

## Mithi ghani dal

Sprouted mung beans in yogurt sauce

1½ cups (300 g) whole mung beans	1 tsp turmeric
2 tsp salt	2 tsp salt
1 cup (250 ml) yogurt or buttermilk	3 fresh chillies, seeded and minced
2 tbs chick-pea flour	1½ tsp sugar
1 tsp cumin seeds	4 tbs chopped fresh coriander leaves
1 tbs grated fresh ginger	2½ cups (600 ml) water
¼ tsp asafetida	3 tbs ghee or vegetable oil
5 curry leaves (if available)	

Wash the *mung* beans and soak them overnight. The next morning, tie them in a moist cloth and hang them for at least 24 hours before cooking, so they can begin to sprout. Check from time to time to make sure the cloth does not dry out.

Mix the chick-pea flour with the yogurt or buttermilk and set aside. Heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil and fry the cumin, ginger, chillies, and asafetida. When the cumin seeds darken, add the curry leaves, turmeric, salt, and sprouted *mung* beans. Pour the water into the pan and cook over medium heat for 30 to 40 minutes, adding a little more water if necessary. When the beans are soft, add the yogurt or buttermilk; then add the sugar and cook for 5 more minutes. Garnish with the chopped coriander leaves. Serve with plain white rice or an Indian bread.

Soaking time: overnight

Sprouting time: at least 24 hrs

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hr

## Khitchri

Boiled rice, dal, and vegetables

This inexpensive dish is so satisfying that Srila Prabhupada once said, "A bowl of khitchri and a small portion of yogurt is a poor man's feast fit for a king."

This recipe is for "dry" khitchri, which has the consistency of rice that is slightly overcooked, soft, and a little moist.

1 cup (200 g) mung dal, split-peas, or whole mung beans	2 tsp grated fresh ginger
1½ cups (250 g) medium- or long-grained rice	1 tsp ground cumin
½ cauliflower, washed and separated into small flowerets	½ tsp asafetida
3 tbs ghee or vegetable oil	7 cups (1.6 l) water
2 tsp cumin seeds	2 tsp salt
4 medium-sized tomatoes, washed and quartered	2 tsp turmeric
2 fresh chillies, seeded and minced	4 medium-sized potatoes, washed, peeled, and cubed
	3 tbs lemon juice
	2 tbs butter
	½ tsp ground black pepper

Pick through the *dal* and wash it and the rice together. Let drain.

Meanwhile, wash, trim, and cut the vegetables. Heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil and fry the cumin seeds, chillies and ginger. After they sizzle for a minute, toss in the ground cumin and the asafetida. After a few seconds, put in the diced potatoes and the flowerets of cauliflower. Turn the vegetables with a spoon for 4 to 5 minutes until they become flecked with brown spots. Now add the drained *dal* and rice and stir-fry for one minute. Pour in the water. Add the salt, turmeric, and tomatoes, and bring to a full boil over high heat. Reduce to low heat and cook with the pot partially covered for 30 to 40 minutes (if you use *mung* beans, cook a little more; split peas a little less) until the *dal* is soft and fully cooked. Stir once or twice in the beginning to prevent the rice from sticking to the bottom of the pot.

Finally, squeeze the lemon juice over the *khitchri*, put the butter

on top, and simmer over low heat until the grains have absorbed all the liquid. Season with the pepper. Mix all the ingredients gently but quickly with a fork.

For an extra special *khitchri*, serve it with a little *kadhi* sauce (see page 174). If you use brown rice, cook the *khitchri* for an extra 20 minutes.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 min

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Opposite page: Geeli khitchri (p. 136)  
Khitchri



## *Geeli khitchri*

Boiled rice, dal, and spinach

In Calcutta the devotees hold a Hare Krishna festival at a different city park every weekend. The local people, informed of the upcoming festival, come with generous contributions of rice, dal, and vegetables, which the devotees transform into a sumptuous "wet" khitchri. The khitchri is first offered to Krishna, then distributed to at least 5,000 people each weekend. Here is a recipe for that geeli, or wet khitchri.

1½ cups (250 g) medium-  
or long-grained rice

1¼ cups (250 g) mung dal,  
split-peas, or whole mung  
beans

¼ cup (50 g) butter or ghee

3 bay leaves

1 tbs chopped ginger

2 cloves

2 tsp salt

1 tsp turmeric

¼ tsp ground nutmeg

8 oz (225 g) fresh spinach,  
washed, stemmed, and  
finely chopped

3 tomatoes, chopped

Wash the *dal* and rice, soak them for 1 hour, and let them drain. Heat the butter or *ghee* in a heavy saucepan, add the bay leaves, chopped ginger, and cloves, then add the drained rice and *dal*. Fry for about 8 to 10 minutes, stirring well, until the butter has been absorbed. Stir in enough water to cover the grains by 2 inches (5 cm). Add the salt, turmeric and nutmeg, stir, and boil for 1 minute. Cover tightly and start to cook over medium-low heat.

Lower the heat gradually as the grains absorb the water. Cook slowly for about 30 minutes, checking from time to time to insure that the mixture is always covered with a little water. (If necessary, add a few tablespoons.) Then gently stir in the chopped spinach and tomatoes and cover again. Continue cooking for another 15 minutes, or until the grains are well cooked but the mixture is still quite moist. Mix well before serving.

Soaking time: 1 hr

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hr

## *Channa masala*

Spiced chick-peas

For a simple, nutritious breakfast, eat a small portion of spiced chick-peas, with khitchri or sambar or by themselves.

1½ cup (250 g) chick-peas, picked through and washed

1 tsp grated fresh ginger

¼ tsp asafetida

1½ tsp salt

½ tsp ground black pepper

2 tsp lemon juice

Soak the chick-peas overnight in water double their volume. Drain them and put them into a medium-sized saucepan, and add enough water to cover them by about 3 inches (7.5 cm). Add 1½ teaspoon of salt, and bring to a boil. Remove any froth that may collect on the surface. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until a chick-pea is tender enough to be crushed between two fingers. Now drain the chick-peas and transfer them to a mixing bowl.

Add the lemon juice, the remaining teaspoon of salt, and the spices. Mix well before offering.

Soaking time: overnight

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hr

finely milled to a buff-colored powder. Doughs made with *atta* turn out velvety smooth, knead readily, and respond easily to shaping. If *chapati* flour is unavailable, whole-wheat pastry flour is the next best. If coarse whole-wheat flour is all you can get, sift it to reduce its coarse texture or mix it with unbleached or all-purpose flour. Two parts sifted whole-wheat flour to one part all-purpose flour generally gives good results.

In most of the bread recipes, the amount of water given is approximate. It will vary with the quality of the flour and the moistness of the air. Start by adding a little less water than specified, and if that isn't enough, add more, a little at a time, until the dough has the desired consistency. Then knead the dough.

The most important step in preparing any dough is the kneading. If the dough has been evenly and thoroughly kneaded, the rolling and cooking are easy. Here is how to do it. Lightly flour the dough and your hand, then push the heel of your hand into the dough, away from you. Fold the dough over, give it a slight turn, and push down again. Keep pushing, folding, and turning until the motion becomes rhythmic. Knead the dough in this way until it is smooth and elastic. If the dough still sticks to your hands or the bowl after you've added all the ingredients, keep kneading and adding flour a little at a time until the ball of dough comes away clean.

The breads in this chapter are either cooked on the *tava* (a heavy, slightly concave cast-iron frying pan) or deep-fried in a *karhai* or wok. Usually you set the *tava* on the flame before you cook the first bread. A pre-heated *tava* or pan cooks the bread faster and prevents it from becoming dry and brittle. The *karhai* or wok saves *ghee*, and its wide concave sides give plenty of room for deep-frying. If you don't have a *tava*, you can substitute a cast-iron frying pan; if you don't have a *karhai* or wok, any wide, heavy saucepan will do.

Rolling these breads calls for a little practice, but don't be discouraged if it seems difficult at first. After a few times, you'll become expert. Besides, even your mistakes will taste good.

At the end of this chapter you'll find recipes for three types of savory pancakes, each made with a different kind of flour.

## *Chapati*

Whole-wheat flatbread

Chapatis, the daily bread of millions of Indians, are cooked first on a dry hotplate, then held directly over a flame, where they swell with steam to the point of bursting.

2½ cups (250 g) atta or sifted whole-wheat flour	½ tsp salt
⅔ cup (150 ml) lukewarm water	2 or 3 tbs melted butter

Combine the flour and the salt in a large salad bowl. Slowly add water, gathering the flour together as you do so, until a soft, moist dough is formed. Transfer the dough to a work surface and knead it for 6 to 8 minutes until it is smooth and firm. Sprinkle the ball of dough with water, cover it with a damp cloth, and set it aside for half an hour to two hours.

When the dough is ready, place a *tava* (see page 58) or a heavy cast-iron griddle over medium heat. With moistened hands, knead the dough again, then shape into 15 equal-sized patties. Dip them into flour and roll them out thin and even on a floured board. Make them as round as possible and about 5½ inches (14 cm) across. Keep some plain whole-wheat flour on the side to dust the *chapatis* as you roll them.

Knock the excess flour off a *chapati* with a few slaps between the hands and place it on the pre-heated griddle. (You can cook several at a time if the size of your griddle allows.) When small white blisters appear on the surface of the *chapati* and the edges begin to turn up, turn it over with a pair of flat tongs and cook the other side until the surface bulges with air pockets. Lift the *chapati* and toast both sides over a direct flame for a few seconds until it puffs up like a ball. A finished *chapati* should be cooked completely (no wet spots) and should be freckled with brown spots on both sides. Press the air out and brush one surface with melted butter.

You can also cook a *chapati* on electric heat. Let it stay on the griddle. Turn it over as many times as it takes for both sides to cook,

then gently press the top of the *chapati* all over with a soft cloth, and the *chapati* will swell. Serve the *chapatis* soon after cooking or wrap them in a cloth to keep them warm and soft.

Preparation time: 15 min

Standing time: 30 min to 2 hrs

Rolling and cooking time: 2 to 3 min for each *chapati*



Opposite page: Preparation of *chapati*  
Overleaf: Preparation of *puri* (p. 151)



# Puri

## Deep-fried puffed bread

Making puris—watching little deep-fried rounds of dough inflate like balloons—is one of the delights of Vedic cooking. Eating them is even more delightful: they have a taste and a texture that go perfectly with any meal.

**2½ cups (250 g) whole-wheat flour  
1 cup (100 g) white flour  
½ tsp salt**

**1 tbs butter or ghee  
¾ cup (175 ml) warm water  
ghee or vegetable oil for deep-frying**

Sift the two flours and the salt into a mixing bowl and rub in the tablespoon of butter (or *ghee*) with your fingertips. Slowly add the water, and mix until all the flour sticks together and you can knead it. Put a little *ghee* on your hands and knead the dough for 5 to 8 minutes until it is smooth and firm. (For a change, you can make *masala puris* by adding 2 teaspoons of cumin seeds, ¾ teaspoon of turmeric, and ¼ teaspoon of cayenne pepper to the dough.)

In a *karhai*, wok, or saucepan, put the *ghee* or oil over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, smear a few drops of *ghee* on the rolling surface (don't use flour—it burns and discolors the *ghee*), shape the dough into 16 patties, and roll them all out thin and even.

When the *ghee* begins to smoke, lower the heat to medium. Lay a *puri* on the surface of the *ghee*, being careful not to burn your fingers. The *puri* will sink for a second, then rise to the surface and sputter. Immediately submerge it with soft swift pushes, using the back of a slotted spoon, until it inflates like a balloon. Fry the other side for a few seconds; then remove the *puri* from the *ghee* and stand it on edge in a colander to drain. (When your skill increases, try frying several *puris* at a time.) Cook all the *puris* the same way.

Serve hot *puris* with any meal or as a snack spread with applesauce, honey, jam, or fresh cheese.

**Preparation time: 15 min**

**Rolling and cooking time: 2 min for each *puri***

# Masala dosa

Pancakes filled with spiced potatoes

This thin, crisp pancake with a spicy potato filling is a popular snack all over South India. Masala dosa should be eaten fresh and hot, so serve them as soon as you cook them. Coconut chutney and chopped coriander leaves are the traditional garnishes.

1 cup (175 g) short-grained white rice, washed	4 tbs grated coconut
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (100 g) urad dal, sorted and washed	3 tsp grated fresh ginger
2 fresh chillies, chopped	4 tbs ghee
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp brown sugar	2 tsp cumin seeds
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt	2 tsp black mustard seeds
10 medium-sized potatoes	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric
ghee or vegetable oil for greasing the griddle	2 tbs chopped coriander leaves
	2 tbs butter

Soak the rice and the *dal* overnight in separate bowls. Wash and drain them separately, then blend them separately in an electric mixer with just enough water to make smooth batters. Now combine both batters in a large bowl along with 1 chopped chilli, the brown sugar, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of the salt. Beat thoroughly. Cover the bowl and set aside in a warm place for an hour or two, or, if possible, overnight.

When you're ready to cook, grease the griddle with about  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of *ghee* or vegetable oil and put it over medium heat. Beat the batter again—it should be of pouring consistency. Flick a few drops of water onto the pan. If they bounce and sputter, the pan is ready. Pour on 4 tablespoons of batter and use the back of a spoon to spread it out thin with a circular motion, starting from the center. This amount of batter should make a thin *dosa*, about 8 inches (20 cm) in diameter. (The art of making *dosas* lies in the ability to spread the batter thin before the heat of the skillet hardens the mixture.) Cook for 2 or 3 minutes until it becomes golden-brown. Turn once. Cooking the second side takes only about half as long as the first. The second side never browns as evenly as the first.

Continue making *dosas* until the batter is finished, greasing the pan only when the *dosas* stick. Pile them on a plate so that they will stay warm and moist while you prepare the filling, as follows.

Boil the potatoes until soft, and peel and mash them coarse with a fork or potato masher. Grind together the coconut, the remaining chopped chilli, the ginger, and a few drops of water to make a *masala* paste. In a medium-sized saucepan, heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil, and stir-fry the cumin and mustard seeds in it. When the mustard seeds start sputtering, add the *masala* paste. A minute later, toss in the turmeric, then immediately add the potatoes, the chopped coriander, and the remaining salt. Stir-fry for 5 minutes before setting them aside.

Divide the filling into as many portions as you have *dosas*. Put one portion in the center of each *dosa* and fold in half. Now grease the frying pan with butter, and toast both sides of each filled *dosa*. *Masala dosa* with *sambar* and fresh tomato salad is a traditional South Indian meal.

Preparation time: 30 min

Standing time: 1 to 2 hrs or overnight

Cooking time: 5 min for each *dosa*

## Atta dosa

Whole-wheat pancakes

2½ cups (250 g) sifted whole-wheat flour	1 fresh chilli, minced
	1 tsp salt
2 tbs chopped fresh coriander leaves	2 cups (475 ml) lukewarm water

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Slowly add the water and whisk it into the flour until you have a smooth pancake batter. Cover the bowl with a cloth and let stand for at least half an hour.

Beat the batter again and cook the *dosas* as in the previous recipe. If you use about 4 tablespoons of batter to make each *dosa*, you should get about 15 *dosas*. Serve *atta dosas* with coconut chutney or plain yogurt, or both.

**Preparation time:** 10 min

**Standing time:** 30 min

**Cooking time:** 5 min for each *dosa*

## Pudla

Chick-pea-flour pancakes

This is the basic recipe for pudla. You can make many tasty variations by adding cooked or quick-cooking vegetables such as mung bean sprouts, grated carrots, chopped parsley, or small cubes of potato.

2 cups (200 g) chick-pea flour	2 tbs fresh coriander or
½ cup (50 g) white flour	parsley leaves, minced
1 tsp ground cumin	1¼ cups (300 ml) cold water
1 or 2 fresh green chillies, seeded and minced	1 tsp grated fresh ginger
¼ tsp asafetida	2 medium-sized tomatoes, chopped
¾ tsp turmeric	1 green bell pepper, diced
1½ tsp salt	ghee or butter for frying
¼ tsp pepper	3 tbs lemon juice
1 tsp ground coriander	

In a large bowl, mix together the chick-pea flour, white flour, and the next eight ingredients. Slowly add the cold water, stirring as you do, until you have a thickish pancake batter. If the batter seems too thick, remember that the juice from the tomatoes will thin it. Now stir in the grated ginger and pieces of tomato and pepper. Set aside.

Melt a tablespoon of ghee or butter in a 10 to 12-inch (20 to 26 cm) frying pan over medium heat. Pour in enough batter to make two 4 to 5-inch (10 to 13 cm) pancakes at a time. It is more important that the pancakes be uniformly thick, than perfectly round. Cook slowly on both sides so that they become golden-brown and crisp (about 4 to 5 minutes). Finish the batter in this way, using about 1 teaspoon of ghee or butter for each *pudla*. Sprinkle the lemon juice over the top of the *pudlas*. Serve hot.

**Preparation time:** 15 min

**Cooking time:** 5 min for each *pudla*

# *Alu phul gobhi ki bhaji*

Cauliflower and potatoes in yogurt sauce

This technique of frying vegetables first in a masala, then steaming them, can be applied to other types of vegetables as well. People sometimes refer to this method as "curried" vegetables.

1 medium-sized cauliflower	4 tbs water
5 tbs ghee or vegetable oil	1½ tsp salt
2 tsp cumin seeds	1 cup (250 ml) plain yogurt
1 or 2 dried chillies, crushed	¾ tsp garam masala
2 tsp ground coriander	2 firm ripe tomatoes, washed and sliced
1 tsp turmeric	1 lemon or lime
½ tsp asafetida	
4 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and cubed	

Trim the cauliflower and cut it into flowerets 1½ inches (4 cm) long by 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick. Rinse them in a colander and let drain.

Heat the *ghee* or oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Drop in the cumin seeds and crushed chillies and fry them for 30 to 45 seconds, until the cumin seeds turn golden-brown. Add the powdered spices, fry a few seconds longer, then immediately add the cubed potatoes. Turn the potatoes for 2 or 3 minutes, letting them brown in spots. Now stir in the cauliflower and stir-fry for another 2 or 3 minutes. Then add the water and salt and put the lid on the pan to trap the steam. Cook over medium heat, shaking the pan occasionally, for about 15 minutes, until the vegetables are tender but still firm.

Finally, stir in the yogurt and simmer for a few minutes until the sauce is thick. Sprinkle with *garam masala* and stir gently to mix. Garnish each serving with slices of tomato and a twist of lemon or lime.

Preparation and cooking time: 25 min

# *Alu gauranga*

Potatoes au gratin

The devotees of Krishna have named this dish after Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the incarnation of Krishna who came to earth to teach the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. He was also known as Gauranga (the golden one) because of His fair complexion.

Add a vegetable dish and some chapatis, and you'll have a most satisfying meal.

1 lb (450 g) paneer	3 tbs ground coriander
10 medium-sized potatoes	3 cups (725 ml) sour cream
½ tsp asafetida	mixed with 1 tsp turmeric
3 tsp salt	¼ cup (50 g) butter
1 tsp ground black pepper	2 tbs powdered milk
3 tbs chopped fresh coriander or thyme leaves	

Rinse the *paneer* well under cold running water. Then gather the cheesecloth tight around the *paneer* and squeeze out most of the water. Wash and peel the potatoes and cut them into thin slices.

Cover the bottom of a greased casserole or cakepan with one third of the potato slices. Sprinkle this layer with one third of each spice, in this order: asafetida, salt, pepper, fresh coriander, ground coriander. Cover with a layer of one third of the crumbled *paneer* and a layer of one third of the cream. Dot with one third of the butter.

Cover this with a second layer of sliced potatoes and other ingredients in the same manner as the first layer. Make the third layer with the rest of the sliced potatoes, and repeat the procedure using the rest of the ingredients. Finally, sprinkle the powdered milk over the top in a thin layer. Cover the casserole with a sheet of aluminum foil wrapped tightly around the edges and put it in the oven for at least 45 minutes at 400°F (200°C). Remove the aluminum foil 10 minutes before the end of cooking to allow the top to brown.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hr

## *Palak baingan aur channa*

Spinach, eggplant, tomatoes, and chick-peas

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (100 g) chick-peas, soaked overnight	1 lb (450 g) eggplant, peeled and cubed
4 tbs ghee or vegetable oil	6 tomatoes, chopped
2 tsp cumin seeds	1 lb (450 g) fresh spinach, washed, stemmed, and chopped
1 tsp grated fresh ginger	4 tbs water
2 tsp ground coriander	2 tsp salt
1 tsp turmeric	1 tbs butter
2 fresh chillies, seeded and minced	

Boil the soaked chick-peas in water until tender. Then set them aside to drain. Place a medium-sized saucepan over medium heat and heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil. When it is hot, toss in the cumin seeds, minced chillies, grated ginger, ground coriander, and turmeric, in that order and in quick succession. Stir-fry for about 30 seconds, then drop in the eggplant cubes and turn them with a spoon until they are browned and butter-soft.

Now add the tomatoes and chopped spinach. Stir to blend the spices into the vegetables. Pour in the water and add the salt. Lower the heat to medium-low, and simmer with the pot covered. After 10 minutes, remove the cover and fold in the chick-peas. Then dot with butter and simmer gently, stirring every few minutes, until most of the excess liquid has been cooked off. Serve hot with *nimbu chawal* or *alu paratha*.

**Soaking time:** overnight

**Preparation and cooking time:** 45 min

## *Sak*

Vegetable greens cooked in their own juice

*Sak* was the favorite dish of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the incarnation of Krishna who appeared in West Bengal five hundred years ago to propagate the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. *Sak* can be made with spinach or other leafy greens such as radish or broccoli leaves.

2 lbs (900 g) fresh green vegetable leaves	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric
2 tbs ghee	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp asafetida (optional)
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fennel seeds	2 potatoes, peeled and diced (optional)
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp grated fresh ginger	1 tsp salt
2 fresh chillies, seeded and minced	2 tbs lemon juice

Wash the vegetable greens in several changes of water, and discard the tough stems. Let the greens drain, then chop them into small pieces. In a *karhai* or medium-sized saucepan, heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil and fry the fennel seeds, grated ginger, and minced chillies together for 30 to 40 seconds. Add the powdered spices and fry them very briefly. Then immediately drop in the diced potatoes and stir-fry for 8 to 10 minutes, scraping the bottom of the pan as you stir. Let them brown to a nice golden color on all sides.

Next, put in the chopped vegetable leaves, cover, and cook slowly for about 15 minutes or until the greens are cooked and the potatoes are soft. (Leafy greens that are juicy and cook quickly may not need additional water, but leaves that stay dry and need to cook longer will need a small amount of water.) Add the salt and lemon juice, stir, then remove from the heat.

*Sak* goes well with white rice or hot *chapatis* and any of the *dal* soups described in the previous section.

**Preparation and cooking time:** 30 min



## Masala bhindi sabji

Seasoned okra slices with coconut

Known as "lady fingers" in India, okra is widely used in creole cooking and is a popular soul food in America. If you can't find okra in supermarkets, look for it at Asian grocers. Choose pods that are small, firm, tender, and bright green.

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1½ lbs (675 g) fresh okra   | 2 tsp cumin seeds           |
| 3 tsp ground coriander      | 1 tsp black mustard seeds   |
| 1 tsp turmeric              | ¼ tsp asafetida             |
| 2 pinches cayenne pepper    | 1 cup (75 g) grated coconut |
| 1½ tsp salt                 | 1½ tsp sugar                |
| 5 tbs ghee or vegetable oil | 2 tbs lemon juice           |

Rinse the okra pods and pat them dry. Cut off the two ends and slice the pods into rounds  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (5 mm) thick. You can cut 2 or 3 pods at the same time. Put the slices in a mixing bowl and sprinkle over them the ground coriander, turmeric, cayenne pepper, and salt. Toss the slices to coat them evenly with the spices.

Heat the ghee or vegetable oil in a frying pan, *karhai*, or wok and drop in the cumin seeds and black mustard seeds. Cover the pan for a moment to prevent the mustard seeds from popping out. Then toss in the asafetida. Fry for a few seconds, and then add as many of the seasoned okra slices as will fit in one layer. You will probably have to fry them in 2 or 3 batches. You should have an idea of how many batches it will take before you start cooking, so that you can divide the ingredients accordingly.

Stir-fry each batch for 3 to 4 minutes until the pods appear to wilt and brown. For each batch, add a portion of the grated coconut and a portion of the sugar. Keep frying and stirring until the pods turn a reddish-brown and are very tender. Sprinkle the lemon juice over them and serve them hot.

Preparation and cooking time: 25 min

Opposite page: *Masala bhindi sabji*  
*Khati mithi sabji* (p. 185)

# Upma

## Vegetable semolina

At many Hare Krishna centers around the world, after the morning spiritual program, the devotees start their day of devotional work with a substantial breakfast of upma, chick-peas, and ginger tea.

Making upma involves three simultaneous operations: cooking the vegetables, boiling the water, and toasting the semolina. When everything is ready, all the ingredients are combined.

4 medium-sized tomatoes	½ tsp turmeric
1 lb (450 g) other assorted vegetables	¼ tsp asafetida
3 tbs ghee	6 cups (1.4 l) water
2 tsp cumin seeds	⅓ cup (50 g) raisins (optional)
1 tsp black mustard seeds	3 tsp salt
½ tsp fenugreek seeds	3 cups (450 g) semolina
2 tsp grated fresh ginger	1 cup (200 g) butter or ghee
1 dried chilli, crushed	½ tsp pepper
6 curry leaves (if not available, use 3 bay leaves)	2 tbs lemon juice
	2 tbs butter

Begin by cutting the vegetables. The tomatoes can be quartered, green beans and peppers cut into pieces, carrots sliced, potatoes cubed, and cauliflower cut into flowerets. Heat the tablespoon of *ghee* in a saucepan over medium heat and fry the cumin seeds, black mustard seeds, and fenugreek seeds, curry leaves, ginger, and chilli. After 30 to 45 seconds, toss in the turmeric and asafetida, then add the cut vegetables. (If you want to give your *upma* a special taste and texture, lightly deep-fry the cubed potatoes, sliced carrots, and cauliflower flowerets and add them to the *upma* at the end.) Stir the vegetables until they brown, then add a little water to prevent scorching. Lower the heat, cover, and gently simmer until the vegetables are tender. While the vegetables simmer, put the water and salt in a small pot to boil.

Melt the butter or *ghee* in a 5-pint (3 l) saucepan, add the semolina, and stir-fry gently over medium-low heat, stirring every time the bottom layer of semolina appears lightly browned. It should take

10 to 15 minutes for all the semolina to turn faintly brown.

When the grains are ready and the water is boiling, put the cooked vegetables into the grains, toss in the raisins (if desired), then pour the boiling water into this mixture. Be careful! The mixture will erupt and sputter. Lower the heat. Stir several times to break up any lumps, then cover the pot to trap the steam. Let it simmer on the lowest heat. After 5 minutes, lift the cover to see if the grains have absorbed all the water. If not, stir briskly several times and cook a few more minutes uncovered. Finally, add the pepper, lemon juice, and butter. Mix again.

Preparation and cooking time: 35 min

# Bhari hui sabji

## Stuffed vegetables

6 medium-large tomatoes,  
or 6 medium-small green bell peppers,  
or 6 medium-small eggplants

Wash and dry the tomatoes, then cut a "lid" off the top of each. Scoop out the pulp and force it through a strainer. Discard the seeds and save the pulp, to be used in the filling. Sprinkle some salt inside the tomato shells and turn them upside-down to drain.

Do the same with the peppers, but discard their pulp. Cut the eggplants in half lengthwise and scoop out the pulp, leaving a thick shell. Chop the eggplant pulp into tiny pieces and fry it in a small quantity of *ghee* or oil until it is tender. Mash it and use it in any of the fillings.

Prepare one of the fillings described below and stuff it into the hollowed vegetables. There are three recipes for fillings. Each is sufficient to stuff 6 vegetables.

### FILLINGS

#### Rice and cheese filling:

3 tbs ghee	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (75 g) lightly toasted cashew nuts, crushed
4 oz (100 g) pressed paneer, crumbled	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp asafetida
1 cup (175 g) cooked long-grained white rice	1 tsp salt
	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (150 ml) sour cream

Heat the *ghee* in a small saucepan over medium heat. Crumble the *paneer*, add it to the pan, and stir-fry it for a minute or two. Then add the cooked rice and all the other ingredients. Remove the pan from the heat, fold in the cream, and mix the ingredients well.

#### Coconut filling:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (100 g) fresh grated coconut or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (75 g) dry coconut	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (150 ml) sour cream
	1 tbs grated fresh ginger
	1 tsp ground coriander

1 cup (100 g) chick-pea flour, lightly toasted	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cayenne pepper
2 oz (50 g) paneer	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp powdered cloves
	1 tsp salt

Put all the ingredients in a large bowl and knead well to make a smooth filling.

#### Vegetable filling:

4 medium-sized potatoes	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cayenne pepper
1 small eggplant	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garam masala
ghee or vegetable oil for deep-frying	1 tsp salt
2 tsp ground coriander	3 tbs chopped coriander leaves
	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (150 ml) plain yogurt

Boil the potatoes in their skins, then peel and mash them coarse with a fork. Peel and cube the eggplant and deep-fry the cubes until golden-brown. Then let them drain. Now mix together the vegetables, spices, herbs, and yogurt to make a thick filling.

When you stuff the tomatoes or peppers, don't forget to replace their lids. You can make a paste from a tablespoon of flour and a dash of water to help the lids stick to the top.

Arrange the stuffed tomatoes or peppers (or both together) in a greased, ovenproof dish. Add 4 tablespoons of water, cover, and bake in the oven at 300°F (150°C) for 15 to 20 minutes. Eggplants take about 1 hour to cook, so cook them separately.

Instead of baking stuffed vegetables, you can steam them in a saucepan. If you have a metal steam-rack, you can steam them over boiling water for 15 to 20 minutes. If you don't have a steam-rack, heat a tablespoon of vegetable oil or *ghee* and fry the bottom of the stuffed vegetables for 2 or 3 minutes. Then add several tablespoons of water, cover the pan tightly, and cook for 15 to 20 minutes. For either method, make sure there is enough water at all times.

Sprinkle the lemon juice and some fresh minced herbs over each serving. Serve hot with a soup and an Indian bread.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 min to 1 hr

# *Bandgobhi kofta*

## Stuffed cabbage leaves

2 tbs ghee  
 1 cinnamon stick, 2 inches (5 cm) long  
 5 cloves  
 1 tsp ground cumin  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp asafetida  
 2 lbs (900 g) tomatoes, blanched, peeled, and mashed  
 4 tbs raisins  
 1 tbs lemon juice  
 1 tsp turmeric  
 $3\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt  
 1 cup (100 g) chick-pea flour

1 pinch ground pepper  
 1 small green cabbage  
 2 tbs ghee  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup (50 g) almonds or cashew nuts, crushed  
 1 tsp grated fresh ginger  
 1 or 2 dried chillies, crushed  
 12 oz (350 g) paneer, drained and chopped  
 3 tbs finely chopped fresh coriander leaves or 1 tsp ground coriander  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp paprika

In a small saucepan, heat the *ghee* and stir-fry the cinnamon, cloves, ground cumin, and asafetida for 30 to 45 seconds. Put in the puréed tomatoes and cook gently for 30 minutes to obtain a smooth sauce. Then fold in the raisins and add the lemon juice, turmeric, and 2 teaspoons of the salt. Discard the whole spices, and remove the saucepan from the heat. Put the chick-pea flour in a bowl with a pinch of salt and a pinch of pepper. Mix with just enough water to make a thick batter. Cover the bowl with a cloth and set aside.

Cut off the stem of the cabbage and remove any damaged outer leaves. Wash the head of cabbage and place it in boiling water with 1 teaspoon of salt. After 8 or 10 minutes, carefully remove the cabbage and rinse it under cold water. Cut the cabbage at the base and peel off 6 to 8 leaves without breaking them. (You can use the rest of the cabbage for another recipe.) Use a small paring knife to pare down the thick section that runs down the middle of each leaf (without cutting through the leaf). This will make the leaves more pliable. Pat them dry and set them aside.

Heat the *ghee* in a small saucepan and brown the crushed nuts, grated ginger, and chillies. Drop in the chopped *paneer* with the chopped coriander leaves, paprika, and the remaining salt. Cook

over medium heat, stirring constantly until all the ingredients are well mixed. Next, spread out the cabbage leaves and place a tablespoon of this filling in the center of each one. Fold over the edges of the leaf and roll it into a tight roll.

Dip the rolls in the thick batter and deep-fry them for 4 to 5 minutes in hot *ghee* or vegetable oil until golden-brown. Put the stuffed cabbage rolls on a serving plate and cover them with the preheated tomato sauce.

Instead of frying the rolls, you can also bake them. For this method you leave out the batter. Place the rolls in an oven in a casserole side-by-side, seam-side down. Cover them with the tomato sauce and bake at 300°F (150°C) for 15 to 20 minutes.

**Preparation and cooking time:** 1 hr 15 min



# Samosa

## Vegetable turnovers

Once you've tasted a good samosa, you'll understand why samosas are the most popular of all Indian savories. For variations, mix fresh paneer into the filling and try different blends of spices.

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|--|--|
| 4 cups (400 g) white flour                   | 1/2 tsp fenugreek seeds                  |
| 1/2 tsp salt                                 | 1/2 tsp grated fresh ginger              |
| 1/2 cup (100 g) melted butter<br>or ghee     | 1 tsp turmeric                           |
| 2/3 cup (150 ml) cold water                  | 1/2 tsp ground coriander                 |
| 2 or 3 medium-sized potatoes                 | 1/4 tsp asafetida                        |
| 1/2 cauliflower, separated<br>into flowerets | 1/4 tsp ground cloves                    |
| 1 1/2 cups (200 g) fresh peas                | 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon                  |
| 4 tbs ghee or vegetable oil                  | 2 tsp salt                               |
| 1 tsp cumin seeds                            | 1/4 tsp pepper                           |
|  | ghee or vegetable oil for<br>deep-frying |

Put the white flour and salt in a bowl and dribble the melted butter or *ghee* over the top. Rub the butter or *ghee* into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Slowly mix in the water and gather the flour together to make a dough. Knead vigorously for 5 minutes, until it is smooth and soft but doesn't stick to your fingers. Gather the dough into a ball, sprinkle with a few drops of water, and cover with a damp cloth while you prepare the filling.

Peel the potatoes and dice them. Either grate the cauliflower flowerets through the largest holes of a metal grater or cut them into tiny flowerets. Boil the peas until they are tender; then drain and set them aside.

Place a large frying pan over medium heat, and fry the cumin and fenugreek seeds in 2 tablespoons of *ghee* or oil. When they begin to darken, toss in the grated ginger and the powdered spices and fry for a few seconds more. Now put in the potato cubes; stir-fry for 3 or 4 minutes, then add the cauliflower. Stir-fry for another 3 or

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Opposite page: Preparation of samosa

4 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of water, cover, and cook for about 15 minutes, until the vegetables are tender (watch closely to prevent burning). Stir the peas into the mixture, season with the salt and pepper, then spread the contents of the pan on a clean surface to cool while you roll out the dough.

Dust the rolling surface with flour. Form the dough into 10 balls. Roll out each ball to make a 6-inch (15 cm) circle. Cut each circle in half. Take each half-circle and moisten the edge of its straight side from the center to one end. Bring the two ends of the straight side together to make a cone. Firmly press the dry side over the wet side to seal the cone tight. Stuff the cone to two-thirds with filling. Then close the opening by pinching and folding the two edges together to form a pleated top.

Heat the *ghee* or oil in a deep-frying vessel over medium heat. Fry a few *samosas* at a time (as many as will cover the surface of the *ghee* in one layer). Fry them for 10 to 15 minutes, turning them often until both sides are golden-brown. Remove and drain.

**Preparation and cooking time:** 1 hr 15 min

## *Alu patra*

Fried spicy potato swirls

4 medium-sized potatoes	1½ tsp salt
2 tbs grated coconut	2 tbs lemon juice
2 tsp sesame seeds	2 cups (200 g) white flour
2 tsp brown sugar	½ tsp turmeric
2 tsp grated fresh ginger	¼ tsp cayenne pepper
2 fresh green chillies, minced	2 tsp melted <i>ghee</i>
1 tbs fresh coriander leaves, minced	½ cup (100 ml) water
2 tsp garam masala	<i>ghee</i> or vegetable oil for deep-frying

Prepare the filling first, so that it will be cool by the time the dough is ready. Boil the potatoes until they are soft. Then peel them. Use a fork to mash them in a bowl with the grated coconut and the next 8 ingredients including 1 teaspoon of the salt. Now spread the mixture on a surface to cool while you prepare the dough.

Combine the flour, turmeric, cayenne pepper, and the remaining salt in a mixing bowl. Rub the melted *ghee* into the flour, then add the water slowly while mixing with your hand until a dough forms. Transfer the dough to a rolling surface and knead well so that it becomes soft and elastic. If the dough is too wet, add more flour.

Flour the rolling surface liberally, then roll out the entire dough into a rectangle with a thickness of about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm). Spread the cool potato mixture evenly on the surface. While dusting with flour to prevent the dough from sticking to your fingers, roll it up to make a tight, compact roll. Use a sharp serrated knife to cut the roll into slices of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (1 cm). Pat and form the slices so they retain their shape. Place them on a platter.

Heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil in a *karhai* or shallow pot. The oil or *ghee* is hot enough when a pinch of dough dropped into it rises immediately to the surface and sizzles. Put several slices into the *ghee* and fry them for 3 to 5 minutes, turning them over once, until they are golden-brown. Serve hot as a side dish in a feast or a meal, or as a snack with a chutney.

**Preparation and cooking time:** 40 min

## Kathmir vada

Chick-pea-flour and coriander-leaf tidbits

2 oz (50 g) fresh coriander or 3 oz (75 g) spinach leaves	1 or 2 fresh chillies, seeded and chopped
2 cups (200 g) sifted chick-pea flour	2½ tsp salt
1 cup (275 ml) plain yogurt	1¾ cups (425 ml) water ghee or vegetable oil for deep-frying

Wash the coriander or spinach leaves thoroughly and remove the largest stems. Chop the leaves into small pieces and combine in a mixing bowl with the chick-pea flour, yogurt, chillies, and salt. Slowly add water, stirring as you do, until the batter has a milk-like consistency.

Pour the batter into a medium-sized pot and place over low heat. Cook gently for 15 to 20 minutes. As the batter thickens, stir frequently with a wide wooden spoon to avoid scorching. The batter is ready when a dab of it solidifies on a cool surface. Now pour the batter into a shallow cakepan (1 to 2 inch/ 2.5 to 5 cm high) and let it cool for at least 15 minutes. When it becomes firm, cut it into diamonds and deep-fry the pieces in *ghee* or vegetable oil until golden-brown.

Remove, drain, and serve hot or at room temperature with date-and-tamarind or mint *chutney*.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 min

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Gajar vada (p. 222)  
Dahi vada (p. 223)



## Gajar vada

### Spiced carrot croquettes

This savory will impress anyone. Be sure the mixture is thick enough not to fall apart when deep-fried. Add more chick-pea flour if necessary, until it holds together.

4 or 5 medium-sized carrots, washed and scraped	2 fresh chillies, seeded and chopped
1 cup (100 g) chick-pea flour	1 tsp garam masala
2 tbs walnuts or hazelnuts, coarsely chopped	½ tsp turmeric
1 tbs grated fresh coconut	½ tsp salt
1 tbs chopped fresh coriander or parsley leaves	¼ tsp baking powder
	ghee or vegetable oil for deep-frying

Grate the carrots on the fine holes of a metal grater until you have about 2 cups (250 g) of grated carrots. Put the grated carrots and all the other ingredients in a large bowl. Mix with just enough water to make a paste thick enough to hold together when deep-fried.

Heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil in a *karhai*, wok, or saucepan over medium heat. Pick up a lump of batter with a tablespoon. Use your finger to push the lump into the hot *ghee* or oil. (You can also use a small ice cream scoop to flick the batter into the *ghee*.) Do this until you have 8 to 10 *vadas* cooking at the same time. Adjust the heat and turn the *vadas* often so that they become nicely browned on all sides in 4 or 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon. Drain in a strainer or colander.

Serve *gajar vadas* hot or at room temperature with a wet vegetable, a *raita*, or plain yogurt.

Preparation and cooking time: 25 min

## Dahi vada

### Dal croquettes in yogurt sauce

*Dahi vada* is a variation of urad dal bara. In India, a moistened banana leaf is used to hold the *vada* before it is slid into the *ghee*. In the absence of a banana leaf, however, you can use your hand. Just make sure that the batter is thick enough to hold its shape.

1 cup (200 g) urad dal, sorted and washed	<i>ghee</i> or vegetable oil for deep-frying
1 tsp cumin seeds	1¾ cups (425 ml) plain yogurt
2 fresh chillies, seeded and chopped	1 tbs grated coconut
1 tbs grated fresh ginger	2 tbs chopped fresh coriander leaves
½ tsp asafetida	2 pinches cayenne pepper
1½ tsp salt	

Soak the *dal* in warm water for several hours. Drain it and grind it in an electric blender (or a grinder) with just enough water to make a thick, smooth paste. Scrape this paste into a bowl and mix in the cumin seeds, chillies, ginger, asafetida, and ½ teaspoon of salt.

Heat the *ghee* or oil in a *karhai*, wok, or saucepan over medium heat. Moisten your left hand and put 2 oz (50 g) of the mixture on it. Flatten it slightly with the thumb of your left hand to form a flat "bread." Poke it in the center with the little finger of your right hand to make a depression. Now carefully slide it into the *ghee*. Because the *dal* is not very firm, this operation may require some practice (if it seems difficult, don't worry: you can also use a spoon to put lumps of the batter in the hot *ghee*). Fry the *vadas* for 6 to 8 minutes on each side until they become reddish-brown. Remove and drain in a colander.

Mix the grated coconut, fresh coriander, cayenne pepper, and the remaining salt into the yogurt and cover the *vadas* with this sauce one hour before serving. Garnish each *vada* by filling the dent in the center with a dab of date-and-tamarind chutney.

Soaking time: several hours for the *dal*

Preparation and cooking time: 40 min