

## **The step-by-step setup of your Halwa Puri offerings to DEVI**

Jai Mata Di. Firstly we at [www.dipika.org.za](http://www.dipika.org.za) are extremely humbled that our Devi's have allowed us to compile an article of this nature and gather information which has never been researched at this depth before. We thus humbly dedicate this article to the sacred lotus feet of all our Divine Mothers esp. to Srimati Durga Devi and Srimati Sarasvati Devi. In any puja to Devi, particularly in Her Divine forms as Mothers Durga/Bandi/Kali, Halwa + Puri and other ingredients are offered to Her. Many have been offering Devi, Halwa + Puri but have never had an idea as to why. So, below we are furnishing you with shastric proof of Halwa + Puri and its importance in Devi puja. We pray to the Divine Mother Saraswati so that Devi blesses us, so that we can compile such an article. Jai Mata Di.

### **CONTENTS IN THIS ARTICLE**

Pages 1-2:-	Quotes from the Srimad Devi Bhagavatam.
Pages 2-4:-	The step by step setup of the Halwa Puri.
Pages 4-5:-	Why is a banana leaf used as a base for the Halwa Puri to be place on?
Pages 5-6:-	Offering of the Nimbu (Lemon/Lime) Lamp to Devi
Pages 6-7:-	Offering of the Nimbu (Lemon/Lime) garland to Devi
Pages 7-8:-	Nimbu Pani and other beverages for Devi.
Pages 8-9:-	Puri Recipe
Pages 9-10:-	Payasam (sweet rice) Recipe.
Pages 10-11:-	Articles of interest pertaining to this article on <a href="http://www.dipika.org.za">www.dipika.org.za</a> .
Page 12:-	Dipika's Disclaimers

When we posted the pictures of our Durga Paath puja in Kartik Purnima in 2015 on Facebook many then have requested us at Dipika to advise on the step by step of how we have arranged the setting so beautifully.

The information provided below is procured from the Srimad Devi Bhagavatam.

**Srimad Devi Bhagavatam 8<sup>th</sup> book chapter 24 "On the worship of the Devi"**

Lord Narayana (a.k.a Lord Vishnu) said:- O Devarsi Narada the worshipper is to offer cake flour (PURI) to Devi. The Lord said it is a rule to give an offering of Payasam (Sweet Rice, known as Devi Payasa). Lord Narayana said the Mother becomes very pleased when one offers to Her the following items:- payasa, gram (pulses), Jambira (lemon/lime citrus fruits)...

**Srimad Devi Bhagavatam The 11<sup>th</sup> Book chapter 18 called "The greatness of Devi Puja".** Narada spoke:- O Bhagavan! I'm now very eager to hear the special Puja of Shree Devi." Lord Narayana said:- O Devarsi! I shall now specially speak to you how Mother Bhagavati (another name for Mother Durga) is worshipped. Offer Devi heaps of food consisting of six Raasas (Tastes viz pungent, bitter, spicy, sweet, **salty**, and astringent), the plates and dishes for chewing, sucking, licking and drinking, that is, all kinds of food solid, and liquid, mountain-like high. Always offer food on golden (if possible) flat plates and cups and various delicious sweet juicy nice heavenly fruits (like pomegranate or apple, grape, orange, coconut juices to name a few), nicely arranged on trays, cups and saucers. When Shree Mahadevi Bhuvaneshvari gets pleased, the whole universe gets pleased. Offer Devi betels (leaf and nut) with cardamom (elachie), cloves, and various delicious scents. These all are to be offered with great devotion so

that Devi will be pleased. Devi is pleased with anybody who remembers Her even once! What wonder then that She will be pleased with all these offerings! The Mother is naturally merciful to her child. When She is loved with devotion, then She becomes very merciful. There is nothing strange here!

**DO NOTE:-** When preparing any offerings to Devi or to any Deity for that matter, I always strongly suggest that 1) one must (of course) have a bath and wear clean clothes, 2) talking is not allowed (one may cover his/her mouth with a cloth) as the saliva from one's mouth can easily enter into the offerings thus rendering the offerings soiled and unfit for Devi to consume), 3) no shoes should be worn (unless it's only used in the kitchen area), 4) when preparing offerings to Devi one should mentally chant (one should avoid chanting out loud – the only reasoning being that saliva could enter the preparations, and make them unclean to offer to Devi), Her mantras for example “Om doom durgaayai namah”, etc. as the vibrations enters into the offerings, Devi will be accepting.

The devotee should offer heaps of food consisting of the \*\*\* 6 Rasas (Tastes viz. pungent, bitter, spicy, sweet, **SALTY**, and astringent), mountain-like high {KINDLY VIEW THE PICTURES BELOW ON THE SETTING ON THESE ITEMS}. Also Lord Narayana states that one should offer Devi “Betels (leaf and nut) with cardamom (elachie), cloves, and various delicious scents”.

Presentation and cleanliness is of utmost importance when one offers any Bhoga (un-offered food) to any deity. On this tray which is meant to be for Mother Durga a small tray is used as that will be place on the Koicha (lap) of Mata. Always offer preps in odd numbers. Why? Even numbers denotes ending and odd numbers denotes continuity.

- 1) So on a tray (thari) cut a banana leaf to the shape of the tray.
- 2) Next place the 2 hot puri's on the banana leaf (it should be hot as the chlorophyll on the banana leaf gets released thus when eaten induces digestion and a whole lot of other positive health benefits).
- 3) Then place a large betel leaf on top of the puri with the point of the betel leaf facing you. (DO NOT BREAK THE TIP OF THE BETEL LEAF)
- 4) Then place some halwa on the betel leaf.
- 5) Then place some Sweet rice (kheer) on the betel leaf.
- 6) Then place 3 types of cut fruits (suggested-ly Banana, pear, red grapes or apple) on the betel leaf.
- 7) Then place 3 types of mittai (sweets) on the betel leaf.
- 8) Then place one whole clove on the betel leaf.
- 9) Then place one whole elachie on the betel leaf.
- 10) Then place 3 Channa dal - which should be soaked over night and then boiled in the morning until soft. Then use Himalayan salts {which is fairly pure and healthy} to season. Do not use general table salt as that is processed hence not advisable for use.
- 11) Then place one flat (black betel nut) on the betel leaf.
- 12) Then place one Tikli on the puri.
- 13) Then dot the Puri with sindhur (Red)

14) Then place 2 bangles over the preps. I humbly suggest glass bangles (but according to your financial situation).

15) Then cut a little serviette and tuck in the puri like in the picture (bottom right).

16) Finally place one whole flower and then decorate with some flower petals (like in the picture). Women like Mother Durga looooooove flowers, so why not give Her what she likes. Kindly set the offering in the order I have stated.

\*\*\* The 6 Rasas mentioned above are elaborated even more now. 1) **LAVANA (Salty)** – Betel nut, Puri, 2) **MADHURA (Sweet)** – Halwa, sweet rice, betel nut, cardamom, mithai, puri, fruits, 3) **AMLA (Sour)** – Fruits, betel nut, 4) **KATU (Bitter)** – Betel nut, 5) **TIKTA (Pungent)** – Betel leaf, betel nut, cloves, elachie, 6) **KASHYA (Astringent)** – Channa dal, betel nut, cloves, puri, fruits. The recipes for the ingredients (like Puri) are provided at the end of this article.



Why is a banana leaf used as a base for the Halwa Puri to be placed on?

Our Awesome ancestors commonly used banana leaves to eat food instead of plates. There are lots of benefits for this. Placing the Halwa Puri and its “mountain-like high foods” on the banana leaf awakens the digestive acids to digest the offerings that Mother Durga is going to consume. Also the hot Puri when placed on the banana leaf, the leaf gets sweltered thus absorbing the chlorophyll in that leaf. Not only that, a flavour is produced at that time, that awakens the six tastes of that person. Amazing, isn't it? :) One should sit thankfully in front of

the food. When thanking, one should remember about that plant and how it was cultivated. Secondly, when thanking the chef and how the food was prepared should come to one's mind. Thirdly, when thanking the one who serves, we can see the food in front. Next we thank God, and then the environment, the condition and the situation comes to mind. "Thus, we thought about the food for four times before eating it. Now our body is completely fit to digest the food that we are going to eat because, by this time, all the acids were produced to digest the food. That is why it's advised to refrain from talking whilst eating. Don't eat food while talking or when watching television. The body will react according to the taxing or feisty scene that we view. This will affect the body harmfully. Mind and food was the base for everything for our former generation. They lived according to that. But today it's not like that. Some of the readers of this article may disagree with these comments, but how can one disagree and say that this is not correct. Eating on a banana leaf helps in the prevention of diseases like Diabetes, Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Cancer, Ulcer, Heart diseases, Piles. If anyone in your family is suffering from any of these diseases mentioned above, please read this and share with others.

So why 2 Puri's? After the Puja is over and when the offerings are eaten, the glass bangles are worn on the wrist of the devotee (who is eating the prashad), the Tikli is placed on the forehead of the devotee, the "landmines a.k.a the clove and elachie" is taken out of this offering and kept aside, as well as the hard betel nut. Then the bottom puri is placed on the top making it look like a "sandwich" and when the devotee eats this offerings she/he breaks her/his salt-less fast with this salted puri.

Some or many would ask but why do I "seem" to go over board with the offerings I set out on the tray. Good question and we have none other than Mother Durga Herself providing us with the reasons. Durga Saptashati (Markandeya Purana) Chapter 12, Durga Devi said "I will accept with love the sacrifice and worship that are made in the offerings to Me. This glorification of mine draws a devotee very near to Me and by the means of the finest flowers, incenses, perfumes, lamps and various other offerings and gifts I will accept."

The next picture is totally optional and it is something I learnt from cooking in temples. On a separate little tray place 1 betel leaf (for digestion), one flat betel nut (for digestion), one clove (for scenting the mouth and killing off any bacteria that maybe in the mouth after eating), 1 elachie (for digestion), little soomph (for scenting the mouth and for digestion), 1 teaspoon to consume the Sweet rice and other foods, 1 toothpick, 1 serviette for Mata to wipe Her hand or mouth. Finally a small finger bowl of warm water for Mata to wash Her hands after eating Her foods. The above may seem rather excessive but I was taught by the best to offer the best to our deities.





**Srimad Devi Bhagavatam The 8th and 11th Books.**

**SALT** and its importance in Hinduism (<http://dipika.org.za/popular-articles/>) (kindly click on the link provided to get a detailed answer to why salt is added to the Puri mixture) Btw the black betel nut is just one of two edibles on earth that has all 6 tastes (the other being the Amla fruit) viz pungent, bitter, spicy, sweet, salty, and astringent. So all these years by offering the black betel nut natural salt was already in the offering via the black betel nut.

In Chatsworth, KZN, South Africa many priests advises to break off the tip of the betel leaf and the reason given is that it is poisonous. There is no shastric proof to break off the tip of a betel leaf otherwise I would have advised that. When offering a betel leaf or clove it must be complete and not torn etc then it is appropriate to be offered to a Deity.

**Offering of the Nimbu (Lemon/Lime) Lamp to Devi**



Srimad Devi Bhagavatam 8<sup>th</sup> book chapter 24 “On the worship of the Devi”

Lord Narayana said:- O Devarsi Narada, Devi becomes very pleased when one offers to Her the following item:- Jambira (lemon/lime citrus fruits). Durga Saptashati (Markandeya Purana) Chapter 12, Durga Devi said “I will accept with love the sacrifice and worship that are made in the offerings to Me. This glorification of mine draws a devotee very near to Me and by the means of the finest flowers, incenses, perfumes, lamps and various other offerings and gifts I will accept”

Hence we offer Devi a Nimbu Lamp as this pleases our warrior goddess immensely.

**Requirements:-** You will need a large lime, handful of white rice or basmati rice, butter ghee, one wick, one inch aluminum foil and a shallow clay lamp.

**Method:-** Now roll the lime until the insides are fairly soft. Then cut the lime in half. Then remove the insides of the lime (keep the fleshy parts aside for later use). Invert the lime so the inside part is now on the outside. Wipe the lime with a paper towel. Add ghee and a wick in the lime. Where the wick is place the foil so the wick rests on the foil. The reason for the foil is that the wick don't burn the skin of the lime. In the shallow clay lamp add the rice and then place the nimbu lamp on the rice (this is done so that the nimbu lamp has balance and not fall over. Also rice represents Annapurna devi. Anna in Sanskrit means grains. And Annapurna devi is a form of Mother Durga who nourishes us with grains and from which flour is derived and so forth.

When Devi is invoked by the Pundit then the lamp is lit which pleases Devi immensely.

### **Offering of the Nimbu (Lemon/Lime) garland to Devi**

So following from the previous page where Devi is pleased with offerings to Her. In all South Indian prayers to the Mother, it is a must to offer Devi a Nimbu Garland as this pleases Devi immensely. In Sanskrit, the lemon fruit is translated as "Nimbu phala".



In Satya Yuga, there lived a Rakshasa (demon) by name Nimbasura who had the blessings and boons of Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma. He was a fanatical Lord Shiva bhakta and used to perform much prayers to Lord Shiva daily. He used to adorn bhasma (ashes) on his forehead at all times. With this, he literally looked like another avatar of Lord Shiva. He ruled his kingdom with the name of Lord Shiva on his lips. But this demon created havoc on this earth. Sage Agasthya performed penances, contemplating on Devi to end the demon's misdeeds. Pleased with the sage's penance, the Mother appeared and killed Nimbasura thus ending the great famine. She brought back vegetation on earth and since then she is worshiped as Shakambhari Devi (Sanskrit "Shakha" – fruits and vegetation, "Ambhari" the one that nourishes us). Before dying, the demon gained divine knowledge and prayed the Mother to give him permanent place in her holy feet. The most merciful Mother gave him that boon and henceforth Nimbasura adore her in the form of Nimbu phala. Thus after killing the demon Nimbasura she assumed the name - Nimishamba Devi.

When Maharishi Vyasa commenced to compile the Devi Purana, he first invoked Devi and asked Devi, ""Mother, please let me know the esoteric meaning of the lime fruit"", To which Devi replied, ""Veda-Vyasa, you are an avatar of Lord Krishna, you are all knowing, however let me clarify your doubts for the sake of greater good of humankind". ""The lime fruit is derived from the essence of Nimbasura, the layers inside this fruit is a representation of Nimbasura's powers, its seeds, represent birth and death, its juice represents the attachment and devotion Nimbasura has for me. It also represents the Moksha I have granted him. The leaves of the tree represent the boons Shiva and I bestowed upon him. When a garland of limes adorns me, I assume the form of Nimishamba. Whoever offers me the juice of limes out of genuine love and affection shall receive my blessings and protection, just like Nimbasura derived from me."" Saying this, Devi left Veda-Vyasa after blessing him.

### **Nimbu Pani (Lemon water)**

Continuing from above ... It is due to these words of Devi that a drink called panaka {a beverage or drink} made from limes came into existence in this world. Panaka is a sweet drink prepared with jaggery (a form of sugar), lots of lemon and pepper. This is an Indian version of lemonade and uses jaggery instead of sugar. Cardamom, fine pepper powder, and grated ginger are also added to make this refreshing drink. After killing Nimbasura, Devi, who was in Her ugra roopa (a very angry form), and filled with Pitta {one of the three Doshas or bodily humors as per Ayurveda, Pitta is the Hot, light, intense, penetrating, pungent, sharp, and acidic dosha. Those with a predominance of the Pitta principle have a fiery nature that manifests in both body and mind}. On seeing this Ugra roopa of Devi, the devas chanted Shanti (cooling) mantras and offered her panaka made from this fruit, after which she cooled down. With this, Panaka prepared from lime fruit became her favourite cooling drink. The insides of the lime that was from the Nimbu lamp is used here.



Srimad Devi Bhagavatam The 11<sup>th</sup> Book chapter 18 called “The greatness of Devi Puja”. Narada spoke:- O Bhagavan! I'm now very eager to hear the special Puja of Shree Devi.” Lord Narayana said:- O Devarsi! I shall now specially speak to you how Mother Bhagavati (another name for Mother Durga) is worshipped. Offer Devi heaps of food consisting of six Raasas (Tastes viz pungent, bitter, spicy, sweet, **salty**, and astringent), the plates and dishes for chewing, sucking, licking and drinking, that is, all kinds of food solid, and liquid, mountain-like high. Always offer food on golden (if possible) flat plates and cups and various delicious sweet juicy nice heavenly fruits (like pomegranate or apple, grape, orange, coconut juices to name a few), nicely arranged on trays, cups and saucers.



From left to right in front of Devi's offerings are a cup of camphor water, cup of Nimbu pani with mint leaves, a cup of apple juice, a cup of orange juice and a cup of coconut water with mint leaves.

So when Devi has her Halwa puri offering on her Koicha (lap), generally a lota/chumbhu Dhaar is kept near Her. But why can't one offer Devi a variety of drinks. When one has lunch with friends or family I am pretty sure that there are a variety of drinks like water, tea, cool drinks are placed on that table so in the same way why can't we offer Devi the same.

### **Puri Recipe**

**Ingredients:-** 1 cup wheat flour, about 1/2 cup water {some use cold while others hot} (or as needed to make a pliable dough, this may vary depending on the quality of flour), sugar and \*\*\* salt (view below).

**Method:-** Stir the flour in a bowl. Add salt and water - little by little - to the dough until it comes together into a pliable dough. Add little by little while kneading. You can also add 1 tbsp or so of the hot oil (that you are heating for deep frying) to the dough. The final consistency should not be too tight (dry) or too soft (wet). Knead it well until smooth. The dough should not



be totally sticky (*only lightly sticky*) or feel dry in your hands. Make small round balls out of it. These will depend on how big a frying pan you have.

**Tip 1:** Do not let the dough sit. Usually for roti(s), the dough sits for some time which makes the dough very soft. But for Puris this rule does not apply. Letting it sit for too long makes it prone to soaking up lots of oil while frying. Hence use the dough immediately to make the Puris. Roll it out into small circles with thin-medium thickness. Don't make it too thin or else it will come out crispy. Repeat for all dough. Alternatively heat oil for deep frying. Do the "oil-temperature" test to see if it's ready. The oil should be hot but not too hot that it smokes.

**Tip 2:** Drop a small piece of dough into the oil. The dough should fry up immediately and come to the surface. You know the oil is not hot enough when the puri does not puff up and is flat and instead also it soaks up the oil. Now drop the puri into the oil. While the puri is slowly coming to the surface, make sure to keep ladling in the hot oil on the surface. This helps the puri to puff up. Turn it so that it gets evenly reddish brown or golden yellow (*however you prefer*). Place it on paper towel to drain off any excess oil. If fried correctly, it will retain very little oil. Serve it with side dish of your choice.

\*\*\* The issue which many will raise is the addition of salt, as most Hindu's know that salt is not added to the Puri mixture and Channa Dal. So why have I mentioned the addition of **SALT** in the Puri mixture and Channa Dal? Let me explain... When one performs a Durga/Devi Puja, one observes a saltless fast, many aspirants don't even drink water. So when one offers a Puri to the Mother, do remember Mata is not saltless fasting - rather we are saltless fasting for her. After the puja is completed and when one partakes in the Halwa Puri (which is given to the lady of the house first), she thereafter consumes that prashad, she breaks her salt-fast with the blessed salted Puri. So why are you hearing this for the first time? Hmmm I have no idea... Common sense and practicality should always prevail. The Betel leaf is heart shaped hence it seems Devi is giving us a clue about something (of course this is speculation on my part but I am a Hindu that likes to do things differently and love thinking outside the box), so why not make the Puri the shape of a heart like the betel leaf. I do this to show my love to Devi. I'm sure she will be smiling because I'm preparing something that's really not prepared by most... I presume. The Chana Dal should be soaked overnight, and the next morning boiled until it's soft and then sprinkle some Himalayan salts {which is fairly pure and healthy} to season. Do not use general table salt as that is processed hence not advisable for use. Most Hindus just soak the Dal and it's still very hard to eat, so if it's hard to digest for most then why are we giving Devi to consume this.

**Payasam** (Sweet Rice/Kheer – a preparation consisting of rice, milk, and gur {sugar}) known as Devi Payasa. How to make Payasam.

**Ingredients:** 1 litre Milk (Full cream), 1/4 cup short grain Basmati rice (soaked for a few hours), 1/4 cup sugar + 1/8 cup more if needed, 1/4 tsp cardamom powder (Elachie), a few strands of saffron, 2 tbsp raisins, 2 tbsp almonds (Soaked for 4-5 hours) and pistachio to garnish in the end.

**Method:-** Use a thick bottomed pan and add a little water (2 tbs). Adding water to the pan before boiling milk reduces the chance of the milk from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Add milk to the pan and boil it. After it comes to a boil add the rice. Short grain rice is preferable for use in kheer as they get mixed uniformly resulting in a thicker kheer. Soak the saffron strands in 2 tbs milk in a separate bowl. After giving rice and milk mixture a boil reduce the gas flame to low and let it simmer for 1/2 hour. Rice kheer should always be cooked on low gas flame. It tastes much better this way and there is less chance of it sticking to the bottom of the pan. Keep on stirring in between and after 30 minutes the kheer will be thick and rice grains would be very soft. Add sugar (gur), cardamom powder, saffron and washed raisins to the mixture and give it another boil. After 5 minutes switch off the flame. Let the kheer cool. Remove the skin of soaked almonds. Garnish the Kheer with pistachio and almond slivers. You can use almonds without soaking as well. (Do note pistachios and almonds are optional as these items are a luxury and expensive).



#### **ARTICLES OF INTEREST PERTAINING TO THIS ARTICLE:-**

\* Mother Durgas' Favorite Foods According To The Puranas

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* Hinduism's views on Menstruation

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* The Importance of Fasting Saltless and Saltless Recipes

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* Devya-padha-kshama-pana-stotram – by Adi Shankaracharya

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* Halwa Puri Puja for Ma Durga and Havan

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* Hinduism on sex when observing a particular fast.

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* SALT and its importance in Hinduism

Kindly control click ([\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) to download this article.

\* The Importance of Dhaar and Halwa Puri in Devi Puja

Kindly control click ([HERE](#)) to download this article.

\* Widows and their place in Hinduism

Kindly control click ([HERE](#)) to download this article.

\* Widows (FAQ'S) and their place in Hinduism

Kindly control click ([HERE](#)) to download this article.



**DISCLAIMER 1:-** Do note that the information given above is given with good faith. Dipika's free services are not intended to be a substitute for any medical care. The information above is intended for general education purposes and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional and/or medical advice.

**DISCLAIMER 2:-** Do note that Dipika is not affiliated to any Hindu group or organization. We at Dipika choose to remain an independent repository of spiritual advice. We appreciate that there are variances between organisations and humbly request that if our views differ from yours that you respect our decision not to conform to the prescripts of your particular organisation. We remain committed to spiritual advice which is based on scripture.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. Jai Hind...Jai Mata Di. All glories to our Divine and Amazing Mothers.





Please do visit our Website to receive more  
free information about our beautiful culture

[www.dipika.org.za](http://www.dipika.org.za)

Compiled for the upliftment of Sanatan Dharma

Narottam das & Arjun Nandlal

Email [info@dipika.org.za](mailto:info@dipika.org.za)

**#Team-Dipika**