



GRAINS & GRACE

THE RICE & DAL TRADITION OF INDIA

A CURATED COLLECTION OF 20 RECIPES



www.foodgood.in



Title: **Grains & Grace - The Rice & Dal Traditions of India**

Author: **Ushadevi**

Publisher: **foodgood.in**

Year of Publication: **2025**

Edition: **First Edition**

Cover Design: **mgrajesh.com**

Language: **English**

Website: **www.foodgood.in**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of foodgood.in. Unauthorized use, distribution, or duplication of any content from this work is strictly prohibited.

Copyright © 2025 foodgood.in



Index

› Introduction	05
› Idli	06
› Dosa	09
› Masala Dosa	10
› Adai Dosa	13
› Handvo	14
› Ponkal	17
› Dhokla	18
› Pesarattu	21
› Sambara Dosai	22
› Paniyaram	25
› Dal Pitha	26
› Bisi Bele Bath	28
› Kanchipuram Idli	31
› Panchmel Khichdi	32
› Muthia	35
› Thalipeeth	36
› Arisi Paruppu Sadam	39
› Undrallu	40
› Ulind Kozhukattai	43
› Uppundu Pindi	44



Grains & Grace

The Rice & Dal Tradition of India

A CURATED COLLECTION OF 20 RECIPES

Across the diverse culinary landscape of India, the pairing of rice and dal has stood the test of time as one of the most balanced, comforting, and nourishing combinations. Rice, a staple carbohydrate, and dal (lentils), a rich source of plant-based protein, come together to form a complete meal that is not only satisfying but also nutritionally wholesome. This dynamic duo delivers essential amino acids, fiber, and energy, making it an ideal foundation for everyday meals. The harmony of rice and dal speaks not just to their nutritional synergy but also to the cultural wisdom passed down through generations, where food is both sustenance and medicine.

This book celebrates the humble yet deeply rooted culinary legacy of rice and dal in Indian households. From the fluffy idlis of the South to the hearty khichdi of the North, from the spiced handvo of Gujarat to the flavorful bisibele bath of Karnataka, every dish reflects the regional identity and age-old practices of home cooking. In an age of fast food and processed meals, this collection brings focus back to the goodness of simple, homemade fare—recipes crafted with care, often fermented, steamed, or simmered slowly, embodying the essence of mindful eating. Let each page take you on a journey through the kitchens of India, where rice and dal come alive in their many delightful avatars.

www.foodgood.in



Idli

Idli, the soft, steamed rice-lentil cake, has deep roots in South Indian cuisine and is revered for its lightness and easy digestibility. Ancient literary references trace similar preparations back over a millennium. The Kannada text Vaddaradhane (circa 920 CE) mentions a dish called 'Iddalige', believed to be an early form of idli. Furthermore, the 12th-century royal encyclopaedia Manasollasa, compiled by King Someshwara III, also describes fermented rice and urad dal preparations, showing that the technique was known in royal kitchens. Today, idli remains a beloved breakfast, served with chutney and sambar, symbolizing simplicity and nutrition.



Prep. Time
8 hrs.



Cooking Time
15 min.



Total Time
8 hrs 15 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 300g
- ✓ Urad dal 100g
- ✓ Poha / Cooked Rice 50g
- ✓ Cold water as required
- ✓ Salt 7-8g (to taste)
- ✓ Oil for greasing

Tips

- › For best results, always grind using cold water and avoid overheating the batter during grinding.
- › Do not overmix after fermentation- it deflates the air and makes idlis dense
- › If the climate is cold, place the batter inside an oven with just the light on or use the yogurt setting in an Instant Pot.

Instructions

- ✓ Wash rice and urad dal separately 2-3 times. Soak both in cold water for 6 hours. Soak poha separately for 30 minutes just before grinding or use freshly cooked rice (cooled).
- ✓ First, grind the urad dal using cold water until very light and fluffy (this may take 20-25 minutes in a wet grinder or 8-10 minutes in a strong blender).
- ✓ Then grind the rice along with poha or cooked rice to a slightly coarse batter using cold water.
- ✓ Combine both batters and mix well.
- ✓ Transfer the batter to a large container, leaving space for rising. Cover and ferment in a warm spot for 8-12 hours, or until the batter rises and turns slightly bubbly.
- ✓ Add salt and gently stir the batter without deflating it.
- ✓ Grease idli moulds with a little oil. Pour batter into each cavity and steam for 10-12 minutes over medium heat. Let it rest for 2 minutes before unmoulding.





Dosa

Dosa is the golden, paper-thin delight that forms the base for many famous dosa varieties like Masala Dosa, Mysore Masala Dosa, Jini Dosa, and Ghee Roast. With roots in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, it has been a part of South Indian cuisine for centuries. The fermentation of rice and urad dal batter, enhanced by fenugreek seeds, gives dosa its signature texture — a crisp outer layer with just the right amount of chew. Whether served plain or with a spicy stuffing, dosa is beloved across India as a wholesome, flavor-packed breakfast that balances tradition and taste beautifully.



Prep. Time
8 hrs.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
8 hrs 20 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 300g
- ✓ Urad dal (skinless) 100g
- ✓ Fenugreek seeds 5g
- ✓ Water as required
- ✓ Salt 7g (or to taste)
- ✓ Oil or ghee as needed

Tips

- › Fenugreek seeds help in both fermentation and browning — don't skip them for crispy dosas.
- › Make the batter slightly thinner than idli batter to help it spread easily and cook evenly.
- › Cast iron tawa gives the best crispiness. Season the pan well before use.
- › For extra crisp dosas, add 2–3 tablespoons of rice flour to the batter before making dosas.

Instructions

- ✓ Rinse rice and urad dal separately. Soak rice with fenugreek seeds and soak dal separately in cold water for 6 hours.
- ✓ Drain and grind urad dal with water until fluffy. Grind rice and fenugreek to a slightly coarse consistency.
- ✓ Mix both batters together to form a smooth, pourable batter.
- ✓ Ferment in a warm place for 8–12 hours or until bubbly and doubled in volume.
- ✓ Stir in salt gently without deflating the batter.
- ✓ Heat a tawa or cast iron pan. Pour a ladle of batter and spread it thin in a circular motion.
- ✓ Drizzle oil or ghee around the edges. Cook until crisp and golden.
- ✓ Fold and serve with chutney or sambar.

Masala Dosa

Masala Dosa is one of the most cherished dishes of South India, known for its crisp, golden dosa wrapped around a flavorful spiced potato filling. This dish is believed to have originated in Karnataka, with Udupi restaurants popularizing it across India. Over time, it inspired variations like the fiery Mysore Masala Dosa (which includes a spicy red chutney spread), Cheese Masala Dosa, Paneer Dosa, and even Mumbai-style Jini Dosa. The combination of a perfectly fermented dosa batter and the aromatic potato sabzi makes this dish a breakfast or brunch classic enjoyed with coconut chutney and sambar.



Prep. Time
9 hrs.



Cooking Time
25 min.



Total Time
9 hrs 25 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 300g
- ✓ Urad dal (skinned) 100g
- ✓ Fenugreek seeds 5g
- ✓ Water as needed
- ✓ Salt 7g
- ✓ Oil/ghee for cooking
- ✓ Potatoes (boiled) 400g
- ✓ Onion (sliced thin) 150g
- ✓ Green chilies (slit) 2–3
- ✓ Ginger (grated) 1 tsp
- ✓ Curry leaves 8–10
- ✓ Mustard seeds 1 tsp
- ✓ Chana dal 1 tsp
- ✓ Turmeric powder ½ tsp
- ✓ Salt to taste
- ✓ Oil 2 tbsp
- ✓ Fresh coriander leaves 1 tbsp chopped
- ✓ Lemon juice 1 tsp (optional)

Instructions

- ✓ Prepare the Batter: Soak rice and fenugreek together, and urad dal separately for 6 hours.
- ✓ Grind urad dal to a smooth, fluffy consistency using cold water. Grind rice and fenugreek to a slightly coarse texture.
- ✓ Mix both into a smooth batter. Ferment overnight (8–12 hrs) until doubled and bubbly. Add salt and mix gently.
- ✓ Make the Masala: Heat oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds and let them splutter.
- ✓ Add chana dal, curry leaves, green chilies, and ginger. Sauté for a few seconds.
- ✓ Add onions and sauté until soft. Add turmeric and salt.
- ✓ Crumble in the boiled potatoes. Mix and mash slightly. Add coriander leaves and lemon juice if using. Set aside.
- ✓ Make the Dosa: Heat a tawa. Pour a ladleful of batter and spread thinly. Drizzle oil on edges.
- ✓ When golden and crisp, place a spoonful of potato masala in the center. Fold the dosa and serve.





Adai Dosa

Adai is a protein-rich, thick and hearty South Indian dosa made with a blend of rice and mixed dals (lentils), often seasoned with spices and herbs. Unlike regular dosa, adai does not require fermentation, making it a quick and nutritious breakfast or dinner option. It is popular in Tamil Nadu and often served with avial, butter, or jaggery. Spicy and filling, adai has many variations depending on the dals used and can be customized with vegetables like onions, drumstick leaves (moringa), or grated carrots for added flavor and nutrition.



Prep. Time
4 hrs



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
4 hrs 20 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 200g
- ✓ Chana dal 60g
- ✓ Toor dal 60g
- ✓ Urad dal 30g
- ✓ Moong dal 30g
- ✓ Dried red chilies 3-4
- ✓ Fennel seeds 1 tsp (3g)
- ✓ Asafoetida ¼ tsp
- ✓ Curry leaves 10-12 leaves
- ✓ Grated coconut (Opt) 2 tbsp (15g)
- ✓ Chopped onion 100g
- ✓ Coriander leaves 1 tbsp
- ✓ Salt 7g
- ✓ Oil as needed

Instructions

- ✓ Rinse and soak rice and all dals together for 3-4 hours.
- ✓ Drain and grind to a coarse batter with red chilies, fennel seeds, and little water. The batter should be thick and grainy.
- ✓ Add salt, asafoetida, chopped onions, curry leaves, coriander leaves, and coconut (if using). Mix well.
- ✓ Heat a dosa pan or cast iron tawa. Pour a ladle of batter and spread into a thick round (not as thin as regular dosa).
- ✓ Drizzle oil around the edges and cook on medium flame until golden brown. Flip and cook the other side until crisp.
- ✓ Serve hot with coconut chutney, jaggery, or avial.

Handvo

Handvo (Rice & Dal Savory Cake) is a beloved Gujarati dish made from a fermented batter of rice and mixed dals, combined with vegetables and aromatic spices. It is typically baked into a golden, crusty cake but can also be made in a pan on the stovetop. Handvo is nutritious, protein-rich, and often eaten for breakfast or as a light dinner. Traditionally, vegetables like bottle gourd (lauki) or carrots are added for moisture and nutrition. With its crispy crust and soft, flavorful interior, Handvo is a delicious example of how regional Indian cuisines transform humble ingredients into hearty meals.



Prep. Time
6 hrs.



Cooking Time
45 min. (Baked)
30 min. (Pan)



Total Time
6 hrs 45 min.



Servings
4 - 6

Ingredients

✓ Raw rice	200g	✓ Turmeric powder	½ tsp
✓ Chana dal	50g	✓ Red chili powder	½ tsp
✓ Toor dal	30g	✓ Baking soda	¾ tsp
✓ Moong dal	30g	✓ Salt	7g
✓ Urad dal	20g	✓ Oil	2½ tbsp
✓ Sour Curd (thick)	150g	✓ Mustard seeds	1 tsp
✓ Grated bottle gourd	150g	✓ Cumin seeds	1 tsp
✓ Carrot (grated)	50g (optional)	✓ Sesame seeds	1 tbsp
✓ Green chilies (chopped)	2	✓ Curry leaves	10 leaves
✓ Ginger (grated)	1 tsp	✓ Asafoetida	pinch

Instructions

- ✓ Wash and soak rice and dals together for 4–6 hours. Drain.
- ✓ Grind to a coarse paste with curd and little water. The batter should be thick and slightly grainy.
- ✓ Ferment overnight for 8–10 hours in a warm place (skip fermentation if using baking soda).
- ✓ Add salt, turmeric, chili powder, grated vegetables, green chilies, ginger, and 1 tbsp oil. Mix well.
- ✓ If not fermented, mix in baking soda just before cooking.
- ✓ Batter is ready

Baked Handvo Method

- ✓ Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F). Grease an 8-inch round or square baking tin.
- ✓ Heat oil in a small pan. Add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, sesame seeds, curry leaves, and asafoetida. Let them splutter.
- ✓ Pour half the tempering into the batter. Mix well.
- ✓ Pour the batter into the greased tin. Drizzle remaining tempering on top.
- ✓ Bake for 35–40 minutes or until golden brown and firm when a toothpick comes out clean.
- ✓ Cool slightly before slicing. Serve with green chutney or ketchup.

Pan-Fried Handvo (Stovetop Method)

- ✓ Heat 1.5 tbsp oil in a thick-bottomed nonstick or cast iron pan (7–8 inch wide).
- ✓ Add mustard seeds, cumin, sesame seeds, curry leaves, and asafoetida for tempering.
- ✓ Once they splutter, pour the batter over the tempering and spread evenly to 1.5–2 cm thickness.
- ✓ Cover with a lid and cook on low flame for 12–15 minutes, until bottom is crispy.
- ✓ Flip carefully and cook the other side uncovered for 6–8 minutes.
- ✓ Cut and serve warm.





Ponkal

Pongal is one of South India's most cherished rice and dal-based dishes, traditionally cooked to celebrate the harvest festival also called Pongal. The word pongal means "to boil over," symbolizing prosperity. There are two major types: Ven Pongal, a savory comfort food often eaten for breakfast, and Sakkarai Pongal, a sweet version offered in temples and during festivals. While both are based on rice and yellow moong dal, their flavors diverge — one rich in spices and ghee, the other in jaggery and cardamom. In texture and ingredients, Ven Pongal is similar to khichdi but distinguished by its unique tempering and creaminess. Both versions showcase the harmony of rice and dal and are core to Tamil cuisine.



Prep. Time
10 min.



Cooking Time
30 min.



Total Time
40 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 100g
- ✓ Split yellow moong dal 60g
- ✓ Water 600ml

Ven Pongal (Savory Version)

- ✓ Ghee 25g
- ✓ Whole black pepper 1 tsp (3g)
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1 tsp (2g)
- ✓ Ginger (finely chopped) 1 tsp (5g)
- ✓ Cashew nuts 10g
- ✓ Curry leaves 6–8 leaves
- ✓ Salt as required

Sakkarai Pongal (Sweet Version)

- ✓ Jaggery 120–130g
- ✓ Water (for jaggery syrup) 50ml
- ✓ Ghee 30g
- ✓ Cardamom powder ½ tsp (1g)
- ✓ Cashew nuts 10g
- ✓ Raisins 5g
- ✓ Edible camphor (optional) a tiny pinch

Instructions

- ✓ Wash and cook rice + dal with water until very soft and mushy (3–4 whistles in a pressure cooker or slow simmer in a pot). Then follow one of the two flavoring directions below.

Ven Pongal (Savory Version)

- ✓ In a small pan, heat ghee. Fry cashews until golden. Remove and set aside. In the same ghee, add cumin seeds, black pepper, chopped ginger, and curry leaves. Let them crackle.
- ✓ Add this tempering to the cooked rice-dal mixture.
- ✓ Stir well, adjust salt, and add the fried cashews. Serve hot with coconut chutney or sambar.

Sakkarai Pongal (Sweet Version)

- ✓ In another pan, dissolve jaggery in 50ml water. Strain to remove impurities.
- ✓ Add jaggery syrup to the cooked rice-dal mixture. Cook on low heat until thickened.
- ✓ Stir in cardamom powder and a pinch of edible camphor if using.
- ✓ In ghee, fry cashews and raisins. Add to the pongal. Mix well and serve warm.

Dhokla

Dhokla is a beloved steamed savory cake from Gujarat, known for its spongy texture and balanced sweet-sour flavor. While modern dhoklas are often made with gram flour (besan), the traditional version—called khatta dhokla—uses a fermented batter of rice and urad dal or chana dal, making it a perfect fit for your rice + dal cookbook. This dish is light, protein-rich, and ideal for breakfast or a tea-time snack. Steaming gives it its characteristic airy fluff, and the tempering of mustard seeds, green chilies, and curry leaves enhances its taste. Dhokla is not just a dish but a cultural staple in Gujarati households, often served with green chutney.



Prep. Time
6 hrs



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
6 hrs. 20 min.



Servings
3-4

Ingredients

- ✓ Rice 150g
- ✓ Chana dal / Urad dal 100g
- ✓ Curd 50ml
- ✓ Ginger-Green chili paste 1 tsp (5g)
- ✓ Salt as required
- ✓ Water as needed
- ✓ Fruit salt (Eno) 1 tsp (4g)
- ✓ Oil 15g
- ✓ Mustard seeds 1 tsp (2g)
- ✓ Green chilies - Slitted 2
- ✓ Curry leaves 6–8 leaves
- ✓ Water 50ml
- ✓ Sugar (Opt) 1 tsp (5g)
- ✓ Fresh grated coconut 10g
- ✓ Coriander leaves chopped

Instructions

- ✓ Soak rice and dal separately for 4–6 hours. Grind them together to a slightly coarse batter using water as needed.
- ✓ Mix in curd and salt. Ferment the batter overnight or for 8–10 hours.
- ✓ Once fermented, add ginger-chili paste and mix well.
- ✓ Grease a dhokla plate or flat vessel. Bring water to boil in a steamer.
- ✓ Add fruit salt to the batter, mix gently. Immediately pour into the greased plate.
- ✓ Steam for 15–20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- ✓ Allow to cool slightly, then cut into squares.
- ✓ 8. Heat oil, splutter mustard seeds, add chilies and curry leaves. Pour in water and sugar. Let it simmer for a minute.
- ✓ 9. Pour the tempering evenly over the dhokla pieces.
- ✓ Garnish with coconut and coriander. Serve with green chutney.





Pesarattu

Pesarattu is a traditional breakfast dish from Andhra Pradesh, made using green gram (moong dal) and rice, ground into a batter and cooked like a dosa. Unlike regular dosa, it doesn't require fermentation, making it a quicker yet nutritious option. The name comes from “pesara” meaning green gram in Telugu, and “attu” meaning dosa. Pesarattu is typically crisp on the outside and soft inside, often served with allam pachadi (ginger chutney) or upma in the center, forming the famous Pesarattu-Upma combo. Rich in plant-based protein and fiber, it's a wholesome breakfast that's easy on the gut and keeps you full for hours.



Prep. Time
4 hrs.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
4 hrs. 20 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Green gram (moong dal) 200g
- ✓ Raw rice 50g
- ✓ Ginger 10g
- ✓ Green chilies 2–3
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1 tsp (2g)
- ✓ Onion (finely chopped) 50g
- ✓ Salt as required
- ✓ Water as needed
- ✓ Oil for greasing

Tips

- › For extra crispness, use slightly less water for grinding.
- › Soak the dal well to ensure softness and easy grinding.
- › Avoid overcooking, or the dosa may turn dry.

Instructions

- ✓ Rinse and soak green gram and rice together for 6–8 hours or overnight.
- ✓ Drain and grind with ginger, green chilies, cumin seeds, and some water to a smooth, pouring consistency batter.
- ✓ Add salt and mix well. No fermentation is required.
- ✓ Heat a tawa or dosa pan. Pour a ladleful of batter and spread like dosa.
- ✓ Sprinkle finely chopped onions on top and press gently.
- ✓ Drizzle some oil around the edges. Cook on medium heat until golden brown and crisp.
- ✓ Flip and cook for 30 seconds (optional). Serve hot with ginger chutney or coconut chutney.

Sambara Dosai

Sambara Dosai is a sacred prasad prepared and offered during Ekadashi in the revered Srirangam Ranganathar Perumal Temple, a prominent Vishnu temple in Tamil Nadu. This unique dosa is known for its thick, ghee-rich texture, use of black urad dal (with skin), and coarsely ground spices. Unlike regular dosas, it is not spread thin or crisp but cooked like a soft, spiced pancake with fragrant ingredients. It is believed to be medicinal, especially effective for colds and coughs, and is deeply cherished as a temple offering (prasad). Similar dosa preparations are found in temples like Kanchi Varadharaja Perumal, Narasimha Perumal, and Singa Perumal temples, each with their distinct character. Sambara Dosai stands out for its sattvic simplicity, aroma, and healing value.



Prep. Time
10 hrs.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
10 hrs. 20 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|---|
| ✓ Raw rice | 200 g | lightly, and powdered, then added to the coarsely ground urad dal batter. |
| ✓ Whole black urad dal | 100 g | |
| ✓ Coarse Black pepper | 1 tsp | ✓ In both methods, the final batter should be thick and slightly grainy—not smooth. Allow the batter to ferment overnight in a warm place. |
| ✓ Coarse cumin seeds | 1 tsp | |
| ✓ Dry ginger powder | ½ tsp | |
| ✓ Curry leaves | 6 to 8 leaves | ✓ The next morning, coarsely pound black pepper and cumin seeds using a mortar and pestle. Add the crushed spices, torn curry leaves, dry ginger powder (if using), and salt to the fermented batter. Mix well. |
| ✓ Salt | 5 g | |
| ✓ Ghee | as required | |
| ✓ Water | as required | |

Instructions

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Wash and soak the raw rice and whole black urad dal separately for about 5 hours. | ✓ Heat a thick dosa tawa or stone griddle. Drizzle a spoonful of ghee. |
| ✓ Traditionally, the batter is prepared in two ways. In one method, the soaked rice and dal are ground separately to a slightly coarse texture and then combined. In another variation, the soaked rice is drained, dried | ✓ Pour two ladlefuls of batter onto the hot surface without spreading it. Cover and cook for 2 minutes. |
| | ✓ Flip carefully, drizzle another spoon of ghee, cover, and cook the other side for another 2 minutes. |
| | ✓ Serve hot, plain—just like the prasadam served at Srirangam temple. |





Paniyaram

Paniyaram is a beloved South Indian breakfast or snack made from fermented rice and urad dal batter, usually the same as idli or dosa batter. Cooked in a special pan with small, round cavities (paniyaram pan or appe pan), these bite-sized treats are crisp on the outside and soft inside. Variations abound: sweet versions with jaggery and coconut, or savory versions spiced with onion, curry leaves, mustard seeds, and chilies. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, paniyaram is a common tiffin box and festival item, often served with coconut or tomato chutney. It's quick to make if you already have fermented batter on hand.



Prep. Time
87 hrs.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
8 hrs. 20 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 200g
- ✓ Urad dal 50g
- ✓ Poha (optional) 20g
- ✓ Water as needed
- ✓ Salt to taste
- ✓ Oil as needed
- ✓ Mustard seeds 1 tsp (2g)
- ✓ Chana dal 1 tsp (5g)
- ✓ Onion (finely chopped) 40g
- ✓ Green chilies 1-2 (chopped)
- ✓ Curry leaves 6-8 leaves

Tips

- › If the batter is too runny, the paniyarams may not hold shape.
- › For soft centers, use poha or cooked rice in the batter.
- › For a quick version, use leftover dosa or idli batter.

Instructions

- ✓ Soak rice, urad dal, and poha (if using) for 4-6 hours.
- ✓ Grind to a smooth batter with water. Add salt and ferment overnight.
- ✓ For savory version, prepare tempering: Heat oil, splutter mustard seeds, add chana dal, then onions, chilies, and curry leaves. Sauté until soft. Mix into the batter.
- ✓ Heat a paniyaram pan and add a few drops of oil in each cavity.
- ✓ Pour batter into each mold, filling up to $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
- ✓ Cover and cook on medium heat until the underside is golden brown (about 3-4 minutes).
- ✓ Flip and cook the other side until evenly browned and cooked through.

Dal Pitha

Dal Pitha is a beloved traditional dish from Bihar and Jharkhand, often referred to as the Bihari version of momos or dumplings. It is made by stuffing spiced lentil filling inside a soft rice flour dough and then steaming them. Dal Pitha is not just a breakfast item but also a festive or seasonal preparation, especially enjoyed during winter and post-harvest times. Typically served with chutney or pickles, it is considered both tasty and healthy. The combination of rice and dal makes it a wholesome meal rich in protein and carbohydrates. It showcases the rustic simplicity and nutrition-rich cooking of Eastern India.



Prep. Time
30 min.



Cooking Time
25 min.



Total Time
55 min.



Servings
3-4

Ingredients

- ✓ Rice flour 250g
- ✓ Salt ½ tsp
- ✓ Water as required
- ✓ Oil (Opt- for kneeding) 1 tsp
- ✓ Chana dal (Bengal gram) 100g
- ✓ Garlic 4–5 cloves
- ✓ Green chilies 2
- ✓ Ginger 1 tsp, grated
- ✓ Cumin seeds ½ tsp
- ✓ Mustard seeds ½ tsp
- ✓ Curry leaves (opt) 1 sprig
- ✓ Turmeric powder ¼ tsp
- ✓ Salt to taste
- ✓ Fresh coriander leaves a handful

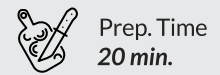
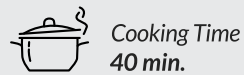
Instructions

- ✓ Wash and soak chana dal for 2–3 hours. Drain and coarsely grind it without water.
- ✓ Heat a teaspoon of oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds and cumin seeds. Let them splutter. Add chopped garlic, green chilies, grated ginger, and curry leaves. Sauté for a minute.
- ✓ Add the ground dal, turmeric, and salt. Cook on low heat for 7–10 minutes, stirring often, until the dal becomes dry and crumbly.
- ✓ Stir in chopped coriander leaves. Let the filling cool completely.
- ✓ For the dough, boil water with salt. Add rice flour gradually while stirring. Mix and cover. Once slightly cooled, knead into a soft dough. Use oil if sticky.
- ✓ Take a small portion of dough, shape into a ball, then flatten into a small disc.
- ✓ Place a spoonful of the dal filling in the center. Fold and seal the edges to form a dumpling (like a gujiya or half-moon).
- ✓ Arrange the pithas in a greased steamer and steam for 15–20 minutes until firm and cooked.



Bisi Bele Bath

Bisi Bele Bath, meaning “hot lentil rice” in Kannada, is a traditional Karnataka dish that beautifully combines rice, toor dal (split pigeon peas), vegetables, and a unique spice blend. Its origins trace back to the royal kitchens of the Mysore Palace, where it was once a carefully prepared ceremonial meal. The hallmark of Bisi Bele Bath is the aromatic masala powder, made with roasted spices and coconut, setting it apart from North Indian khichdi or Tamil ven pongal. Rich in protein and comfortingly spicy, it is often served with ghee, boondi, or potato chips, and is a beloved staple in Karnataka homes and temples.



Ingredients

✓ Curry leaves	1 sprig	✓ Raw rice	150 grams
✓ Dry red chilies	4	✓ Toor dal	100 grams
✓ Coriander seeds	1 tbsp	✓ Turmeric powder	¼ tsp
✓ Chana dal	1 tsp	✓ Tamarind	15 grams
✓ Urad dal	1 tsp	✓ Ghee	1 tbsp
✓ Cumin seeds	½ tsp	✓ Salt	to taste
✓ Fenugreek seeds	¼ tsp	✓ Water	approx. 800 ml
✓ Cloves	2	✓ Carrot	50 grams
✓ Cinnamon	1 small piece	✓ Beans	50 grams
✓ Grated dry coconut	2 tbsp	✓ Brinjal	50 grams
✓ Oil/Ghee	as required	✓ Drumstick	1
✓ Mustard seeds	½ tsp	✓ Chow chow / ash gourd	50 grams
✓ Curry leaves	a few	✓ Green peas	30 grams
✓ Hing (asafoetida)	a pinch	✓ Shallots (small onions)	10 to 12
✓ Cashew nuts	8–10 (optional)		

Instructions

- ✓ Add boiled vegetables, tamarind pulp, and salt. Cook for 5 minutes on medium flame.
- ✓ Add the ground spice powder, mix well, and cook for 5–7 minutes until the raw smell disappears.
- ✓ Add the mashed rice and dal, mix thoroughly. Add hot water if needed to adjust consistency. Simmer for 5 minutes.
- ✓ In a small pan, heat 1 tbsp ghee, splutter mustard seeds, add hing, curry leaves, and cashews. Pour the tempering over the Bisi Bele Bath.
- ✓ Serve hot with extra ghee, boondi, or papad on the side.
- ✓ Wash and soak the rice and toor dal together for 30 minutes. Drain and pressure cook with turmeric and 750 ml water until soft and mashable. Mash lightly and set aside.
- ✓ Soak tamarind in 100 ml warm water for 10–15 minutes. Squeeze and extract the pulp. Strain and set aside.
- ✓ Steam or boil the vegetables (except shallots) until just tender. Keep aside.
- ✓ Heat 1 tsp ghee, roast all the masala ingredients (except coconut) on medium flame until aromatic. Add coconut at the end, roast briefly. Cool and grind to a fine powder.
- ✓ In a large pan, heat 1 tbsp ghee, sauté shallots until golden.





Kanchipuram Idli

Kanchipuram Idli, also known as Kovil Idli, is a sacred and spiced version of idli traditionally offered to Lord Varadharaja Perumal at the Kanchipuram temple in Tamil Nadu. Unlike regular soft idlis, this variety is generously flavored with crushed pepper, cumin, ginger, curry leaves, and a touch of asafoetida. A unique feature of the traditional preparation is that the batter is steamed in long cylindrical molds made of bamboo or metal, lined with mantharai leaves (*Bauhinia variegata*). These leaves infuse a subtle earthy aroma into the idlis and are an essential part of the authentic temple version. This idli is a true representation of South Indian temple food, known for its simplicity, sanctity, and deep flavors.



Prep. Time
8 hrs.



Cooking Time
25 min.



Total Time
8 hrs. 25 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 250 grams
- ✓ Parboiled rice (idli rice) 250 grams
- ✓ Whole urad dal 150 grams
- ✓ Black pepper (crushed) 1½ teaspoons
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1½ teaspoons
- ✓ Fresh ginger (chopped) 1 tablespoon
- ✓ Curry leaves 8 to 10 leaves
- ✓ Ghee 2 tablespoons
- ✓ Hing (asafoetida) ½ teaspoon
- ✓ Salt as required
- ✓ Mantharai leaves (opt) for lining molds
- ✓ Water as required

Instructions

- ✓ Wash and soak both types of rice together and urad dal separately for 4 to 5 hours.
- ✓ Grind the urad dal into a smooth batter using minimal water.
- ✓ Coarsely grind the soaked rice to a slightly grainy consistency.
- ✓ Combine both batters and add salt. Mix well and ferment overnight or for 8–10 hours.
- ✓ Before steaming, coarsely crush black pepper and cumin seeds. Heat ghee and add chopped ginger, curry leaves, pepper, cumin, and asafoetida. Sauté briefly.
- ✓ Add this tempering to the fermented batter and mix thoroughly.
- ✓ Line long cylindrical molds (metal or bamboo baskets) with mantharai leaves if available.
- ✓ Pour the batter into the molds, filling only ¾th full. Steam for 30 to 40 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.
- ✓ Let it cool slightly, then unmold and slice into thick rounds.

Panchmel Khichdi

Panchmel Khichdi, also known as Panchratna Khichdi, is a traditional Rajasthani dish that showcases the culinary wisdom of using five different lentils blended with rice. “Panch” means five, and “mel” denotes mixture — together they represent a balance of flavors, nutrition, and texture. Originally developed as a wholesome one-pot meal in arid regions of India, this dish is spiced with regional masalas and typically cooked with ghee. Panchmel Khichdi holds cultural significance as it is offered as prasad during festivals and served in traditional thalis across Gujarat and Rajasthan. Unlike simple khichdi, this version is rich, slightly spiced, and hearty enough to serve as a complete meal on its own.



Prep. Time
20 min.



Cooking Time
35 min.



Total Time
55 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Rice 100 g
- ✓ Chana dal 25 g
- ✓ Moong dal (split, yellow) 25 g
- ✓ Urad dal (split, skinless) 25 g
- ✓ Masoor dal (red lentils) 25 g
- ✓ Ghee 30 g
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1 tsp
- ✓ Cloves 2
- ✓ Bay leaf 1
- ✓ Asafoetida a pinch
- ✓ Green chili (chopped) 1
- ✓ Ginger (grated) 5 g
- ✓ Tomato (chopped) 1 small (50 g.)
- ✓ Turmeric powder ½ tsp
- ✓ Red chili powder ½ tsp
- ✓ Garam masala ¼ tsp
- ✓ Salt to taste
- ✓ Water as required
- ✓ Fresh coriander for garnish

Instructions

- ✓ Rinse the rice and all five dals together thoroughly. Soak for 30 minutes, then drain.
- ✓ In a pressure cooker, heat ghee. Add cumin seeds, cloves, bay leaf, and a pinch of asafoetida.
- ✓ Add green chili and ginger. Sauté for 30 seconds.
- ✓ Add chopped tomatoes, turmeric powder, and red chili powder. Cook until tomatoes soften.
- ✓ Add the drained rice and dal mixture. Stir well for 2 minutes to coat with the spices.
- ✓ Add salt and 700 ml water. Pressure cook for 3 whistles on medium heat.
- ✓ Let the pressure release naturally. Open and check consistency — adjust with hot water if needed.
- ✓ Add garam masala and mix gently.
- ✓ Garnish with chopped coriander and serve hot with ghee or curd.





Muthia

Muthia is a traditional Gujarati breakfast dish that's as wholesome as it is versatile. The name comes from the word 'muthi' (fist), as the dough is shaped by hand. This version is a clever and delicious way to use leftover cooked rice and lentils like moong dal or chana dal. Once steamed, these dumplings are sliced and pan-fried with aromatic tempering. Popular across Gujarat, this steamed snack is light, protein-rich, and can also double up as a tea-time item. It is often prepared in households that value minimal waste and maximum nutrition.



Prep. Time
15 min.



Cooking Time
25 min.



Total Time
40 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Leftover cooked rice 200 grams
- ✓ Cooked Chana /Moong dal 100 grams
- ✓ Rice flour 80 grams
- ✓ Gram flour (besan) 50 grams
- ✓ Fenugreek leaves (opt) 20 grams
- ✓ Ginger paste 1 teaspoon
- ✓ Green chili paste 1 teaspoon
- ✓ Turmeric powder ½ teaspoon
- ✓ Red chili powder ½ teaspoon
- ✓ Asafoetida a pinch
- ✓ Salt as required
- ✓ Lemon juice 1 tablespoon
- ✓ Sugar 1 teaspoon
- ✓ Water as needed
- ✓ Oil as needed
- ✓ Mustard seeds 1 teaspoon
- ✓ Sesame seeds 1 teaspoon
- ✓ Curry leaves 8 to 10

Instructions

- ✓ In a large bowl, mash the cooked rice and dal lightly.
- ✓ Add rice flour, gram flour, fenugreek leaves (if using), ginger-chili paste, turmeric, chili powder, asafoetida, salt, lemon juice, and sugar.
- ✓ Mix everything and add a little water only if required. The dough should be soft but not sticky.
- ✓ Divide the dough and shape into cylindrical logs about 1½ inches thick.
- ✓ Place them in a greased steamer and steam for 18–20 minutes on medium heat, or until firm.
- ✓ Remove and let them cool slightly. Slice into 1 cm thick rounds.
- ✓ Heat oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds, let them splutter.
- ✓ Add sesame seeds, curry leaves, and a pinch of asafoetida.
- ✓ Add the sliced muthia pieces and pan-fry on medium heat until golden and crisp on both sides.

Thalipeeth

Thalipeeth is a multigrain savory flatbread from Maharashtra, typically made with bhajani flour—a roasted blend of various grains, pulses, and spices. For your rice and dal-focused cookbook, this version uses only rice and dal, staying true to the spirit of Thalipeeth while aligning with your ingredient criteria. Traditionally served hot with butter, curd, or thecha (spicy chutney), Thalipeeth is dense, filling, and rich in flavor. It's commonly eaten for breakfast or as a hearty snack, especially in rural homes, where the flour mix is prepared in advance and stored for quick meals.



Prep. Time
20 min.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
40 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Rice 100g
- ✓ Chana dal 40g
- ✓ Urad dal 20g
- ✓ Moong dal 20g
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1 tsp (2g)
- ✓ Coriander seeds 1 tsp (2g)
- ✓ Onion (finely chopped) 50g
- ✓ Green chilies (chopped) 2
- ✓ Fresh coriander 10g (chopped)
- ✓ Salt as required
- ✓ Water as needed
- ✓ Oil or ghee for cooking

Tips

- › Dough should be soft but not sticky. Use wet hands to handle. Cook on medium flame to ensure the inside is fully done. Add a little grated carrot or spinach for extra nutrition.

Instructions

- ✓ Dry roast rice and all dals separately until aromatic. Also roast cumin and coriander seeds.
- ✓ Let cool completely and grind into a coarse flour.
- ✓ In a bowl, mix the flour with chopped onion, chilies, coriander leaves, and salt.
- ✓ Add enough water to make a soft dough.
- ✓ Divide into small balls. Flatten each between palms or on a banana leaf/plastic sheet using wet hands.
- ✓ Make a hole in the center for even cooking.
- ✓ Place on a hot tawa, add oil or ghee around the edges and center.
- ✓ Cook on medium heat until golden and crisp on both sides.





Arisi Paruppu Sadam

Arisi Paruppu Sadam is a simple yet iconic one-pot dish from Coimbatore and the Kongu Nadu region of Tamil Nadu. The name literally translates to "rice and dal rice," and it is considered one of the earliest comfort foods in Tamil households. This humble dish, often flavored with local spices, is said to have inspired variations like Sambar Sadam and Bisi Bele Bath. Unlike other khichdi-type preparations, Arisi Paruppu Sadam has a distinctively rustic, homestyle taste, traditionally served with appalam (papad), pickle, or ghee. It is deeply rooted in agrarian food culture — easy to prepare, nutritious, and hearty enough to sustain farmers through long hours in the field.



Prep. Time
15 min.



Cooking Time
30 min.



Total Time
45 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice 200 g
- ✓ Toor dal 100 g
- ✓ Pearl onion or shallots 100 g (sliced)
- ✓ Tomato 100 g (chopped)
- ✓ Garlic (crushed) 4 cloves
- ✓ Dry red chilies 2
- ✓ Mustard seeds 1 tsp
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1 tsp
- ✓ Curry leaves 10 leaves
- ✓ Asafoetida a pinch
- ✓ Turmeric powder ½ tsp
- ✓ Salt to taste
- ✓ Ghee 20 g
- ✓ Sesame oil (gingelly) 15 g
- ✓ Water 700 ml

Instructions

- ✓ Wash and soak rice and toor dal together for 20 minutes. Drain and keep aside.
- ✓ Heat sesame oil and ghee in a pressure cooker. Add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, and allow them to splutter.
- ✓ Add dry red chilies, asafoetida, curry leaves, and crushed garlic. Sauté for a few seconds.
- ✓ Add sliced shallots and cook until golden brown.
- ✓ Add chopped tomatoes and turmeric. Cook until tomatoes are soft.
- ✓ Add the soaked rice and dal. Mix well to coat with the masala.
- ✓ Add salt and 700 ml water. Pressure cook for 3–4 whistles on medium heat.
- ✓ Allow pressure to release naturally. Open, stir gently, and adjust consistency if needed.
- ✓ Serve hot with a drizzle of ghee on top, accompanied by papad or pickle.

Undrallu

Undrallu, also known as Kudumulu, is a sacred steamed dumpling from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, commonly offered to Lord Ganesha during Ganesh Chaturthi. Traditionally, it is made using rice rava (coarsely ground rice) and chana dal, resulting in a slightly grainy, rustic texture. This distinguishes it from modern adaptations that use rice flour for convenience. The combination of rice and dal makes it light, wholesome, and rich in protein. With minimal seasoning like cumin and ghee, Undrallu reflects the essence of temple-style cooking and is often served as a prasadam or simple breakfast.



Prep. Time
15 min.



Cooking Time
25 min.



Total Time
40 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Rice rava (biyyam rava) 100 grams
- ✓ Chana dal 50 grams
- ✓ Water 250 ml
- ✓ Cumin seeds ½ tsp
- ✓ Salt ½ tsp
- ✓ Ghee 1 tsp

Instructions

- ✓ Wash and soak the chana dal for 1 hour. Drain and set aside.
- ✓ In a pan, bring water to a boil. Add salt, ghee, and cumin seeds.
- ✓ Add the soaked chana dal and simmer for 5–6 minutes.
- ✓ Gradually add the rice rava, stirring continuously to avoid lumps.
- ✓ Cook the mixture on low heat for 2–3 minutes until it thickens into a dough-like mass.
- ✓ Allow to cool slightly, then knead gently with greased hands.
- ✓ Shape into lemon-sized balls.
- ✓ Steam in an idli steamer or steamer basket for 10–12 minutes until firm and cooked.
- ✓ Serve warm as a breakfast item or festive offering.





Ulundu Kozhukattai

Ulundu Kozhukattai is a traditional South Indian steamed dumpling made especially during Ganesh Chaturthi and other auspicious occasions. The name "Ulundu" refers to black gram (urad dal), the primary filling ingredient. These dumplings are mildly spiced, packed with protein, and steamed to soft perfection. Unlike sweet kozhukattai, this savory variant is less known outside Tamil Nadu, yet deeply cherished in Tamil Brahmin households. The filling blends coarsely ground urad dal, spices, and fresh coconut, making it not only nutritious but also flavorful.



Prep. Time
1 hr.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
1 hr. 20 min.



Servings
4

Ingredients

- ✓ Raw rice flour 100 grams
- ✓ Water 180 ml
- ✓ Sesame oil 1 tsp
- ✓ Salt 2 grams
- ✓ Urad dal 100 grams
- ✓ Grated coconut 30 grams
- ✓ Green chilies (chopped) 2
- ✓ Ginger (chopped) 1 tsp (4 grams)
- ✓ Black pepper (crushed) ½ tsp (2 grams)
- ✓ Cumin seeds ½ tsp (2 grams)
- ✓ Curry leaves a few
- ✓ Salt (to taste) 4 grams
- ✓ Coconut oil or sesame oil 1 tbsp (15 ml)
- ✓ Asafoetida a pinch

Ingredients

- ✓ In a saucepan, boil 180 ml of water with 1 tsp sesame oil and 2 grams salt.
- ✓ Once it comes to a rolling boil, reduce heat and add the rice flour gradually while stirring. Mix quickly without lumps, cover and cook on low for 2–3 minutes.

Instructions

- ✓ Turn off the heat, let it cool slightly, and knead into a soft, non-sticky dough. Keep covered.
- ✓ Rinse and soak urad dal for 1 hour. Drain completely. Coarsely grind the dal without adding water to a coarse, crumbly texture.
- ✓ Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pan, add cumin seeds, black pepper, chopped green chilies, ginger, curry leaves, and a pinch of asafoetida.
- ✓ Add the ground urad dal mixture and sauté for 4–5 minutes until aromatic.
- ✓ Add salt and grated coconut. Mix well and cook for another minute. Let it cool.
- ✓ Divide the rice dough into small lemon-sized balls. Flatten each ball into a small cup shape using your fingers.
- ✓ Fill with 1–2 tsp of the urad dal mixture and gently seal the edges. Shape into ball or modak-style dumplings.
- ✓ Arrange the kozhukattai on a greased steamer plate or banana leaf. Steam for 10–12 minutes on medium heat or until the outer layer turns glossy.

Uppudu Pindi

Uppudu Pindi is a humble yet deeply satisfying traditional dish from Andhra Pradesh. Made with rice flour and a tempering of spices, it is often served as a warm breakfast or a light dinner. The word “Uppudu” means “cooked” or “steamed” and “Pindi” means “flour.” Unlike idli or dosa, Uppudu Pindi doesn’t require fermentation, making it quick to prepare. It’s closely related to Kerala’s kozhukatta and Tamil Nadu’s pidi kozhukattai, but here, rice flour is cooked directly in seasoned water. Some variations include moong dal for added texture and nutrition. It is best enjoyed with coconut chutney or curd.



Prep. Time
10 min.



Cooking Time
20 min.



Total Time
45 min.



Servings
3-4

Ingredients

- ✓ Rice flour 200 g
- ✓ Split yellow moong dal 50 g
- ✓ Water 400 ml
- ✓ Green chilies (chopped) 2
- ✓ Ginger (chopped) 5 g
- ✓ Mustard seeds 1 tsp
- ✓ Cumin seeds 1 tsp
- ✓ Chana dal (soaked) 1 tbsp
- ✓ Curry leaves 10 leaves
- ✓ Asafoetida a pinch
- ✓ Salt to taste
- ✓ Oil 15 g

Instructions

- ✓ Dry roast the rice flour in a pan on low flame for 3–4 minutes until it becomes aromatic. Set aside.
- ✓ Cook moong dal in water until just soft but not mushy. Drain and keep aside.
- ✓ Heat oil in a kadai. Add mustard seeds and let them splutter. Then add cumin seeds, soaked chana dal, green chilies, ginger, curry leaves, and asafoetida. Sauté for a minute.
- ✓ Add the cooked moong dal and 400 ml of water. Add salt and bring to a boil.
- ✓ Slowly add the roasted rice flour, stirring continuously to avoid lumps.
- ✓ Reduce the heat to low and cover the pan. Let it steam-cook for 6–8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- ✓ Once the mixture is fully cooked and becomes slightly dry, turn off the heat.
- ✓ Cover and let it rest for 5 minutes. Fluff with a spoon and serve hot.



From the sunlit kitchens of Tamil Nadu to the rustic hearths of Bihar, The Essence of Indian Rice & Lentil Breakfasts brings together a vibrant collection of traditional recipes rooted in simplicity, nutrition, and cultural richness. This book explores time-honored breakfast and snack dishes made from humble rice and lentils—transforming them into hearty, wholesome meals enjoyed across generations. Whether it's the steamed Kanchipuram Idli, the savory Sambara Dosai, or the comforting Panchmel Khichdi, each recipe tells a story of regional pride and culinary ingenuity. Designed for the modern cook yet faithful to heritage, this collection will energize your mornings and revive your afternoons, one delicious spoonful at a time.

