

Venus Masih

I came to the UK in the late 70s, and moved to Queen's Park in 1980. I originate from the village of Heran in the Punjab, India. Punjabis are known for their eating habits, and particularly rotis, which I enjoyed eating with ghee (yes, it's the fattening stuff!) and also for their homemade dairy products, like yoghurt.

In India, eating meat was always a treat. We had goat meat, which was lovely, about once a week. In the hot weather we had nimboo pani, which means lemon water. It was very tasty with a bit of sugar, and refreshing. Most the things we ate were organic. Fresh vegetables better known as sabzi, and fresh fruit were grown on our own land. We would do our own picking at the weekends when we had time off school. Different food such as corn on the cob, potatoes, sugar cane, carrots and mooli were grown on the farmland.

My favourite desserts were and still are jalebis, kulfi (milk-based lollies) and semolina, again in lots of ghee. I loved having mango milkshake; my dad was really good at making it. Another item my dad made was fresh orange juice. He would squeeze the juice with his hands (no machines) and mix it for me.

I do remember my wedding, dressed in a red coloured sari, eating and sharing party food, samosas, pakoras and tandoori chicken.

I have learnt from elders and relatives how to make samosas and I would like to share the recipe.

Samosas

7-10 potatoes
50g fresh or frozen peas
6-10 green chillies
2 spoons of vegetable oil
Jeera (cumin seeds)
Salt to taste
2 teaspoons garam masala
10g gram flour
50g plain flour
2 tablespoons ghee
3 teaspoons milk



Peel potatoes, boil and mash them. Put oil in frying pan and add peas. Cook the peas for about 10-15 minutes on medium-low heat. Chop chillies into very fine pieces; add a teaspoon of jeera, 2 teaspoons of garam masala and salt in frying pan. Wait till the mix cools.

In the meantime, use a large separate bowl to mix flour with ghee and knead until solid dough is made. Using your fingers, pinch some dough and roll into small balls (maybe half the size of a tennis ball). Roll using rolling pin into a thin circular pastry. Heat one side of pastry on a thavaa (or a separate non stick frying pan) for 30 seconds on low heat. Cut each roti (pastry) into halves. Mix gram flour in a bowl with milk until thick and creamy. Make a cone figure with the rotis, individually filling each pastry with a tablespoon of the potato and peas mix. Close the cone shape pastry using the gram flour mix using fingertips to glue the top together. You can push down the edges using your fingers, and make sure there are no gaps. Place each samosa in heated oil and cook for 5-8 mins until golden brown. Serve with chutney, tomato ketchup or chilli sauce.

Aloo Gobi (India) by Anita Mattu

My mother makes it very good.

1 cauliflower
2 onions
Butter
2 cloves of garlic
1 tsp ginger
3 potatoes
2 tomatoes
2 tsp salt
4 chillies
Coriander
Turmeric



Wash and cut cauliflower, potatoes and tomatoes. Cut onions into small slices, then fry in butter under a moderate heat. Crush some garlic and ginger, then add to onions. Put in one teaspoon of salt and heat for 15 minutes. Put in coriander, chillies and turmeric plus cauliflower and potatoes. Cook for 30 minutes and eat with chapattis.