

Giano Masih

In my village Garha, Punjab, my family and I used to have the usual Indian food like rotis, chawal (rice) daal of many kinds. My Papa (dad) used to encourage us to eat rotis with makhan (or butter). It had to be one day old, cold and with lots of butter on it. I think we were told it gives us good strength. I have been a vegetarian all my life; I just didn't like the taste of meat. When I try, it is like rubber to me.



One thing I remember, we hardly ever drank tea, only if it was raining or cold and then my mum made it to keep us warm. Another thing we only had during the monsoon or cold season was pakoras. In those days we could buy pakoras from the local hatti (shop) and did this when we finished our schoolwork.



A scene from the fields near Giano's village

One day I went to a wedding in India and I remember crying when someone took my jhanjraan (foot jewellery) while I was eating a plate of pakoras and samosas. It was very sad.

Now in modern times, especially if you live in the shehar (city), much of the food you can get is very much similar to the UK. In the Punjab you can have pizza from Domino's, or a Wimpy, drink Coca-Cola and get Chinese noodles from the man on the rehdi (a wheeled table/trolley used for cooking on).

I have lived in Queen's Park for 36 years now, and have seen many changes. Before, maybe only one or two shops sold Asian goods; now everywhere you go you can see Asian food and clothing shops.

I like vegetarian spring rolls and often make large quantities for special events such as All Saints' Church celebrations. This is a dish I have learnt from my friends in England.

Spring Rolls filled with Vegetable Mix

40 spring roll pastries (buy from any Asian store and defrost before use), 4/5 carrots, 7/8 potatoes, cabbage (1 lb), 50g of soya mince, 20/30g of sweet corn (frozen or fresh), 1-2 spoons of garam masala, 1-2 spoons of chilli powder, 8-10 green chillies chopped into very small pieces, salt to taste, half an onion (chopped) and cooking oil.

Chop all the vegetables into very small pieces. Fry onions until golden brown in a large cooking pot. Put soya mince into a cooking pot and soak for 5 minutes in cold water. Add soya mince into pan with onions, and cook on medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Add the chillies, salt then stir for 4 minutes. Add vegetables and stir them thoroughly until water is completely absorbed (about 15 mins on medium-low heat). Add garam masala and mix. Leave on low heat for a further 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool at room temperature (for at least an hour).



Place the defrosted spring roll pastry on a flat surface. Please ensure one pastry at a time is filled with vegetable mix. Repeat 40 times (get a friend to help, it's quicker!). Heat oil (vegetable or sunflower) and reduce heat to medium. Fry spring rolls in oil for about 5-8 minutes until they are golden brown. Serve with chutney or any type of sauce.

