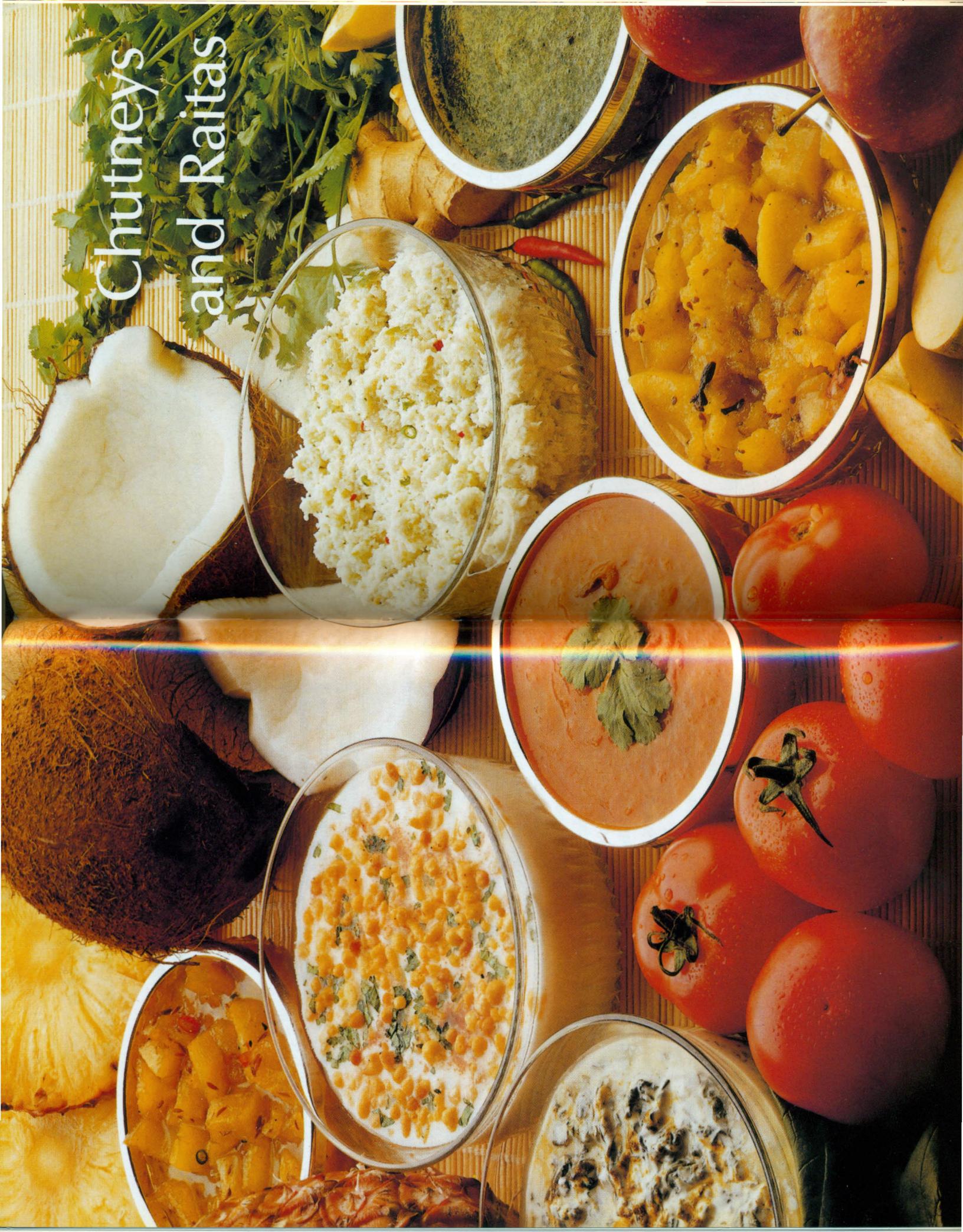
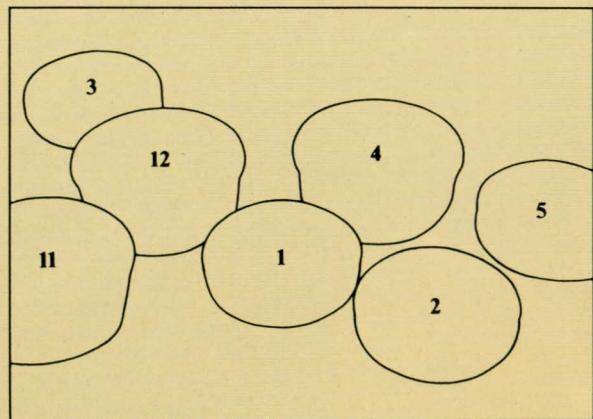


Chutneys and Raitas



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CHUTNEYS and *raitas* bring out the flavor of the main courses. Spicy chutneys enhance mild dishes, cool *raitas* enhance spicy ones—and the vivid colors of both enhance the appearance of the meal. With a little experience, you'll be able to choose the right chutney or *raita* to match the main dish.

In this chapter you'll find two kinds of chutneys: cooked and fresh. Cooked chutneys are made sometimes from vegetables but most often from fruits. They take a long time to cook so that the ingredients merge and thicken. Fresh chutneys are not cooked. You make them by grinding fresh ingredients into a smooth paste.

Whether cooked or fresh, all chutneys are sweet and spicy. They also perk up the appetite and stimulate digestion. A good chutney, Srila Prabhupada said, is so hot you can hardly eat it but so sweet you can't resist. You need only a teaspoon or two to accent a meal. Serve it in a little bowl or directly on the plate or *thali*, next to the rice. The uninitiated should be warned not to take a whole mouthful at once.

Some chutneys make a good dip for savories. Tomato chutney, for example, goes well with vegetable *pakoras*, *katchoris*, and fried potato patties.

Raitas consist of either cooked or raw vegetables, or fresh fruits, combined with spiced yogurt. Served in small bowls they are light, refreshing, and easily prepared.

Tamarar chatni

Tomato chutney

Although tomato chutney may look like ketchup, it tastes a lot better. Besides, ketchup can't be offered to Lord Krishna, or eaten by devotees, because it contains vinegar and onions, which according to the Vedas increase the quality of ignorance.

| | |
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| 8 ripe tomatoes | 1 cinnamon stick, 2 inches (5 cm) long |
| 4 tbs water | |
| 2 tbs ghee | 1 tsp cumin seeds |
| 2 tsp black mustard seeds | 2 tsp ground coriander |
| 2 or 3 fresh chillies, minced | 1 tbs grated fresh ginger |
| 5 cloves | 1 pinch asafetida |
| 2 bay leaves | 1 tsp salt |
| | 4 tbs brown sugar |

Blanch the tomatoes, purée them with 4 tablespoons of water, and set them aside. In a medium-sized saucepan, heat the *ghee* over medium heat and toss in the mustard seeds. Cover the pan. When the mustard seeds stop sputtering, stir-fry the next six spices and the ginger for 1 minute. Put the tomatoes in the saucepan with the asafetida and salt. Mix with a wooden spoon, and cook uncovered over low heat for 20 to 30 minutes. Stir occasionally at first, then more often as the chutney thickens, until there is hardly any liquid in the pot.

Now stir in the sugar and raise the heat. With a quicker motion stir the chutney for 5 minutes more, or until it has thickened to the consistency of thick tomato sauce. Discard the cloves, bay leaves, and cinnamon stick. Transfer the chutney into a bowl and serve at room temperature with a meal or as a dip for savories.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 to 50 min

Seb ki chatni

Apple chutney

Practically any type of apple will make a good apple chutney. Select firm, ripe ones and avoid those that are oversized and mealy.

The recipe may also be used for making chutneys from other fruits, such as peaches, plums, apricots, mangos, guavas, gooseberries, and blackberries. Omit the asafetida if you like, and use the dried chillies according to taste.

| | |
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| 6 medium-sized apples | 2 or 3 dried chillies, crushed |
| 4 tbs ghee or vegetable oil | 5 cloves |
| 2 tsp grated fresh ginger | 1 tsp turmeric |
| 2 cinnamon sticks, 2 inches (5 cm) long | 1 pinch asafetida (optional) |
| 1 tsp anise seeds | 4 tbs water |
| | 4 tbs brown sugar |

Wash, peel, and core the apples. Then cut them into small chunks. Heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil in a saucepan. When it begins to smoke, drop in the ginger, cinnamon sticks, anise seeds, chillies, and cloves. Stir-fry until the anise seeds darken (about 30 seconds). Immediately add the turmeric and asafetida, then the chunks of apple. Stir-fry to brown the apples for 5 or 6 minutes. Then add the water.

Cover and cook over high heat for about 15 minutes, stirring often, until the apples are quite soft. Mash the apples in the pot. Add the sugar, increase the heat, and stir continuously until the chutney thickens. Remove the cinnamon sticks and cloves. Serve at room temperature with hot *puris*, or with a sweet at the end of the meal.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 min

Anannas ki chatni

Pineapple chutney

Pineapples are popular in India. The field-ripened ones are best. A pineapple is ripe when some of the inner leaves pull out easily, the eyes protrude, and the fruit has a sweet smell.

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| 1 medium-large pineapple | ½ tsp turmeric |
| 1 tbs ghee | ½ tsp ground cinnamon |
| 1 tsp cumin seeds | 4 tbs water |
| 2 fresh chillies, seeded and minced | 1 cup (175 g) brown sugar |

Hold the pineapple upright and pare off the skin with a sharp knife, then dig out the eyes. Cut the pineapple lengthwise into quarters, and remove the core from each quarter. Then cut each quarter lengthwise into three strips, and cut each strip into chunks. Set the pineapple aside in a bowl.

Heat the *ghee* in a saucepan and fry the cumin seeds and chillies until they darken. Toss in the turmeric and ground cinnamon; then immediately follow with the pineapple chunks. After stir-frying for 4 or 5 minutes, add the water. Cover the pan. Cook over low heat for 15 minutes, stirring every now and then. Remove the cover and continue to cook until most of the liquid is cooked off. Finally, stir in the sugar and cook over the same low heat until the chutney thickens again (about 10 minutes).

Pineapple chutney can be served with *puris* towards the end of a meal, or with another dessert such as *shrikhand* or *kulfi*.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 min

Narial chatni

Coconut chutney

Take care to buy coconuts that are fresh. There should be no cracks in the shells, and they should be heavy with milk. The coconut milk should smell pleasant and taste sweet. If it smells oily and tastes sour, the coconut will be sour. Coconut chutney goes well with dosas, and can be used as a dip for savories such as *doklas*, *pakoras*, and *gajar vadas*.

| | |
|---|--|
| 1½ cups (200 g) fresh coconut or 1½ cups (100 g) desic- cated coconut | 1 tbs finely chopped fresh coriander leaves |
| 1 tbs granulated sugar | 2 or 3 fresh chillies, seeded and minced |
| 1 tbs grated fresh ginger | 3 tbs lemon juice |
| | ½ tsp salt |

Break the coconut and save the coconut milk. Detach the pulp from the shell and pare off the brown skin. Cut the pulp into small pieces and blend them in an electric blender with all the other ingredients. Add enough coconut milk or water to make the mixture smooth. If you don't have a blender, grate the coconut and use a mortar and pestle or a grinding stone to make a smooth mixture. As an alternative to coconut milk or water, you can use 1¼ cups (300 ml) yogurt, which gives a creamier texture.

Preparation time: 20 min

Dhanya chatni

Fresh coriander chutney

Fresh coriander can be recognized, by its smell and by its leaves, which are feathery on the top of the plant and fan-like on the bottom. When making coriander chutney, use only the upper, leafy portions of the plant; the lower stalks become stringy when pulverized.

Coriander chutney should be eaten on the same day it is made. The yogurt makes it a relatively mild chutney. A small amount—two or three tablespoons—is sufficient with a meal.

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 oz (50 g) fresh coriander leaves (weight without stems) | 3 tbs lemon or lime juice |
| 4 tbs grated coconut | 1 cup (250 g) plain yogurt |
| 1 tbs fresh ginger, grated | 1 tsp sugar |
| 1 or 2 fresh chillies, chopped | 1 tsp salt |
| | $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin seeds, roasted and ground |

Thoroughly wash the coriander leaves and chop them fine. Put all the ingredients into an electric blender. Mix until they form a smooth paste.

Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Preparation time: 15 min

Pudina chatni

Fresh mint chutney

This chutney goes well in small quantities with any meal.

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|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2 oz (50 g) fresh mint leaves | 4 tbs lemon juice |
| 1 tbs grated fresh ginger | 1 tsp salt |
| 2 fresh chillies, minced | 2 tsp sugar |

Wash the mint thoroughly and shake it dry. Use only the leaves and the thinnest stalks; discard the thick stems. Blend all the ingredients together in an electric blender, with just enough water to make a smooth paste.

Serve, preferably chilled.

For a tasty chutney using both mint and coriander leaves, mix the same ingredients in an electric blender, and add only 1 oz (25 g) of mint leaves. Add 1 oz (25 g) of coriander leaves, 3 oz (75 g) of roasted or deep-fried peanuts, and 2 oz (50 g) of tamarind pulp (see page 84). Blend well. This recipe may take about 10 minutes longer than *pudina chatni*.

Preparation time: 15 min

Khajur imli ki chatni

Date and tamarind chutney

This chutney is simultaneously sweet, sour, and hot. It goes well with most fried savories.

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| 2 oz (50 g) tamarind | 2 tsp sugar |
| 1½ cups (275 ml) water | ½ tsp salt |
| ¾ cup (150 g) dates, pitted and chopped | ½ tsp ground cumin 1 pinch cayenne pepper |

Break the lump of tamarind into small pieces and boil them in the water for 10 minutes. Then pour the tamarind and water through a strainer. With a wooden spoon push as much of the pulp as possible through the strainer into the water, scraping the bottom of the strainer every few seconds. Continue until all the pulp has been extracted from the seeds and fiber.

To this juice, add all the other ingredients. Cook over medium heat, uncovered, until most of the liquid cooks off and the chutney takes on the consistency of marmalade. This chutney goes very well with savories such as *kathmir vadas*, *dahi vadas*, and *urad dal katchoris*.

Preparation and cooking time: 35 min

Aam chatni

Mango chutney

You may be surprised to discover that the flavor of a green, unripe mango may rival the flavor of a colorful ripe mango. Often the flesh beneath the skin of a green mango will be orange colored. Adding the sugar to this recipe will give the chutney a sweet and sour taste.

| | |
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| 1 large green mango | 1 tsp salt |
| 1 fresh chilli | 1 tsp sugar (optional) |
| ½ tsp grated fresh ginger | 2 tbs fresh mint leaves |

Peel the mango, cut the flesh off in strips, and scrape the rest off the seed. Chop the flesh. Then grind it with all the other ingredients in an electric blender (or in a mortar and pestle) to form a thick pulp. Serve portions of the chutney in small dishes as an accompaniment to a meal.

Preparation time: 15 min

Alu narial raita

Potato and coconut salad

This raita, consisting of boiled potatoes, grated coconut, and seasoned yogurt, goes well with any meal.

Potatoes are full of vitamins B, C, and G, plus minerals and protein. Don't use potatoes whose skins are greenish (they're apt to be bitter) or sprouted potatoes (they tend to be watery).

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| 6 medium-sized potatoes | 1 tbs grated fresh ginger |
| 1¾ cups (425 ml) plain yogurt | 1 fresh chilli, minced |
| 2 tsp salt | 2 firm ripe tomatoes |
| 1½ cups (100 g) grated coconut | washed and cut into 8 wedges each |
| 1 tbs ghee | several sprigs of parsley |
| 1 tsp black mustard seeds | |

Boil the potatoes until they are soft. Peel them, cut them into cubes, and put them in a bowl. Refrigerate.

Mix together the yogurt, salt, and grated coconut. Heat the ghee in a small pan; then toss in the mustard seeds. Cover the pan immediately so that the seeds don't jump all over the stove. When they finish popping, add the ginger and the chilli. Stir for a few seconds. Empty this *masala* into the bowl of yogurt, drop the potatoes in, mix, and toss gently to give the potatoes an even coating of the yogurt and the spices.

Serve chilled, garnished with a sprig of parsley and wedges of tomato.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 min

Opposite page: Alu narial raita



Kakri raita

Cucumber and yogurt salad

Hari Caran dasa, the headcook of Gopal's Restaurant in Auckland, New Zealand, says that cucumbers are at their best when they're about 10 inches (25 cm) long, firm, bright green, and shiny. If the skin is tough, you can peel or score it; if the seeds are large, it will be worth the extra time to scrape them out.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1/2 tsp cumin seeds | 1/2 tsp salt |
| 2 medium-sized cucumbers | 1/4 tsp ground black pepper |
| 1 1/4 cups (300 ml) plain yogurt | 2 pinches asafetida (optional) |
| 1/2 tsp garam masala | |

Dry-roast the cumin seeds and grind them into a powder. Wash the cucumbers and grate them through the large holes of a metal grater. Squeeze out the excess liquid and combine the grated cucumber with all the other ingredients in a mixing bowl. Toss. Serve chilled.

Preparation time: 15 min

Palak ka raita

Spinach and yogurt salad

Any kind of spinach or spinach-like leafy green can be used for palak ka raita. New Zealand spinach (which, by the way, is not a true spinach) can be easily grown at home all through the summer and fall.

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| 1 lb (450 g) fresh spinach, washed and stemmed | 1/2 tsp garam masala |
| 2 cups (475 ml) plain yogurt | 1/4 tsp ground black pepper |
| 1 tsp cumin seeds, dry-roasted | 1 tsp salt |
| | and ground |

Make sure the spinach is washed in several changes of water. Then plunge the leaves in boiling water for a minute or two to wilt them. Drain, press out the excess water, and chop the leaves coarse.

Put the yogurt in a large bowl with the spinach and other ingredients. Mix with a fork. *Palak ka raita* is tasty served with *puris* or as a refreshing side dish to an elaborate meal.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 min

Bundi raita

Chick-pea-flour pearls in seasoned yogurt

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 cup (100 g) chick-pea flour | 2 pinches cayenne pepper |
| 3 tsp salt | ghee for deep-frying |
| 1/4 cup (50 ml) cold water | 1/4 tsp paprika |
| 1/2 cup (275 ml) warm water | 1 tsp finely chopped fresh |
| 2 1/2 cups (600 ml) plain yogurt | coriander or parsley leaves |
| 1/2 tsp ground cumin | |

Sift the chick-pea flour into a large mixing bowl. Add 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Slowly pour in the cold water, mixing constantly, until you have a thick, smooth batter. Set aside. Dissolve 2 teaspoons of salt in the warm water and set aside also. Put the yogurt in a bowl with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt, the ground cumin (reserve a little for garnishing later), and the cayenne pepper. Mix well and refrigerate.

Heat the *ghee* for deep-frying over medium heat. The *ghee* is hot enough when a drop of batter put into it immediately rises to the surface and sizzles. Now hold over the *ghee* a colander with large holes (1/8 inch/3 mm). With the help of a spatula, push several spoonfuls of batter through the holes. Cover the surface of the *ghee* with droplets. They should cook slowly, for about 2 to 5 minutes, until golden-yellow. They should not turn brown. Test to see if the *bundis* are properly cooked by taking one out and pressing it between your fingers. If it is crisp, they are ready. Drop them in the salted water to soak. Transform all the batter into *bundis* and let them soak for 15 minutes.

Just before serving, take the *bundis* out of the water and squeeze them gently between the palms of your hands to remove the excess water. Be careful not to break them. Now mix most of the *bundis* into the yogurt and use the rest as a garnish. Sprinkle with the ground cumin, paprika, and chopped coriander leaves. Serve chilled.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 min

Soaking time: 15 min

Kela raita

Sliced bananas in yogurt sauce

This recipe comes from the monthly magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement, Back to Godhead, which has a section called "Lord Krishna's Cuisine." The recipes for this section come from Yamuna dasi, one of the best cooks in the Hare Krishna Movement. This is her favorite raita recipe.

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4 small, firm, ripe bananas | 2 tbs ghee or vegetable oil |
| 2 cups (475 ml) plain yogurt | 2 tsp black mustard seeds |
| 1 tsp salt | 1 fresh chilli, seeded |
| 1/2 tsp sugar | and chopped |
| 3 tbs chopped fresh | |
| mint leaves | |

Peel the bananas and cut them diagonally to make slices 1/8 inch (3 mm) thick. Set them aside. Whisk the yogurt, salt, sugar, and chopped mint leaves in a mixing bowl. Then add the sliced bananas.

In a small saucepan, heat the *ghee* or vegetable oil over medium heat. When it is hot, add the mustard seeds and cover the pan. Remove the pan from the heat when the seeds stop crackling and popping. Toss in the chilli, swirl the pan to mix the ingredients, then pour the seasonings into the yogurt and bananas. Mix well and cover. Refrigerate at least one hour before serving.

Preparation and cooking time: 10 min

Chilling time: 1 hr