with spices and spring onion, whose burst of flavour is a great combination of chili hot and spiciness).

Profiles:

Rina Adhikari. Artist manager and wife of Andy Bennett. **Andy Bennett.** Singer/songwriter

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Bennett_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Bennett_(musician))

Quantity: Serves 2 people twice, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 30 minutes.

Utensils:

Frying pan
Chopping board
Knives

Ingredients:

- Chicken -1kg
- Chopped onion, chopped tomatoes, 2 chillies, chopped coriander,
- Lime, crushed garlic and ginger
- 1tea spoon turmeric, salt, coriander and cumin powder

Method:

Place the pan on the hub and once the oil is hot incorporate the fennel seeds; let them go black then add some turmeric, and finally the diced chicken thigh until the meat is light brown. Put salt, coriander and cumin powder and stir it well, add the lime juice and let it cook for 4-5 minutes. Then you add the chopped onion and then chopped tomatoes and stir well, leaving to cook for 5-8 minutes. Once cooked add in the crushed garlic and ginger with a little water, stir well and let simmer for 10-12 min. Finally, add chopped fresh coriander to garnish, and serve.

Accompaniments:

Bhat (boiled rice)
Dal (black lentil for preference)
Vegetable curry side dish – optional
Saag (boiled spinach) – optional
Pickle / achar – optional

NOTE: This is a variant of the same dish detailed elsewhere in this book by Deepak Tamrakar

Shredded Potato Dish:



Main ingredient: these dish's main ingredient is potato. Potatoes are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C. When prepared in healthy ways (minimal to no oil basting or frying) and moderate quantities, they are said to not be harmful to weight loss regimes.

Taste description & background:

The combination of firm, almost crunchy texture of the potato presented as slices, and delicious seasoning make this dish, which is amongst my top favourites, always highly popular with both my Nepali and non-Nepali/Western friends, when I cook it. It is really moreish and can be eaten on its own, or be a popular alternative to traditional vegetable curry, with bhat (boiled rice) and dal – bhat. I learned it from a friend who worked as main chef at a restaurant in Thamel, Kathmandu, and have since experimented with some aspects of the main options of seasonings.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 30 minutes (15 to 20 for boiling potatoes, 5 minutes for other ingredients preparation, and a further 5 – 10 minutes for cooking).

Utensils:

Chopping board
Bowls for mixing and setting aside
Frying pan
Knives
Spatula or wooden cooking spoon for stirring

Ingredients:

- Small to medium sized boiled Potatoes – shredded in slices, with potato lightly boiled, still firm/semi hard (NOT soft)
- 2 – 3 tablespoons of oil (vegetable or extra virgin olive)

- 1 chopped brown onion
- 1 – 1.5 fresh, finely sliced birds eye chilis
- 1 medium finely chopped tomato
- 1.5 – 1.5 cube of finely chopped ginger
- Chilli powder -- to taste
- Some white sesame seeds
- Some fenugreek seeds (Methi) -- optional
- ½ a tablespoon of turmeric
- Salt -- to taste
- Fresh Lemon to squeeze – optional, and can be used by the person eating the cooked dish

Method:

Boil potatoes, but take out whilst still quite firm (the cooking will be completed once they are in the frying pan). Then slice the potatoes (still firm and part cooked) into shreds. Chop onion and tomato, and slice finely the fresh chili, then heat oil in pan and introduce the seasonings (methi, sesame seeds, chili powder), then onion, chili and tomato, and finally the potatoes. Cook in frying pan, gently stirring, for five minutes, adding salt to taste: the dish is now ready, and you can add a squeeze of lemon if you wish.

Tomato spicy pickle -- Golbeeda Achar:



Main ingredient: these dish's main ingredient is Golbedaa/Tomato, and at a secondary level Chilis. **Tomatoes** are a major source of vitamin C, vitamin K1, folate (vitamin B9), potassium, and a substantial source of lycopene (an antioxidant that assists with dieting). Regular consumption of tomatoes are said to reduce risks of cancer and heart disease. **Birds eye chilis:** Chilis contain large quantities of vitamin C (especially red chilis), vitamin B6, provitamin A beta-carotene. Chilis originated from Mexico and Central America, and spread through Portuguese merchants, to Asia where they quickly became a major ingredient in South and East Asian cuisines, particularly in curry dishes: in Nepal, India, China and other Asian lands, homes commonly keep a good stock of fresh green finger chilis.

Taste description & background:

The classic accompaniment (pictured in the top section of the image above) to Momos and Dal Bhat Tarkari. I learned how to make this classic Nepali fiery sauce when in my mid-teens, in the setting of the family home kitchen. It is most famous as THE essential accompaniment to momos, making the latter particularly distinct from Chinese dumplings; yet it is a fantastic, piquant accompaniment to dal bhat tarkari and other boiled rice Nepali dishes.

Quantity: Serves 2 people two times, or four people for one occasion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 30 minutes.

Utensils:

Pan
Mortar & Pestle / electric blender
Spatula
Bowl

Ingredients:

- 8 – 10 chopped cherry tomatoes (cherry tomatoes more effective than normal/salad tomatoes)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of a large brown chopped onion – finely chopped
- Cumin
- Cumin powder
- 2cm x 2cm of finely chopped fresh Ginger
- 3-4 cloves of finely chopped fresh Garlic
- Chopped green hot / Bird Eye Chilli
- Fresh Coriander – finely chopped and ground
- Fenugreek seeds
- Thyme seeds (optional)
- Coriander powder
- 3-4 Spring Onions
- Chilli powder
- Salt – to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of Lemon
- 2 tablespoons of Oil (Vegetable or Extra Virgin)
- White Sesame Seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ tablespoon of Turmeric
- Finely chopped Szechuan Red Pepper

Method:

Wash and cut tomatoes into halves & quarters, and finely chop onion, mixing together. Prepare all of the other ingredients through finely chopping (ginger and garlic) and use a mortar & pestle (or electric blender for quicker results) to make into a smooth pulp.

Heat a frying pan then add oil, when pan is hot add fenugreek seeds (and thyme seed if used); when these have browned, pour in the puree of onion and tomato, and the spices pulp, add water and fresh chillies and turmeric and salt. Let this reduce and stir and add in freshly squeezed lemon at the end. The achar is ready when its consistency is smooth and sauce-like and should be a pleasant reddish orange in colour.

Traditional Sherpa Potato Pancake -- Aloo Roti (Riki Kur):



Main ingredients: potato and egg are the main ingredients for this dish. **Potatoes** are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C. **Eggs** are a source of high-quality protein, riboflavin and selenium (mainly egg white), with highest concentrations of nutrients (particularly Vitamin D) found in the yolk.

Taste description & background:

Riki Kur is one of our Sherpa communities main traditional dishes back in Nepal, but we enjoy it here in Britain too, especially when we gather together as a community at our homes. It is filling and gives energy, and is really tasty; great for winter weather in the UK as much as the Himalayan climate. It is a mainstay Sherpa food enjoyed for centuries and its recipe, as with the accompanying Yak cheese & spring onion achar / pickle, which we use with other traditional dishes too; the cheese, chili, and spring onion complement the pancake's taste, with its blend of potato and butter, itself so well.

I first enjoyed it as a very young child, learning from my mother soon after in the family kitchen. I feel since that time long ago, and settling in the UK, and learning a little about traditional British foods, that there are at least in the Riki Kur itself, some similarities with aspects of Scottish food, and that maybe we can say that terrain and climate do have some influence on the types of food different peoples develop as distinctive to their nutrition needs relating to the lands they live in.

Quantity: Serves 6 people for one occasion, with large portion.

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare (potatoes being already boiled) and cook takes about 35 to 40 minutes

Utensils:

Frying pan
Saucepan or ceramic bowl for mixing
Grater
Whisk
Cookery wooden spoon or spatula

Ingredients:

- 5 Kg of potatoes
- A cup of
- 3 – 4 eggs
- A pat of butter (ghee if you can); particularly for achar accompaniment to ease spreading

- Some butter or oil for cooking
- A pinch of salt -- to taste

Ingredients of accompanying cheese & spring onion pickle / achar

- 75 - 100 grammes of green birds eye chilies
- 100 – 125 grammes of fresh spring onions
- About 100 – 125 grammes of Yak cheese or Sour cream
- A pinch of salt -- to taste

Method:

Boil potatoes, removing their skins. Then use a grater (or electric blender) to mash the potato to an even pulp in a bowl, and then incorporate flour, and then the eggs, adding salt to taste; you can also add in a little butter if you wish. After this you heat butter or oil in your frying pan, and cook on medium heat; then add the batter making sure the quantity is not thin (you can the remaining batter after you have finished frying the first pancake) and covers the base of the pan evenly.

Turn, and turn again if needed until your Sherpa potato pancake is cooked through and an even gold colour on the outside. This completes the main dish. However, to finish your Riki Kur you need to make the accompanying Yak's cheese (you can use sour cheese as an alternative) and spring onion pickle / achar.

To make this classic Sherpa achar, you finely slice green birds eye chilies, chop up the spring onions and dice the cheese and mix finely, and then blend these three ingredients together with some butter. You can now serve this famous Sherpa pickle with the potato pancake, by placing with your wooden cooking spoon the achar across the top of the pancake whilst still warm.

Accompaniments:

Yak Cheese (Sour Cheese as alternative) and Spring Onion Pickle / Achar

Vegetable Curry -- Tarkari:



Main ingredients: This dish has multiple main ingredients, rather than one or two main ingredients. We recommend for this dish's ingredients information that you visit our Ingredients & Nutrients page, to learn more about the health-related aspects of the dish's individual ingredients.

Taste description & background :

This is Nepal's most famous main course dish (also in its Hindustani and Bangladeshi variants famous in neighbouring India and Bangladesh), and almost invariably provided with dal – bhat, but can also be ideal with just rice and tomato achar and perhaps saag (spinach) to accompany. Filling, it has great taste, and my version features firm pieces of potato and concentrates on moistness rather than stock and sauce; in this way the distinct taste of main and minor ingredients, have their flavours perfectly conveyed and with a mild spiciness of the seasoning, which can be heightened by additional fine chopped chilis being incorporated. I learned the dish at my family home in Dadeldura, and have since experimented with some secondary and tertiary ingredients (such as adding some kherau/peas). Elsewhere I provide other main variants of the dish, such as egg (more stock with this type), chickpeas, paneer, which constitute separate types of curry.

Quantity: Serves 2 people

Time taken on creating dish: to prepare and cook takes about 35 - 45 minutes

Utensils:

Chopping board
Frying pan
Bowls
Knives

Spatula or wooden cooking spoon for stirring

Ingredients:

- ¾ kilo of potatoes (boiled but not soft)
- 2 – 2.5 tablespoons of oil (Vegetable or Extra Virgin)
- 2 – 2.5 chopped medium-size tomatoes
- 2 finely chopped brown onions
- Broccoli – spears of broccoli
- Cauliflower – a quarter
- Half to three-quarters of a cup of peas (optional)
- Half to three-quarters of a cup of broad beans (optional)
- 2 large carrots, chopped (optional)
- A teaspoon of freshly, finely chopped cumin
- A teaspoon of finely chopped fresh ginger
- 3 – 4 cloves of finely chopped fresh garlic
- Cumin powder
- Coriander powder
- ½ a tablespoon of turmeric
- Cloves (optional)
- Some green cardamon
- 2 – 2.5 tablespoons of oil (Vegetable or Extra Virgin)
- Salt – to taste
- Chilli powder – a sprinkle
- Fresh chopped Coriander (Dhania)

Method:

Heat the cooking oil (be sparing with this: just enough only, Not more) in a frying pan on medium heat. Then add chopped brown onion, cook and stir gently until these are soft and transparent. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 1-2 minutes, not allowing these two important ingredients to go brown. After this you put in cumin, coriander, turmeric and mix these together. After this you add your main vegetables (chopped firm potatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, and chopped tomatoes) combining these in the seasoning and spices; then add a little salt (taste some of the dish first to get just the right amount of salt) coated in spices.

Then you put the frying pan lid on and simmer on a low heat until the vegetables are cooked; you need to stir occasionally so that you make sure ingredients aren't stuck to the bottom of the frying pan, but you can add a little water throughout as required, and depending on how much stock (which you will need to reduce as much or as little as you desire) you prefer to have – or not have – with the curry. Some variants of this classic dish (such as with egg, chicken, or fish) require more stock, but my version is designed to have all-important moistness but do without stock so the seasoned vegetables are the main focus of the palate; dal which is commonly served with this dish provides all the liquid you should need, keeping the main dish, the tarkari itself clean in how its vegetable ingredients taste.

You can garnish with fresh chopped coriander, add a squeeze of lemon if you prefer, but this can best be saved for the dal (lentil soup) accompaniment of the dal – bhat dish to the vegetable tarkari main course; cooked & seasoned saag (spinach), and golbeedaa achar / tomato spicy pickle are commonly available to add to this famous Nepali curry.

Accompaniments:

Boiled rice
Chili achar
Gundruk

2. Ingredients information.

Spices & herbs:



The major spices of Nepali cuisine are coriander (Dhania), cumin (Jeera), chili-pepper, pepper, salt, and (for colour) turmeric: there are many other spices that are also very popular in Nepali home cooking. Herbs in powdered or fresh forms are also indispensable in Nepali cuisine. The images above are from Deepak's kitchen, featuring his spices selection and chopped Lasun (garlic) and Jeera (Cumin) seeds in frying pan.

Black Pepper -- *Maric*

Nutrients and particularities

Black pepper is called the king of spices: a very effective flavour enhancer (like salt) it is known to offer health benefits, promotes good digestion and weight loss, and can be of value in relieving colds and treating dermatological problems. **Red peppercorn**, course or ground are also used on their own or in combination with other spices, in some Nepali dishes.

Cardamom:

Nutrients and particularities:

Cardamom is a hybrid splice made from the seeds of a number of different plants, and originated in South Asia, and its extracts, oils and seeds have been used in traditional medicine from very early times. It can help in lowering blood pressure, is an antioxidant, and has diuretic effects; it also is thought to contain compounds important in fighting cancer.

Chili (commonly green finger chilli) -- *Khursani*

Nutrients and particularities:

Green (hario), Red (raato)*, dried (as with Szechuan cuisine in China), and powdered are the main culinary forms of chili, which come in different sizes and degrees of heat intensity (birds eye and scotch bonnet being some of the hottest): they are commonly used as a spice to heat dishes.

Chilis contain large quantities of vitamin C (especially red chilis), vitamin B6, provitamin A beta-carotene. Chilis originated from Mexico and Central America, and spread through Portuguese merchants, to Asia where they quickly became a major ingredient in South and East Asian cuisines, particularly in curry dishes: in Nepal, India, China and other Asian lands, homes commonly keep a good stock of fresh green finger chilis

** NOTE: red chilis are prepared for Szechuan dried style (you can buy them already dried too, but they will not be so freshly prepared as in this method), by placing and turning on a hotplate*

Cilantro:

Nutrients and particularities:

Often used as a garnish, Cilantro contains manganese, potassium, folate, vitamin K, and antioxidants.

Cinnamon:

Nutrients and particularities:

Cinnamon (source: the inner bark of trees named '*Cinnamomum*') has legendary medicinal benefits, known of from the earliest times, and in more recent ones confirmed by scientific research, it once gathered curls to form cinnamon sticks, which are commonly then ground to provide cinnamon in its powdered form. It has major antioxidant properties.

Cloves:

Nutrients and particularities:

Cloves provide fibre, manganese, calcium, vitamin C, K, and vitamin E.

Coriander -- *Dhania*

Nutrients and particularities:

Fresh (leaves), seeds, and powdered, are the forms of *Dhania* used in Nepali cuisine. Coriander seeds possess anti-rheumatic and anti-arthritic properties (helping reduce the swelling these diseases cause), as well as phosphorous, vitamins A and C, and antioxidants. Citronelol, a natural antiseptic is present in coriander, and aids fresh breath and the healing of ulcers.

Coriander has been known to provide major benefits to health of the eyes, and helps in reducing cholesterol, and bowel health (a curative for diarrhoea) and digestion, and is known to be effective in treating nausea, body fever, liver disorders, fever, coughs and respiratory tract infections. It contains some essential acids such as ascorbic acid, oleic acid, stearic acid and linoleic acid.

Cumin -- *Jeera*

Nutrients and particularities:

Cumin, which is used in both ground powder and whole seed forms (sometimes as a condiment with rock salt) is one of the main spices used in traditional medicine, and is known to fight food carried infections, and promote good digestion, and helps with pain relief, the good functioning of the liver, and against coughs. Cumin is also known to help weight loss and to bring down cholesterol and blood sugar.

Fenugreek seeds -- *Methi*

Nutrients and particularities:

Methi, nutty and slightly sweet in taste, is rich in carbohydrates, protein, fibre, and has high iron content, as well as magnesium and manganese. It has been used for millenia in Chinese Medicine (TCM) and is a common ingredient in South Asian dishes and in Nepali homes/kitchens.

It acts as a thickening agent in foods preparation, and is known to be effective in treating dermatological conditions, and a number of diseases such as diabetes, helps with breastmilk production, and is said to increase testosterone and libido levels in men (more research needed). This last giving further supportive evidence to some forms of Buddhism giving injunctions on consumption of spices, that can increase sexual desire.

Garlic -- *Lasun*

Nutrients and particularities:

Garlic (a member of the onion family) is renowned for its powerful properties for combatting the common cold and sickness, and reducing cholesterol. Medical research has found that garlic is potent in regard to inhibiting or lowering high blood pressure.

Ginger -- *Aduwa*

Nutrients and particularities:

Ginger (a root vegetable) is filled with bioactive compounds and nutrients of many of the most important kinds. One of the major spices, having it is said major positive health benefits for your brain and body, it has been from the earliest times a respected component of Nepali and South and East Asian traditional health maintaining and restorative systems. Ginger also improves your digestive system.

Red (Szechuan) peppercorns:

Nutrients and particularities:

Red peppercorns, better known as Szechuan peppercorn is red/pink in colour and course or ground are also used on their own or in combination with other spices, in some Nepali dishes: they have a strong pungent taste, and a citrus type flavour. They are a good source of vitamin A, thiamine, pyridoxine, carotenes, and minerals such as iron, zinc, selenium, potassium, and copper. Szechuan peppers also contain essential oils not found in other peppers, and are said digestion.

Sesame seeds:

Nutrients and particularities:

Sesame seeds come in black and white forms (in the UK best known for being used on rolls and burger buns) and are oil-rich. Sesame seeds have been used in traditional medicine of many cultures across the world from the earliest times, and include vitamins and B6, as well as iron, selenium, zinc, and copper. Sesame seeds are reputed to protect against arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease.

Spice -- Masala

Nutrients and particularities:

Masala is the generic name for various combinations of spices.

Spices have from the earliest times been used as a natural medicine and are known to have antimicrobial properties. Spices come in different forms from seeds, bark to roots. Common major spices include, Coriander, Cumin, Turmeric, Ginger, Chili pepper, Rosemary, Black pepper, Red pepper, Saffron.

Spices come on their own or in combinations of various kinds (one of the hotter kinds being Garam Masala). In cookery spices are famous for their various flavours, but also colours. Spices are said to be effective in improving various health conditions and needs, including but not limited to Alzheimer's, Arthritis, cancer, and low mood.

Turmeric -- Besar

Nutrients and particularities:

Turmeric, known as *Besar* in Nepali contains fibre, carbohydrate and some protein. It also contains vitamin C and a number of the B vitamins. It is Nepali cooking, particularly important however for its distinctive light orange-yellow colour.

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