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## A royal repast: A peek into the kitchens of Jaipur

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PHOTO BY GITANJALI GURBAXANI

By Gitanjali Gurbaxani

*From staple dishes to elaborate curries, we take a peek into the kitchens of Jodhpur.*

Rajasthan has many allures, and its cuisine is one among them. Among its cities, Jodhpur offers a range of unique dishes. The region of Marwar boasts of culinary inheritance and a history of conquests and resistance that have help shape its cuisine over the centuries. As food is a culinary exchange of cultures, it is easy to find variations in the style of cooking, the quality of ingredients and spices used and the serving style of every preparation. Some of the dishes on these pages are from the kitchens of Jodhpur's famous palaces, including the Umaid Bhavan and Ranbanka. The Mirchiwada is loaded with flavour, transforming a simple potato recipe into a filling one, and is as popular with the common man as former kings. Jungli maas is an enticing dish, the unique flavours of which come from fresh red chillies, salt, lemon juice and, of course, meat that is cooked over a slow flame.

### MIRCHIWADA

Mathania green chilli is locally grown in Jodhpur (Mumbaikars can use Bhavnagari chillies). To enable a common man to eat something substantial, this green chilli is slit and filled with a spiced potato mixture, which is then dipped in gramflour batter and deep fried until golden brown. Mirchiwada is a common man's mid-day meal, and it keeps him going for hours, as the potato mixture is heavily spiced and the coating of besan has a high protein content. Summer or winter, mirchiwada is to Jodhpur what vada pao is to Mumbai.

### **Ingredients**

#### Serves 8

Potatoes .....	500 gms
Onion.....	250 gms
Chickpea flour.....	500 gms
Water.....	250 ml
Big green chillies.....	125 gms
Red chilli powder .....	2 tsp
Turmeric powder.....	1 tsp
Garam masala powder.....	2 tsp
Coriander powder.....	2 tsp
Cumin seeds.....	1 tsp
Coriander seeds.....	1 tsp
Mustard seeds.....	1 tsp
Asafetida .....	½ tsp
Soda bicarbonate .....	1 tsp
Ajwain.....	1 tsp
Turmeric powder.....	½ tsp
Coriander leaves.....	2 tbsp
Garlic .....	2 tsp
Ginger.....	1 tsp
Cashew nuts.....	2 ½ tbsp
Anar .....	100 gms
Raisins.....	2 tsp
Salt .....	30 gms
Citric acid.....	10 gms
Green chillies.....	2 -3
Oil.....	2½ litre

Boil the potatoes, and cool them. Peel the potatoes and grate them. Finely cut the onion, coriander leaves and green chillies separately and set aside. In a kadai, heat 50ml oil. When hot, add in the mustard seeds, coriander seeds, asafetida, ginger, garlic, and chopped green chilli. Let the masala become light brown, then add in the grated potato along with turmeric powder, red chilli powder, garam masala powder and coriander powder.

Mix well. Add in the onion. Mix well. Add in the salt. Continue cooking over low flame. Remove it from the flame and add in the raisins, cashew nuts, coriander leaves and anar. Slit the big green chillies in the centre.

Take approximately 70 gm of the potato mixture and coat the green chilli with this mixture. Repeat this process until all the chillies are coated with the potato mixture. In a large bowl, mix together the chickpea flour, water, salt, ajwain, soda bi-carbonate and turmeric powder. Mix well. Dip the potato coated chilli in this batter and deep fry. Fry for 10 minutes over low flame till it is evenly brown in colour. Serve hot.

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Left: Mirchiwada; (right) Rabri laddoo

## **RABRI LADDOO**

Rabri laddoo is made by adding rabri to dry besan with a little orange colouring to make a batter of pouring consistency. A slotted spoon is dipped in this batter and gently tapped over the piping hot oil and that produces the small pearls. These are drained and added immediately into sugar syrup with saffron and cardamom and drained almost immediately. They are then shaped into small round balls.

### **Ingredients**

Sugar .....500 gms  
Ghee..... 250 gms  
Besan..... 250 gms  
Ghee for frying..... 750 gms  
Cardamom powder .....1 tsp  
Cold milk ..... 300 ml  
Dry fruits.....10 gms  
Saffron..... 1 gm

Place the sugar and water in a deep saucepan. When it comes to a boil, simmer and cook until it has a single string consistency. In a separate bowl, mix the besan and milk. Heat ghee in a kadai till it comes to a smoking point. Add in the besan milk batter to the hot ghee using nozzle no 2. Fry over low flame till it is golden brown in colour. Add it to the sugar syrup. Add in the cardamom powder, saffron and dry fruits. Set aside covered for two hours. Make laddoos of 100 gms each.

CONTRIBUTED BY: **Chef M A Sayyad**, Executive Chef, Ranbanka Palace

## **FISH JALI KEBAB**

Fish Jali kebab gets its name from the grills that hunters used to carry along with jars of spices. They would catch fresh fish, marinate it and place it between these iron rods and cook it over a wooden fire and feast on their fresh catch that would have the iron grill marks. Basted with ghee, the flavour of the fish would stand out as it was not overpowered by spices, says Sujoy Gupta, Executive Chef, Umaid Bhawan Palace.

### **Ingredients**

#### **Serves 6**

Fish fillets..... 1 kg  
Ginger paste..... 2 ½ tbsp  
Green chilli paste .....1 ½ tbsp  
Lemon juice.....3 tsp  
Garam masala powder..... 1 tsp  
Thick yogurt ..... 250 gms  
Garlic paste..... 1 ½ tbsp  
Fresh coriander leaves paste ..... 1 tbsp  
Desi ghee ..... 1 tbsp  
Salt .....to taste

Wash and clean the fish (behti, mahi mahi, sole or basa will work well). Cut each fillet into 3 large pieces. Place the yogurt in a large bowl. Add to it the ginger paste, garlic paste, green chilli paste, fresh coriander leaves paste, lemon juice, ghee, garam masala and salt. Mix well. Marinate the fish pieces in this spicy masala and set aside for 2 hours. Now prepare a charcoal fire. Place the fish pieces in between the jali and roast on slow charcoal fire, turning the jali from time to time till the fish pieces are well roasted and cooked on both sides. Serve hot.

CONTRIBUTED BY: **Chef Chander Singh**, Senior Sous Chef, Umaid Bhawan Palace

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Fish Jali kebab

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## **JUNGLI MAAS**

Jungli Maas is a speciality of the Marwar royals. Freshly slaughtered meat would be best enjoyed with very little spices after a hunt to enable the diners to savour the flavour of the meat. The meat was cooked over a wood or charcoal fire, and this further enhanced the flavour of the meat, says Gupta

### **Ingredients**

#### **Serves 6**

Mutton ..... 1 kg  
Desi ghee .....200 gms  
Whole red chillies.....50 gms  
Lemon.....1  
Salt .....to taste  
Water.....as required

Slit the red chillies, discard the seeds and soak in water for 15 minutes. Take out the juice of the lemon and set aside. Heat ghee in a kadai. When hot, add in the mutton pieces with salt. Cook till the mutton absorbs its juices completely and the ghee remains. Pour in some water. Bring it to a boil, then simmer and cook till the meat is tender and the water has dried up. Now add the red chillies and cook for 5–7 minutes. Always add the red chillies just 10 minutes before taking the meat off the flame. Adjust seasonings. Serve hot.

CONTRIBUTED BY: **Chef Anbalagan Kesavapillai**, Senior Sous Chef, Umaid Bhawan Palace

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Jungli Maas

## CHAKKI KA SAAG

Chakki ka saag is an unusual recipe, made from ingredients easily available in one's kitchen. This recipe calls for kneading the dough and keeping it aside for a minimum of two hours, then rinsing it under running water, till all the husk has disappeared, and you have clean and clear water flowing over the dough. A kilogram of wholewheat atta would yield 200 gm of the dough, which is then cut into small cubes and is lightly blended with red chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt. This is fried in a little oil and added to the yogurt based gravy that has onion as the base and a medley of flavours from the dry spices, ginger and garlic that have been cooked over slow flame.

### **Ingredients**

#### Serves 6

Whole wheat flour.....1 kg  
Pinch of salt  
Pinch of red chilli powder  
Pinch of garam masala powder  
Oil for deep frying

In a large bowl, place the whole wheat flour. Add water as required to form a stiff dough. Set this dough aside for one hour. Now place the stiff dough into a round strainer, one that we use for straining dry whole wheat flour. Place the strainer in a parat, pour a little water on the dough and keep kneading. And keep pouring water and kneading the dough until it becomes sponge-like. Now add in the salt, garam masala powder, red chilli powder to the spongy dough and knead well. Make small cubes of chakki. Heat oil in a kadai. When hot, put in a few pieces of chakki at a time and deep fry them till cooked. A kilo of whole wheat flour will get you about 250 gms of chakki.

### FOR THE GRAVY

Yogurt .....200 gm  
Red chilli powder..... 1 tbsp  
Coriander powder .....1 ½ tbsp  
Onion paste.....2 tbsp  
Onion, chopped..... 100 gms  
Salt .....to taste  
Water.....2½ Cups  
Desi ghee ..... 150 gms  
Turmeric powder ..... 1 tsp  
Garlic paste..... 1 tbsp  
Garam masala powder.... ½ tsp  
Cumin seeds ..... 1 tsp  
Ginger paste..... 2 tsp  
Coriander leaves .....to garnish

Heat oil in a pan. When hot, add in the chopped onion and stir fry over low flame until it turns golden brown in colour. Add in the garlic paste and stir fry for a few minutes. In the meantime add the red chilli powder, coriander powder, turmeric powder, cumin seeds to the yogurt and mix well. Add this spicy yogurt to the fried onion. When the masala is nicely fried, add in the chakki. Add in the water, reduce the flame and cook for 15 minutes. Garnish with coriander leaves. Serve hot.

CONTRIBUTED BY: **Chef Chander Singh**, Senior Sous Chef, Umaid Bhawan Palace

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Chakki ka saag

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