

# Indian Cooking Evening

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**Date:** 09.02.2013

**Time:** 16:00

**Place:** Dorotheenstrasse 5-7, (Silo)

30419 Hannover

**Instructor:** Mrs. Priyanka Parvati

**Contact:** [priyanka.parvathi@gmail.com](mailto:priyanka.parvathi@gmail.com)

## A brief introduction to Kerala Palghat (Palakkad) cuisine:

**Palakkad** is a district of **Kerala state** (which is at the southern end of India) and is located at the border of Kerala with the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. Palakkad Iyers are a community of Tamil speaking Brahmins, living in Kerala. Originally from Tamil Nadu, these Iyers migrated to Kerala about 400 years or so back and settled down in the Palakkad area. Some of these migrants also settled down in Trissur and Trivandrum. Today, they are very much an integral part of the state.

This migration has resulted in a unique cuisine that is a combination of cooking styles that came with them from Tamil Nadu, those adopted/ adapted from Kerala and a cooking tradition that evolved distinctly from the two styles and is unique to Palakkad Iyer homes. A lot of the cooking has evolved from Brahmin ritualistic traditions.

Palakkad Iyer cooking is **purely vegetarian** (and traditionally uses no garlic or onions), and uses a lot of lentils, dry beans, vegetables and coconut (which grows abundantly in Kerala). Coconut oil and gingelly (sesame seed) oil are used and rice is the main carbohydrate source. Palakkad Iyer food is **very healthy** as it uses minimal oil, and steam cooking is extensively used. There is no baking tradition.

Most of the dishes are prepared using indigenously available vegetables and spices, though many changes have crept in over the years. Vegetables like potatoes, carrots, cabbages, cauliflowers, tomatoes and even green chillies came to India as a result of foreign influence of the Dutch, British and Portuguese over the years and were not a part of the original cooking ingredients. Most of the breakfast dishes, snacks and desserts are made with rice. Jaggery is the preferred sweetening agent, though sugar is also used and coconut milk is used a lot. Tamarind or yogurt is used to add a tang to some dishes.

(Source: My Diverse kitchen, 'A Bit About Palakkad Iyers and Their Cuisine',  
<http://www.mydiversekitchen.com/2008/01/bit-about-palakkad-iyers-and-their.html>)

## RECIPIES

### STARTER

#### Pappad

1. Buy Pappad from any Indian shop.
2. Fry the pappad in any oil and its ready to served

### MAIN COURSE

#### A. Spinach Dal

##### Ingredients

1. Spinach – 2 Big Bunches (Frozen Spinach can also be used)
2. Tuvar Dal – 3 – 4 Tablespoon (Rote Linsen can also be used)
3. Grated Coconut – ½ Cup
4. White Urad Dal – 1 tsp (Available at any Indian shop)
5. Cumin Seeds – 1 tsp
7. Mustard Seeds – 1tsp
8. Salt to taste
- 9 Oil - 2 Tablespoon

##### Method

1. Cook the dal / Rote Linsen. Clean and wash the Spinach very well. Chop it roughly.
2. Boil the spinach in very little water for about 5 mins. Allow to cool. Run the cooked spinach in a mixer for just a few seconds. Transfer the ground spinach into a vessel.(If frozen Spinach is used, then allow it to melt in a pan).
3. In a small pan, heat a tsp of oil fry the urad dal till dal turns light brown.
4. Grind this along with coconut and cumin seeds into a paste using little water.
5. Mash the dal / Rote Linsen well.
6. Add the ground coconut paste to the dal. Add salt to taste.
7. Bring this mixture to boil for 2 mins stirring constantly.
8. Then add the ground Spinach.
9. Check the consistency.. Simmer for 2 to 3 mins. (Do not boil for long after adding spinach as this will result in discoloring the spinach).
10. Heat a tsp of oil, add mustard seeds. Once it starts spluttering add it to the molagootal.
11. Spinach Dal is ready to be served.

## **B. Potato Podimas**

### **Ingredients**

1. Potatoes, 4-5 nos. (depending on the size)
2. Oil, 2 Tablespoons
3. Mustard seeds, 1/2 teaspoon
4. Chana dhal/ kadalaparuppu, 1 tablespoon (if not there can be omitted)
5. Onion, 1 (small)
6. Garlic, 4-5 cloves
7. Ginger, 1 small piece (2" size approximately)
8. Curry leaves, a sprig
9. Asafoetida, a pinch
10. Turmeric powder, 1/4 teaspoon
11. Salt, to taste
12. Cilantro, to garnish

### **Method**

1. Boil the potatoes. Peel the skin and mash them well.
2. Chop the onions, slit the green chillies, finely mince the garlic and grate the ginger.
3. Heat the oil in a skillet, add the mustard seeds and when they crack add the channa dhal and fry for a minute and add onions, curry leaves, garlic, ginger and asafoetida. Saute for 2-3 minutes.
4. Then add turmeric powder and cook for a minute then add the mashed potatoes, salt to taste and mix them well.
5. Remove from heat. Mix well and garnish with

## **C. Avial**

### **Ingredients**

1. Mixed Vegetables. Any vegetable can be used  
(Vegetables commonly used - Carrots, potatoes raw bananas, Yam, string beans, a little of raw mango, white pumpkin, French Beans, peas etc)
2. Yogurt (Thick, a little sour will also do) – 3 cups
3. Coconut (Grated fresh) – 1 -1/2 to 2 cups
4. Oil – 1 tablespoon (preferably coconut oil) if not available then sunflower oil
5. Curry leaves – 1 sprig
6. Turmeric powder – 1/2 tsp.
7. Salt – to taste

### **Method**

1. Boil the veggies in enough water with turmeric and salt till very soft.
2. Grind coconut to smooth blend and set aside.
3. Whisk the curd – do not add water.

4. Add the coconut paste to the boiled vegetables. Add the curd and mix.
5. Cook the mixture well it just starts frothing, stirring in between ( we do not want it to curdle, right!)
6. Remove from fire and add the coconut oil or sunflower oil and mix

## **D. Beans Curry**

### **Ingredients**

1. Beans – 500 grams (Cut into tiny pieces)
2. Coconut (Grated) – 4 tablespoon
3. Moong dal/payatham paruppu – 3 tablespoon
4. Mustard – 1 tsp
5. Curry leaves – few
6. Asafetida – ¼ tsp
7. Salt – to taste
8. Oil – 1 tsp

### **Method**

1. Clean the beans and cut into tiny pieces. In a pot, add the beans, moong dal and add enough water to cover it and let it come to boil.
2. Let the beans and the moong dal cook  $\frac{3}{4}$  th ways and at this point generously add salt to the boiling water. Make sure that you add the salt only after the beans is cooked  $\frac{3}{4}$ th. Otherwise, you will end up with uncooked beans. Also make sure that you don't let it cook all the way because then we would end up with mushy beans and dal.
3. Once you add the salt, let it boil for couple of minutes so the beans and the dal absorb the salt. Drain it in a colander.
4. In the same pot, add the oil. Once the oil is heated add the seasonings (mustard seeds, asafetida and the curry leaves). Once they splutter, add the drained beans and mix it well.
5. let it cook for 3-4 mins or until all the water evaporates and the beans look dry and then add the grated coconut and mix it well.
6. Beans Curry is ready to be served

## **E. Carrot Pachadi**

### **Ingredients**

1. Plain thick yogurt - 2 cups
2. Carrots(big) - 2 nos
3. oil - 1 tablespoon
4. Mustard seeds - 1/2 tablespoon
5. Fresh curry leaves - 8 nos
6. Grated coconut - 1/4 cup
7. Salt - As required

## Method

1. Heat oil in a skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking.
2. Splutter mustard seeds
3. Add curry leaves and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 3 seconds.
4. Finally add carrots and cook for maybe 1 to 2 minutes till it turns crisp-tender (do not overcook).
5. Add grated coconut and remove the skillet from the heat.
6. Add thick yogurt and once mixed well immediately transfer it to a cool bowl and add salt as per taste.

## **DESSERT**

### Semiya Payasam (Vermicelli)

#### Ingredients

1. Semiya/ Vermicelli - 1/2 cup heaped
2. Sugar - 1/2 cup levelled
3. Milk - 1/2 cup
4. Ghee- 2 tsp
5. Cashew nuts - 6
6. Raisins(optional) - 12
7. Elachi (Cardamom) - 1
8. Salt a pinch
9. Water 2 cups

#### Method

1. Heat a pan, add ghee and fry cashews into golden yellow in colour. If using raisins, fry them as well in ghee until it fluffs up. Keep aside. In the same pan, roast vermicelli in Medium-low flame with constant stirring.
2. The vermicelli should turn golden here and there. Set aside. Bring water to boil in a large bowl Add the roasted vermicelli. Cook for 4-5 minutes until soft.
3. Add sugar. Powder the elachi and add to it. The cooked vermicelli turns transparent at this stage. Boil for 2 minutes. Add the milk.
4. As soon as milk is added and bring to boil. Boil for a minute, add a small pinch of salt and switch off the stove. As it cools down, it gets thicker. Garnish with fried cashews and raisins.