

How to set a tray for one's Jhanda puja and Sweet Puri offerings to Shree Hanumanji

Jai Shree Hanumanji. We humbly prostrate at your lotus feet our dearest Superhero.



In South Africa Hindu's favourite offerings to our Superhero are Rhot and Panjeri (recipes are provided later in this article). In our motherland India however, Hindu's offer Mittai Puri a.k.a Sweet Puri. Below is the recipe and directions on how to prepare this very simple Bhoga (un-offered food). Do note that our Superhero is the only Deity (that I am aware of) that does not partake in any salt (NaCl {table salt}) preps. Shree Hanumanji is an exception to many rules ... Well he is unique in so many ways hence all the exceptions.

I would suggested-ly advise you to add this Mittai Puri offerings to the Rhot and Panjeri and other preps one makes for the offering to Shree Hanumanji in the Jhanda Puja offerings

Hanumanji's Sweet Puri Recipe

The sweet puri can be prepared in two ways. One option is dusting jaggery/gur (raw sugar) on the puri (as stated in number 11) and the other one is dipping the puri in sugar syrup. The one with sugar sprinkle stays longer than the other one.

Ingredients

- 450g wholemeal chapati or plain flour
- 250ml cold water
- butter ghee for spreading
- jaggery / gur (raw sugar) for sprinkling

Method

1. Set aside 200g of the flour and reserve for shaping the puri's.
2. Place the remaining flour in a deep bowl. Fill another bowl with the cold water.
3. Add the water to the bowl of flour, a little at a time, kneading as you go, until you have a soft, elastic dough. The longer you knead the dough the softer the puri's will be.
4. Sprinkle a little of the reserved flour onto a flat surface or board.
5. Divide the dough into eight and shape each piece into a ball.
6. Flatten the balls slightly, then place one onto the floured board.
7. Roll it out into a flat disc approximately 15cm (6 inches) in diameter, flouring the board when necessary.
8. Heat a griddle or a shallow frying pan. Lay the puri on the griddle or pan and cook for about 20-30 seconds or until the surface is bubbling.
9. Turn it over with tongs and cook the other side for 10-15 seconds. As soon as brown spots appear on the underside, the puri is done.
10. Repeat with the other seven balls, using the remaining flour to roll them out. Stack them up as they are cooked, placing a sheet of kitchen towel between each one to absorb any moisture.
11. Spread butter ghee and sprinkle Gur (Jaggery) on the Puri.
12. Place a Tulsi leaf on top of the Puri.

Preparing the Sugar Syrup:

Add 1 cup of sugar in a thick bottom vessel. Now add water in the pot. Mix well and heat in a burner till it becomes 1 string consistency.

Then when the puri is ready to be dipped after number 10. then Dip the puri while it is warm in the sugar syrup. Leave it inside the syrup for 1/2 minute. Then remove and place on a paper towel to remove the excess syrup.

Kindly refrain from talking when preparing the above. The goodies from your mouth will just soil the preps and thus rendering it not proper for our Superhero to consume. Also I suggest playing bhajans or mantras of our dearest Lord while the food is being prepared to create an ambiance of positivity.



Other offerings one can offer to Shree Hanumanji...

Red and yellow fruits (banana, mango and red apple) are amongst his favourite

Nuts, roots and bulbs.

Rice / wheat offering.

Chick peas (chana dal).

Urad dal vadha, with (chill, ginger).

Payasam (sweet rice).

Milk.

Rhot tray set up

So I have been asked on how should one arrange the prashad one offers on a tray/thari to Lord Shiva, Shree Hanumanji and for the Bedi. Kindly view the attached pictures. Presentation and cleanliness is of utmost importance when one offers any Bhoga (un-offered food) to any deity. So on the tray there are 5 Rhot. One can offer 3, 5, or 7 Rhot depending on the size of the tray. Always offer things in odd numbers. Why? Even numbers denotes ending and odd numbers denotes continuity.



From the left to the right on the large tray are mini foil trays. In these small trays are Halwa, Soojee, Panjeri, a mixture of (dates, raisins and coconut pieces) and Sweet rice (Kheer). 3 types of mittai (sweets) and 3 types of fruits (suggested-ly Banana, pear, red grapes or apple). Why have I suggested these small foil trays. Well generally when one views a tray with all the ingredients it look like biryani or kitchari. It looks so unappetizing. Hence I have suggested placing the preps in mini containers. Also kindly refrain from talking when preparing the above. The goodies from your mouth will just soil the preps and thus rendering it not proper for the deities to consume. Also I suggest playing bhajans or mantras while the food is being prepared to create an ambiance of positivity.

The next picture is totally optional and its something I learnt from cooking in the 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 for the deity to consume the Panjeri (which is powder) and other foods, 1 toothpick, 1 serviette for the deity to wipe their hand or mouth. Finally a small finger bowl of warm water for the deity to wash his/her hands after eating their bhoga. The above may seem rather excessive but I was taught by the best to offer the best to our deities.



Rhot, Panjeri, Halwa and Sweet rice Recipes

Rhot Recipe

5 cups of flour
2 cups normal sugar,
1 cup butter ghee
1 cup fresh milk.
1/4 tsp crushed cardamom (elachie)

Method:- Do remember this little secret - the ingredients should always be 5-2- 1 meaning 5 cups flour to 2 cups of sugar to 1 cup of butter ghee. This is something my awesome mother taught me. Mix the flour and elachie together and add ghee until smooth crumbs form. Add the sugar and mix well. Add the milk to the flour mixture to form a smooth dough. Knead well until the dough appears rich and shiny and has an oily texture. Divide the dough into little portions and make rounds shapes to desired thickness and size. Deep fry in medium to hot ghee until flaky and lightly crisp, but evenly coloured to a pale golden colour. Drain well and allow to cool.

Panjeri Recipe

One non-stick cooking pan and a wooden stirring spoon are needed for this preparation. Cook Time: 15 minutes, Total Time: 15 minutes, Yield: About 20 servings
Ingredients: 1 cup ghee or 1/2 lb unsalted butter (2 cubes), 1 cup cake flour (atta), 1 cup sugar, 1/4 teaspoon Black pepper corn, two pinches of elachie powder. Preparation: Measure all ingredients. Bring the pan to a reasonable heat, add about half a cup ghee or butter and once the ghee/butter is melted add 1 cup cake flour. You have to continuously stir the bottom of the pan so that the flour doesn't burn. When the ghee is almost absorbed into the flour you add more ghee. After about 15 or so minutes the flour should be brownish in colour and will smell a tad burnt. Then you know it's almost ready. Next empty the ingredients onto a flat tray to cool down. After a little while it will be warmish to the touch, then add the elachie powder, crushed pepper corn and sugar... Mix well and (it will be ready to be offered to Shree Hanuman-ji) ready to be offered to Shree Hanumanji. I advise using those small round silver mini-tart/pie containers for the Panjeri to be offered to Hanumanji as it will look presentable and professional.

Halwa Recipe

Add 1 cup Semolina and 1 cup Butter Ghee in a pan and roast it over slow flame while stirring the mixture continuously. After a little while add the sugar and milk to the roasted semolina and stir continuously on a slow flame. After some time the milk and sugar will merge with the semolina. The next items are optional but we are preparing this offering for the Lord so our Lord deserves the best don't you think? You can now

add the almonds, pistachio, cashew-nuts and elachie powder and once again stir for a few more minutes and the Halwa is now ready to be offered to the Lord.

Payasam (Sweet rice / Kheer) Recipe

Ingredients:

1 litre Milk (Full cream)

¼ cup short grain Basmati rice (soak for a few hours)

¼ cup sugar + 1/8 cup more if needed

¼ tsp cardamom powder (Elaichi powder)

A few strands of saffron

2 tbsp raisins

2 tbsp almonds (Soaked for 4-5 hours)

pistachio for garnish

Take a thick bottomed pan with a little water (2 tbsp). Adding water to the pan before boiling milk reduces its chance of sticking to the bottom. Add milk to the pan and boil it. After it comes to boil add rice. Short grain rice are better for use in kheer as they get mixed uniformly resulting in a thick kheer.

Soak saffron strands in 2 tbsp milk in a separate bowl.

After giving rice and milk mixture a boil reduce the flame to low and let it simmer for ½ hour. Rice kheer should always be cooked on low 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. After 30 minutes the kheer will be thick and rice grain would be very soft. Add sugar, 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 Rice Kheer with pistachio and almond slivers. You can use almonds without soaking also.

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