



CHAATS are snacks and are for experience seekers. Literally meaning to lick, as in flavorsome lick, **CHAATS** are all about the flavours that ignite the internal fireworks of the mind.

Their function is to enliven and fortify, with each mouth full a crunchy, tangy, hot and sweet affair resulting in a cooling mental tonic and a warming physical boost that sends you off with a different step. A punctuation mark in the day. They come in between the main events of lunch or dinner but can replace them as they are not some frivolous fancy that flips you up and slaps you down but built to stimulate and satisfy.

Chaats are all about the textures, the fresh aromatic flavors and seasonings that cover the sour, sweet, salty and bitter tastes.

Getting the balance in the seasoning one of the most important things to make food work to its full potential and when the body is given foods that have this balance of the tastes it loosens, relaxes and puts it all in the right place.

From an endless array of buckets and bowls, trolleys and trays the chaat wallahs of the city distract and delight with mixtures from their boxes and bags of tricks. Some wandering, some static, in Kolkata you are never far from a cheap cone of some crunchy tasty goodness and the positive effect of having such a choice is immeasurable.



TEXTURES...

THE CHAATS ARE VARIATIONS ON A THEME.

CRUNCHY AND FRESH STUFF, GIVEN NEW LIFE WITH SPICES AND CHUTNI'S AND SEASONINGS.

THE TEXTURE COME FROM GRAINS, GRAMS AND NUTS ROASTED OR FRIED INTO CRISP NUGGETS.

RAW RICE, FLATTENED RICE (CHURRA), CHICKPEAS AND PEANUTS ARE ROASTED IN HOT SAND IN LARGE KARAHI'S (INDIAN WOKS) SIEVED AND STORED. THE SAND COOKS THEM QUICK AND EVEN. OILESS, DRY AND CLEAN TASTING.

CHICKPEA FLOUR, THE GRAM FLOUR, IS MADE INTO A BATTER AND FRIED IN HOT OIL INTO VARIOUS NOODLE SHAPES. ITS CALLED SEV.

CHICKPEA FLOUR IS GOOD PROTEIN AND ABSORBS LESS OIL THAN WHITE FLOUR.

SPLIT DALS ARE SOAKED AND FRIED AS ARE POTATO STRAWS, PURI,S, PEAS, CORN AND ON AND ON.



TASTES...

THESE COME FROM CHOPPED FRESH THINGS, SPICES, CHUTNIS AND OIL. A FEW THINGS CROP UP EVERYWHERE. THE THINGS THAT COLOUR THE BLOOD.

FRESH ITEMS

THE AROMATICS COME FROM ONION, GINGER, GREEN CHILLI AND CORIANDER. LIME FOR SOUR AND ZING. TOMATO, CUCUMBER, POTATO, COCONUT, SPROUTED GRAM- ROOTS AND FRUITS FOR FRESHNESS AND NUTRITIONAL CLOUT.



ONION

THE ONIONS IN INDIA ARE PINK AND SOFTER IN FLAVOR. NO PROBLEM TO EAT RAW AND THEY BRING A UNIQUE CHARACTER TO THE CHAATS. RED ONION CAN BE USED BUT WHITE ONION IS TOO STRONG.

GINGER

SKINNED AND CUT IN SMALL PIECES OR STRIPS, GINGER ADDS HEAT, STRENGTH AND PUNGENT GOODNESS. EAT MORE GINGER BE SICK LESS.

CORIANDER

THE FRESH CHOPPED LEAVES OF CORIANDER ARE A STAPLE OF PRETTY MUCH ALL THE CHAAT STALLS.

GREEN CHILLI

THE GREEN CHILLI USED ARE NOT SUPER HOT LIKE SOME OF THE SMALLER THAI ONES. THEY HAVE GOOD TASTE TOO AND OPEN THE MIND TO THINK.

LIME

THE LIME OF ASIA ARE THE SIZE OF PING PONG BALLS AND HAVE A SWEETER TASTE THAN THE SOUTH AMERICAN.



MASALA



MASALA ... IS LITERALLY A MIXTURE, A MIXTURE OF SPICES TO LIFT THE FOODS AND ARE VITAL IN THE CHAATS. AS WITH THE FOODS THEY ALSO HELP THE BODY TO PERFORM TO THE BEST.

CHAAT MASALA- SNACK MASALA, IS THE ALL PURPOSE SNACK SPICE MIX THAT BRINGS IT ALL TO LIFE.

MOST CHAAT WALLAH'S HAVE THEIR OWN THEIR BLEND -THEIR INDIVIDUAL CALLING CARDS. THEY ALL ARE BASED THOUGH AROUND THE SOUR FLAVOUR OF AMCHUR- THE POWDER FROM THE DRIED GREEN MANGO, BLACK SALT- THE SULPHURIC SALT FROM THE EARTH, THE HEAT OF THE RED CHILLI POWDER AND THE SLIGHTLY BITTER ROASTED CUMIN POWDER, TO GIVE A HOT, SALTY, SOUR LIFT TO THE CHAATS, THE EGGS, FRUITS, PULSED, DAL'S AND CURDS. ALL SORTS.

OTHER ITEMS THAT CAN TURN UP IN A CHAAT MASALA ARE CORIANDER, CAROM, GARAM MASALA, BLACK PEPPER, GINGER POWDER, DRIED MINT, ASAFOETIDA, NUTMEG. §
THE LAYERS OF OPTIONS ARE ENDLESS.

MOODI MASALA OR MURI MASALA

A BENGALI VERSION OF CHAAT MASALA, MOODI OR MURI MASALA IS THE POWDER TO SPICE JHAL MURI, THE BELOVED SNACK OF BENGAL.

THIS IS JUST A VERSION. THERE IS NO ONE VERSION.

TO GET THE DARK RICH INTENSITY OF THE MURI WALLAH'S OF KOLKATA ROAST THE CUMIN AND CORIANDER SLOW AND LONG TILL DARK AND INTENSE TAKING CARE NOT TO BURN.

1 TBS CUMIN SEEDS

1 TBS CORIANDER SEEDS

4 BAY LEAVES

1/4 TBS WHITE PEPPER SEED

1/2 TBS AMCHUR

1/4 TBS BLACK SALT

1/4 TBS CHILLI POWDER

DRY ROAST CUMIN AND CORIANDER SEEDS

SLOWLY TILL BROWNEED AND AROMATIC.

DRY ROAST BAY LEAVES TILL CRISP.

GRIND WITH ALL OTHER INGREDIENTS.

BHAJA MASALA

BHAJA MASALA IS A BENGALI MIX THAT TAKES THE ROASTED CUMIN A STAGE FURTHER ADDING EITHER RED CHILLI'S AND GRINDING OR ROASTING CUMIN WITH THE OTHER FOUR SPICES PANCH PARON (MUSTARD SEED, FENNEL, FENUGREEK, NIGELLA AND FENNEL) WITH ROAST CUMIN.

ROASTED CUMIN... OPENS THE APPETITE AND AS WELL AS TURNING UP IN THE CHAAT MASALA THE SLIGHTLY BITTER, NUTTY AROMATIC COMFORT OF ROASTED CUMIN IS OFTEN USED ON ITS OWN TO DUST OVER AND FINISH A SNACK.

TAKE A PAN HEAT IT. ADD THE CUMIN SEEDS AND ROAST THEM TILL THE SEEDS TURN COLOUR AND THE SMELL IS RELEASED.

LET COOL A LITTLE THEN GRIND. BEST STORED IN A AIR TIGHT JAR OR BOX.



CHUTNI'S...

THE CHUTNI'S BRING A FRESH ZING AND ADD FLAVORSOME VALUE. LIGHT WEIGHT BUT HEAVY WEIGHT THEY BRING EVERYTHING TOGETHER.

INDIAN CHUTNI'S ARE FRESH, MADE FRESH AND EATEN FRESH. THE BRITISH ADAPTED THE IDEA, MADE IT A WAY OF PRE-SERVING AUTUMN FRUITS IN SUGAR, VINEGAR AND SPICES FOR LASTING THE WINTER AND CALLED IT CHUTNEY.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN CHUTNI'S THAT TURN UP ON THE CHAAT WALLAHS CARTS.

A RED ONE, A GREEN ONE AND A BROWN ONE.



HARI CHUTNI - GREEN CHUTNI

HARI (GREEN) CHUTNI IN ITS MOST SIMPLE FORM IS MADE FROM JUST CORIANDER LEAF, GREEN CHILLI, LIME AND SALT ALL PASTED TOGETHER. AS SIMPLE AS IT IS EFFECTIVE AND A GREAT WAY TO PRESERVE THE LIFE OF THIS HIGHLY VOLATILE LEAF. MINT LEAVES CAN BE ADDED TOO AND TO GIVE EXTRA DIMENSIONS FRESH GINGER, ONION OR GARLIC CAN BE ADDED AS CAN CUMIN, IN SEED FORM OR ROASTED AND POWDERED. BY ADDING A FEW PEANUTS OR ROASTED GRAMS TO THE MIX HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER AS WITHOUT THE WATER WILL IN TIME START TO SEPARATE. A PINCH OF SUGAR WILL HELP KEEP THE INITIAL VIVID GREEN COLOUR AS WILL A TEASPOON OF OIL.

YOGHURT TOO CAN BE ADDED TO MAKE A HOT COOLING SAUCE.

SO MANY USES IT HAS- KEBABS TO EGGS TO THE CHAATS AND FOR MANY ITS THE ORIGINAL SANDWICH SPREAD.

IT WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD FEW DAYS IN THE FRIDGE AND FREEZES WELL TOO.

BASIC HARI CHUTNI

1 BUNCH CORIANDER
1 OR 2 GREEN CHILLI'S
1 LIME
SALT

CHOP THE WASHED CORIANDER, STEMS AND LEAVES ALONG WITH THE CHILLI AND PASTE IN A MIXER. KEEP PUSHING THE PULP DOWN THE SIDES OF THE MIXER BOWL TILL ITS A FINE MUSH THEN ADD THE SALT, LIME JUICE AND WATER TO GET THE DESIRED CONSISTENCY.

TAMARIND CHUTNI

FOR TAMARIND CHUTNI YOU NEED TAMARIND PULP. TO GET THIS SOAK THE PASTE IN WATER AND SQUEEZE OUT THE JUICE LEAVING BEHIND THE SEEDS AND FIBRES. THIS IS THE PULP.

TAMARIND PULP ALONE IS TART AND TANGY SO YOU COOK IT WITH SOME PALM SUGAR AND OR DATES TO MAKE A LITTLE SWEET. YOU ADD SOME SPICES TOO TO GIVE IT MORE.

YOU CAN BUY IN A PASTE FORM THAT HAS BEEN FREED OF ITS SEEDS AND FIBERS- EASIEST TO USE BAD TASTE AVOID IT.

THE SEALED BLOCKS OF WET PASTE WITH SEEDS FROM THAILAND ARE LITTLE SWEETER. ITS OK BUT THE BEST IS THE 200 GM DRIED BLOCK OF PASTE FROM INDIA. CHEAPEST AND THE TASTIEST.

TO EXTRACT THE PULP BREAK THE BLOCK INTO SMALL PIECES INTO A POT AND COVER WITH BOILING WATER AND PUT A LID ON THE POT. AGITATE FROM TIME TO TIME WITH AN IMPLEMENT AND BY THE TIME THE WATER HAS COOLED THE TAMARIND WILL HAVE SOFTENED ENOUGH FOR YOU TO PUSH IT THROUGH A SIEVE WITH YOUR HAND OR THE BACK OF A SPOON. WHEN MOST HAS GONE THROUGH, SCOOP OUT THE MULCH INTO A BOWL, ADD A LITTLE WATER, JIMMY IT ABOUT AND STRAIN THROUGH SIEVE AGAIN. REPEAT THE PROCESS ONCE MORE AND YOU BE LEFT WITH SEEDS AND FIBERS TO THROW AWAY AND TAMARIND PULP TO USE.

TAMARIND PULP HAS MANY USES, IN ITS NATURAL SOUR STATE OR SWEETENED, FROM CURRIES TO DRINKS TO CHUTNI'S FOR THE CHAATS.

TO SWEETEN IT AVOID WHITE CHEMICAL SUGAR. ITS SWEETNESS IS CLOYING, UNSATISFYING AND LINGERING. BEST TO USE THE PALM SUGAR, THE JAGGERY- MADE FROM THE REDUCED SUGAR CANE JUICE, WITH ITS TOFFEE LIKE TASTE OR THE DATES. BOTH HAVE A SWEETNESS THAT COME QUICK AND LEAVES FAST WITHOUT OVER POWERING.

FROM A BLOCK YOU SHOULD GET ABOUT 1 LTR ML OF TAMARIND PULP THE THICKNESS OF DOUBLE CREAM. IT FREEZES WELL.



TAMARIND CHUTNEY

**200 GM BLOCK DRIED TAMARIND SOAKED
AND SIEVED AS ABOVE**

200 GM PALM SUGAR

1/4 TSP RED CHILLI POWDER

1/2 TSP GINGER POWDER

1/2 TSP ROASTED CUMIN POWDER

1/8 TSP BLACK SALT OR TO TASTE

**HEAT EVERYTHING UP GENTLY TILL THE PALM SUG-
AR DISSOLVES.**

**LET IT COOL AND STORE IN THE FRIDGE WHERE IT
WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD FEW DAYS.**



RED CHILLI GARLIC CHUTNI

DRIED KASHMIRI CHILLI'S ARE NOT HOT HAVING A MILD RICH FLAVOUR THAT FITS PERFECTLY WITH GARLIC AND BRING A STRONG RED COLOUR TO THE CHUTNI. ITS DELICIOUS JUST WITH THE GARLIC THOUGH SOME WILL ADD ROASTED CUMIN POWDER. SOME OMIT THE LIME. KEEPS LONGTIME IN THE FRIDGE. THIS WILL MAKE HALF A JAM JAR FULL. NOT MUCH IT DOESN'T GO WITH.

9 DRIED KASHMIRI CHILLI
4 CLOVES GARLIC
LIME JUICE TO TASTE
SALT TO TASTE

BREAK OPEN THE CHILLI'S AND REMOVE THE STEMS AND SEEDS AND CUT INTO PIECES.
SOAK FOR HALF AN HOUR IN HOT WATER TILL THEY GO SOFT.
PASTE IN BLENDER WITH THE GARIC AND A TOUCH OF WATER TO GET IT GOING.
ADD LIME AND SALT AND IF NEEDED MORE WATER TO GET THE DESIRED CONSISTENCY.

YOGURT - CURD - SAUCE

YOGURT IS CURD AND COOLING AND SOOTHING TO TEMPERATURE INSIDE AND OUT. A LITTLE SOUR, A LITTLE SWEET, SALTY TOO. OCCURS IN THE CHAAT FAMILY. DOI PHUCHKA, PAPRI CHAAT, I USE WITH DHOKLA, WITH FRUIT, MUSLIE AND CUCUMCUMBER.

WHISK UP THE CURDS, A LITTLE SALT AND SUGAR, THIN WITH WATER.

VERY SIMPLE SAUCE BUT OFTEN PERFECT.

ITS IN THE WHISKING IN OF THE WATER THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

TO START IT WILL SEEM TO GET THICKER, THEN LEVELS AND WHEN IT STARTS TO GET THIN AGAIN IS THE TIME TO STOP.

WHEN CURD AND TAMARIND CHUTNI MEET
IT WORKS.

