

The Importance of Fasting Saltless and Saltless Recipes

The Importance of Fasting (Vrata)

In all religions fasting is considered very important. In Hinduism it's the essence of life. All the religious ceremonies are preceded by a period of fasting. The meaning of fasting is to reach the heavens and also to fulfil one's desires. By fasting, one's inner self is purified and one enjoys sound health, long life, intelligence, devotion, purity, removes impending difficulties and incidents that can be avoided.

Fasting can be classified into three types:-

KAAIKA VRATA – (Physical fasting):- entails abstaining from any food for the entire day or having just one vegetarian meal in the evening after sunset or eating just fruits for the day.

VAACHIK VRATA – (Speech fasting):- entails speaking the truth, speaking sparingly, melodiously, or the abstinence from speech.

MAANASIKA VRATA – (Fasting for the mind):- entails simplicity, non-violence, restraint, celibacy, friendliness.

When one consumes heavy foods, the blood circulation is accelerated towards the digestive organs, on account of which blood circulation to the head gets decreased after food is consumed and one would feel sleepy and the thinking faculty practically ceases to function. Hence, there is no advantage in giving the physical system work on days you want to perform devotional service unto God. There is a necessity to give the physiological system some rest once in a while. It may be over-worked due to a little over-eating or indiscretion in diet. The underlying principle behind fasting is to be found in Ayurveda. This ancient Indian medical system sees the basic cause of many diseases as the accumulation of toxic materials in the digestive system. Regular cleansing of toxic materials keeps one healthy. By fasting, the digestive organs get rest and all body mechanisms are cleansed and corrected. A complete fast is good for health, and the occasional intake of warm lemon juice during the period of fasting prevents the flatulence. Since the human body, as explained by Ayurveda, is composed of 60% liquid and 40% solid, like the earth, the gravitational force of the moon affects the fluid contents of the body. It causes emotional imbalances in the body, making some people tense, irritable and violent. Fasting acts as an antidote, for it lowers the acid content in the body which helps the devotee to retain their sanity. One who dry fasts (i.e. abstains from consuming water) should break fast the next morning approximately one hour after sunrise with a mixture of 50-50 hot milk and water sweetened with sugar. The effects of this drink loosen the toxins in the intestines where all the toxins have been absorbed during the fast. This expels the toxins within ½ hr.

The whole idea about fasting is to abstain from salt. Why you may ask???

Fasting in Hinduism indicates the denial of the physical needs of the body for the sake of spiritual gains. Salt (Table-salt sodium-chloride {NaCl}) is an integral part of our diet. Abstaining from salt {NaCl} is a huge sacrifice. It's common knowledge that excess salt causes hypertension or elevation of blood pressure. Since the point of a fast is to make progression and not regression in one's life, one should fast according to one's capacity and circumstances. The best method of fasting is to abstain from everything, including water, but if one's physical condition will not permit this, then one should rather not pursue this method. The next best step is to consume water only, and the next on fruits only. Thereafter we enter the realm of mono-diets; some of these are inclusive (e.g. milk only), while others are exclusive (e.g. no salt {NaCl}). In this day of age it's very difficult for most to abstain from water so the next best thing is to abstain from salt {NaCl}.

The difference between Sodium (Na) and Sodium Chloride (NaCl)

What follows is a basic crash course in Chem-101. Technically a salt can be any ionic compound formed by reacting an acid and a base, but most of the time the word is used to refer to “Table-Salt”, which is sodium chloride or NaCl. So, you know salt contains sodium and chloride, but these two chemicals aren't the same thing. When we observe a "salt fast", we abstain from table salt (Sodium Chloride). Sodium, on its own is not a salt, it's a metal (an element). There are many other forms of salts in foods, some occurring naturally and some added (phosphates, chlorides, chromate's, etc. that are not sodium chloride). We are not required to fast from these salts, BUT only from sodium chloride (NaCl). Sodium also combines with other compounds, forming salts, e.g. Sodium Bicarbonate, Sodium Phosphate, etc. “Salt” is a compound Sodium-Chloride. If it says sodium chloride, then only you should consider it as “Salt”. It's like saying everything with oxygen has water (H₂O). Sodium is very reactive and isn't found free in nature. In fact, it undergoes spontaneous combustion in water, so while sodium is essential for human nutrition, you wouldn't want to eat pure sodium! When you ingest salt, the sodium and the chlorine ions in sodium chloride separate from each other, making the sodium available for your body to use. Sodium is used to transmit nerve impulses and is found in every cell of your body. The balance between sodium and other ions regulates the pressure of cells and is related to your blood pressure, too. Because sodium levels are so critical to so many chemical reactions in your body, the amount of sodium you eat or drink has important implications for your health. If you are trying to regulate or limit your intake of sodium, you need to realize the quantity of salt (NaCl) you consume is related to the amount of sodium, but is not the same. This is because salt contains both sodium and chlorine, so when salt dissociates into its ions, the mass is divided (not equally but 40% sodium and 60% chloride) between sodium and chlorine ions. The reason salt isn't just half sodium and half chlorine is because a sodium ion and a chlorine ion don't weight the same amount. It's that 40% that causes so much concern among doctors today. Their findings point to the dangers of people overdoing salt intake in their daily diets. High blood pressure, strokes, and kidney disease have all been associated with excessive salt intake.

The amount of natural sodium in foods varies. These include most vegetables and salad items (potatoes, carrots, spinach, lemons, beets, celery (etc)), peanuts, other types of nuts and dairy products such as milk, and non-vegetarian foods.

The main idea about fasting for a particular planet (graha) is to abstain from something that very important and dear to our body viz. SALT (Table-salt sodium-chloride {NaCl}). When one consumes *** “added salt {NaCl}” on a day that a particular planet is malevolent towards one (due to one's past karma), then that deity becomes like a magnet to create obstacles on that person's path and has all the reason to send his malefic rays to that individual and thus creating many obstacles in that person's life. On the other hand if one doesn't have “added salt” in his foods on that particular day that, that planet is malefic towards him/her, then that planet cannot harm that person in any way. So now you can see how important it is not to consume salt on that day. Hence “added Salt” in foods are avoided as far as possible.

POINTS TO PONDER OVER:- Many who observe a planetary/Graha fast do not perform the fast in the correct manner and that's why when the fast is complete there's still no improvement. The reason for this is that people are told that they must firstly fast from sunrise of the day of the fast to sunset of the (same) day of the fast. Now this is incorrect as the fast starts from sunrise and ends sunrise the following morning hence the fast for a

particular planet should be for 24 hours and not 12 hours. And secondly they abstain from meat and not salt. Now this is incorrect. I have heard on numerous occasions “Oh I am fasting today”, but when I inquire from them they say they are not eating meat. This is the so-called Indian way of fasting and is totally incorrect.

So one should rather observe the vrata concentrating on one's prayers at hand than rather on the foods to consume. We do not wish to argue the merits of the various approaches but we provide the following information as a guide to allow individuals to decide which option to exercise.

SALT SUBSTITUTES??? :-

***** FASTING SALT:-** In South African Prayer shops I have come across “Fasting salt” (a.k.a. Rock Salt, Sendha Namak, Saindhava Lavana). Remember although Rock Salt is very beneficial for one's health as compared to the mass produced table-salt (NaCl), STILL it's salt as it consists of Sodium-chloride hence it can't be used in the preparations below.

******* Seaweed granules are also marketed as alternatives to salt for the future. However, various diseases and medications may decrease the body's excretion of potassium, thereby increasing the risk of potentially fatal hyperglycaemia. Those who suffer from kidney problems, heart problems or diabetes should not use salt substitutes without medical advice. A manufacturer, “[LoSalt](#)”, has issued an advisory statement that people taking the following prescription drugs should not use a salt substitute: amiloride, triamterene, Dytac, captopril & other angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, spironolactone, aldactone, eplerenone, and Inspra.

“Saltless” Recipes

Below we provide some really tasty “saltless” recipes - but we would like to elaborate why it's so important to observe a fast when trying to appease a certain planetary Deity. In a bid to assist those aspirants who are undertaking a specific vrat (fast) to abstain from salt (NaCl) or those who simply for health reasons have chosen to decrease or eliminate salt from their diets, we have provided a list of ingredients which are “table-salt (sodium-chloride - NaCl)” free. Most of Dipika's recipes are free from onion and garlic but this is optional and if you choose so, you can add them.

***** FLOURS AND GRAINS:-**

Flax seeds, plain (cake) flour, self raising flour, honey, sugar (whole, fine or powdered) and vanilla pods are all acceptable.

Baking powder contains sodium bicarbonate (which is acceptable), but it also includes the acidifying agent already (cream of tartar), & also a drying agent (usually starch) which are fine.

Breakfast Cereal (of course, check for any traces of sodium chloride {NaCl} content)

Semolina or tasty wheat. Jungle oats, puffed rice are all acceptable.

***** FRUITS:-**

Almost all fruit including whole dates are acceptable as it has natural salts in it. Many varieties of Jam are sodium chloride free but do check labels for NaCl (Salt).

***** STARCHES:-**

Pasta, rice (white and brown) and mealie meal (including samp) are whole foods without preservatives and table-salt (NaCl) is added only when cooking. These foods can be consumed remembering to eliminate table-salt when cooking.

***** NUTS:-**

Most nuts has Sodium and is used.

*** OILS:-

Most cooking oils (Sunfoil, Sunflower in South Africa) and pure butter ghee has no salt. Be on the look out for unsalted butter at your local supermarket which can be more economical for a few preparations than butter ghee.

*** **SPICES and HERBS** are all acceptable although some like Fennel, Parsley, Jeera (cumin), dill, rosemary, basil, cinnamon, cloves, paprika, oregano, ginger, garlic, vinegar, nutmeg has Sodium and is used.

*** VEGETABLES:-

Vegetables are all acceptable. Carrots, Spinach, Celery and Beets as it contains Sodium.

*** MILK PRODUCTS:-

* MILK, Buttermilk (some products may contain NaCl), Goat's Milk:- Is fine as it has sodium.

* CHEESE has SALT NaCl, so NO

* Maas, Yogurt (some products may contain NaCl)... So kindly check first.

*** LIQUIDS:-

* **WATER:-** Some Boroughs around the world add sodium in their water to soften the water. We are rather fortunate in South Africa we do have one of the highest qualities of water standards. So knowing how much sodium is in your water may be important to your health. Sodium, a mineral found naturally in some drinking water, is added to water when the water is "hard" to soften it. The level of sodium in water is particularly important to people who have to watch their sodium intake for health reasons. So, sodium in water around the world - the amount varies depending on the source. Water labelled as "drinking water" in supermarkets may have sodium since it is usually only filtered with a carbon filter and will contain any and all sodium present in the source water. So drinking water with sodium is fine as long as it don't contain Sodium Chloride.

* **FRESH JUICES:-** is fine, do check to see if it has any Sodium Chloride or any other "funny" looking names, you rather avoid those. Rather only have pure fresh juices.

MILK SHAKES:- Banana Milkshake

1 frozen ripe banana, cut into chunks, 1 cup whole milk, 1-2 tablespoons sugar, 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract. Blend all ingredients until smooth using a hand blender or traditional blender. Drink immediately. **Yield:** two servings. You can use Avocados or Strawberries as a substitute to a banana.

YOGURT SMOOTHIES:- Strawberry Banana Smoothie. Smoothie Ingredients - 1 Cup Fresh Strawberries, 1 Banana, 1 cup Non-fat yogurt, 1 packet sugar or sugar substitute like Stevia, 1 cup of ice. Blend until creamy and delicious, which won't take long. Serving Size: 1

Mango Smoothie:- Mango Smoothie Ingredients: 2 cups non-fat vanilla yogurt, 1 cup mango nectar, 2 mangoes, peeled and chopped, 1/4 tsp. Cardamom (Elachie). Add all ingredients to blender and process until smooth. Add 1 cup of ice cubes and blend till crushed and smooth. Serves 2.

Simple Potato Soup...

Ingredients (this is for 1 person)

1 large potato, 1/4 cup chopped celery, (include leaves), 1/4 cup chopped onion (optional), Few chopped up garlic. (optional), 1/4 cup milk or 1/4 cup fresh-cream, Thyme, black or white pepper, Coriander (Cilantro/Dhania)

Directions: Peel and cube potatoes. Put in a saucepan along with the onions and celery. Add

water, but don't quite cover the vegetables. Bring to a boil, lower heat, cover and simmer for 25 minutes, or until all of the vegetables are very tender. Using a potato masher, coarsely crush the potatoes, but don't mash them - you want chunks left. Add enough milk or cream to thin to desired thickness and add thyme, black or white pepper, dhaniala, (optional – rosemary or basil) for added taste. If you also desire later you can add some *** Maas (Plain Yogurt). Maas really camouflages the absence of salt. You can have the Potato soup the Roti or Puri given below.

*** **DO NOTE:-** Maas (Afrikaans)/Amasi (Zulu and Xhosa). Clover Low Fat Maas has Sodium (50mg per 100g) in their Maas, and hence CAN be used as it's only natural Sodium and NOT Sodium Chloride. Remember if it's natural it's fine.

*** Butternut or Pumpkin soup... Follow the directions above just replace the POTATO.

Potato chips (with a Dip) with a “DIPIKA” twist:-

2 large potato's, cut either in long stripes or flat.

Deep fry in oil and when fried to one's liking take out and place on a paper towel.

Then once the excess oil has been drained, place in a medium size container and add black or white pepper, *** Lemon pepper.

*** Lemon pepper is always a good choice because the pungency of the flavours.

Serve with a dip.

Dip:- We recommend:- 1 cup greek yogurt or maas, strained, 1 cup sour cream, 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and diced, 1 tsp. chopped fresh dill (savaa in Hindi, sada kuppi in Tamil).

Preparation: Using a whisk, blend the yogurt with the sour cream. Add the cucumber and chopped fresh dill. Chill for at least two hours before serving.

Salt-less Soft Roti (S.A. home style)

Ingredients:- 400g cake wheat flour, 1 tablespoon melted unsalted butter or ghee, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, Half cup flour for dusting the work surface, 250ml hot water

Method:- Add 350g flour into a bowl. Add the oil. Add the hot water. Mix with a tablespoon since the dough will be quite hot with the boiling water. Take some of the remaining flour and dust the worktop. Remove the dough from your dish then place on the work top. If it is sticky then add a little flour until it is soft and manageable. Knead the dough until a soft pliable dough is formed. This could take up to 5 minutes...keep kneading the dough until a soft dough forms. Like most Roti the key to soft Roti is a dough that is well kneaded! Once a soft dough is achieved. Cover the dough with a dishcloth or with your mixing bowl turned over it. Let the dough rest for about 5 minutes while you prepare the butter and heat the pan. Leave the pan on low heat while you are rolling the Rotis then turn up to high heat a minute or two prior to cooking the Rotis. Melt the butter then return to the dough. Break off a small piece of about 8cm diameter then roll into a large circle shape. Take the melted butter or ghee then spread over the circle shaped dough. Then roll the dough like a Swiss roll. Roll inward toward you. Once you have formed a snake-like shape then cut into even pieces. Take one of the cut pieces, stand upright then press down with your hand this will create a circle when flattened. Dust your hands with flour then work this small circle into a round shape then place onto work top and roll into a flat round disc. Take care to overlap the Roti so they don't stick to each other. To cook your soft Roti simply place on the hot preheated pan (the pan should be hot).The cooking process for each roti should be 1 minute. Allow the roti to cook for a 5-10 seconds before turning it over. On the second side allow to cook for a little longer, pressing the sides with your fingers/or large flat spatula to ensure that it cooks. Once the Roti rises or you see bubbles form turn the roti. Careful not to burn your fingers as this can be quite hot, use a spatula if you like. Once you see the dough rise

up forming bubbles then turn the dough over allowing the dough to rise once more. Once you have golden brown spots then the Roti is cooked. Remove from stove then repeat this process for all remaining Roti's. Once all are cooked cover with a piece of paper towel or dishcloth, this will keep the moisture in keeping Roti soft until you are ready to serve them. You can now add melted butter to the cooked but its not necessary – as if you follow this recipe the Roti should be soft enough to be enjoyed without excess butter. If you do prefer your roti with butter then simply spread a little melted butter or ghee onto your Roti before removing from the stove. Cover the cooked Roti with a clean clothe or kitchen towel. This helps keep the Roti soft and warm until served. To reheat Roti simply place the Roti on a heated pan for a minute or two on each side until warmed.

Puri (Indian Bread)

Ingredients: 1 cup wheat flour, Warm Water – 1/2 cup, Oil – 1 tbsp, Oil – for deep frying.

Method: Mix the Flour and Oil together. Mix well to incorporate all the Oil into the Flour. Add a little Warm Water at a time to form a dough. Option- A food-processor can also be used to make the dough. Once the dough is made, smear a couple of drops of remaining Oil coat it. Oil will help avoid forming a crust. Cover and allow the dough to rest for about half hour or at least 10 minutes. After the rest time, knead the dough once again. Heat Oil for frying the Puris on Low-to-medium heat. Allow it to heat very well. Make balls of the dough (approx table-tennis size balls). Makes 12-15. Take one ball and roll it into a nice, smooth round ball with the palm of your hands. Then press it flat. Roll it out with a rolling pin to form a nice even round discs without using flour. The puris are usually smaller than chapattis and a little thicker (so they can puff up). Once the Oil is nice and hot, gently slide the Puris in from the side. The Puri will settle at the bottom for a few seconds before it come up to float. Once it starts floating, gently press on one side with a frying ladle. This will help the Puri to puff up. After a minute or so, flip the Puri and cook on the other side. After another minute, scoop the Puri to the side and drain out all the excess oil. Put the done Puri on a paper towel. Serve hot and fresh with the recipes you desire on the article esp the Potato soup. Serves 3-4. You can have the Puri with the Potato soup above
Tips: A pinch of Carom Seeds (Ajwain) may be used in the dough. It helps to digest. As a variation, add a boiled and mashed potato to the dough to make 'kasta puri'. Test the oil by putting in a small ball of dough to see if the oil is ready. The little ball of dough should go to the bottom and then after a few seconds float to the top of the oil. The oil is then ready.

SALADS:- Vegetarian Salads are limited only by the raw materials that are available, your taste preferences, and your imagination. Savvy Vegetarian's are easy, healthy mainly vegan salad recipes and are delicious any time.

“DIPIKA'S” twist of a Salad (with a Dressing)

Ingredients:- Choose what you like from the following list, and add your own variations.

- Lettuce torn into bite sized pieces, baby spinach.
- Alfalfa sprouts, sunflower sprouts
- Tomato slices or cherry tomatoes
- Cucumber slices
- Avocado cut into 3/4” cubes
- Shredded carrot
- Shredded red cabbage
- Bell pepper, seeded and sliced thinly
- Sliced or diced onions (optional) (ONLY ADD WHEN EATING)

- Sliced radishes
- Chopped fresh herbs, whole Basil leaves, Rocket leaves
- Nuts: sunflower seeds, walnuts, or pecans
- Dried cherries, cranberries or raisins
- Crumbled paneer (Indian cheese), or unsalted cheese

Add the above to a large mixing bowl. If all the salad will be eaten right away, dress the salad with your dressing of choice (View Below). If you will be storing some salad for later, dress the individual servings, since an undressed salad stores better. Toss and serve.

Lemon and Oil Dressing Ingredients Dressing:-

- 4 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp Fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1/2 tsp dried marjoram
- 1/4 tsp dried thyme
- 1-2 cloves crushed garlic (Optional)
- 1/8 tsp Black pepper

Salad Dressing Directions:

Place all ingredients in a small jar with a leak proof lid. Close lid tightly and shake until dressing is well mixed. Use to dress salads, cooked veggies, etc. Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Potato Salad

Boil a few baby potatoes until tender. Fork and toss in some unsalted butter. If you like crush them slightly and serve with the dressing below.

Dressing Ingredients:

Sour Cream - 5 tblsp

Lime/Lemon Juice - 2 tblsp

Crushed Mustard seeds 1/4 tsp.

Freshly chopped Dill – 1 tsp

Freshly chopped Parsley – 1 tsp

Sugar - 1 tsp

1 clove garlic crushed

Olive Oil - 6 tblsp

Add freshly ground black pepper

Green shallots, ends trimmed, thinly sliced

Coriander (Cilantro/Dhania)

Method:- Use a fork to whisk together the sour cream, dill, parsley, garlic, sugar, mustard olive oil and lemon juice in a large bowl until well combined. Taste and season with Dhania and pepper. Place the potatoes and green shallot in a large serving bowl. Spoon dressing over the potato mixture and gently toss until potatoes are well coated in dressing. Serve immediately.

SWEET DISHES:- An assortment of sweet dishes can all be rendered saltless simply by using pure butter ghee or unsalted butter and milk.

Saigo milk

Add 4 cups of water in a pot. Then add one cup of saigo and then bring to boil stirring continuously. Add sugar to taste (approx. 1 cup) and then add a few drops of vanilla essence. Cook on medium heat for about 20 minutes until the saigo becomes clear. Add 2 cups of milk, and then boil until slightly thick and serve.

Sweet Rice (a.k.a Kheer)

To make Sweet Rice you will need the following ingredients:

- 1 cup white rice (or similar substitute), 2 cups milk, 175ml fresh cream, Desired limit sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cardamom powder.

Soak the rice a few hours before you plan to cook sweet rice. (Minimum 1 hour-soak up to 4 hours). Depending on the type of rice you are using, the rice may absorb some of the water. Rinse the rice - drain off all excess water then place in a pot. Add the milk and boil on low heat for 30 minutes. Once the milk is absorbed by the rice add sugar, and cardamom powder. Add the fresh cream, stirring gently - Allow to cook for 10 minutes on low heat. Remove from stove. Allow to cool. The longer you leave the sweet rice to rest the better the consistency will be. The cream is absorbed by the rice forming a thick pudding like texture. Serve as desired.

Sooji Halwa

Ingredients: (Serves 4):- 1/2 cup semolina flour, 1/4 cup ghee, 1/3 cup sugar, 1 1/2 cup water, Pinch of cardamom powder, 1 tablespoon sliced almonds for garnish.

Method: Boil the water with sugar, and cardamom powder in a pan over low medium heat. Bring to a boil and Set aside. Melt the butter in a frying pan on medium heat. Add the semolina and roast to golden brown colour; stirring constantly this will take about 5 to 8 minutes. The semolina will be golden brown in colour and will have a light sweet aroma. Add the syrup (sugar mixed with water) slowly, as you add the syrup to the semolina, the water will splatter. Turn down the heat to medium low and let it cook for about 2-3 minutes. The semolina (now Halwa) will absorb the water, as the Halwa cools so keep Halwa a little softer than you want. Garnish with almonds. Serve hot for best taste.

Variations: Instead of water add 1 cup of milk and 1/2 cup of water and keep Halwa a little thicker. Pour the Halwa on a greased plate, keep it about 1/2 inch thick. Garnish with shaved almonds or pistachio or shredded coconut, and let it cool for about a half an hour. Cut the Halwa in square or diamond shapes like Burfee.

Badam ka Halwa

Ingredients:- 1 cup almonds (soaked overnight), 2/3 cup milk, 8 tbsp sugar, 1/2 tsp cardamom (elachie) powder, 6 tbsp ghee

Method:- Pour 1 cup of boiling water over the almonds. Leave aside for 5 minutes. Drain and remove the skins of the almonds. Purée the almonds with 4 tablespoons of milk to a smooth paste in a blender. Heat the ghee in a non-stick fry pan and add the almond purée. Cook over a slow flame while stirring continuously till the mixture turns golden brown (approx. 15 minutes). Boil together the remaining milk with 4 tablespoons of water, add to the almond mixture and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the sugar and cardamom powder and cook till the sugar has dissolved, while stirring continuously. Serve hot, garnished with the almonds.

Gajar (carrot) Halwa Recipe

Ingredients:- 500g Carrots, 750ml Milk, 1 tsp cardamom (elachie) powder, 1/2-1 cup Water, 3 tablespoons Ghee, 1 and half tablespoons Raisins, Almonds and Pistachios nuts each, 250 grams Sugar.

Method:- Wash and grate the carrots. Soak the raisins in water for some time. Finely slice the nuts. Boil water and add the grated carrots. Cook for approximately 8-10 minutes. Then add the milk and cook on a low flame for 45 minutes stirring occasionally. Add sugar and keep stirring until all the milk has been absorbed. Add ghee and cook for 5 minutes again. Add a little crushed cardamom and the raisins. Mix well. Take away the Halwa from flame. Garnish with nuts. Serve as desired.

VERMICELLI PUDDING

Ingredients:- 1 cup Almonds, 1 cup Vermicelli broken into 4 cm bits, 5 cups milk, 1/2 cup sugar, 1/3 cup almonds (sliced), 1/4 cup unsalted blanched pistachio, 1/2 tbsp rose water, Ghee

Preparation of Vermicelli: Heat the ghee in a heavy bottomed non-stick pan over medium heat and add Vermicelli and fry till golden brown, stirring constantly. Pour the milk, sugar, almonds, pistachio and stirring constantly bring to boil. Cook for about 20 minutes or until the milk is slightly thickened. Cool to room temperature, add rose water and chill. Stir well and serve the vermicelli pudding in individual bowls.

Pancakes

Ingredients:- 1 and 1/2 cups (cake) flour (without self-raising flour), 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 and 1/4 cups milk, 1/4 cup plain yogurt (instead of 1 egg), 3 tablespoons butter, melted

Directions:- In a large bowl, sift together the flour and sugar. Make a well in the centre and pour in the milk, yogurt and melted butter; mix until smooth. Heat a lightly oiled frying pan over medium high heat. Pour or scoop the batter onto the frying pan, using approximately 1/4 cup for each pancake. Brown on both sides and serve hot.

Crudités (Appetizers)



Crudité is raw or partially cooked veggies with a dipping sauce. Delicious and healthy and there are numerous combinations that can be used.

4 medium carrots peeled and cut into strips

One cucumber cut into strips

Some cherry tomatoes

Some peppers of various colours cut into strips

These are suggestions and you can use any combination of veggies you like.

Serve with a dip.

Dip 1:- We recommend

1 cup Greek yogurt or maas, strained, 1 cup sour cream, 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and diced, 1 tsp. chopped fresh dill (savaa in Hindi, sada kuppi in Tamil)

Preparation: Using a whisk, blend the yogurt with the sour cream. Add the cucumber and chopped fresh dill. Chill for at least two hours before serving.

Dip 2:- Cottage cheese dip

One container cottage cheese, Squeeze of lemon juice, Lemon pepper, One Roasted red pepper. Mix together in a food processor and serve.

Fruit Platter/Salads

Pineapple cut into chunks, Apples cut into chunks and sprinkled with lemon juice, Strawberries, Peach, nectarine. Arrange on a platter and serve with sweetened fresh cream which has been whipped into soft peaks and flavoured with vanilla pods.

Apple crumble

For the crumble mixture:-

One and a quarter cup plain flour, sieved; 175g/6oz unrefined brown sugar, 200g/7oz unsalted butter, cubed at room temperature, Knob (walnut-sized lump) of butter for greasing, Two tablespoons ground almonds.

For the filling:-

Half a kilo apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1cm/½in pieces or any fruit if you so desire. 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 tbsp plain flour, 1 pinch of ground cinnamon

Preparation method:-

Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Rub the butter into the dry ingredients until you have a coarse breadcrumb texture. Place the fruit in a large bowl and sprinkle over the sugar, flour and cinnamon. Stir well being careful not to break up the fruit. Butter a 24cm/9in oven-proof dish. Spoon the fruit mixture into the bottom, then sprinkle the crumble mixture on top. Bake in the oven for 40-45 minutes until the crumble is browned and the fruit mixture bubbling. Serve with thick cream.

Vegetable Biryani

3 cups Basmati rice

One cup red lentils

2 cups veggies of your choice. We suggest - (a mix of carrots, peas, boiled gadara, double beans and green beans works well)

3 large tomatoes plus a sliced chilli

4 tablespoons of curry powder of your choice

Some paneer cut into cubes and fried.

A tablespoon of ground fennel seeds (soomph – Hindi, perunjeeragam or sombu - Tamil)

3 large potatoes cut up and fried

A cup of ghee or unsalted butter.

Boil the rice with a cinnamon stick, bay leaf, star anise and elachie until half done and drain. Boil the lentils until soft but not mushy. Add a few tablespoons of ghee to a large pot and add the spices, curry powder and the tomatoes. Next add in all the vegetables (including the potatoes) and cook until half done adding a little water only if the veggies burn and catch. Now layer everything starting with a layer of rice and lentils followed by the veggie mix and top with rice and lentils. Heat the remaining ghee and add half a teaspoon of turmeric powder. Pour over the rice. Top with the fried paneer chunks and lastly add half a cup of boiling water. Cover tightly and steam in a hot oven for about half hour. If you don't have an oven you can steam it on a stove top on the lowest heat setting.

Serve the Biryani with Raita (is a side dish of yogurt containing vegetables, and spices).
Sour chick peas (Two cups chickpeas cleaned and soaked), 2 green chillies sliced plus one cinnamon stick, 5 large tomatoes, 2 cm ginger crushed or sliced, 4 Tablespoons lemon juice quarter cup ghee, A tablespoon each of jeera, chilli powder, turmeric and garam masala

Soak the chickpeas in water overnight. Wash properly and top up the water to 4cm above the chickpeas. Boil until soft but not mushy. Heat some of the ghee and add the chillies and cinnamon. When sizzling add the spices (except the garam masala) and the tomatoes and the drained chick peas but reserve the cooking liquid. Cook well until the liquid has evaporated adding some of the reserved cooking liquid if it gets too dry. When done add the lemon juice and garam masala give it stir and serve. Serve with Rotis made with unsalted butter.

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 anything especially medical advice. The information above is intended for general educational purposes. Many will have their own opinions on some of the information provided above (which we do respect), and this article is a humble contribution to humankind. For medical issues please consult with your doctor. We thank you. Jai hind.

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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 Shree Radha Krsna.

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Compiled (for the upliftment of Sanathan Dharma – the Eternal Religion)

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