

Spice and Kosher

The exotic cuisine of
the Cochin Jews

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TAMARIND TREE BOOKS
Toronto

Use 11-point Palatino for text.

Use 14-point Helvetica for chapter titles and 12-point Helvetica for section headings.

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*Tamarind Tree Books Inc.,
14 Ferncastle Crescent,
Brampton, Ontario 747 3P2, Canada.*

*Library and Archives Canada Card Number:
ISBN: 978-0-9919157-0-5*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Introduction

The Cochinitim (as the Jews from Cochin are called in Israel), like Jews across the world, love their food. Living for around 2000 years on the lush monsoon-swept Malabar coast in the southwestern corner of India, this close-knit, orthodox community stayed true to the strict dietary rules of the Bible, adapting the abundant and exotic local produce to develop some wonderful dishes.

Foremost among the culinary treasures the land yielded was the ubiquitous coconut*; and complementing it were the universally loved pepper and spices like cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, asafoetida, red and green chillies, coriander, fenugreek, assorted lentils and many varieties of vegetables and fruits.*

All of us who love preparing, serving and enjoying good food, know that recipes need not be followed to a T. The kitchen is a place for creativity and recipes can be interpreted, ingredients altered and adapted to suit individual tastes and to whatever produce is available at hand.

Every Cochin Jewish kitchen became a place for gourmet cooking, with dishes that burst with flavour and health, tantalizing and satiating generations. The Jewish housewife picked up ideas from friends, neighbors and acquaintances, tweaked them to make them conform to Jewish law and then passed it down from generation to generation, through daughters and daughters-in-law.

In compiling these recipes, we have tried to keep in mind the resources available in the Cochinitim Jewish kitchen around the middle of the 20th century. Cochin Jewish mothers tended to be both economical and practical in the use of raw materials, adding for instance more potatoes in meat dishes to increase volume and feed larger families.

Almost all recipes in this book easily adapt themselves to the modern kitchen with its electric blenders, ovens, refrigerators and microwaves. Printed or mimeographed records have been impossible to come by, although many Cochin women in Israel still remember being gifted these on their wedding days.

Ruby Daniels and Dr. Barbara Johnson mention some names of popular early 20th century Cochinitim dishes in their book *Ruby of Cochin: A Jewish Woman Remembers*. We have succeeded in tracking down most of these recipes. Dr. Nathan Katz and Ellen Goldberg, who wrote the definitive, anthropological book *The Last Jews of Cochin*, included some recipes collected during their stay in Cochin in the late 1980s.

Recipes in this book have been sourced from Cochin Jews in Matancherry, Ernakulam and Alwaye in Kerala, India, various cities in Israel and from some who have settled in the United States and Canada.

Food evolves, but it is recognized that as long as you stick to a regional area, a time frame, basic spices and method of cooking, you can say that it is authentic to the community. Here, you will find many recipes that are common to the Jews, Hindus, Christians and Muslims who lived in proximity in small communities for centuries in the old Kingdom of Cochin, mutually dependent on each other and transferring cooking styles and ideas as well.

Several dishes, like the *dosa* and *puttu* continue to be made and eaten with relish in Cochini households/restaurants throughout Israel as it is being done in homes throughout Kerala. As mentioned earlier, only one thing stood out for the Jewish community - the laws of Kashrut, the Jewish dietary laws.

Jewish cuisine owes its ingenuity and originality mainly to the prohibition of mixing meat and dairy, the ban on pork and fishes with no fins and scales (this means no seafood like shrimps and lobsters, scallops, crabs etc.) There are also other prohibitions, like not using certain cuts of meat, ensuring that no food is tainted with blood or is the result of hunting. In Cochin, the Jewish housewife found that coconut milk became a prized commodity, because it was the ideal alternative to milk to use with meat dishes.

Kosher law also dictated that even soaps and powders for scouring utensils must contain no animal fat. This was easy in Cochin - because soaps were herbal and plant-based - and scouring agents were mainly wood ash and coir.

Writer Chitrita Banerjee in her evocative book “Eating India: Exploring a Nation’s Cuisine” talks of how food in India has always been a matter of fusion—and one that is constantly evolving. She embarked on a search for vanishing cuisines and suggested that the gastronomic tradition of the Cochin Jews was the one missing from the list of other Indian cuisines that are now accepted and loved worldwide.

This book attempts to fill that gap.

(Note: No serving sizes are given and there are no calorie counts in any recipe. In Cochini households, nobody measures portions!)

Unu Nammukku - Our Meal or Our Food

This is the Malayalam version of the Hebrew grace after meals (birkat ha-mazon), traditionally sung by Cochini Jewish women at the conclusion of festive meals after the Hebrew grace has been sung. This song is performed with different tunes, depending on the occasion.

*May the One who gives us food be blessed,
The One whose food I have eaten to satisfaction,
Oh Lord who governs the whole world
and feeds the whole world,
Who nourishes all who have a body -
feed them forever without fail.
Open your provident hands and shower us with abundant kindness.*

*Unu nammukku Tharunnavane,
Undu niranju njan vasta vennam, vasta vennam.
Ullagil Nee vazhunna Thambiraney
Sarve ullage ellam Oottunavam, Oottunavan
Saiyaamavarku Ellaavarkum
nirthalum chaapiyaam kuravillathe, kuravillathe.
Niranja thirukayyil urakka venam
Thiruvellam aake nirayippannum, nirayippanum*

As legendary American chef Julia Childs, who revolutionized the eating habits of Americans in the latter half of the 20th century, said in one of her television shows: “Train yourself to use your hands and fingers; they are wonderful instruments. Train yourself also to handle hot foods; this will save time. Keep your knives sharp. Above all, have fun.” In her last book, *My Life in France*, she ends with this sentence “... the pleasures of the table, and of life, are infinite – toujours bon appétit!”

In Hebrew we say: Be Te'avon - Enjoy

The story of the Cochin Jews

Kerala's Jews or Cochinim trace their history on the Malabar coast of India to 2500 years ago. They first landed on those pristine beaches as sailors in the fleets of King Solomon to purchase spices, animals and precious metals.

The Old Testament mentions a number of materials said to have been exported from India to the Kingdom of Israel. We read in 3 Kings, 10:28 “ [...] And they came to Ophir and fetched from thence, gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon”. Again in 3 Kings 10:22, “For the King's navy once in three years went with the navy of Hiram by sea to Tharshish (believed to be the old name of Tharissapalli, near the harbour of Kollam) and brought from thence gold and silver, ivory (elephant teeth) and apes and peacocks”.

The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the first century AD, explained in his Antiquities of the Jews that the trade mission of Solomon and Hiram to the land of Ophir was from the Red Sea port of Ezion-geber to the island of Chryse in the Indian Ocean (most probably to India). Ezion-geber is considered to be somewhere near the modern Israeli city of Eilat.

Songs and oral traditions of the Cochin Jews tell of the first permanent settlement in the port of Cranganore (today's city of Kodungalloor) soon after the destruction of the Second Temple in 72 AD. They call this the 'First Diaspora'.

Recorded history shows that Jews were present in Kerala from 800 A.D because Hebrew names were engraved on copper plates granted by a Kerala Hindu emperor to Syrian Christian settlers. The Jews signed the plates as witnesses. In 1000 A.d, the Kerala emperor Cheraman Perumal Kulashkhara Bhaskara Varman presented two copper plates to a Jewish merchant Joseph Rabban, believed to be of Yemeni descent, conferring on the Jewish community rights equivalent to the Nayers, the then nobles of Malabar. This was during the 100 year war between the Cheras and the Imperial Cholas and it is believed that the Jewish community contributed men and material for the war effort.

A replica of these plates was presented to a delighted Shimon Peres on September 09, 1992 when he visited India* - a heart-warming piece of evidence that there was a safe haven for the Jews in this little corner of India, centuries before the dream of Eretz Israel.

The copper plates* are preserved in the magnificent 460-year old Pa-

radesi Synagogue in Cochin, the oldest functioning synagogue in the Commonwealth.

*copies of these plates were deposited at the Cambridge Library by the Rev. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, a Scottish missionary who visited Cochin in 1806.

<http://www.hindu.com/2003/09/11/stories/2003091108060400.htm>

The inscriptions mention that several land rights and other honours were being given to the Jews in perpetuity “as long as the earth and the moon remain.”

Thus began the privileged existence of the Jews in Kerala. For almost five centuries, they thrived in their major settlement of Cranganore (today’s Kodungalloor).

However, they abandoned the town by the middle of the 16th century after a horrific attack by the Portuguese and the Muslims in which their houses were burnt and scores slaughtered. The Jews spread out to small settlements like Chennamangalm, Mala, Paravur, Madai, Tirur and the biggest of them all Cochin, which had by then become the seat of Perumbadapu Swaroopam, descendants of Cheraman Perumal.

The king granted land for them to settle and build houses and synagogues, near royal palaces and retreats, absorbed them into the military and government and permitted them to flourish in agriculture and trade and any vocations they chose..Many became palace courtiers and ambassadors. The Jews were loyal subjects followed the advice of Prophet Jeremiah - the de facto charter of the diaspora: “Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; and seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” (Jer.

29 : 4 and 7.) This close emotional and physical proximity continued until 1948 when the Cochin Kingdom acceded to the newly independent Indian Union and the Maharaja surrendered all his political rights.

It is of interest to note here that in the late 18th century that Cochin was more important to Jews than New York. Walter Fischel, a scholar of Oriental Jewry, wrote: “Cochin, one of the oldest Jewish settlements on Asian soil, had a much larger Jewish community than New York and surpassed it not only numerically, but also culturally. The Cochin Jewish community in 1792 had about 2000 Jews...and 9 synagogues of considerable antiquity, while New York had only 72 Jewish families and only one synagogue.”

*Walter Fischel - From Cochin, India, to New York, ;p. 265-67, cited by Katz on page 102.

From Cochin, India, to New York.” In Harry Austrynn Wolfson Jubilee

Volume. Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 255-75.

The birth of Israel, uncertainly over their status in a new India, as one of the tiniest minority communities in the country, loss of special privileges in Kerala, sweeping land reforms which took away most of their vast plantations, led to mass emigration to the Promised Land.

Today, there are several flourishing Cochin moshavim (settlements in Israel), the largest among them being Neve Ativ and Shikun in the south, Aviezer near Jerusalem, Mesillat Zion, Ta'at and Kfar Yuval in the far north.. Sizeable pockets of Cochinis are found in Binyamina, Petah Tikvah, Rishon Le Zion, Ashdod, Jerusalem and Haifa. Moshav Neve Ativ also boasts a beautiful Cochin synagogue, with the interior brought to Israel from the Thekkumbagam Synagogue in Mattancherry and a Cochin Heritage Museum.

Many of the Cochinis now have jobs in the cities and in all professions in Israel, have intermarried with other communities, emigrated to other countries and have acquired a name as hard-working people with a high self-esteem. Sociologists attribute this to the absence of fear or siege complex, because through their centuries of life in Kerala, they did not face any discrimination or violence from the people among whom they lived.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel in 1992, many Cochinis have been travelling to Kerala to visit places associated with their ancestors and to see the synagogues, two of which have been turned into heritage museums.

(The history and traditions of the Cochin Jews have been documented in books and journals by noted scholars like Dr. Nathan Katz, and Ellen Golberg, Dr. Barbara Johnson, Prof. J.B. Sehgal, Prof. P.M. Jussay, Dr. Joan Roland, Dr. Shalva Weil and others. -See bibliography, p...)

In Kochi itself, there are few Jews left. In Mattancherry, they number nine and there are about 40 others spread around the Ernakulam area. There are no synagogue services, except at the Paradesi synagogue when Israeli tourists gather or when a Rabbi visits from Mumbai.

As a former warden of the Paradesi synagogue the late Samuel Hallegua said: There's nothing any of us can do to avert the end of Jewish life [in Cochin]. Perhaps a day might come when someone here will start thinking that it all was a dream."*

*The Jewish Journal, The Last Jews of Kochin, by Joshua Newton

July 5, 2001 http://www.jewishjournal.com/travel/article/the_last_jews_of_kochi-20010706/

Ora Farchy, who was born and raised in Moshav Shahar in southern Israel and now lives in Houston where she is a Hebrew teacher says: “It has been a long journey for us Cochinis. Although physical Cochin has receded from us when we consider concepts of time and space, the food has remained with us and, I think, it will remain part of our consciousness and identity.”

It is often said that our foods link our present lives with that of our ancestors of long ago; and it not easy to explain why the smells of childhood last a lifetime and are able to ignite pleasant memories.

This sentiment is expressed plaintively by young Avithal Elias, a Cochin Jewish student at Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa. One of her posts on social media said:” “I miss puttu, idiappam, appam , porotta, kadala kari, coconut chamanthi, fish curry, fish fry, unniyyapam, murukku , Banana chips , coconut curry stew , pachadi, kichidi, manga achar, chambakka, chakkapazham, upillita pala sambahavangal, sadhya , palada payasam, dosa ...I miss you My KOCHI !! Love u always.”

Avithal, who was born in Kerala, is the daughter of Babu Josephai, caretaker of the Kadavumbhagam Synagogue in Ernakulam. The magnificent shul is not operational today.

Sociologist Ashish Nandy in his book Time Warps, quotes Itzhak Nehemia, one of the community leaders at Moshav Nevatim in Israel, who made aliyah when he was an infant: “ We (still) like to live as if we were in Kerala.”

Nandi adds:”Indeed, Nehemia and his friends made it a point to serve us typical Malayali food and claim that the Malayali food the Cochin Jews prepared in Israel was better than that was available in Cochin.”

Time Warps, page 198.Rutgers Universitt Press, new Brunswick, New Jersey, 2002.

Kerala cuisine is different from what the world generally considers fine Indian cuisine. It is a world apart from the rich, creamy curries and hearty breads of North India. Blessed with abundant vegetables and fruits, a long coastline teeming with some of the finest edible fishes in the world and spices that the world coveted for two millenia, Kerala is a cornucopia of culinary creativity.

Aromas, colour, mystery flavours, the heat of chillies and spices and the cooling sensation of coconut milk combine together to make Kerala cuisine a kaleidosopic adventure that keeps rolling through the day - everyday

Ottawa chef Cameron Stauch is an enthusiast when it comes to Kerala food. As one who helped develop recipes for the Canadian film *Cooking With Stella*, Stauch says: "Indian food isn't just the restaurant food that we get in North America. There's so much diversity and variety that you couldn't taste all of India in a lifetime. You'd need many more lifetimes to taste everything."*

About South Indian and Kerala food he says: "I really like (it). I prefer it. I find it to be lighter food, fresher tasting." The film is mostly about Kerala and other southern Indian delicacies, because the main character Stella is from Kerala. (Stauch is the author of the popular blog <http://www.indiaonmyplate.com/>)*

*A Chef's Passage To India; Cameron Stauch's experiences in Delhi helped inspire the film *Cooking with Stella*

Peter Hum. *Calgary Herald*. Calgary, Alta.: Apr 11, 2010. pg. C.1

Kerala, which was named as one of the Ten Paradises of the World and Fifty Places of a Lifetime in the 15th anniversary issue of the *National Geographic Traveler Magazine* in 2009*, is a narrow strip of land in south-western India.

*http://intelligenttravel.nationalgeographic.com/2009/09/17/50_places_of_a_lifetime_1/

Separated from peninsular India in the east by the magnificent Sahyadri Mountains (the Western Ghats), and the Arabian Sea/Indian Ocean in the west, Kerala is one of the richest states in India in terms of cash crops.

*[talking spices article.....about bondas](#)

The highlands are covered with dense forests of valuable woods like teak and sandalwood with terraced plantations of tea, coffee, cardamom and pepper. In the foot hills are estates of rubber, cashew, and coconuts dotting the entire length of the state. In the coastal areas and the hinterland are more coconut groves, interspersed with rice paddies, orchards of mango, banana, jackfruit and pineapples and tree-lined canals and backwaters. Some

44 rivers criss-cross the land, offering fresh water for vegetable gardens that yield every kind of tropical vegetable.

Influence On Kerala Cuisine

Kerala cuisine has been shaped by its maritime history. Judaism, Christianity and Islam came to the land along with the voyagers who landed on the coast to trade in spices or seeking to take control of their sources. They also contributed to the cuisine of Kerala.

The Arabs brought in fenugreek and fennel, the Portuguese chillies and cashew and these were combined with local spices, adding the magic of curry leaves and tamarind pulp, creating a wonderfully fragrant and pungent cooking style.

Rice, in its many forms, is the staple food of Kerala.

Staples in Kerala Cuisine

Rice, or rather unpolished rice, is the main food of the Keralite. Aside from the boiled product eaten as a staple, there is also a wide range of snacks and breakfast fare made of the cereal. Pounded into flour, it gives shape to the bamboo formed puttum, the round spongy vattayappam, the lacy edged palappam or vellayappam, the pancake-like kallappam, the sweet uniappam, the idiappam that looks like fine noodles, and the stuffed ball called kozhikotta. And then, there is the pathiri, chapatti-like bread that can be made into a plain thin one called vatipathiri, a box type pettipathiri and a sweet cake-Chattipathiri. Pathiris are also stuffed with beef, chicken or mutton and fried, or steamed when filled with fish.

Cochini cooking is spicy with emphasis on ginger, coriander, mustard seed, fresh and dry hot chilli, fenugreek, cardamom and curry leaves..yoghurt is very popular

Methods for preparing Kerala Cuisine

Like most South Indian cuisine, be it seafood or rice and other cereal dishes, the emphasis is on 'healthy food', less use of oil, sugar, and artificial additives, and more use of natural herbs, spices flavorings, and coconut. Spices that flavor the local cuisine of Kerala give it a sharp pungency that is heightened with the use of tamarind. In the Kerala kitchens, be it of any of the various communities living there, simple methods and the locally available foodstuff are used to dish out mouthwatering delicacies.

beef cutlets with sarlas (a salad made of finely cut onions, green chilies and vinegar), chicken roast, olathan erachi (fried mutton, beef or pork), meen moilee (a yellow fish curry), meen mulligattathu (a fiery red fish

curry), and peera pattichathu (a dry fish dish of grated coconut). kallu or (toddy) and patta charayam (arrack).

injipuli (a thick ginger tamarind curry), (a dry mix of any vegetable with coconut), (gourd is the main ingredient), aviyaal (a thick mixture of vegetables in a coconut based gravy), Pachadi (raw mango and curd mixture) The sambhar (a lentil based gravy that came to Kerala from neighboring Tamil Nadu) and kalan (a curry of yam and curd, spiced with pepper) . When the meal is over, pradaman (rice flour, coconut milk and jaggery) or pal payasam (sugar sweetened milk and rice) is served onto the leaf. rasam (fiery pepper water)

Chapter 1

The mustard seeds jumped and crackled in the hot coconut oil as Batzion Bezalel sprinkled some fresh curry leaves over it. Two tablespoons of ground spices were at work in the wok (called cheena chatti in Malayalam). A mouthwatering aroma floated around the kitchen and living room of her sprawling farmhouse in Moshav Kidroon, central Israel.*

*Kidroon is a prosperous moshav in central Israel, some 30 km from Tel Aviv.. Located in the Shephelah around 2 km east of Gedera near the Tel Nof Airbase, it falls under the jurisdiction of Brenner Regional Council.

Now the onions. These are special ones. In Kerala, they are called ‘cheriyya ulli’. Similar to pearl onions, small, red and round, these shallots are the most flavourful in the onion family* (See Footnote: it really belongs to the garlic family) and one of the main ingredients in the ‘Chuttulli Meen’ that Batzion is making today.

For the past two days, Batzion has been planning a menu for her daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren, who are coming to visit from Vancouver. The Chutulli Pan Fried Fish.... is a family favourite and one of the celebrated dishes born in the kitchens of the Jews of Cochin. Meanwhile, her husband, award-winning horticulturist Bezalel Eliyahu is using a flat, black stone (ammikallu) to smash small mangoes to pieces which will become the base for a succulent coconut and mango chutney. (*See recipe on page...).

In the township of Abderdeen, New Jersey, Gila Rosenblatt is serving chicken for dinner. Although her children were born in Israel and her husband is of Ashkenazi origin, the family loves Cochin Jewish food. Kozhi Pollichathu is one of the most popular.. The recipe was handed down to her by her mother who got it from her grandmother..... in the small Kerala settlement of Chennamangalam.*** (See footnote about Chennamangalam).

“So many generations of Jews,” says Gila, “and we use the same spices, the same measures, the same style of cooking and it tastes so wonderful every time I make it.” The chicken has been cut and is boiling...now to add the rest of the ingredients...See recipe on page....

Meanwhile, the summer has been bountiful for fishermen in the southern Indian state of Kerala. In Jew Town, Mattancherry, 91-year-old Sarah Cohen, the matriarch of the Cochin Jews, is looking at the kingfish (neymeen) that has been bought by her reliable helper Taha, off the nets in Fort Kochin, about eight km away.

“This is great for making a lot of meen undas (fish balls)”, said Sarah. Fish is now the staple for most Cochini jews because there is no shoheit in the community. For about two years, there was a Chabbad Rabbi who helped the community but political shenganigans forced him out of the country. “So it is fish for us” says Sarah as she supervises the cleaning of the fish in the backyard of her 400 year-old house. (See recipe on page...)

Canada has its own celebrity Cochin Jewish chef. Linda Hertzman is famous as the ‘Spice Chef’ of Vancouver, making a name for herself with innovative dishes based on centuries-old recipes from her hometown in India. She runs a successful catering company Classic Ventures and also looks after a large kosher food business....with husband Steve. Very interested in fusion of Western and Eastern foods, Linda serves a specialty dish called Salmon Miso. (See recipe on page....)



<http://shalom-salaam.net/index.php?t=msg&th=3236&start=0&>



The people of Kerala have a choice between kadal meen and puzha meen (fishes caught in the ocean and from the 44 rivers, lakes, backwaters and canals that criss cross the state) In Cochin itself, the catch from the Arabian Sea yields a variety of fish - from mathi (sardines), ayla (mackerel), avoli (pomfret) to several types of bigger fish like seer, kingfish (generalya called ney meen or aikura) and tuna (choora). Barracuda (seelavu) and sharksn(sravu) are caught in quantities, along with the commercially valuable chemeen (prawns and shrimps). There is also a fish called Jewfish (kora), a type of grouper which is also a prized product. (The name “jewfish” was officially attached to the species way back in 1846, when Dr John Richardson published a scientific account of the species, recognising its uniqueness with the common name “West Australian jewfish”).

The Jews of Kerala have traditionally been avid fish eaters. Their ancient settlement in Kodungalloor (Shingly) was on the banks of the fabled Periyar river, which even today teems with marine life.

IN Kerala, fish is cooked in different way in different homes, leading to scores of recipes - with small changes in the ingredients - with the same name.

Noted Malayalam writer N.S. Madhavan, wrote about this abundant fish resources in the online magazine Outlook.

“My memories of succulent prawns take me back to the late Cohen, one of the last of Kochi’s Jewish community, who also performed duties as the priest at Kochi’s synagogue. He owned a fishing boat, which he gave on hire. Along with rent, he was also entitled to a customary portion from the day’s catch. If it was prawns, which is not kosher, he would distribute it among friends. My father was his colleague and a dear friend; we cherished the deep sea bounty with gratitude to Cohen Sir. Fish cooked in a green gravy of coconut and coriander leaves ground together is what I faintly remember of the Kochi Jewish fish curry. There aren’t many people left now to ask for the recipe.”*23

Madhavan here was referring to Jackie Cohen, who was once caretaker of the Pardesi synagogue. However, Jackie Cohen was only a weekend fishermen who waited patiently with his single rod fishing line at the Mat-tancherry jetty.. The Cochin Jew who owned the fishing boat was actually Isaac Hallegua. Prawns or ‘chemmeen” is a valuable product for fishermen and for Isaac Hallegua, any haul of praws meant good money on that day. However, like all good Cochin Jews, Isacc made it a point to distribute a part of the prawn catch, free to friends.

*23

Outlook Magazine, January 09, 2012, Those Mean Papas, The sea, the fresh catch, the Kerala fish curry, from Kochi to Kozhikode. N.S. Madhavan is author of the award-winning Litanies of Dutch Battery and other works. Now retired, he was an officer of the Indian Administrative Service in its Bihar cadre.

Here is the famous ‘Green Cochin Jewish Fish Curry” that Madhavan referred to in the article. The recipe is courtesy: Queenie Hallengua

Cochin Jewish Green Fish Curry

Coriander, known as malli in Malayalam and dhaniya in Hindi is widely grown throughout India and the fresh leaves and seeds are part of every regional cuisine in the subcontinent. In the Western world, it goes by its Spanish name of Cilantro. The leaves have a slightly citrus flavour, while the seeds are warm and nutty to taste and are roasted and powdered to become an essential ingredient of the Indian curry powder. The leaves add color, a fresh flavour and delightful aroma to hot dishes. Coriander is also referred to as Chinese parsley or Mexican parsley.

This dish is very popular during Pesach (Passover)
serves 6

2 pounds firm white fish fillet (seer fish, tuna, halibut, tilapia - In Kerala, the favoured variety is the seer fish - called Neymeen or Aikoor.)

- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 cup chopped coriander (cilantro)
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 4 green chillies - chopped fine
- 3/4 tsp turmeric
- 1 tbsp cumin
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 onions, finely sliced
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 2 cups water
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 1/2- tbsp coconut oil

Directions:

1. Add coconut, coriander, chilli powder, turmeric and cumin to 1 cup of water in a food processor. Blend ingredients until it turns into a smooth paste.

2. Fry the onion in vegetable oil in a skillet over medium heat, until the slices turn golden brown.

3. Add the chopped garlic, add 1/2 cup of water and the coconut-based paste. Sprinkle salt and pepper over the mixture. Bring it to a boil. Let the mixture simmer until it begins to thicken.

4. Pour 1/2 cup of water and slowly slide the fillets into skillet. Bring it to a boil on medium heat, then cover the pan partly to let steam escape and

simmer again on low heat.

5. Occasionally, lift pan and ladle sauce onto the fillets. Cook until fillets become flaky. This should take around 12 to 15 minutes.

6. Garnish with chopped coriander and drizzle the coconut oil over the dish.

This is another version of the Green Fish Curry

In this recipe, coconut milk is used instead of grated coconut and there is also mustard, ginger, cardamom and curry powder added. The sauce is richer and thicker.

Green fish curry in Coconut Milk Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs of firm fish fillet (Seer fish/tilapia, salmon)
- 1 1/2 cups thick coconut milk
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 4 shallots, chopped
- 2” ginger, sliced fine
- 6 green chillies, sliced fine
- 6 cardamom pods, skinned & crushed
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 1/2 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp curry powder* or fish masala
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 sprig of curry leaves
- 1 large bunch coriander
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Directoins:

1. In a large pan heat the coconut oil and splutter the mustard seeds.
2. Add cardamom and shallots and fry until shallots turn brown.
3. Use a food processor to blend the chopped onion garlic, coriander powder and ginger with 3/4 cup of coconut milk into a paste.

4. Add spice paste to pan with the green chillies and some water and let cook for about 15 minutes.

5. Slide the fillets into the pan. Add curry leaves, pepper, curry powder, coconut milk and cook on low heat. Stir the gravy. Remove from heat when fish is flaky.

6. Sprinkle lemon juice over dish and garnish with fresh coriander.

Cochin Fish Curry

With Pomfrets

Serves 4

Pomfrets are perciform fishes belonging to the family Bramidae.

They are found in abundance off the coast of Kerala, the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. The largest of the species, the Atlantic pomfret, *Brama brama*, grows up to 3.5 ft long.

The pomfret is also known as pamflet, a word which comes from the Portuguese pampo, referring to similar fish like the blue butterfish,

Ingredients

2 large pomfrets

1 large bunch of coriander (cilantro)

5 green chillies, chopped fine

1 lemon

2 tbsp grated coconut

1 large onion

2 tsp garlic powder or 5 cloves of garlic chopped fine

salt to taste

1 cup water

1/2 cup oil

Directions:

1. Clean and wash the pomfret. Cut slit across the middle on both sides. Coat with salt and juice of half of the lemon.

2. Chop the onion and garlic and mash them to a paste.

3. Grind the coriander, three green chillise and grated coconut into a paste.

4. Heat oil in a wok and fry the fish individually.

5. Remove from wok and keep aside.

6. In the same oil, add onion and garlic and fry until browned.
7. Add one cup of water into wok. Let boil. Slide the fried pomfret into wok.
8. Reduce heat. Add coriander paste and bring to boil again.
9. Remove from heat and add rest of the lemon juice and chopped green chillies. A sprinkling of ground pepper is optional.

A tip from the past:

When fish is to be boiled, it should be rubbed lightly over with salt, and set on the fire in a saucepan or fish-kettle sufficiently large, in hard cold water, with a little salt, a spoonful or two of vinegar is sometimes added, which has the effect of increasing its firmness. Fish for broiling should be rubbed over with vinegar, well dried in a cloth and floured. The fire must be clear and free from smoke, the gridiron made quite hot, and the bars buttered before the fish is put on it. Fish to be fried should be rubbed in with salt, dried, rolled in a cloth, and placed for a few minutes before the fire previous to being put in the pan.

page 22, Chapter III, The Jewish Manual, by Judith Cohen Montefiore, LONDON: 1846. The Project Gutenberg EBook #12327]

Recipe of the “Meen Varathu Vechathu” - by Gila Pallivathukal

- 1-2 kg of fish cut into strips or filleted.
- Spices for the fish
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp hot red pepper powder
- 2 tsp of sweet paprika
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp of oil

Directions:

1. Soak the fish in water with 1 tsp turmeric powder, 3 tbsp of vinegar, 2 tsp of salt for about 30 minutes and rinse)
2. Mix all the spices together and rub the fish
3. Bake the fish in the oven till done

Vegetables

- 1 eggplant cut to small slices.

- 2 potatoes peeled and sliced
- 1/4 kilo ladies fingers
- 1 sweet potato peeled and sliced.

1. Sprinkle salt on eggplant pieces and squeeze out the water.
2. Combine the vegetables, sprinke some salt and bake in oven until they are done.

Sauce :

1 onion diced

- 8 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 1 inch thick ginger root, chopped fine
- 1-2 green chillies, chopped fine

Directions:

1. Saute the onion and garlic till cooked and add ginger and pepper.
2. Add 2 cups of water
3. Add the following spices: 1/2 tsp turmeric; 2 tsp of ground coriander
4. 1/2 tsp hot red pepper powder; 1 tsp sugar; 4 tbsp of vinegar and
5. salt according to the taste
6. Boil the sauce till the spices and vinegar are cooked.
7. Add 1 cup of soy milk or coconut milk and 2 tbs of ground coconut, and continue cooking.
8. For vegetarians add the baked vegetables and cook till the vegetables absorb the spices and put aside some.
9. Add the baked fish to the sauce and mix well, let it boil once.
10. Let it sit, the vegetables and fish will absorb a lot of the sauce.

Meen Unda

(Cochin Jewish Fish Kofta curry)

Ingredients:

- 1 kg firm, white fish fillets
- (Sea bass/mullett/kingfish etc)
- 3 large tomatoes diced
- 2 or 3 pieces of tamarind
- (soaked in water/squeezed for the juice)
- or 2 tsps of lemon juice

- 3 tbsp all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp rice flour
- 1 cup thick yoghurt
- 1” ginger, chopped fine
- 1/2 tsp fennel seeds
- 6 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 2 cloves
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 1/2” inch cinnamon
- 1 tsp curry powder*
- 3 cardamom pods,
- husked/ground
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 1 onion, chopped rough
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 10 green chillies/chopped fine
- 1 large bunch coriander
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp sugar
- 3 tbsp oil
- Salt as needed.

Directions :

1. Wash and clean fish. Debone after boiling. Crumble.
2. Blend chopped onions, coriander leaves, 5 green chillies and fennel into a paste.
3. In a wok, fry the chopped onions, garlic, along with tomato and rest of the spices. Splutter the mustard seeds. Add the onion and coriander paste. Add yoghurt and salt.
4. Add 3 cups of water, lemon juice or tamarind water and cook for 20 mins over low fire until the sauce begin to thicken.
5. Knead the crumbled fish along with the rice and all-purpose flour, salt and curry powder into a smooth mixture. Form into small balls.
6. In a large saucpean, fry the fish balls to golden brown.
7. Add the fish balls into the sauce in the skillet, reduce heat and simmer for about 10 minutes. Garnish with whole coriander leaves

Meen Undas (Fish Balls) Cochin Fish Patties/Cutlets

Ora Farchy's mother Rebecca made these mouth-watering fish balls (or flat croquettes) in Moshav Shahar in Israel in the 1950's, and before that in Chennamangalam - where she got the recipe from her mother Sarah.*

Today, this chopped fish with mashed potatoes, coated with bread crumbs and then deep fried in oil is a favourite party-time snack all across Kerala. In Israel, half a cup of finely chopped olives is also added to the mix.

(Note of interest: The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology in Cochin, which began operations in 1957 claims on their website that 'fish cutlets' were one of many products developed by the institute)

Makes about 30 cutlets

- 1 kg firm fish fillets (tuna or any firm fish is fine), deboned, ground
- 1 bunch of coriander. chopped fine
- 2 large onions, chopped fine
- 4 green chillies chopped fine
- 5 tsps of finely chopped ginger
- 3 potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 5 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp pepper
- red chili powder
- 1/4 tsp cloves ground
- coriander and cinnamon powder to taste
- 1-2 tsp lemon juice
- 4 eggs
- Bread crumbs, powdered
- Salt to taste
- Oil to fry

Diectioms:

1. Cook fish; add salt and turmeric and mix well.
2. Fry chopped onions in oil in a shallow pan until golden brown. Add chillies and other spices as well.
3. Mix paste, along with the mashed potatoes into cooked, ground fish. Squeeze the juice of lemons into mix.
4. Shape mixture into flat rounds or oval forms, dip in beaten eggs, roll

in bread crumbs and refrigerate for about three hours.

5. In a wok, deep fry the frozen cutlets over medium heat.

Optional:

You can also prepare tomato sauce and add the fried fish patties and cook for 30 minutes on a low heat.

Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

Ora's mother Rebecca passed away in December, 2012. She was the last of the older generation in Moshav Shahar, Israel. Ora had this to tell us: "A lot of wisdom and knowledge about the unique way of life of Cochin Jews and their traditions have gone away with her. It is very sad."

Chaala and Koorka Salad

(Sardines and Chinese Potatoes Salad)

Dr. Usha Mohan of Bengaluru, India, remembers her mother the late Dr. Esther Salem (Minoo) of Jew Town in Mattanchery, making a delicious salad with fish and Chinese potatoes. "Sardines or anchovies (netholi/uzhuva in Malayalam) were preferred," says Dr. Mohan, "because they had the oily flavour that blended well with the coconut."

The salad can also be made with other meatier fishes, flaked and with the bones removed.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 kg sardines
- Chinese Potatoes
- Coconut oil,
- Coconut milk
- Mustard
- Curry Leavs,
- Garlic,
- Ginger,
- Turmeric,
- Green Chillies
- Salt and vinegar to taste

Directions:

1. Fry the sardines (chala) until crisp. Skin and cook the koorka.

2. In a deep pan, add some coconut oil, mustard (optional), curry leaves, chopped garlic and ginger, turmeric, green chillies and fry for a minute or so until the raw smell of the garlic is gone

3. Add your coconut milk, salt and vinegar to taste.

4. Bbring it to boil, simmer for a while and turn off the flame.

5. Add the fried sardines chala and potatoes koorka and raw, chopped onions.

Fish Salad With Tomatoes And Coconut Milk

Another version of a fish salad calls for tomatoes and coconut milk, without the potatoes.

After the fish is fried, pour a cup of coconut milk over the fish. Add half a cup of raw, chopped onions and half a cup of raw chopped tomatoes, a pinch of salt and 1 tsp of lemon juice. Let the fish soak for a couple of hours.

Meen Peera or Meen Pattichatu (Coconut-Laced Fish) | Serves 4

This fish dish is a perennial favourite - it is inexpensive and easy to make. The fish used is mostly netholi or uzhuva (anchovies) and there is liberal use of grated coconut. (If you prefer not to deal with fish bones, you can use sliced white fish fillets)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. anchovies, heads cut and cleaned
- or white fish fillets, sliced into 1”inch pieces
- 2 tbs. coconut oil
- 1 1/2 tsp. mustard seed
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- 8 shallots, chopped fine
- 6 green chilies, chopped fine
- 1” ginger, grated
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 3 pieces of kudampuli (gambojee)
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1 sprig of curry leaves
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 cup water

- 3/4 cup grated coconut

Directions:

1. In a processor, coarsely blend the coconut, shallots, garlic, ginger and chillies.
 2. Heat the coconut oil in a skillet. Pop mustard seeds, reduce heat and add coconut paste, cooking on low heat until browned.
 3. Add the curry leaves, turmeric, kudampuli, salt and water. Cook about a minute and slide the fish in, coating the fish with skillet mixture.
 4. Cover and simmer 10 minutes or until fish is done.
 5. Drizzle a tsp of coconut oil over the dish.
- (Pieces of raw mango can be used as the souring agent instead of the kudampulli)

Motta Salada

The Motta Salada is a delicacy served during Cochini Jewish weddings and bar mitzvahs (Jewish coming of age rituals - 13 for boys and 12 for girls). In November, 2011, at the wedding of Gilad Salem and ddndndndd, in Haifa, it was Rachel Roby (of Petah Tikvah in Israel), who took charge of making the Motta Salada. More than 100 eggs were used, with several Cochin Jewish women working late into the night to make the egg strings.

This ultra-sweet bites were consumed at a party after the bride and bridegroom prayed at their synagogue in Haifa. on Saturday after the Thursday wedding.

Many of the Cochins in Haifa, Binyamina and Petah Tikwah remember Rachel Roby's wedding in Mattancherry some 53 years ago when more than 1000 eggs were used to to make the sweet egg strands. (However, some say they cannot bear the taste of egg yolk and sugar syrup! The Muslims of northern Kerala make a similar dish - called Mutta Mala - Egg Garland- for their festive occasions). - Kenny Salem

Ingredients:

- 30 eggs
- 1/2 kg sugar: (You can add more sugar if desired)
- 3 cups water

Directions for the yolk:

1. Crack the eggs and separate the yolks and whites to different bowls.
2. Use a cheesecloth to strain the egg yolk into another bowl.
3. Boil water and sugar in a large pan over low fire and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.
4. Remove scum that rises to surface.
5. Strain the syrup using a fresh cheesecloth.
6. Take a glass bottle with a thin nozzle and fill it with the egg yolk. Or improvise with a hole at the bottom of a small plastic bottle.
7. Heat the syrup again on low fire, until it begins to thicken. Add some water if it gets too thin.
8. Squeeze out the yolk into the hot syrup in a circular motion. It should be coming out like noodle strings. Continue until all the yolk are done.
9. Sprinkle some cold water into the syrup. This halts the cooking process. Remove the yolk strings using a strainer spoon, after draining the syrup into another vessel.
10. (In Cochin, a small hole was made in a coconut shell to make the strings; and the strings were lifted with thin coconut leaf sticks. In Israel, they now use Chinese chopsticks).
11. Ensure that the strings do not clump together and place them in a flat dish.

Keep aside the syrup for use with the the egg whites.

Directions for the egg whites::

- 4 pods of cardamom, husked and crushed
- 1/4 cup of cashew
- 1/4 cup of raisins
- or other dried fruits/nuts of your choice.

Whisk all the egg whites in a bowl.

Add the leftover syrup to the bowl and whisk again.

Add the raisins, cashew nuts and cardamom.

Steam the mixture in pressure cooker; it cooks to the consistency of cake.

Let cool and cut into required shapes. This is called the Kinnathappam and can be eaten with the Motta Salada or as an individual dessert.

Appam
(Rice Fritters) -
Makes 30 to 40 fritters.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups rice flour
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/2 tsp active yeast
- 2 tbs sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 3/4 cups water
- 1 tsp
- Oil for frying

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients (including 1 teaspoon oil) and set aside until batter rises (about 1 hour).

2. Heat 1/2 cup of oil in frying pan until hot. Use a ladle to pour about 2 tbs of batter into oil and fry until golden.

3. Turn fritter and remove from pan when second side is also browned.

4. Use up all batter.

5. Drain on paper towels.

(These fritters can also be cooked like a pancake in a deep round-bottomed pot with a cover on low heat - Gila Rosenblat).

Courtesy:Shlomo Mordechai, New York

Kozhi Pollichath

(Serves how many?)

Ingredients:

2 chickens, cut into desired pieces - weight?

- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 3 onions, chopped rough
- 1 1/2" ginger, chopped fine
- 1 1/2 tsp oil
- 4 tbs vinegar 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp black pepper

- 4 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 bunch coriander for garnish.

Directions:

1. Grind chilli powder, pepper and coriander powder with the oil and vinegar.
2. Marinate chicken in spice mix. Leave covered in refrigerator for about three hours.
3. Cook chicken in a little water on medium heat for about an hour and add onions, ginger, and garlic when about 10 minutes are left.
4. When chicken is cooked add the spice mix. Stir well. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves.

Courtesy: Gila Rosenblatt, New Jersey

Kozhi Puzungiath
 Chicken with vegetables
 (Serves eight)

Ingredients:

1 chicken, cut to desired sizes (1 kg)

- 250 gm beans. chopped coarse - what kind of beans?
- 20 gms quash, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped coarse
- 1 clove of Garlic, chopped fine
- 2 onions, chopped coarse
- 2 tsp coconut or vegetable oil
- 1/2 tsp pepper 1/2 tsp
- 1/2 tsp turmeric 1/2 tsp
- 1 cube of chicken stock

Directions:

1. In a deep skillet, heat coconut oil.
2. Fry garlic, onion and spices until onions are browned.
3. Add chicken pieces along with the squash and tomato.
4. Cook for 30 minutes, partially covered on medium heat.

Courtesy: Gila Rosenblatt, New Jersey

Cochin Jew Chicken recipe

<http://immigrantrecipes.blogspot.ca/2006/03/cochin-jew-chicken-recipe.html>

east and west and in the middle recipes

1 chicken skinned and cut in to small pieces

2 onion chopped fine

1 tbl spn each ginger and garlic paste

10 fresh green chill. cut 5 in to rings and the other half split in to two

2 small tomatoes chopped

1/2 tsp turmeric

1 tsp chilli powder

walnut size tamarind soaked in 3 tbl spn hot water

1 1/2 tspn sugar

salt to taste

Curry leaves..one sprig

oil 1 tbl spn

Heat oil, fry the onion, ginger and garlic and the chilli cut in to rings, when the onion is slightly browned add the curry leaves and tomatoes, saute for 3 mints, add the turmeric and chilli powder, fry for another minute, add the chicken, saute for 5 mints. add a cup of water and the salt, cover and cook till the chicken is almost done. Now add the tamarind pulp and the chilli split in to half and the sugar. Turn the heat to medium and cook uncovered for another 10 mints..taking care that you stir often so the chicken isn't burned.

Kerala chicken roast

Kerala style chicken roast is one of the most common side dishes that is made in Kerala. It is widely seen in Christian weddings and is a favorite among all age groups. So here is the recipe of Kerala style chicken roast.

Serves 4

Fry chicken and keep aside.

Ingredients

1 kg Chicken, Boneless

5-6 Shallots, ground to a paste

1 1/2 tbsp. Ginger and garlic paste

2 medium sized Red onions, sliced

2 medium sized Tomatoes, sliced

1 cup Coconut milk
1/2 cup Cashew Nut paste
Coconut oil
Salt, to taste
Chilli powder, as per taste
Turmeric powder, as per taste
1 - 1 1/2 tbsp. Chicken masala
Corriander powder, as per taste
2 Green chillies, slit
6-8 Curry Leaves, for final garnish

For Marination

Marinate chicken with chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt for 1 to 2 hours.

Deep fry in coconut oil and keep aside.

For Gravy

Sauté onions lightly and add the shallot and ginger-garlic paste. Sauté them until they are golden brown. Add chilli powder , turmeric powder , corriander powder and salt to taste. Sauté for a minute or so. Pour in some coconut milk and add the cashewnut paste. Close the lid for about 10 to 15 minutes. Drop in the fried chicken pieces and bring to a boil. Garnish with fried curry leaves and green chillies.

<http://foodindiacook.blogspot.ca/2011/12/kerala-chicken-fried-in-browned-onions.html>

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Cochin Fried Chicken
with thick, brown onion sauce
Glennys Salem, Haifa, Israel

Ingredients

One 3 to 4 pound skinless chicken cut in pieces
4 tablespoons coconut oil (or olive oil)
10 green cardamom pods
10 whole cloves
1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds

10 large or 20 small garlic cloves, smashed, skins removed and coarsely chopped

3 large yellow onions (about 2 1/2 pounds), peeled, quartered and thinly sliced

1 generous teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt or sea salt crystals

BROWNING THE ONIONS.

Heat the oil in a large wide nonstick skillet over medium heat.

Add the cloves, cardamom and star anise (or fennel seeds) and fry until the cardamom swells and starts to split and the oil is sizzling, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic.

Cook, stirring constantly and scraping up from the bottom of the pan with a slotted spoon, about 30 to 40 seconds, being careful it doesn't brown (or it will become bitter).

Quickly add the onions and stir, scraping up the garlic from the bottom of the pan and mingling it in with the onions.

Continue stirring and scraping up fairly frequently until most of the water released has dried up and the onions become a sticky mass, and are starting to turn a very pale golden color, about 15 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and cook until the onions are a soft caramel brown mass, about 15 minutes, checking once or twice and stirring.

Push the onions to the sides of the pan; increase the heat to medium-high and add the chicken. Sprinkle in the salt. Scrape up the onions with the slotted spoon and scatter over the chicken pieces.

Cook until the flesh changes from glossy pinkish to milky white, turning several times with the onions, about 6 to 7 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until the chicken is coated in the brown onion paste and brownish all over, about 40 minutes, checking once or twice to stir (no need to add water unless you want gravy). Transfer to a serving dish and serve garnished with cilantro.

A fancy variant is the Chicken in Cashew Sauce

Ingredients:

Chicken - 1 kg

Onions - 2 cups

(finely chopped)
Ginger - 2 small pieces
Cumin seeds(Jeerakam) - 1/2 tsp
Garlic pods(small) - 25 nos
Chilly powder - 2 tsp
Turmeric powder - 1/4 tsp
Salt - As reqd
Coconut oil - As reqd
Mustard seeds - 1 tsp
Onions - 4 nos
(chopped length-wise)
Water- As reqd
Cashews - 20 nos
Tomatoes - 2 nos
Lemon - half of one
Coriander leaves - 3 stems

Preparation Method of Cashew Chicken Curry Recipe

- 1)Blend together onions, ginger, cumin seeds and garlic in a mixer grinder.
- 2)Keep the cashew nuts immersed in water for 10 minutes.
- 3)Blend it to paste in a mixer grinder.
- 4)Heat oil in a pan.
- 5)Add mustard seeds and when they splutter, add onions (chopped length-wise) and saute, till onion turns brown.
- 6)Add the blended paste.
- 7)Stir well and add chilly powder and chopped tomatoes.
- 8)Add turmeric powder, salt and add washed chicken pieces.
- 9)Add enough water and allow it to boil.
- 10)When the chicken pieces are cooked, add lemon juice and stir well.
- 11)Add blended cashews.
- 12)When mixture starts boiling again, turn off the flame.
- 13)Garnish with coriander leaves.

<http://www.foodbuzz.com/recipes/3102733-capsicum-chicken>

Jewish Capsicum Chicken

Bell pepper or capsicum was not readily available in Cochin until the late 20th century. So chicken with capsicum is a newcomer to the Cochini menu list. In Kerala, this dish is served in several restaurants in Cochin as Jewish Capsicum Chicken (following the recipe from Menorah in Koder

House, Fort Cochin). The same ingredients and the same method are used to cook mutton/lamb too.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg chicken, cut into desired pieces
- 2 large onions, chopped rough
- 2 large tomatoes, skinned, chopped
- 3 large green bell peppers, julienned
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 4 tbsps tomato paste
- 2 tsp dry red chilli powder
- 12 peppercorns
- 4 tbsps coconut oil
- 1 bunch coriander, chopped
- Salt to taste

To make marinade:

- 4 tbsp coconut milk
- 3 tsp coriander powder
- 2 tsp of chopped ginger
- 3 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1/2 tsp of turmeric powder
- 1 tsp pepper
- salt to taste

Directions:

1. Marinate chicken with the marinating ingredients and coconut milk. Chill in refrigerator for about 3 hours.
2. In a deep skillet, heat 2 tbsp of oil. Add onions, garlic and peppercorns and sautee until the onions turn brown.
3. Add bell peppers and chilli powder and saute about five minutes.
4. Slide the marinated chicken gently into skillet along with 1/2 cup of water. Add the remaining 2 tbsp of oil.
5. Cook covered over medium heat until chicken becomes tender.
6. Add the tomato paste and chilli powder. Stir well.
7. Garnish with coriander.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of fresh, firm-fleshed fish
- 1 cup thick coconut milk
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped fine
- 1” ginger, chopped fine
- 1 or 2 red dried chillies, crushed
- 2 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp of cumin powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- Tamarind water (squeezed from a ping-pong sized ball of pulp in a little water)
- Salt to taste
- 1 large bunch coriander leaves

Directions:

1. Clean, slice fish to desired fillet size.
2. Heat 3 tbsp of coconut oil in a large skillet. Add the onions, garlic, green chillies and ginger and sautee until onions begin to brown.
3. Add the coriander powder, cumin powder, crushed red chillies, turmeric, pepper, tamarind extract, salt and saute another 5-6 minutes.
4. Add 1 cup of water and bring the mixture to boil. Slide in the fish fillets and cook about 5 minutes on medium heat.
5. Pour the coconut milk over the fish and simmer on low heat for another 10 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and sprinkle rest of coriander leaves.

Thengha Chor

Cochin Jewish Coconut Rice

(Samuel Sabattai Koder's Coconut Rice) Serves 8

Many American newspapers have called this famous recipe Samuel Sabattai Koder's Coconut Rice after the illustrious Cochini Jewish businessman of the late 20th century. (S.s. Koder - 1928-1992).* However, there is more to it than what has since been copied and disseminated in several Internet blogs.

There are two ways to make this distinctive and gratifying main dish,

which goes well with meat preparations. One is by adding thinly shredded coconut flesh and spices to the cooked rice and the other is cooking the rice in coconut milk and then adding spices to unleash a delightful aroma and unforgettable flavour. A third version uses both coconut milk and shredded coconut. All three work!

*The Los Angeles Times “PASSOVER IN INDIA : Why is this night different from all others? Because we’re eating coconut rice.

March 24, 1991|JULIE SAHNI talks of this rice at a Passover seder with Indian Jews at Congregation Bina in New York City

The Classic version

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups Rosematta rice

The Classic version

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups Rosematta rice
(if this not available, any parboiled rice will also do)
- 2 cups finely grated coconut
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 6 green chillies
- 1 pinch asofoetida
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp cinnamon powder
- 12 cashew nuts/raisins
- 4 tsp urad dhal
- 4 tsp chana dal
- 1 1/2” ginger, chopped fine
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- 2 sprigs curry leaves
- 4 tbs of clarified butter
- 1 tbs coconut oil
- 1/2 cup water
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Cook rice and let cool.
2. In a large saucepan, heat the clarified butter and splutter the mustard seeds. Add the cinnamon powder and cumin seeds and saute for a minute.
3. Reduce heat. Add the chillies, curry leaves, urad dal, chana dal, ginger, and fry until the dals begin to brown.

4. Add the shredded coconut, cashewnuts and raisins and stir fry for about three minutes..

5. Add rice and salt as required and gently fluff the rice, while drizzling the coconut oil over it.

Kerala Matta rice or Rosematta rice also goes by the name Palakkadan Matta. This red variety is a well-kept secret of Kerala and was once available only to royal families. It's robust flavour makes it popular for breakfast dishes and the numerous rice-based snacks, the most popular being the crunchy murukku. The Kerala Matta rice is an ancient grain, mentioned in the Tamil classic Thirukkural by Tiruvalluvar, a poet who lived sometime in the 1st century bc or 6th century ad - long before Jews got official recognition in the Hindu kingdoms of Malabar. See page... Cheraman Perumal's grant of the copper plates to Joseph Rabban in the then Cranganore/Shingly.

Coconut rice with shallots,
fennel & fenugreek

The fenugreek in this preparation lends an intriguing bitterness in sharp contrast to the fennel and the coconut.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups Rosematta rice
(if this not available, any parboiled rice will also do)
- 2 cups grated coconut
- 3 pods cardamom, husked
- 1/12 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 12 shallots, chopped fine
- 4 tbsp of clarified butter
- Salt to taste
- Water- as needed.
- A handful of roasted, broken cashewnuts is optional for sprinkling atop the fluffed rice.

Directions:

1. Cook the rice and keep aside.
2. In a heavy skillet, heat the clarified butter. Add the shallots, fenugreek, fennel, cardamom and fry until shallots turn brown.
3. Add the coconut and the rice. Add salt as needed.
4. Fluff the rice gently .

Cocunut rice with coconut milk

Makes 8 servings.

- 1 1/2 cups Rosematt rice
- 3 cups Coconut Milk
- 1 cup grated coconut
- Water

Directions

1. Cook rice in coconut milk and a little water on medium heat in a saucepan. Bring to boil.
2. Reduce heat and and cook until most of the liquid is absorbed and rice is cooked.
3. Turn off heat and and fold in grated coconut.
4. Fluff with a fork.

Cochin Jewish Chicken Biryani

Ingredients

- 8 cups basmati rice
- 2 kg chicken cut into **cubes**
- 6 onions, chopped
- 6 tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 bunch mint leaves, chopped
- 2 bunches coriander leaves, chopped
- ½ cup oil
- 12 cardamoms
- 12 cloves
- 3 cinnamon sticks (3" long)
- 2 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 tablespoon lime juice
- Salt to taste
- 1 packet biriyani masala*

Directions:

1. Cook rice with cardamom, cloves, cinnamon sticks, vinegar and salt in plenty of water till half done.
2. Drain the rice and keep it aside.
3. Soak biriyani masala in little water to make a paste.
4. Heat oil and fry onions till brown. Add biriyani masala paste and fry

till oil begins to separate.

5. Add tomatoes and half the chopped mint leaves and coriander leaves. Stir for a couple of minutes and add meat.

6. Mix well and add water and lime juice and close lid. Cook till meat is tender.

7. Take a pan and coat with little oil or butter

8. Divide the cooked rice into three portions. Spread one portion of the rice in the pan and add cooked meat and spread this nicely.

9. Add some coriander leaves and mint leaves. Then make the second layer first with rice and then with meat. Repeat this till rice and meat are done.

10. Garnish with coriander leaves and close the lid. Keep in a warm oven until ready to serve.

Shlomo Mordechai, originally from Paravur/Chennamangalam in Kerala, went to Israel when he was 12 years old. He has only faint memories of Kerala, “but the food remained a part of my life.” He now attends an egalitarian and socially active conservative synagogue, “Beth El” in Massapequa NY. He prepares several Cochin dishes, including the popular pastel, as part of the 57-year-old synagogue’s cooking program. The synagogue is the only one in Long Island with a kosher food pantry.

Shlomo, whose name in Kerala was Solomon Pallivathukal (meaning Solomon from the house near the synagogue door) prefers traditional Kerala food at home, because as he says: ”This food, in general, especially vegetarian items, are in sync with our kosher laws.” Shlomo has shared four of favourite recipes with us here.

(Newsday of New York published versions of these recipes in March, 2002 under the title A Passover from India” along with some Bene Israeli recipes after Sclomo was interviewed by a freelance writer Ramin Ganeshram.

* Published: March 19, 2002 7:00 PMM Newsday

<http://www.newsday.com/food-day-wednesday-a-passover-from-india-a-seder-from-the-subcontinent-includes-curry-rice-and-dosas-1.356638>

Kubbah Varathadhu

(Fried Kofta Ball - Meat is optional)

Makes about 16 servings

Ingredients

For the Kubbah covering:

- 3 large potatoes, peeled
- 1 1/2 cup matzo meal
- 2 tbs oil
- Salt to taste
- All-purpose flour or plain wheat flour for dusting

For the filling:

- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/2 pound boneless chicken or ground beef
(optional - the kubbah will then be vegetarian)
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1/2 cup carrots, sliced thin
- 1/2 cup cabbage, chopped fine
- 3 onions, chopped
- 1 potato, sliced thin
- 1/2 cup mushrooms, chopped
- 1/4 cup almonds, chopped
- 1/4 cup cashew, chopped
- 2 green chilli pepper, chopped
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 3 tbs wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- Salt to taste

For frying:

- 6 eggs, lightly whisked,
- Salt and pepper to taste,
- 1 cup oil

Directions:

1. Boil the peeled potatoes. Mash. Add matzo meal, oil and salt and form dough. Set aside.
2. Heat 1/2 cup oil in a large pan or wok.
3. Fry the chicken until meat turns white.
4. Add the chopped vegetables one by one, stirring constantly.
5. Cook for 20 minutes over medium heat.
6. Add salt, pepper, turmeric, vinegar and the nuts and cook for another 15 minutes, stirring frequently.
7. Add the chopped eggs and remove from heat.

8. Dust a work plate with the flour. Roll the dough into about 9 or 10 equal-sized balls.

9. Flatten balls with a rolling pin into patties of four or five inches in diameter.

10. Fill each pattie with just enough filling so that the dough can be folded and pinched closed.

11. Next, add salt and pepper to the beaten eggs. Brush the patties with the egg.

12. In a deep fryer or wok, fry each kubbah one at a time, until it turns golden brown. .

Courtesy: Shlomo Mordechai, New York

Ispethi

(Stewed Beef in rich sauce)

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds stewing beef, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 2 1/2 tsp paprika or chili powder
- 2 green chillies -sliced
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt (assuming that the beef is already salted)
- 1/2 cup vinegar, divided
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil (coconut oil is preferred)
- 3 large onions, sliced
- 2-4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 4 tsp powdered coriander
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 large onion, chopped rough
- 4 bell peppers, chopped

1. Marinate the beef with paprika or chili powder, turmeric, black pepper, salt and 2 tablespoons vinegar.

2. Refrigerate for about 2 hours .

3. Heat oil in large pot. Add the sliced onions, garlic and curry leaves and saute until onion becomes translucent.
 4. Add beef and brown on all sides.
 5. Add the remaining ingredients, except the chopped onion and bell pepper.
 6. Cook on medium-low heat, covered, for about 1 hour 40 minutes, or until beef is tender.
 7. Add chopped onion and bell pepper and cook for another 20 minutes longer. Stir occasionally. If you find the gravy too dry, add 2 tablespoons of water at a time. Continue cooking till the meat is done
 8. Serve over cooked rice.
 9. (Optional: Add half a tablespoon of sugar or one tablespoon of tomato puree for a milder taste - although this is not part of the original recipe)
- Courtesy: Shlomo Mordechai, New York

Elaggal

Cochin Jewish Red Beef Curry

This beef dish is an attractive red curry with a strong coriander flavour and a customer favourite at the Jewish-themed Menorah Restaurant in Fort Cochin.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg beef (stewing steak), cut into strips
- 2 tbsp of 8/8 sauce
- 8/8 Sauce (made of boiled dates, raisins and tamarind water) ,
- 2 tbsp tamarind extract (Worcestershire sauce),
- Rosemary,
- 2 tsp crushed red chillies,
- 2 long red chillies, halved, deseeded, cut lengthwise
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 3 tbspcococonut oil
- 1 tbsp sugar ,
- 2 tsp of white pepper powder
- 1/2 cup lettuce, shredded fine
- 1/2 cup celery, sliced fine
- 1 cup of shredded red cabbage,
- 4 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 cup Madras curry paste (coriander, cumin, red chilies, turmeric,

paprika)

- 2 bunch coriander leaves

Directions:

- Heat the fry pan pour the coconut oil and put some chopped garlic and saute it, then pour the beef and add the above sauce and crushed pepper and cook the beef for 20 minutes, once the beef is cooked put the rosemary white pepper powder and sugar.

Dice cutting Iceberg , Cellary , Parcelly , Lettuce , Red Cabbage and marinate the Balsamic Vinegar.

Serve in a Bowl by arranging the Dice cutting Iceberg , Cellary , Parcelly , Lettuce , Red Cabbage and marinate the Balsamic Vinegar. Then Pour the cooked thick red beef curry.

Courtesy: Vicky Raj, (Menorah Restaurant), Koder House, Fort Kochi.

Beef Olathiyathu /Cochin Beef Fry or Cochin Chilli Beef Roast

Fried bits of coconut add an indescribable burst of flavour in this beef dish. Combined with roasted ginger and curry leaves, this fried dish is delightful with a variety of breads or with rice and has today become a featured item at Christian weddings in Kerala.

Serves - 4

Ingredients for the spice mix:

- 3 tsp dried red chilli powder
- 3 tbsp coriander powder
- 6 cloves of cardamom, husked, crushed
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp fennel seeds, crushed
- 2 tsp of ground pepper
- 1 tsp cinammon powder
- A sprig of curry leaves, chopped fine

For the main beef dish:

- Beef - 1 kg stewing meat, cubed
- 1/2 cup of chopped fresh coconut
- 10 shallots, chopped fine
- 2” ginger, grated fine
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 4-5 green chillies, halved and sliced lengthwise
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped fine

- Coconut slices (Thenga kothu) - 1/4 cup
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- Salt to taste
- Coconut oil for frying (No other oil will provide the right flavour and aroma needed for this dish)

Directions:-

1. Heat a small frying pan and add all ingredients.
2. On low flame, dry roast the mix for about 6 to 10 minutes until it all browns.
3. In a heavy pan, add the beef a long with the spice mix, vinegar and 1 cup of water over medium heat for about 60 minutes. .
4. In a large frying pan or wok, heat some coconut oil and fry the coconut slices. Add onions, ginger, chillies, garlic, salt and saute on low heat for about 10 minutes or until the mixture gently browns.
5. Add the beef and let simmer over low heat, and stir fry until all the water has evaporated. Garnish with chopped coriander and a chopped tomato if you so desire.

Chuttulli Meen

Fried/grilled fish with thick roasted onion sauce

The sweet flavour of shallots and the piquant blend of spices come together with flaky fish to create this celebrated dish, an original recipe of the Cochin Jews. The dish has now crossed over to other communities and has been featured on BBC Television and several Indian and international networks. It is usually served with stuffed or grilled potatoes

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of firm fish - (mullet, bass, trout fillets)
- 7-8 shallots (or pearl onions)
- 2 sprigs curry Leaves
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 5 cardamon pods, husked and crushed
- 3 tsp of coriander powder
- 4 green chillies - chopped fine
- 2" ginger, chopped fine
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 - bunch of coriander - chopped fine

- 2-3 tablespoon oil (coconut oil gives off a better aroma)
- Salt to taste

Directons:

1. Clean and pat dry the fillets and keep aside
2. Heat coconut oil in a frying pan and roast the shallots, curry leaves, chillies, pepper, cumin, cardamom and coriander seeds on medium heat. Let the shallots turn brown.
3. Add the salt and lemon juice and grind together to make a rough paste.
4. Rub the paste on both sides of the fillets.
5. Fry the fillets in a skillet, basting often with coconut oil till the fish browns and the skin crisps.
6. Garnish with coriander and wedges of lemon.
7. (Instead of pan frying, the fish can also be grilled on charcoal for a variant of the dish).

Courtesy: Batzion Bezalel, Moshav Kidroon, Israel.

Kurkirachi

(Chicken with Chinese potatoes)

Koorka is a small, hairy tuber belonging to the mint family of plants (Lamiaceae), and is native to tropical Africa. Botanists call this herbaceous perennial *Plectranthus rotundifolius* or *Solenostemon rotundifolius*. It is today cultivated extensively throughout South Asia and is in plentiful supply in Kerala where it has become a much-loved part of the local cuisine. In the West, it is called Chinese potato (nobody knows why!), Coleus potato, Hausa potato, country potato and native potato.

While Kerala Hindus and Syrian Christians use the koorka mainly with beef (from the local water buffalo/oxen) or as a stir-fried, stand-alone side dish, the Cochin Jews used only chicken to make this delectable, earthy-tasting dish. One reason offered by an Ernakulam Jewish family was the difficulty of obtaining kosher beef in Kerala. (There is also one Koorka dish with fish. See Koorka and Sardines salad on page....)

The koorka has a tough skin and it was youngsters in the family who were given the task of putting the tubers in a gunny bag and beating it on the floor. This allows for the skin to be peeled off easily. The aroma of the skinned tuber is akin to the smell rising from the Kerala soil after a heavy rainfall. Fresh and invigorating!

Soaking the koorka in water for a while also helps in scraping the skin off with a knife.

Mattanchery's matriarch Sarah Cohen was quoted in an article "Jews of God's Own Country" in the magazine Live Encounters mentioning this dish as one the community's favourite recipes.

Ingredients:

Ingredients:

- 1 kg - chicken cut into pieces
- 10 - koorka, cut into small cubes
- 2 onions-chopped,
- 2 or 3 fresh green or red dry chillies
- 8-10 shallots - chopped
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 2 tsps of ginger - chopped
- 2 cloves garlic -chopped
- 2 tsps turmeric
- 2-3 tbsp of coconut oil or other vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. In a deep skillet, heat the oil and fry the onions, shallots, garlic, chillies, turmeric and curry leaves for a few minutes.
2. Add the chicken and continue cooking till the chicken is half done. Stir.
3. Add the potatoes, close the lid and cook on medium heat until chicken is well done.
4. Open the lid and let the curry dry.

This recipe, in which coconut and coriander is also used, is how the Hindus and Christians make the same dish.. Replace the chicken with beef.

Ingredients:

1 kg - Beef - cut into small cubes

- 1 kg - Beef - cut into small cubes
- 10 Koorka - diced Koorkka 3 Cups
- 1/2 coconut - chopped •
- 2 tsp Corriander powder.

The other ingredients are the same as the Kurkirachi.

Directions:

1. In separate skillets, add a little oil and turmeric powder and cook the beef and the koorka separately.
2. In a saucepan, fry coconut pieces in hot oil, along with the shallots, onions etc. and keep it aside.
3. Combine the beef and koorka and add water slowly until there is some thick gravy. Stir.
4. Add the fried coconut pieces and the spice mixture at the end. Serve hot with rice.

Koorka can also be stir fried to make a delightful side dish.

Stir fried Koorka

Ingredients:

- 12 koorka, cut into small pieces
- 10 shallots - crushed
- 2 red dry chillies - crushed
- 3 cloves of garlic, smashed
- 1/4 cup grated coconut
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp urad dal (decorticated or dehusked- split)*
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 10 to 12 - curry leaves
- Salt and pepper, as needed

Directions

1. Cook the koorka in a little boiling water.
2. Add turmeric and salt. Drain.
3. Heat the coconut oil in a wok, splutter mustard seeds; add the cumin, curry leaves and urad daal.
4. Combine the crushed shallots, chillies and garlic and add it to the ingredients in the wok. Saute.
5. Add cooked koorkas and grated coconut. Stir.
6. Cover the wok and cook for ten minutes on a low flame.

7. Drizzle 1 tsp coconut oil on mixture. Serve hot.

footnote* Urad dal is known as black gram. In Kerala, this versatile lentil is called uzhunnum parippu and is available whole (black) or split and white with the skin removed. In many dishes, it takes on the role of a spice, adding crunchiness to the dish. When the white split lentil is ground, it is the main ingredient in popular Kerala delicacies like dosa, idli, vada and popadums. Split decorticated legumes (Urad Dal, Moong Dal, and Chana Dal) are also used like spices to make dishes such as Rasam and Sambhar.

Dr. Barbara Johnson in *A Cochin Woman* remembers thanks Ruby's sister "Rahel Kala (Royal), for her cheerfulness and for cooking the sambhar while we worked" more than 20 years ago in Neot Mordecai, a kibbutz in the Upper Galilee in northern Israel. (Rahel still lives in the kibbutz).

The Classic Sambhar

The sambhar is lentil and shallot based curry that is an everyday dish in Kerala, Karnataka and neighbouring Tamil Nadu state, from where it is believed to have originated. It can be described as a richer cousin to the more well-known dal of northern India. The Kerala sambhar is, however, a little different because tamarind pulp/water is added as the souring agent.

Today, the sambhar has travelled far and wide and enjoyed in restaurants and takeouts across India and India-themed eateries abroad, as an accompaniment to dosas, idlis and vadas. It is a staple curry in most Cochin Jewish homes.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup toor dal (yellow pigeon peas)
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder ¼ tsp
- 3 green chillies, chopped
- 2 potatoes
- 1 carrot
- 1 Tomato
- 8 okra, cut
- 1 onion, chopped
- Salt to taste
- Tamarind water (squeezed from 1 lemon sized ball of pulp)
- 2 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tbsp red chilli powder
- 1/4 tsp Hing (asafoetida)

- 1/4 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 4 tbsp grated coconut
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 spring curry leaves 1 sprig
- 1/4 cup coriander leaves chopped

Directions:

1. Add two cups of water in a bowl along with the toor dal.
2. Add turmeric powder, green chillies, onion, salt and and cook (preferably in a pressure cooker) till dal is done.
3. Add cut vegetables and cook till vegetables are tender.
4. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan, add grated coconut, fenugreek seeds and fry till golden brown.
5. Add coriander powder, chilli powder and hing.
6. Remove from pan and grind this by adding tamarind water.
7. Add this mixture to the cooked dal and vegetables and cook for another 5 minutes.
8. Heat the remaining oil and add mustard seeds. When it splutters add curry leaves.
9. Pour this over the Sambar and mix well.
10. Garnish with coriander leaves.

Other vegetables that can be used in a sambhar include drumstick, egg-plant and/or yam. A sambhar made only with shallots simmered in its own juices and tamarind water is a considered a specialty dish with a different flavour.

Charoset is one of the symbolic Jewish foods for Passover (Pesach) Seder, the ritual feast that marks the beginning of this major Jewish holiday. It is conducted in the evening of the 14th day of Nisan (Jewish calendar) and also on the 15th by traditionally observant Jews living outside Israel.

The colour and texture of the charoset is intended to remind the Jews of the bricks and mortar the Israelites were forced to make for 40 years during their enslavement in ancient Egypt. The word 'charoset' itself comes from the Hebrew word cheres or "clay."

The Seder tells the story of the liberation of Israelites from slavery ("You shall tell your child on that day it is because what the lord did for me when I came out of Egypt").

(It is needless to say that this brown lump is delicious and vanishes off the plate!!) - Dr. Essie Sassoon.

There are as many recipes for charoset as there are Jewish communities in the Diaspora. While the Jews of Eastern Europe made charoset from apples, walnuts and honey, spiced with cinnamon and sweet wine, in the Middle East, it was made with dry dates, raisins and figs. In Greece and Turkey, they added almonds and the Italians used chestnuts.

The Cochini Jews followed the Sephardic tradition and dates become the main ingredient in their charoset. Some congregations also used coconuts, bananas and pomegranates. After reciting the blessings, a sandwich with the charoset and some maror (bitter herbs) is eaten, with the rest of the charoset enjoyed plain.

Maror, refers to the bitter herbs eaten at the Passover Seder in keeping with the Biblical commandment “with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” (Exodus 12:8). In Cochini, bitter melon was used as maror.

Duwo / Cochini Charoset essie

Ingredients

- 2.5 kg dates, seeded
- Water
- 3 pieces cheese cloth

Directions:

1. Put the seeded dates in a big stainless steel pot.
 2. Pour water till it is 4 fingers above the level of dates.
 3. Cook till the dates become soft/mushy; Cool.
 4. Strain the paste through cheese cloth three times. Use water to help in extraction.
 5. Put the pot back on the fire with the strained date paste.
 6. Cook on low fire for about 4 hours till it is thick and syrupy. (Stir frequently so that the paste does not burn at the bottom of the pot.)
 7. Preserve in dry, clean bottles. It will keep for a long time.
-

Cochin Charoset

Bernadette Baum is an editor of financial market and general news at a global news agency in New York,. Having spent her childhood in Malaysia, she traces her roots to the Cochin Jews. In her words: “Many years ago, in a tropical paradise far away, a little girl grew up in a jasmine-fringed house with orchids, mango trees, papaya trees, banana and coconut palms, jack-fruit, soursop, tomato vines and curry plants. She watched as her Grand-mother cooked and baked in a fragrant kitchen...That was me, and I have been cooking since I was ten.”

Bernadette, who converted to Judaism from Catholicism fifteen years ago, speaks French, Indonesian, Malay, Malayalam, some Hebrew and writes a popular blog <http://divaindoors.com>

Charoset for Passover

Bernadette Baum

“Charoset, the fruit and nut jam-like confection which, at Passover, recalls the mortar which the enslaved Jews of ancient Egypt bonded bricks together with, is relatively simple to put together. This version is similar to the charoset made in Egypt, which includes dates, nuts and cinnamon. I have substituted orange juice for the more traditional red wine, and thrown in coconut as a nod to my Jewish predecessors in Cochin, Kerala.”

- 1 Fuji apple, grated
- 1 cup dates
- 1/2 -3/4 cup apricot
- 2 tbsp preserved orange peel
- 3/4 cup walnuts
- 1 orange, zest and juice
- 1 tbsp brown sugar,
- 1/2 cup coconut shavings
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 1/4 cup red wine, optional
- 1-2 tsp cinnamon

Directions:

1. Put all the ingredients together in a food processor and blend, but not too finely
2. Serve at the Passover Seder and on toasted matzah for breakfast.
(Reprinted with permission.)

Charoset - 2

The Cochini Jewish congregation of Mala was among the earliest in India to make aliyah. By 1950, they had made all arrangements to go to the Holy Land and as gratitude to the community, which hosted them for several centuries, they bequeathed their magnificent synagoge to the town council. (The only stipulation was that it not be converted into another place of worship or a slaughter house).

Mala has grown over the past 50 years and today the Mala Jewish cemetery finds itself located in the heart of the town, walled and surrounded by attractive homes...and there is not a single Jewish family anywhere near! There have been demands to convert this valuable piece of real estate into a playground or park - but a court edict, in response to a petition filed by the Ernakulam Jews, has ordered status quo on the property.

The synagogue structure still stands and is being used as a community hall for social/cultural functions and meetings. The yard is used as a communal area by the public for drying chilli pepper.

This Charoset is from the Jews of Mala, part of the erstwhile Kingdom of Cochin

- Half a kg dates, seeded
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 tbs sesame seeds
- Half a kg raisins
- 1 cup cashew
- 1 cup almonds
- 1 cup wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 cups water

Directions:

1. Process all ingredients in a blender until it becomes a paste. Add more water if it is too thick.
2. (In the old days in Cochin, Jewish homes used a large stone mortar and pestle to grind the fruits into a pulp.)
3. In a saucepan, let the mixture simmer over low heat for half an hour. Cool and cut into pieces.

Rachael Roby of Petah Tikvah, Israel, starts making the charoset immediately after Purim, with the process taking her about two days. The mixture is then bottled and kept in special room for about a month. When it is taken out, it just tastes right!

This recipe is similar to the Duwoo of Sarah Cohen of Mattancherry in Cochin, but Raechel squeezes the juice out of each date individually and leaves it to cool overnight.

Directions:

1. Place 1 kg of pitted dates in a pot with sufficient water.
2. Cover and boil the dates until pulpy.
3. Let the pot cool overnight.
4. Squeeze out the juice out from each date into another pot.
5. On a high flame, bring the juice to boil.
6. Continue boiling uncovered until all the water evaporates.
7. Cool the remaining syrup mixture. Bottle.
8. When the seder night arrives, mix the syrup with chopped walnuts/ other nuts of choice and serve.
9. (In Cochin, where walnuts were not available, the Jews used cashew which was abundant or peanuts).

At a charoset tasting event at the Houston Jewish Community Centre some years ago, Ora Farchy's offering was judged as the 'farthest from traditional.' Amidst the numerous Ashkenazai-style charoset, what Ora presented was one of the Cochin versions, her mother Rebecc'a nut paste held together by pureed dates..

Ingredients:

- 1 cup roasted sesame
- 1 cup roasted almonds
- 1 cup roasted peanuts
- 1 cup roasted cashews
- 2 cups dates syrup or date puree
- ½ cup of sweet wine

- 1 cup honey
- A good pinch of ground cardamom
- 1-2 drops of rosewater

Directions:

1. Crush the nuts into rough small pieces
2. Mix with all the other ingredients in a pot and heat on a top stove.
3. Steer continuously until all is blend.
4. Turn off the heat and wait until it cools down.
5. Store in glass jars. (No need to refrigerate... it will be vanish in no time.)

Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

Upma or Uppumavu

The Upma is an excellent porridge-like breakfast dish, easy to prepare, filling and nutritious. Vegetables like peas, carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, capsicum and fried peanuts or cashews can also be added to make variants of this dish. It can be eaten alone or with any curry, steamed bananas or just a sprinkling of sugar.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups semolina (sooji)
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 1 “ Ginger, chopped fine
- 4 green chillies, chopped
- 1tsp cumin
- 3 dried red chillies, crushed
- 4 tbsp grated coconut
- 1 tsp black gram (urad dal or split peas)
- 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 2 tbsp clarified butter or vegetable oil
- Salt – As needed
- Water

Directions:

1. Lightly roast the semolina in a non stick pan. Stir continuously so that it does not brown. Remove from heat and keep aside.

2. Heat the clarified butter or oil in another pan and splutter mustard seeds. (Clarified butter enhances the aroma and taste).

3. Add onions, chillies and curry leaves and saute until onions become translucent.. (If you want the upma to have a light yellow colour, add a pinch of turmeric).

4. Add ginger, gram, cumin and fry for 2 more minutes.

5. Add 2 cups of water, salt and let boil. Reduce heat.

6. Add the roasted semolina, stirring slowly to prevent clumping. Sprinkle coconut flakes and mix.

7. Cover the pan and cook on low heat for about 5 minutes. The semolina will absorb all the water and turn a little fluffy, much like couscous. Pour a few tablespoons of water if it seems dry and heat for 2 more minutes.

Kallappam or Stone appam -

(Kallu is stone in Malayalam)

Makes 3 appams

This crispy and savoury item was made by the Cochin Jews on Friday afternoons for Shabbat. The tradition continues in Israel.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour (rice flour preferred)
- 1 cup semolina
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 egg
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 5 green chillies, chopped fine
- 1 sprig of curry leaves
- Salt to taste
- 3 tbsp oil

Method:

1. Mix all ingredients except oil to make a batter.
2. Grease a frying pan with 1 tbsp of oil.
3. When the pan is hot pour 1/3 of the batter and tilt the pan so that batter evenly covers bottom of pan.
4. Cover and cook for a couple of minutes.
5. Turn it over and cook the other side till appam becomes hard and

crispy.

steamed appam

Pongiya Appam

- essie

ingredients-

flour-one cup(incochin rice flour was used)

samolina-two cups

sugar-3\4 cup

yeast-1 1\2 table spoons(incochin toddy was used)

water-a little less than 4 cups

cocunet grated -fresh or dry-one cup

pinch of salt

method-

mix all the ingriedents to gether and leve it in a warm place to ferment-1\2 to one hour

poured into idly plate and steamed-we get small appams like idely-any other sutible vessel for steaming can be used

optional on top of the batter one piece of ripe banana and nuts can be put before steaming

Palappam or Vellayappam

Rice crepes

These are similar to the dosa, but with spongy centres and lacier edges. These crepes are part of an array of breakfast rice dishes and goes well with egg roast or potatoes stewed in coconut milk or just with sugar and milk.

Ingredients

2 cups rice flour

2 cups coconut milk

ed Rice – 3/4 cup approx

Yeast – 1.5 to 2 tsp

Sugar – 1 tbsp + 3-4 tbsp or as needed

Salt – to taste

Thick Coconut Milk – 1/2 cup

Ice cubes – as needed

Water – as needed

Preparation Method

Soak the rice for atleast 6 hours or leave it overnight.

Wash and drain the rice and keep aside.

Dissolve the yeast and 1 tbsp sugar in 1/2 cup of lightly warm water. Keep it aside for ten minutes until it foams.

Next, you need to grind the rice in several batches. Grind around two handfuls of raw rice along with a few tablespoons of cooked rice and very little water. I add 2-3 ice cubes while grinding each batch to prevent the mixie from overheating.

While grinding the last batch, add the yeast solution to the mixie.

Leave the batter in a warm place for 6-8 hours. I usually leave it overnight. Ensure that the bowl is large enough to prevent the batter from overflowing after fermentation.

8. The batter would have risen after fermentation and will look foamy. Stir the batter and check the consistency. Add 1/4 – 1/2 cup of coconut milk to make a batter of medium consistency. If the batter appears thin after fermentation, skip the coconut milk.

9. Add sugar as per desired sweetness (3-4 tbsp) and salt to taste. Mix everything together.

10. At this stage, you can start preparing the Appams with this batter or for extra lacy appams, leave the batter untouched for half an hour. The batter will froth and rise again. Spoon the foamy layer from the batter and transfer it to another dish. Use this foamy batter for making Appams.

Heat a Palappam Chatti and lightly grease it with oil.

Once the Palappam Chatti is hot, pour a ladle full of batter and swirl the pan in one direction so that the batter spreads to the edges.

Keep it covered and allow the Appam to cook for a few minutes.

Once cooked the edges of the appam will start separating from the pan. Remove the appam carefully with a spatula.

Note

To make appams with brown laces, increase the amount of sugar.

Sheera - A Semolina Sweet

(This delicious sweet is made across Kerala. In northern India, this is called Kesari and is part of Hindu temple offerings. The Jews of Cochin, make this as part of their many soft *halwa* preparations)

Ingredients :

1 cup / 250 gm Rava/Semolina/sooji

2-3 cups / 500 ml boiling water

150 gm clarified butter
1/2 tsb green cardamon powder
6 almonds/chopped
6 cashew nuts roasted/chopped
8 raisins
5 strands saffron

Method :

1. Soak saffron in water and keep aside.
2. Heat ghee over medium flame in a deep vessel
3. Add rava to it and keep frying till it turns golden pink in colour(it should take appx 7-9 mins. Make sure you constantly saute rava so that it does not turn brown. You can add a little more ghee if you like.
4. Now add boiling water and keep stirring it for the next 3 minutes.
5. Add sugar, cardamon and saffron to it and again stir well 5 mins..Slowly the mixture will start turning thick. Keep stirring for further 3-4 mins.

You can now remove it and serve by adding almonds, cashews and raisins on the top(optional). I dont like raisins so I usually skip it. In typical halwa raisins are used and not cashwes and almonds. We have now started adding serveral dryfruits due to its nutritional values.

What I did here for presentation is, I added the halwa in small cup then pressed it slightly with a small spoon so that it levels and takes the shape. And then turned it over serving plate and tapped it out.

Garnish it in your own way. You can also use muffins molds instead of small cup.

Apam- Semolina coconut cake Cochin Jewish

Ingredients

- 1 can thick coconut milk
- 1.5 cups milk
- 1 cup sweetened flakes of coconut (optional)
- 8 pods of cardamom crushed
- 2 tsp nutmeg ground
- ½ cup almonds or cashews toasted
- cup fine semolina (farina)

- 1 ½ cups sugar (adjust according to your need)
- 4 ozs butter or ghee
- eggs

Direction:

- Preheat oven 325. Roast semolina in a saucepan on low heat, stirring constantly, till it turns a light golden color for about 5 minutes. Do not brown the semolina.

- Add ghee or vegetable and roast another 3-4 minutes. Set aside to cool completely.

- Add coconut milk, milk, coconut flakes, powdered cardamom/nutmeg and sugar and eggs. Stir vigorously. Add nuts. Pour into a baking pan about 8-10 inches wide and 2-3 inches deep and bake till firm and golden brown in a 325 oven for about 25-35 minutes.

- To test insert a sharp knife. If it comes out clean the cake is ready.

Important: If the semolina is very warm when liquid is added it tends to cook immediately and become thick and lumpy. Therefore the roasted mix must be cooled before the coconut milk is added.

Cucumber salad

Ingredients:

- 4 medium cucumbers
- 2 large tomatoes
- 2 green chillies, chopped fine
- Green pepper, diced (optional)
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- 1 small bunch coriander, chopped fine
- ½ lemon, juiced/or 1 tbsp of white vinegar
- Kosher or other coarse salt, as needed
- Pinch of sugar

Directions:

1. Grate the skin of cucumbers and cut into small pieces (quarters of a ring).

2. Cut tomatoes the same way.

3. Mix tomatoes and cucumber in a bowl with the lemon juice/vinegar, salt, pepper.

4. Garnish with the coriander. Add a pinch of sugar to enhance the tanginess of the lemon and tomatoes.

Plain Cochini Spiced Rice

The cardamom, cinnamon, cumin, pepper, garlic and ginger in this rice dish all create tiny explosions of taste with every spoonful. Some fennel seeds can also be added when stir frying the spices to add another level of flavour.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups long-grain rice
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 1/2-inch ginger, chopped fine
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 3 cardamom pods, husked, crushed
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 1 tsp cinnamon powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 5 cloves
- 2 tbsp clarified butter or coconut oil
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. In a heavy-bottomed pan, heat the ghee or coconut oil over medium heat.
2. Sautee the onion, garlic and ginger until the onions become translucent.
3. Add the cumin seeds, cinammon, cardamom, coriander, cloves, pepper and stir fry for about a minute.
4. Add rice, 3 cups of water, salt and bring to boil.
5. Cook on reduced heat for about 30 minutes or until the water is absorbed.
6. (Optional) - Drizzle a tsp of coconut oil over the hot rice or mix in a tsp of clarified butter. Stir well

Cochin Latkes

The crusty potato appetizers might be thick patties, thin cakes or small spheres and are simple to prepare. Seasonings vary from a gentle pinch of ground ginger, nutmeg or cumin to a liberal dose of hot chiles - fresh, dried

or a mixture of both. Some chefs accent their patties with the lively flavors of fresh onions, garlic, gingerroot, coriander leaves or lemon juice. For a little extra richness, many cooks enhance their potato cakes with coconut, peanuts, almonds or cheese.

. The crust is not as delicate, but baking yields pleasing results and is more practical than frying if you're making a large amount. Besides, you'll use less oil.

(Makes about 8 latkes)

Ingredients

4 large. potatoes,

- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 3 green chillies, chopped fine
- 1/2 tsp. coriander powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup coconut oil
- Bread crumbs for thickening batter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Boil peeled potatoes in salted water. Mash.

1. Beat eggs in a deep bowl until peaks form. Add mashed potatoes, onions chillies, coriander powder, cumin, salt, pepper and mix well.

2. Add bread crumbs to thicken mixture.

3. Heat coconut oil in a heavy frying pan. Ladle about 2 tbsp of batter into oil to make a thin pancake.

4. Fry until it begins to brown on both sides. Continue until all the batter is done.

Citation: A similar recipe was published in the Jerusalem Post : LEVY, FAYE. "Latkes from spicy lands." Jerusalem Post. 23 Dec. 2005: 40. eLibrary. Web. 14

Nov. 2010.

Eggplant (Brinjal) Latkes

Makes 12

In Kerala, the eggplant or brinjal was looked down upon as a poor man's vegetable and the upper and middle classes seldom cooked it at home.. Tastes, however, changed as society turned egalitarian in the 1940s and

50s. The eggplant is a popular vegetable with the Cochinis in Israel today.
(This parargraph is mine)

Ingredients

- Use 2 large eggplants
- 1 cup of breadcrumbs
- Plus ame ingredients as the previous recipe for Cochin Latkes

Directions:

1. Follow the same method used for the Cochin Latkes.
2. After boiling or baking the eggplants, mash them and fold in the beaten eggs, breadcrumbs and spices.
3. A dollop of cream cheese can add to the richness.
4. Fry until the latkes turn brown on both sides .

Ulli Nirachatu (Mahasha)

Filled Onions

This delightful, filling snack got into Cochini Jewish cuisine after Baghdadi Jews began arriving in India in the early 18th century and fused their cooking with local flavours. Many Cochin Jews interacted with the Baghdadis in Bombay and Calcutta and in Burma. The name Mahasha is believed to be of Arabic origin. The Cochinis, of course, spiced up the dish!
- Dr. Essie Sassoon

Ingredients for the filling:

- 8 large onions for filling
- 1 kg of ground beef or minced boneless chicken
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped fine
- 2” ginger, grated fine
- Some curry leaves
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cayenne (Kashmiri chilli powder - this is not hot)
- 3 green chillies, chopped fine
- 10 cashew nuts, chopped
- 1/2 cup raisins
- Oil for frying

- 1 bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Heat 4 tbsp of oil in a large frying pan. Add onions, garlic, ginger and curry leaves. Fry until the mixture browns.

2. Add the meat and cook on medium heat until done/browned. Stir occasionally.

3. Add turmeric, salt and sweet chilli powder.

4. Add the nuts and raisins and mix well. Remove pan from fire and set aside.

5. Discard the outer skin and trim the onions.

6. In the Cochin of yesteryears, when there were no microwaves, so the onions were put into salted boiling water for about 10 minutes to make them soft and pliable.

7. Make a deep cut lengthwise on one onion. Remove the inside layers, leaving about three or four outside to let the onions stay firm.

8. Fill the onion with the meat mixture and close. Repeat process with the other onions.

9. Drizzle a little coconut oil over each.

10. Grill the onions until they begin to brown and crisp. Or bake in an oven pre-heated 375F for about 20 to 30 minutes on a greased pan.

11. The onions can be served on its own or a) in a thick gravy of chicken stock cooked with turmeric, salt and pepper; b) or a thick gravy of onion and tomatoes, with spices; c) a thick sauce of onions and curry powder.

(Filled onions can also be made with only vegetables. Bell peppers, eggplant and grated carrots do well as filling when mixed with cooked rice or cream cheese. Some housewives use a mixture of meat and rice.)

Houses and food were in desperately short supply. Under an austerity program, the fledgling government distributed staples - margarine, flour, salty fish - that puzzled and repelled Farchy's parents.

"At the beginning, it was hard for them to accept the strange food. `This is not tasty. This is disgusting. How can you eat that?'" " Farchy mimicked. Eventually, they became adept at trading with other families, exchanging the flour they didn't want for the rice they did.

For Farchy, her brother Nir Gadot and her cousin Hannah Abraham, all born in Israel, life there was all they knew. They grew up with Cochin foods

and customs, but their friends and schoolmates came from a United Nations of lands and introduced them to a veritable world cafe. The children grew as accustomed to schnitzel and falafel as to eggplant curry and dal. Their everyday cooking now reflects the foods of Israel as much, or more, than the foods of Cochin.

Rosh Hashana, one of the holiest days of the calendar. Three Houston families - the Farchys, Abrahams and Gadots - will gather around the table to welcome the New Year. They'll feast on saffron rice, dosa with hot peppers and onion, coconut curry, spicy chicken, tamarind-ginger-marinated salmon, rose-water-scented candied apples in syrup and cardamom cookies.

Here is cousin Goulie Scheer's Indian cabbage salad, updated with a teaspoon of Splenda. There is grandmother Sarah Tovachy Elias' pastel, a delicious chicken- and vegetable-stuffed pastry that's a favorite of one of Abraham's daughters.

Citation for Ora Frachy

PEGGY GRODINSKY STAFF. "INDIAN JEWS / FEASTING ON HERITAGE / Three Houston families will welcome the New Year with meruba, meen-varzezu and pastels, foods of the littleknown Jewish community of Cochin, India." Houston Chronicle. 20 Sep. 2006: 1. eLibrary. Web. 14 Nov. 2010.

the holiday of purim is probably one of the best of the Jewish holidays in that it is filled with loads of sweets and pastries. People will spend hours baking and prepare elaborate gift baskets for family, friends and neighbours which we call mishlo'ach man'ot. It is considered a very happy occasion, one which children remember fondly once they are grown.

Pongalam

A dosa? No, it is not a dosa!

This batter-based dish, with some similarities to the dosa/uthappa, has been wrongly called 'Fongalam' in some newspapers and blogs, with butternut squash as the main ingredient. Each community in Cochin made it with different ingredients. The Jews, however, did not use butternut squash and potatoes were rare in their pongalams. Also, butternut squash as we know it today, was not available in Cochin. Instead, grated carrots or grated cabbage went into the batter that was generally left over after making idlis; because there was no

refrigeration possible the batter got sour and was ideal for this dish.- Dr. Essie Sassoon.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of idli batter
- 1 cup of grated cabbage or carrots
- 6 shallots, chopped fine
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 1 small bunch coriander leaves
- 1 tbsp channa dal
- 1 tbsp urad dal
- 2 green chillies, chopped fine
- 2 dry red chillies, crushed,
- 1/2 tsp cumin seed
- 2 tbsp of grated coconut (optional)
- Salt to taste
- Coconut oil for frying

Directions:

1. Heat 2 tbsp of coconut oil in a deep-bottomed pan and fry the dals.
 2. Add the onions, chillies, cumin, and curry leaves until onions begin to brown. (If you are using coconut, fry it along with the onions).
 3. Add cabbage/carrot and fry for another 3 minutes.
 4. Mix all ingredients well into the batter.
 5. On low heat, heat 1 tsp of coconut oil into the same pan. Ladle about 3 tbsp of batter into the oil. Drizzle a little oil all around the batter and let the edges sizzle for two or three minutes.
 6. Turn the pongalam over and cook until edges start getting crisp.
- The Serve hot with coconut chutney.

Unniyappam or Neiyappam
Cochin Jewish Hanukkah fritters
(Makes about 40 appams)

This delicious, golden-brown rice dumplings deep-fried in clarified butter, were much-anticipated treats at Hanukkah time and the day before Yom Kippur in Cochin. The Hindus also make them as offerings to temples during their many festivals and consider it an ancient specialty.

The unniyappams are made in a special cast-iron pan with round indentations, called 'appakaara', similar to the the Danish pans called 'aebleskiver' used to make apple pancakes. The Greek Jews also have a look-alike pan with seven

wells for making their 'bimuelo' fried dough for Hanukkah. - Bala Menon

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of basmati rice or idli rice - 2 cups
- 2 cups brown sugar - 2 cups
- 2 over-ripe banana - (the Robusta variety called Chiquita)
- 2 tbsp black sesame seeds – 2 tbsp
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- 4 tbsp dry coconut (copra), chopped into fine pieces
- 4 tbs clarified butter
- Oil for frying

Directions:

1. Wash and soak rice for about 5 hours.
2. Grind soaked rice with water, brown sugar and mashed bananas.
3. Transfer to a bowl and add cardamom powder, sesame seeds, and coconut pieces and mix well. The batter should have the consistency of idli (or pancake) batter.
4. Keep this batter in fridge for 4-5 hours, allowing mild fermentation.
5. Heat 'appakkara' and fill 3/4th of each depression with equal amounts of oil and clarified butter.
6. Pour batter gently into the oil to fill half the well and cook for 2 minutes.
7. Turn the appams and cook for another 2 minutes. Use a skewer to check whether the appams are done (skewer will come out clean).
8. Remove appams from the appakara and drain on paper towels.

(The bananas help create the soft and spongy interior in delightful contrast to the crusty exterior.)

Recipes of Cochin Jews

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Cochin Jewish Holiday Cookies
Ora Farchy

This is a favourite recipe of three families of Cochin Jewish cousins - the Farchys, the Gadots and the Abrahams (they are now spread out across the

world).

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup ghee/clarified butter
(Use vegetable oil if cookies are being served along with meat)
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup almonds
- 1 cup coconut, grated fine
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- Salt to taste
- Sugar for dusting
- 5 drops of food coloring
- Few drops of rose water
- Confectioners' sugar

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Line a baking pan with butter paper/parchment paper. Grease lightly.
3. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl and knead until dough is formed. (Red food colouring should make the cookies attractive).
4. Shape chunks of dough into size of pingpong balls. There should be enough dough for about 35 cookies.
5. Place evenly on parchment paper and bake for 25 minutes.
6. Cool and sprinkle confectioners' sugar atop the cookies.

Fried Fish

Meen Varuthathu (FISH FOR ROSH HASHANAH)

The Farchy, Gadot and Abraham families eat this fish at the start of the meal as they say the blessings. Fish stands for abundance and fertility. An entire fish head is placed on the table to symbolize that Jews should be at the head - that is, strong.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg. fillets of any firm fish
- 4 colves of garlic, mashed
- 1" ginger, grated, mashed
- 1 tsp tamarind paste
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp red chilib powder
- ½ tsp ground pepper

3 to 4 tbsp lemon juice, to taste

1 bunch coriander, chopped fine

Oil for deep frying

3-4 tbsp all-purpose flour

Directions:

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients with the lemon juice.

Add fish fillets. Stir in the coriander.

Let the well coated fish marinate in the refrigerator for about six hours.

Heat oil in a deep frying pan.

Pat fish fillets into flour and fry in batches, turning them over, until they turn golden brown.

Varian: Instead of frying, opt for baking in oven preheated to 350 degrees. for about 15 minutes or until done.

Pastels, known to most Jews worldwide as burekas or borekas has been a traditional food item for the Cochinitis for several hundred years. The Cochini pastel has been mentioned by Shlomo Reinman in the 1850s in his book 'Masa'oth Shlomo b'Kogin', page 39. Reinman was a merchant from Galicia in northwest Spain, who came to Cochin in the 1840s, married the daughter of Samuel Chaim Rahabi of Mattanchery, He stayed in Cochin for about 25 years, before returning to Europe and writing his travelogue.

In Synagogue Lane, Mattancherry, in the waning years of the 20th century, 'pastel hunting' was a favourite hobby for Jewish bachelors. during the Shabbath. In their book the Last Jews of Cochin, Nathan Katz and Ellen Goldberg writes of how Isaac Ashkenazi and Raymond Salem (both now deceased) "went from house to house in search of the perfect pastel."

Every Cochin Jewish family made the pastels in a different way and every variation became a gourmand's delight.

Pastel itself is a Portuguese word that denotes crisp pastry with assorted fillings. In Brazil the pastel is called salgado (salty snack) primarily sold on the street as a thin pastry envelope containing cheese, ground beef, chicken, shrimp or other fillings and then deep fried. Sweet pastels are also made, containing assorted fruits or chocolates..

In Israel, the pastel's cousin - the bureka is a popular street food made with phyllo dough that is cut to size, filled with your choice of vegetables, meats or cheese, garnished with sesame seeds and baked in an oven.

This recipe is from Shlomo Mordechai (from Paravur/Chennamangalam and now in New York).. Here is what he has to say: "As a result of the expulsion of Jews from Portugal during the Inquisition and immigration to Co-

chin, India, where a 1500-year-old independent Jewish community already resided, we now have the Cochini Jews' version of pastel with filling called hooba.

“Hooba (a mixture of cabbage, vegetables, potatoes, egg, cashews, spices and sometimes chicken) was filled in dough balls (dumplings) that were cooked in low heat overnight for Shabbat morning. On festivals, Cochini Jews filled hooba in a flat dough that was fried in oil. I made an adaptation using egg roll wraps to make cooking them less time-consuming and more convenient. This recipe takes about one hour to prepare.”

Makes 18-20 Pastels

Ingredients

- 2 onions medium chopped
- 10 oz. cabbage chopped
- 5 whole mushrooms chopped
- 1 potato chopped
- 2 carrots chopped
- 2 tbsp. vinegar
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp. ground turmeric
- 2 tsp. soup mix
- 2 oz. cashews raw chopped
- 1 boiled egg chopped
- 1 raw egg
- 1 pkg. egg roll wraps
- 1 bottle of oil
- (over)
- Directions:

Hooba

1. Heat 1/3 cup oil in a large pan and add the onion mix until it softens.
2. Add cabbage. Mix until it softens. Add mushrooms, potatoes and carrots. Add chicken and continue mixing.
3. Add black pepper, turmeric and soup mix. Stir until all vegetables are cooked (around 20 minutes).
4. Add the cashews and chopped egg.

5. Mix all together and let it sit for 5 minutes.
6. Beat the egg.
7. Fill each egg roll wrap with 1 tbsp. hooba mix. Brush the edges with the egg. Crimp the sides to seal the dough..
8. Bring the oil to boil and fry the pastel until golden brown (in around 2 minutes).

If adding chicken:

Before you begin, take a ¼ cup of diced chicken breast and sauté in oil until it turns white. Put on the side. Then follow the instructions above and add the chicken after adding the vegetables.

Sarah Tovachy Elias'
Chicken Pastel
Makes 40 servings.

This recipe, from one of Ora Farchy's cousin Hannah Abraham (whose husband is with the Israeli Foreign Service) uses margarine instead of butter so that the pastels remain kosher. Abraham crimps the edges of the pastel in a traditional Cochini curled style.

Dough:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
 - Salt to taste
 - 4 tbsp margarine, melted
 - 1 egg, lightly beaten
 - 1 tbsp vegetable oil
1. Whisk 2 cups flour and the salt together in a bowl.
 2. In a separate bowl, combine margarine, oil, egg and ¾ cup water.
 3. Slowly pour the egg and oil mixture into the bowl with the flour, stirring to prevent clumping.
 4. Add flour as needed until it forms a soft dough.

Filling:

- 3 tbsp vegetable oil, or more
- ½ pound chicken breast, chopped fine
- 2 cups onions, chopped fine
- 1 potato, peeled, shredded and squeezed dry
- 1 carrot, shredded fine

- 2 hot green peppers, chopped fine
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- ¼ tsp turmeric
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 bunch coriander, chopped fine
- 1 tbsp white vinegar
- Oil for frying

1. Heat the oil in a large pan.

2. Add the chicken, and cook over medium heat until until the pink disappears.

3. Add onions, carrot, potato, peppers and spices. Cook for about 30 minutes.

4. Stir in vinegar and chopped coriander in the last few minutes of cooking. Let cool completely.

5. Divide the dough into thirds. Roll it out thinly one-third at a time. Cut out circles, each the size of a coffee mug. Place a heaped teaspoon of filling on half of each circle, fold, to make half-moons, and crimp to seal.

6. Heat the oil. Deep-fry the pastels until light brown, flipping once.

7. Drain on paper towels.

Courtesy: Ora Farchy's late grandmother Sarah Tovachy Elias from Chennamangalam was among the Cochin Jews who made aliyah in the early 1950s and lived in Moshav Shahar in the Negev, southern Israel.

Rachel Roby's

Baked cheese burekas

Ingredients

- 3 cups allpurpose flour
- butter-100gms
- 1 large egg

Directions:

1. Crumble cheese in bowl. Break egg into bowl and whisk gently.

2. Knead the flour with butter till dough is formed, using water as needed.

3. With a roling pin open out the soft dough on a board dusted with flou.

4. Cut into circles with a cup or mug(size 8 -10 cms)

5. alternate method Roll potions of dough into small balls and then roll

them open on the board.

6. Fill with cheese-egg mixture and close it in the shape of a half-moon by pinching the edges

7. Preheat oven to 180 degrees. Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Place burekas and bake for about 20-30 minutes.

KADATHALA PASTHEL

Here is the Kadathala Pastel, made today by Cochinis according to the same ancient recipe, mentioned by Schlomo Reinman. I tasted this for the first time in the home of Shalom and Esther Nehemia in Moshav Nevatim. Delicious! - Bala Menon

Ingredients: (For the Batter)

Sarah Cohen

1 cup rice flour

2 cups coconut milk

3 eggs

Salt to taste

For the Filling

2-3 eggs, hard-boiled and chopped

Onions (big) ½ lb. finely chopped

Potatoes ½ lb. chopped & fried

1 lime, juiced

A few mint leaves

1/4 tsp turmeric

Salt and pepper

Fry the chopped onions in a little oil. Add the other ingredients. Stir well and cook for a few minutes. Keep aside.

For the Batter

Directions;.

Break the eggs and beat lightly. Add the rice flour, coconut milk and salt to taste. Heat a sauce-pan and brush the pan with an egg yolk (brush made from the husk of coconut). Pour suitable quantities of the batter into the pan and keep it on the fire for 2 to 3 minutes (till the edges curl). Turn them on to a clean paper. Continue till the entire batter is used up.

Take each Kadathala, put a little of the filling and fold over to form a puff. Fry in oil. The above mixture will make about 30 Kadathala Pashtel.
- From Sarah Cohen

The Kadathala Pastel (without the filling) can be eaten for breakfast or tea with scrambled eggs or jam etc. It is sometimes eaten along with a fenugreek dip called hulba, said to have originated hundreds of years ago in Yemen. Many Yemeni Jews believe the fenugreek is an auspicious food item, mentioned in the Talmud (Talmudic Rubia) and is an essential part of the Rosh Hoshanah table.

Fenugreek is called Uluva in Malayalam or Methi in Hindi.

The Hulba

Ingredients:

Ground fenugreek - 2 heaped tbsp

Tomato - 2 small or 1 large

Garlic - 2 cloves

Coriander/Cilantro

Green chillies - 2 (optional)

Lemon - 1

Directions:

Soak the ground fenugreek overnight in water. This removes the bitterness.

Drain the water. What is left is a paste-like mixture.

Chop the tomato, garlic, about five tbsp of coriander and chillies.

Pour all ingredients into a blender. Add the juice of the lemons and salt to taste.

Blend until the concoction becomes frothy.

Pour out and serve in a dipping bowl. Vinegar or additional lemon juice can be used to thin the sauce, if needed.

Classic Cochin Tuna Pastel

Follow the same procedure as the Kadathala Pastel but substitute the filling with flaked tuna, cooked with the desired spices. Cochinis today add bell

peppers and some chopped olives also into the mix.

2 cans of tuna, with 1 cup of grated carrots and a bell pepper should yield pastels for 8 persons.

GREEN CHILLI CHICKEN Reema Salem

Ingredients:

Large Chickens	.....	2 Nos. (4Kgs.)
Small onions		
(Shallots)	.....	1 ½ Kg.
Oil	.....	¼ Kg.
Green Chillies	.....	¼ Kg.
Tomatoes	.....	½ Kg.
Chilli powder	.....	1 Tablespoon
Tamarind	.....	100 gms.
Ginger	.....	2 big pieces (2 inch pieces)
Garlic	.....	1 pod
Curry leaves	.....	few
Turmeric powder.....		little
Sugar (optional)	.....	1 to 2 tablespoons

Slice onions and tomatoes-chop ginger, garlic and ½ the green chillies. The remaining chillies should be sliced length-wise. Soak the tamarind in a little water and squeeze out the tamarind juice. It should be thick and not watery.

Directions:

Pour oil in a pressure cooker. When oil becomes hot, add curry leaves sliced onions, chopped ginger, garlic and chillies. Fry till onions are light brown in colour. Then add the tomatoes. Cook till the water in the tomatoes is dried up and the oil comes out clearly. Next add the chilli powder and turmeric. Cook for a minute. Add the cut up chicken, mix well and cook for a few minutes. Add water and pressure cook for 20 minutes or till the chicken is tender. Remove lid from cooker and add the sliced green chillies. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Then add the tamarind juice and cook on a slow fire till oil comes to the top. If necessary add 1 to 2 tablespoons of sugar. Serve with rice bread, or chapattis.

- Queenie Hallegua

CORIANDER FRIED CHICKEN

(Malli Varutharacha Kozhi)

Ingredients:

- 1 kg chicken, cut to desired pieces
- 4 tbsp coriander powder
- 3 large onions, sliced
- 5 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1” ginger, grated
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 3/4 cup coconut oil
- 1 or 2 sprigs of curry leaves
- 1/2 cup water
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Grind coriander powder, sliced onion, garlic and ginger to a paste.
2. In a deep bowl, on medium heat, cook the chicken in water till meat is almost done.
3. Stir in the coriander paste, add some more water water and cook covered until the water is all gone.
4. In a large frying pan, heat the coconut oil and fry the cooked chicken for about five to ten minutes. Serve with rice or bread.

Coutesy: Queeni Hallegua, Synagogue Lane, Mattancherry.

KUBBAH

(Arabic Kofta)

Ingredients:

For kofta

Meat 1 cup-boiled and minced fine

Onions 4 big-chopped fine & salted

Maida ¼ kg. -sleved well and made to a dough with

salt and water

Green chillies 6-8- chopped fine

Mint or celery ¼ cup-chopped fine

Turmeric powder ½ teaspoon

Pepper ½ teaspoon

METHOD

Squeeze out the salt and water from the onions and mix it with the chopped chillies, meat, mint, turmeric powder, pepper and salt (if necessary). Take small or with a chapatti making press. Place the meat kofta in the centre of the flattened dough and cover to make a small ball. 30 to 40 Kubbahs can be made with the above ingredients.

- Sarah Cohen

Ingredients:

For gravy

Cooking oil	.....	¾ cup
Onions (large)	.....	3-sliced
Tomatoes	.....	4-sliced
Ginger	.....	¾ inch-chopped fine
Garlic	.....	4 flakes chopped
Tamarind	.....	size of a lime
Turmeric powder	.....	¾ teaspoon

Queenie's Coconut and Coriander Chutney

“Chutney” is a word common to all Indian languages. It describes a type of spicy preparation, generally used as a side dish or as a spread. It is derived from the Sanskrit word caṭnī (to lick). In English, chutney today denotes a blend of spices with any combination of mashed vegetables/fruits.

Queenie Hallegua of Mattanchery has given this recipe to several chefs in Kochi, who now use it as part of their special Kochi fare.

Serves 5

Ingredients

Finely Grated Coconut - 1 cup

Ginger 2” piece

Shallot cherriya ulli or chuvanna ulli (Malayalam)

4 Green chili 1 or 2 depending on the ‘fire’ that you desire

Chopped Fresh Cilantro/coriander/parsley ½ cup

Vinegar 2 tsp

Salt, according to taste

A pinch of sugar

Directions:

Use a blender to grind all the ingredients into a smooth paste. . In tradi-

tional Kerala, this is done on a flat stone (ammikal) or mashed in a mortar and pestle.

This chutney is dselightful when spread over fried fish. It also goes along well with crepes, fried chicken or a hot bowl or rice.

Variant of Coriander Chutney

This is another fresh-tasting variant of the coconut and coriander chutney given above.

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 2 cups of fresh coriander leaves
- 1 1/2 “ ginger, chopped coarse
- 2 green chillis, seeded, chopped fine
- 3/4 cup of coconut milk
- 1 tbsp of lime juice or to taste
- 1 tsp of white pepper, ground
- 3/4 tsp sugar
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. In a non-stick pan, toast the coriander seeds for 3 to 4 minutes. Crush in a mortar or in a coffee grinder.
2. Use a blender to process the garlic, chillies, the ground coriander, pepper and coriander leaves.
3. Add coconut milk, lime juice, sugar and slat and process again until it becomes a paste.
4. Spoon the chutney into a bowl. Serve fresh with rice, bread etc as a side dish/relish or as a dip.

Mango chutney (Maanga chamanthi)

Bezallel Eliaahu is a renowned horticulturist, who became famous in Israel as the man who made the Negev bloom. He was one of the pioneers of modern Israeli agricultural techniques and the and the export of flowers to Europe. He was awarded one of the highest Israeli civilian awards the Kaplan prize in hdhdhhand and was honoured with the Pravasi Award, the highest award given by the Indian government to persons of Indian origin.

Bezallel made aliyah in the early 1950s from the hamlet of Chennamangalam.

One of the items he offered us during a visit to his farm in Moshav Kidroon was the Mango Chutney. He makes it on a traditional black rectangular stone called ammi, which he brought from Kerala. The pounding stone or rolling stone is used to smash coconut, onions etc. “It is only this pounding that releases the real flavours” says Bezallel.

- Bezallel Eliahu, Kidroon, Israel.

- 1 large raw mango
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 2 tsp mustard seeds
- 4 dry red chillies
- 5 or 6 green chillies
- 3 shallots, chopped
- 1” ginger, grated
- 1 small bunch coriander
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- Pinch of asafoetida
- 1/2 a lemon, juiced
- Salt, as needed

Directions

1. Cut mango into small pieces. Leave skin on. Smash the mango pieces along with coconut into a pulp.
2. Heat the oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds, turmeric, asafoetida, green chillies and red-chillies.
3. Remove from heat after mustard seeds finish crackling.
4. Mix with mango, lime juice and salt

Two types of Coconut chutneys are made in every Kerala home. The liquid version is served as a dip served with Idli and Dosa, while the solid one - called Chamanthi - is an excellent side dish with rice. Ingredients used coconut, dried red chillies, shallots and ginger, all smashed together. For other taste variations, you can add tamarind, curry leaves, garlic and coriander powder.

The red chillies are dry roasted in a shallow pan before it is crushed. The

white version of the chammanthi is made with green chillies.

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FLOWER SILLIMAN'S FISH CASSEROLE WITH DILL AND MINT

(Anjuli)

6 tablespoons corn oil

1/2 pound white non-oily fish fillets (cod, scrod, sole etc.), cut in thin 2-inch pieces

1 small eggplant (1/2 pound), cut in slices, salted and drained

1 teaspoon chopped green chiles

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped mint

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped dill

1 teaspoon chopped cilantro

1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced, salted and drained

1 bunch green onions (both green and white parts), thinly sliced

1 1/2 cups Coconut Milk

1/4 cup lemon juice

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon sugar

Dill sprigs

Heat 2 tablespoons corn oil in skillet. Add single layer fish fillets and fry on both sides until lightly browned. Remove fish with slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Continue with remaining fish and eggplant slices, using additional oil as necessary.

In 2-inch-deep serving dish, layer fish, eggplant, chiles, mint, dill, cilantro, onion and green onions. Combine Coconut Milk, lemon juice, kosher salt and sugar and pour over rest of ingredients. Serve immediately or refrigerate few hours. Serve garnished with dill sprigs. Makes 8 servings.

Maampazha Kaalan

Ripe Mangoes in Coconut & Yogurt Sauce:

Rewrite

<http://www.peppertrail.com/>

This attractive and palate-tingling delicacy is a favourite during the summer in Kerala, when the mango is in season.

2 ripe mangoes

Salt to taste

½ teaspoon turmeric powder
3 cups freshly grated coconut
4 fresh green chilies (serrano or Thai) (less for a milder taste)
1 teaspoon black pepper
1½ cups yogurt
2 tablespoons brown sugar

For seasoning and garnish:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
2 dried red chillis, crushed
½ teaspoon fenugreek seeds
12 to 15 fresh curry leaves

Wash and peel the mangoes. Cut them into medium-sized cubes. **Leave some flesh on the seeds: these also go into the pot.** In a heavy saucepan, combine the mango pieces and seeds with two cups of water. Sprinkle salt and turmeric on top, and cook over medium heat for five to six minutes. Meanwhile, grind the coconut, green chilies, and black pepper with just enough water to make a thick, smooth puree. Add the coconut puree to the cooking mango pieces, stir, and simmer for five minutes. With a large spoon, beat the yogurt into a smooth, thick liquid, and pour it over the mango pieces. Reduce the heat, and simmer. When the liquid in the pot starts bubbling, remove it from the stove, sprinkle brown sugar on top, and stir gently. Heat the oil in a skillet, and add the mustard seeds. When the mustard seeds start sputtering, add the halved red chili pepper, fenugreek seeds, and curry leaves, and remove it from the stove. Pour this over the cooked curry. Serve hot with rice.

Makes 4 to 6 servings if served with another curry, as is traditional.

Spicy Hot Chicken Curry Kozi Kari

This is a hot chicken curry made with a combination of hot fresh green chili peppers and dried ground red chili peppers. Spicy hot chicken curry and fish cooked in a spicy sauce thickened with fresh grated coconut became their specialties. Following is a recipe for a spicy chicken curry, specialty of Cochini Jews.

Ingredients:

4 Tablespoons sesame oil *

3 onions, thinly sliced

8 to 10 fresh green chili peppers (Serrano or Thai)

15 fresh curry leaves

½ teaspoon turmeric powder

3 cloves of garlic crushed

1 ½ inch piece of fresh ginger finely chopped

2 tomatoes, cubed

1 Tablespoon cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon tamarind paste

2 pounds of boneless, skinless chicken pieces cut into cubes

2 green bell peppers cut into small pieces

Salt to taste

Heat the sesame oil in a heavy deep pan. Add onions, green chili peppers and curry leaves and fry until onions are soft. Stir in turmeric, garlic, ginger, cayenne and tomato slices. Simmer for ten minutes, stirring periodically. Dissolve tamarind paste in ½ cup of warm water. Put in chicken pieces, bell pepper and tamarind water and stir. Season with salt. Sprinkle in a little more water if necessary. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat for 30 to 35 minutes, until chicken is tender and the sauce has thickened. Stir occasionally to prevent the spice mixture from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Serve with rice.

Green chilli chicken

This was a Sabbath dish, and was collected by Madhur Jaffrey from the Kodar family for her 1985 cookbook, *A Taste Of India* (which is her best so far as I'm concerned).

As with many Keralan dishes, you start by sizzling the curry leaves (highly aromatic, slightly bitter leaves of the kari tree, nothing to do with Indian "curries") in hot oil. You then stir and fry shallots, garlic, ginger and green chiles in the curry-leaf flavored oil until browned (above).

You then add tomatoes.

Now add the chicken.

You saute the chicken briefly with the shallot-chili-tomato mixture, plus salt, turmeric and cayenne pepper, add water, cover tightly, and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring once during that time. T

Finally, you add some MORE slivers of green chile, cover again, cook for 5 minutes, and then add some tamarind which you have earlier marinated and strained... this is the sour element. You then cook, uncovered, for

another 10 minutes to reduce.

Appam is a fermented flat bread made out of Rice and Coconut. In Tamil, it is known as “Aappam“. The Srilankans prefer to call it as “appa” or “hopper“. Appam is popular among the Syrian Christians of Kerala who say that it was adapted from Jewish settlers in Kerala. Times have changed and I would say, Appam has become an identity of all Keralites.

There is a community of Christians in Kerala called the Knanaya s or Cnanites whose many life-cycle practices mirror those of the Cochin Jews.

Although there is no historical evidence, it has been disseminated that these ‘Jewish Christians’ called Nazaranis, led by one Knayi Thomas or Thomas of Cana reached the Malabar coast in A.D 345. Scholars like Dr. Shalva Weil of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have noted how the Jews and the Cnanites “developed along parallel lines in a similar geographical area both in terms of history and tradition and in terms of group image”.*

“For Easter, the Cnanites partake of unleavened bread, reminiscent of the Jewish matzot and drink wine prepared from coconut milk and plums which is of a faint red colour like the wine drunk by Jews on the Passover Seder night. Biblical songs are sung about the Creation and the Exodus from Egypt and they partake of a Pesach or Passover meal.”*

The Pesaha meal also includes some local fresh fruits and nuts. A bitter herbal drink mimics the maror of the Jews. The Nazaranis, who also call themselves the Jerusalem community from Edessa, acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah while adhering strictly to Mosaic Law.

*Symmetry between Christians and Jews in India: the Cnanite Christians and the Cochin Jews of Kerala, Dr. Shalva Weil, , Contributions to Indian Sociology, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1982), Sage Publications. London.

*Ibid

Indari Appam and Pesaha Paal

This is a recipe from the Knanaya Community. The unleavened bread made by the Knanayas during their Maundy - Thursday (coinciding with the Jewish Passover) is called Pesaha Appam or Indari Appam. ‘Paal’ is milk in Malayalam and the Pesaha Pal is Passover Coconut Milk.

Pesaha Appam
(Passover Bread)

Ingredients:

1 cup rice flour – 1 cup
1/4 cup split black lentils (Uzhunnu in Malayalam) – ¼ cup
1 cup grated coconut
5 shallots
2 cloves of garlic – 1 if it is big and 2 if its small
1/4 tsp cumin seed
Salt to taste
Water, as needed.

Directions:

Soak urad dal for about hours and grind it with a little water to make a fine paste. Add to rice flour.

Grind coconut, shallots, garlic and cumin to make a coarse paste and add it to the flour.

Add a little water and combine everything well to make a thick batter. Add salt to taste.

Pour the batter into a greased stainless steel plate or line the plate with aluminum foil and spread evenly.

Steam in a steam cooker for about 20 minutes.

Let cool . This is the Pessaha Appam (Passover bread)

Pesaha Paal

Ingredients:

3 cups coconut milk
1/4 kg jaggery
1/4 tsp cardamom powder
1/4 tsp dried ginger powder
1/4 tsp sesame seeds

Directions:

Melt jaggery in about 1/2 cup of hot water. Strain.

In a saucepan, heat the coconut milk on low heat until it comes to a boil.

Add the melted jaggery and stir for a few minutes.

Stir in the powdered ginger, cardamom and toasted sesame seeds.

(Optional: Add some rice flour to thicken the milk. Also optional is adding thin slices of the ‘poovampazham’ variety of small bananas.)

Recipe adapted with permission from: Jisha Joy

Kerala Recipes - <http://recipes.malayali.me/menu/indari-appam-and-pesaha-paal>

Breakfast delights

As mentioned elsewhere, Moshav Nevatim is a settlement of the Cochin Jews, part of the Bnei Shimon Regional Council. There are two popular restaurants on the moshav, serving authentic Cochin Jewish food to tourists going to Dimona and the Dead Sea. One is Miriam's Kitchen and the other is run by the Ephraim family.

Nehemia and his wife Miriam, who made aliyah more than 50 years ago from the Ernakulam congregation of Thekkumbhagam have been running Miriam's for about 14 years now. Nehemia tells us that one of their most popular dishes is the dosa (a type of blintz), eaten with chamanthi (a tangy coconut chutney). There are also idlis (steamed rice cakes), a variety of chicken and beef dishes and the kubba.

At the Ephraim house, along with the food, guests can also hear stories about Jewish life in Cochin.

There are more than 50 varieties of dosas served across Southern India, ranging from the breakfast dosa to ones made with the addition of onions, buttermilk, wheat flour, grated coconut, a range of spices, spinach, tofu or many kinds of fillings.

Everyday Breakfast Dosa
of the Cochin Jews.
(A kind of blintz)

Ingredients

1 cup split black gram (urad dal)

2 cups rice flour

Method

Soak the split black gram in water for about three hours.

Grind it with a little water to a smooth paste.

Add rice flour 2 cups of rice flour. Add salt and let stand overnight for batter to rise.

Grease a hot griddle with coconut oil and spread the batter evenly in a circular shape - as thin as possible. Reduce heat.

Dab coconut oil on the edges of the dosa. Turn over with a flat spatula. When crispy, transfer to a plate.

Sada Dosa

Ingredients

1 cup boiled rice
1 cup parboiled rice
1/4 cup split black gram (white urad dal)
1/2 tsp. fenugreek seeds
1 /2 tsp soda bicarbonate
1/2 cup yoghurt
10-12 tsps. ghee or coconut oil

Dictions:

Wash the rice and split black gram. Add water and fenugreek seeds and let soak overnight.

Drain water and grind ingredients to make coarse paste..

Add salt and bicarbonate of soda and keep aside for some hours to let the batter rise.

In a bowl, whiskthe yoghurt and add to the batter.

Heat an iron griddle or non-stick flat pan. Grease griddle and pour a ladleful of batter. Spread thinly to form a circular shape.

Drizzle ghee or coconut oil over in and at the edges. When it begins to crisp, turn over with a spatula. Tranfer to plate after a couple of minutes.

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The Masala Dosa

(This is the most beloved among dosas throughout India today)

Ingredients

1 cup plain rice.
1 cup parboiled rice.
1/4 cup white urad dal.
1/2 tsp. methi (fenugreek) seeds
1 /2 tsp soda bi carbonate
1/2 cup curds the batter.
10-12 tsps. ghee or oil as preferred
water for grinding

Method

For masala:

2 large onions in vertical slices 2 large potatoes boiled and peeled 4-5 green chillies 1

1/2 tsp. chopped coriander 8-10 cashews halved 1/2 tsp. each urad dal, cumin & mustard

seeds 2 tbsp. oil 1/4 tsp. turmeric salt to taste

Wash the rice and dal together. Add plenty of water and methi seeds. Allow to soak for 7-

8 hours or overnight. Re wash the rice by draining the water 2-3 times. Grind to a paste.

Rawa-like grains should be felt in Add soda bicarb and salt and mix well. Keep aside in a

warm place for 8-10 hours. Beat the curds well.

Add to the batter, add more water if required. The consistency of the batter should be

enough to thickly coat on a spoon when dipped. Heat the iron griddle or non-stick tawa

well. Pour a spoonful of batter in the centre, spread with the back of the spoon to a thin

round.

Pour a tsp. of ghee or oil over it. Spread chutney spread over dosa. Place a tbsp. masala

in the centre. Fold into triangle to cover masala. Remove with spatula when crisp. Serve

hot with chutney and/or sambar.

Chop potatoes coarsely. Chop green chillies. Heat oil, add cashews and brown lightly.

Add dal, seeds and splutter. Add chillies and onions. Fry till tender. Add turmeric, salt,

potatoes, coriander. Mix well.

Idlis

Idlis are steamed dumplings made with a sour rice and lentil batter.

The Kubba, meaning ‘ball’ in Arabic, is a dish of bulghur, onion and spiced ground meat that originated in Baghdad. It became an instant hit around the 15th century with the Cochin Jews as the recipe spread among Sephardic communities. However, instead of bulghur, the Cochins used rice or all-purpose flour. (In northern India, a similar dish is called ‘kofta’)

It has been reported that “in the mass aliyah of 1950/51, many families took with them their heavy brass mortar and pestle for pounding the kubbas, as a priority item of their luggage”. *

Queenie Hallegua of Mattancherry, Cochin, spells it out as ‘Koubbah’ and describes it as “chicken or fish minced and encased in round balls made

of flour and cooked in gravy. The gravy can have vegetables in it, like (okra) lady's fingers and gourd." It is generally served with the Resaya Plaf.

There have been paens sung to the kubbah. Here are two examples:

The Kubbah

by Benjamin Koheleth

(who was a Tel Aviv Magistrate Court Judge in Israel in the 1980s)

*A Kubbah, which everyone would like to eat,
has been pursuing me day and night.
Tasty, its beautiful shape equals its savour and
fragrance.
It went gracefully into the throat
like a gentlewave into the calm sea.
Its pure rice covered a ball of excellent meat.
I would forsake every food to satiate my hunger
when it entices me to a ravenous appetite.
When I beheld it, I left my "regime" and decided
to forget it.
And I said tn those who questioned me,
"No more hunger, no more fasting".
O, our lady friend, I praise you
or making such nice food in quality and quantity
Make more Kubbahs to satisfy a heart crushed by pain.
As if these pies emulated their maker's gracious
soul to be the nourishment of body and spirit.*

--

Translated by Meer Basri

Printed in The Scribe (Journal of Babylonian Jewry, London, January
1993 Issue No. 56

Saga of the Kubba

by Gad Ben Meir of Melbourne, Australia,

*O my kubba, O my kubba
you are my stomach's love.
With you I comfort my hunger,
your fragrance is my wine.*

*Blessed be the hand
that fashions this wonder.
I chew you with relish,
and prolong my enjoyment.
I have loved you since my youth,
as now in my old age.
Every fan has his idol;
my idol is my kubba.
Wa Kaabati fi kubbati:
my K...ba is my kubba!*

- printed in The Scribe (Journal of Babylonian Jewry, London, June 1993
Issue No. 58

Both poems reprinted with permission from The Scribe/Dangoor Family

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“The Jews of Cochin made wine for their weddings. They usually used dry grapes boiled with water, maybe because they could not get kosher wine at that time. The Jews of Cochin usually made this raisin wine called mai for their ceremonies such as circumcisions, Shabbat and specially for the Passover Seder. There were also some Jews who made real wine at home for such occasions. “ page 179, Ruby of Cochin.

Kiddush Wine

“Kiddush” literally means “sanctification.” It is one of the main segments of the “Remember the Sabbath Day” commandment (Za’chor et Yom Ha’Shabbat- Exodus 20:8). Kiddush is recited over a glass of wine: “Remember the Sabbath day and sanctify it. Remember the day over wine.”

All meals on Shabbath and on Jewish holidays begin with this combination of ritual and wine. Many Cochini families have special silver goblets which are heirlooms and are used as the Kiddush cup.

Kerala does not grow much grapes and in earlier days it had to be imported from elsewhere in the country, sometimes at great expense. During the 18th century, a Yemenite Rabbi Yahya ben Yosef Salih (Mahris) was reported to have sent coffee and raisins to the Cochini jews ‘in return for spices and fragrant oils’.*

Shlomo Reinman also mentions this: “In any festival, they (the Cochin Jews) drink alcohol, the juice of the liquid from the palm tree of the coconuts.(arrack,* made from distilled toddy). As they do not have wine and India is not a land of wine, they sanctify the Sabbath and festival with wine made from raisins that are imported from Persia and Arabian countries.”*

The Cochinitis called this raisin juice ‘mai’ or ‘yeynin’.

*Arrack, made from the fermented sap of coconut flowers is extremely intoxicating and is usually consumed with spicy, boiled eggs and potatoes. The Cochin Jews, especially those of Mattanchery, owned vast estates of coconut which yielded plentiful toddy and arrack, before the land reforms of the communist governemnts in Kerala came into effect.

Reinman, Masa’oth Shlomo b’Kogin, pg 39, cited by Katz, pg 116

Katz and Golberg have also mentioned the vast quantities of imported alcohol - rum which was called ‘petrol’, brandy as ‘high octane petrol’ and whikey termed ‘aviation fuel’ - which was drunk during Simchat Torah and other celebrations in Cochin up to the 1980s. * page 185-186.

*The Yahya ben Yosef Salih story was from a letter sent to Salih from Cochin, quoted in a book Come Thou South - Bo’i Teman; Studies and Documents concerning the culture of the Yemenite Jews, ed Jehuda Ratzaby (Tel Aviv, 1967 Heb, 250, in which he cites a Sassoon manuscript. (SALIH, YAHYA BEN JOSEPH (known as Mahariz; c. 1715), Yemenite scholar; av beit din and rabbi of San’a.

Note/: Apparently, one of the reasons why Jewish men do not become alcoholics can be traced to their infancy. The story is that boys lose their taste for alcohol during their circumcision on the eighth day after birth. A piece of cloth dipped in wine is tapped many times on the child’s lips to comfort him or try to get him to sleep. This leads to the baby associating the pain with the wine and this is enough to put him off alcohol for life. (My words)

Gila Berkowitz, The New Jewish Cuisine, Double Day and Company, New York, 1986, 178

Kosher Mai or Kiddush wine :

- 2 cups of raisins

- 4 cups water

Directions:

1. Pour the water into a clean bottle and drop all raisins into it.
2. Leave it at room temperature for about 24 hours.
3. Shake the bottle several times during this time.
4. Strain the liquid and you will have your basic Kiddush wine.

Sarah Cohen's recipe

For several decades now, Sarah Cohen has been making Kosher Mai, following this recipe:

- 4 kgs of red grape, the darker the better.
- 2 kgs of sugar

Wash the grapes thoroughly.

1. Pour a layer of grapes into a large container.
2. Pour a layer of sugar.
3. Repeat the process, making as many layers as possible.
4. Seal the container.
5. Every 24 hours, open the container, stir the contents and seal again.
6. On the 12th day, drain the liquid using a colander. Keep as reserve.
7. Squeeze the grapes in a piece of muslin or cheesecloth.
8. Combine this liquid with the one in reserve.

You now have Kiddush wine. One kilogram of grapes will yield a bottle of wine.

Many older residents in the Kodungalloor (Cranganore) area still remember the vinegar they purchased from Chennamangalam and Paravur Jews, who brought it to town in large porcelain urns, ferrying them over by boat across the Periyar river around the middle of the 20th century. Obviously, it must have been a centuries-old tradition. Described as 'fresh' and tangy, this 'choroka' or 'vinaagri' as it was called in Malayalam was made from the raisins left over after making the Kiddush wine.

Raisin Vinegar

- 1 cup raisins taken from the wine bottle
- 2 cups water

Directions

1. Mix the raisins with water and store in a pot.
2. Allow it to stand for about two months at room temperature. (In Kerala, this meant at around 28 degrees C.)
The vinegar thus made naturally will have a wonderful, fruity quality.

Coconut Rice Pudding

Serves: 6

- 2 cups thin coconut milk
- 1/3 cup rice
- 4 pods of cardamoms
- 1 cinnamon stick broken/smashed
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup chopped almonds
- 1/4 cup chopped cashew nuts
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract (Optional)
- 2 teaspoons rosewater (Optional)

Directions:

1. Pour the coconut milk into a medium-sized saucepan.
2. Add rice and bring to a simmer over medium heat.
3. In another saucepan, toast the almonds and cashew in a tablespoon of clarified butter.
4. Add raisins. Add the crushed cardamoms and cinnamon and continue cooking for about 20 minutes.
5. Stir frequently, until the mixture thickens.
6. Add the sugar, chopped almonds, cashew and raisins.
7. Stir. cook for another 10 minutes.
8. Add the vanilla extract/rosewater and nutmeg.

Apam- coconut cake Cochin Jewish

Serves 4-6

Tara Deshpande

Ingredients

1 cup thick coconut milk

1 cup grated coconut
6 cardomom pods, skinned and crushed
1/2 cup of blanched almonds
1/2 cup of cashewnuts
1 cup semolina (rava/farina)
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
Clarified butter/ghee

2 eggs
Method

Preheat oven 325.

Roast semolina in a saucepan on low heat, stirring constantly, till it turns a light golden color for about 5 minutes. Do not brown the semolina. Add ghee or vegetable shortening, margarine, Vanaspati Dalda or Parkay and roast another 3-4 minutes. Set aside to cool completely. Add coconut milk, milk, coconut flakes, powdered cardamom/nutmeg and sugar and eggs. Stir vigorously. Add nuts. Pour into a baking pan about 8-10 inches wide and 2-3 inches deep and bake till firm and golden brown in a 325 oven for about 25-35 minutes. To test insert a sharp knife. If it comes out clean the cake is ready. Important: If the semolina is very warm when liquid is added it tends to cook immediately and become thick and lumpy. Therefore the roasted mix must be cooled before the coconut milk is added. Ghee may be replaced with margarine or shortening and milk may be omitted entirely.

NEYYAPPAM

Cochin Hanukkah cakes

These cakes or fritters were popular treats during Hanukkah and just before Yom Kippur in old Cochin..

1 cup flour
1 cup semolina
1/4 cup sugar
1 tbsp sesame seeds
10 almonds, blanched/chopped 2 cups water
10 casheanuts, chopped
1/4 cup raisins, chopped
1/4 tsp cardamom powder
1/2 cup coconut oil
2 cups of water
Salt to taste

Directions:

Dry roast the semolina. Combine with flour, almonds, cashew, raisins and sesame seeds.

Add sugar and salt to water and bring to boil in a saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat

Pour over the semolina/flour mixture. Cover and let stand overnight.

Add cardamom powder and baking powder to the batter.

In a wok, heat the oil on medium heat. Pour a small ladleful of batter into the oil and fry.

Remove when the neyyappam browns. Drain on paper towels. Repeat until batter is done.

Cochin Jewish Biryani/Biryani/Buriyani

Rich festive rice with meat

Among the Cochinitis in Israel today, Rachel Roby is considered the biryani expert. The dish is served at all festivals and bar-mitzvahs and Jews of the Mattancherry community all gather at the house of Sammy Koder in Petat Tikvah where most of the celebrations are held.

The biryani is a rich dish mixed with chicken, lamb, fish or vegetables and a common household festival item throughout India. However, Cochinitis are aware that their *biryani*s are more flavourful than those made in other regions of India - because coconut milk replaces the yoghurt and the addition of tomato and fennel raises the taste factor exponentially.

In Cochin Jewish homes, throughout the 20th century, it was customary to bring in Muslim cooks to give instructions to make the biryani on festive occasions - because it was believed that only they knew the secret to create the legendary Malabar biryani the right way. The Jewish housewife handled the ingredients and did the actual cooking. In Israel today, Cochin Jews make biryani using the biryani masala powder/paste, imported from Kerala.

Note: Although at first glance, the making of the meat Biryani and the vegetable Plaf look similar, there is a major difference between these two famous cousins. While Plaf is made by cooking all the vegetables, spices and rice together, the Biryani demands that every ingredient be cooked separately and mixed together later.

Ingredients

8 cups Basmati or any long-grained rice

2 kg of chicken, cubed

6 large onions, sliced thin
4 pods of garlic
2" ginger, grated fine
6 large tomatos, chopped
1/2 bunch mint leaves, chopped
2 bunches coriander leaves, chopped fine
12 cardamom
12 cloves
6 green chillies, slit lengthwise
1 cup coconut mlk
1 tbsp fennel seeds
1 tsp turmeric
2 tbsp vinegar
2 tbas lemon juice
3 pieces of cinammon
1/2 cup oil
1 packet biryani masala powder*
Salt to taste
1 tbsp vinegar

Ingredients:

Soak the biriyani masala powder in a bowl of water to make a smooth paste.

On medium heat, cook the rice for about 15 minutes in a big pot with plenty of water, vinegar, salt, cardamom pods, cloves, fennel seeds and cinammon and salt to taste. Drain and keep aside.

Heat oil in a deep bottomed non-stick pan and fry the onions and garlic until the onions are camelized..Add green chillies and ginger and fry for about 2 minutes. Add coconut milk and let simmer for about five minutes.

Add the biryani masala paste and stir well.

Add tomatoes, lime juice and half of the chopped coriander leaves.

Add the chicken cubes along with 1 1/2 cups of water. Add turmeric.

When it starts to boil lower heat and cook covered for about an hour, stirring occassionally.

When chicken is cooked, add the remaining coriander and mint leaves. Take off stove.

In a deep pan, layer half the cooked rice, spread the meat over the rice and layer the reamining rice over it.

Leave in a heated oven to keep warm until ready to serve.

(Optional: Garnish the biryani with fried raisins and cashewnuts)

Plain Dal Curry
or Curried Lentils
Ingredients;

1 cup red lentils

- 2 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter) or vegetable oil
- 2-3 tablespoons curry powder
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- 1/2-1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- 1 1/3 cups dried red lentils
- 4 cups chicken broth or vegetable stock, low-sodium
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

1. 1

Preheat oven to 300°F.

2. 2

In a Dutch oven, heat the butter or oil until shimmering. Add the spices and stir until fragrant, 2-3 minutes. Add the onion and stir until soft and translucent. Add the tomato paste and cook until it begins to brown.

3. 3

Add the lentils and stock. Stir well, cover, and transfer to the preheated oven. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are soft and most of the liquid is absorbed, about 2 hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with jasmine rice or basmati rice.

In modern-day Kochi, there are two hotels that look to history to create authentic Jewish dishes.

One is the Brunton Boatyard, run by CGH Earth (formerly Casino Group Hotels), a company owned by the Dominic family that believes all its properties must be “immersive and respect local ethos.” They operate a string of ‘eco’ hotels, with environment and nature taking precedence over concrete structures.

The Brunton Boatyard itself has been resurrected from the remains of a Victorian ship-building yard and its many restaurants bill themselves as

‘melting pot of cultures...(and in ancient Cochin) the Jews found coriander both kosher and delicious and into the cook pot it went...’

Ajeeth Janardhan is Executive Chef at the Brunton Boatyard and he tells us that he visited several Jewish families scattered today around Cochin, Ernakulam and Alwaye to collect some ancient recipes. He has also been experimenting with some of them so that the Brunton Boatyard restaurants can present original Jewish dishes or ‘close adaptations.’ He shares some recipes with us. (See recipes on pages.....)

The other is the Koder House, the historical red building on Tower Road, Fort Kochi, which was the residence of the renowned Jewish family of the Koders and the hub of Cochin Jewish life for over a century. It was built by Samuel Koder in 1808, over an early nineteenth century Portuguese mansion. It is believed to have been structured and gabled in Europe and shipped to Cochin. It passed on down the family and in the second part of the 20th century was occupied by Shabdai Samuel (Sattu) Koder (1907–1994) who lived there with his family. The Friday open houses at the Koder House during the latter part of the 20th century was a Cochin social event and guests included heads of states, diplomats and celebrities from all vocations. Actor Fredrick Marsh with president Eisenhower’s daughter, Countess Snowdon with family and Rajiv Gandhi were some of the personalities who dined here.

After Sattu and his wife Gladys passed away, their daughter Queenie, sold the 20,000 sq feet house to its present owners, Vicky and Praveena Raj, who runs it as a boutique hotel. Queenie, also gave the hotel a collection of her family recipes and “our food is always spiced with history,” says Praveena.

“You will not get these recipes in any other Jewish home. My children abroad wait for me to cook the kubbah and pastel for them, as these are time consuming. These are exclusive to Kochi Jews,” says Queenie Hallegua.*

Food Spiced with history, PRIYADARSSHINI SHARMA <http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mp/2006/04/22/stories/2006042202720300.htm>

Two of the main dishes on the Jewish menu are the Ellegal made with chicken and the Cochin red beef curry, both with a strong coriander flavour. *See recipe on page... “We are recreating authentic Cochin-Jewish recipes,” says Vicky Raj. Dishes on the menu include oaf molagirachi and oaf kothip-orchathu, both chicken dishes. There is also the Cochin Jewish cutlet, “like the schnitzel that we get abroad. Thin chicken breasts dipped in eggs and mixed in crumbs are deep-fried. We flatten the meat using tenderiser,” says

Ms. Hallegua.*

Ibid

Every year, Koder House organizes an Indo-Jewish food festival during Hannukah at the Menorah restaurant where a huge seven-branched candelabra spreads glorious light, as mainly Jewish tourists get a taste of Cochin cuisine.

In the 15th century, when Spanish and Portuguese Jews were being expelled from their homes, they took with them the art of chocolate-making. In their new homes, they continued their chocolate making traditions and towns like Bayonne, in southwestern France, became centres of Jewish chocolates. (Many of the expelled Jews, like the Castiels and the Halleguas-came to Cochin). In Cochin, however, cacao beans were not available and it was only in the 20th century that wealthy Cochin Jews started using chocolate. The Koders had by then become major importers of fine chocolates, liquors and luxury goods from Europe. For most Cochinites, however, chocolate was an unheard of and untasted item until well into the 1960s or so.

Today, chocolate is one of the favourite foods in Israel and is affordable fare for all Cochinites.

The Menorah Restaurant in Koder House, Fort Cochin serves this Cochin Jewish Chocolate Pudding, a mousse made of cocoa, coffee and chocolate, a recipe from Queenie Hallegua of the Koder family.

Chocolate Mousse

3 cups of semi sweet choc bits
1/2 cup coffee, brewed strong, hot
4 tbs sugar
4 tbs dark rum
8 egg yolks
8 egg whites, whisked

Use a blender to process chocolate chips in until ground very fine

Pour hot coffee and add sugar to bowl.

Process mixture until the chocolate is melted.

Pour the rum and the egg yolks gently into the bowl. Pulse.

Pour into another bowl, gently fold in the whisked egg whites

Chill.

Courtesy: Vicki Raj, Koder House, Fort Kochi

Ambrosia* is the food and drink of the Gods in Greek mythology and was believed to bestow immortality on those who drank it. Semantically, the word 'ambrosia' is related to the Malayalam/Sanskrit word amrita (which also means nectar of the Gods).

In Cochin, ambrosia is a fruit cocktail of orange and the fruit of the all-giving tree *kalpakavrisha* - the coconut.

Ambrosia

Directions:

- Fill tall glass with alternate layers of sliced orange and grated coconut.
- Sprinkle cinnamon powder between layers.
- Sprinkle granulated sugar between layers.
- (Pineapple rings can also be added to the layers)
- Eat with a spoon.

*Source: The International Jewish Cook Book (1919). by Florence Kreisler Greenbaum

Some years ago, members of the Brighton and Hove Reform Synagogue in London, England got an opportunity to savour the delights of Cochin Jewish food. As part of a "Discovering Jewish communities around the world", participants tasted curried salmon fish balls (meen undas - see recipe on page...), curried pineapples and the Cochin Jewish cake (see recipe on page...).

According to Rabbi Meyer: "There is no one normative way of Jewish life, and that the context in which these communities reside has a huge impact on the way they perform their rituals, carry out their customs and, of course, cook and eat their food."*

Rabbi serves up taste of global communities

20/09/2005 jewish chronicle online - <http://website.thejc.com>

Pineapple Pachhadi

Pineapple in

Pineapple (known as kaitha chakka in Malayalam) is grown in most districts of Kerala, but industrial farming takes place in the Vazhakkulam area of Ernakulam district, adjacent to Cochin. Kerala produces around 140,000 tonnes of pineapple a year, mainly as an intercrop in rubber plantations and it is in plentiful supply in local markets throughout the state.

Ingredients:

2 cups ripe pineapple, cut into 1 inch cubes

4 green chillies

¼ tsp ground pepper

¼ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp cumin powder

½ cup grated coconut

2 tbsp coconut oil

1 tsp mustard seed

1 sprig curry leaves

1 cup water

Salt to taste

1 litre yogurt (keep at room temperature for some time to make it sour)

Directions:

Grind grated coconut with green chillies and cumin with 1 cup yogurt.

Add rest of the yogurt to the coconut mixture and stir well. Keep aside.

In a deep saucepan, on medium heat cook the pineapple pieces in water with pepper, salt and turmeric powder.

Reduce heat and add the coconut yogurt mixture to the pineapple.

Stir frequently till bubbles appear on the sides of the pot. (Do not boil after adding coconut- yogurt mixture.). Take off stove.

Heat coconut oil in a frying pan and splutter the mustard seeds.

Add curry leaves, fry for about 1 minute and pour it over curry. Stir.

Cochin Pineapple curry

This variant uses ginger, garlic, shallots, red chillies and fenugreek seeds as well. A sprinkling of sugar over the curry is also an extra.

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe pineapple
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 cup of yoghurt
- 6 shallots, chopped fine
- 2 ” ginger, grated
- 4 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 4 green chillies, chopped fine
- 3 dry red chillies, crushed
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp cumin seeds

- 1/2 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt as needed

-

Directions:

1. Chop the pineapple into small bite-sized chunks. Keep aside.
2. Grind coconut, garlic and green chillies into a rough paste. Keep aside.
3. In a large pan, heat coconut oil on medium flame. Saute the onion until it is translucent. Splutter the mustard seeds.
4. Add dry red chillies, the green chillies and ginger and fry about three minutes.
5. Add curry leaves, fenugreek seeds, turmeric and salt.
6. Add pineapple along with 1/2 cup of water and bring mixture to boil. Add coconut paste and mix everything well.
7. Take off stove. Let cool slightly and add yoghurt. Mix. Sprinkle a tsp of sugar over dish.

Cochin Jewish Pineapple Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 pineapple, chopped up
- 1/2 cabbage, shredded
- 6 carrots, grated fine
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 2 tsp olive oil

Directions:

1. Combine pineapple, cabbage, carrots, garlic.
2. Add vinegar and stir well.
3. Drizzle the olive oil over the salad.
4. Serve chilled.

Courtesy: Vicky Raj, Menorah, Koder House, Fort Cochin

Mango is not considered a commercial crop in Kerala, because almost every home has a couple of mango trees in the compound. Many varieties of

the fruit are available during the months of March to June, ranging from the legendary Mulgova and the delicious Alphonso to the fleshy Moovandan and the juicy Priyoor.

During these months, the Jews of Cochin added mango to everything - from fish dishes to simple curries and the fruit also went into the making of a delicious salad and pickle.

TOASTED MANGO SALAD

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 4 large mangoes, sliced into small cubes
- 10 small cucumbers, sliced finely
- 4 cups coriander, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups fresh mint, chopped
- 2 lemons - juice squeezed
- 2 limes - juice squeezed
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. pepper
- 4 green chillies - slice finely (optional)
- 1 tbsp. ground coriander powder
- 6 tbs of coconut oil
- 1/4 vinegar
- Salt to taste

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients, except the mango in a large salad bowl. Toss.
2. Toast the mango slices over a hot grill after brushing them with a little oil until they turn brown.
3. Add to salad. Stir, adding three or four cubes of ice.

Ulli Sarlas

Kerala Onion Salad

- with vinegar or yoghurt

This rustic salad, made with red onions and green chillies, is a popular accompaniment with biryanis, plafs and fried rice.

Ingredients:

- 2 large red onions, sliced thin
- 4 green chillies, chopped fine

- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 tbs vinegar
- (or 1 cup of yoghurt)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Squeeze the onions/chillies firmly until it begins to go soft and the onions take on a deep pink colour.
3. Add a couple of crushed ice cubes before serving.

Plain Pulip (Salad)

Ingredients:

- 3 small potatoes, boiled
- 1 large onion,
- 4 green chillies, chopped fine
- 1 tsp of toasted cumin powder
- 2 tbs of Cochin Jewish vinaigrette dressing
- 1 bunch coriander
- 1/4 cup grated coconut

Directions:

1. Chop up potatoes and onion.
2. Mix with green chillies, coconut, coriander cumin and vinaigrette dressing. Serve chilled.

Pulip - A variant

1. Mix boiled and chopped potatoes with chopped coriander leaves, toasted cumin, salt, pepper, mint leaves and pour coconut milk over it instead of the vinaigrette.

Queenie Aunty's Fruit Salad

This light and fresh summer dessert was a big hit with the Jewish children of Mattancherry during the 1970s. All the children of Synagogue Lane are, however, long gone - and so are Queenie Hallegua's own children, a son who is a doctor in California and a daughter who lives in New York. The Queenie Aunty's Fruit Salad, which soaks up earthy, local flavours, is now served in the Menorah Restaurant, Koder House. (The apple is a late 20th century add-on, when the fruit started coming to Kerala from north Indian

orchards).

- 1 ripe banana (Nendran variety preferred)
- 1 apple,
- 1 orange
- 1/4 water melon
- 1/4 pineapple
- 1/4 papaya,
- 1/2 cup of green grapes
- 1/2 cup of red grapes
- 1/4 cup cherry
- 1/4 cup sugar

1. Cut the larger fruits into small cubes.
2. Mix with fresh/whipped cream. Chill.
3. Sprinkle sugar over the fruits and serve in a bowl.

Recipe courtesy: Vicky Raj, Koder House, Fort Cochin.

Cochin Jewish salad dressing
(Serves 4)

This vinaigrette or salad dressing can be made with assorted fruits and vegetables. Although many consider it similar to the northern Indian ‘raita’ (a yoghurt-based dressing), in Cochin it was/is made with coconut milk, so that it can accompany meat dishes in keeping with the kosher food laws. Flavours can be enhanced using coriander or mint and your choices of spices.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup, fresh coconut milk , thinned with some water
- 1/2 large, unripe mango
- 1 medium tomato
- 1 large onion
- 2 green chillies
- 1 large bunch coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 tsp curry powder*
- salt to taste

Directions:

1. Cut the mango into small bits and add it to the coconut milk.
2. Chop tomato, onion and coriander and green chillies finely. Reserve a little of the coriander for garnish, add the rest to the coconut milk.
3. Stir in the cumin and the curry powder..
4. Garnish with the coriander held in reserve
5. You can also use ripe mango instead of the raw one, if you want the dressing sweet and tangy. In this case, add two rings of chopped pineapple as well.

*Curry powder is an aromatic medley of many of Kerala's fine spices and when ground together and bottled can be used to bring out the flavours of the individual spices. Ideal when needed for quick dishes. - See recipe for Curry Powder on page/..

Cochin Jewish Chicken Curry

The Israeli Embassy in Washington DC., is cited as contributing this recipe to the Jewish Virtual Library of the American Jewish Co-operative Enterprise. (AICE was established in 1993 as a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization to 'provide educational materials. promote scholarship etc.')

The article says:“After its independence, Israel discovered a new Jewish community, the Cochin Jews of India..... One of their principal dishes is chicken curry which has now been incorporated into Israeli cuisine.*

(The recipe is being included here for record.)

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the Cochin Jewish community was not 'discovered' by Israel. They were in existence for more than 2000 years and were well-known to international Jewish and Christian scholars in Europe from around 1000 CE. Many Cochin Jews were part of the International Zionist movement, long before Israel came into being. Also, apples and olive oil, mentioned in the recipe, were seldom used by the Jews in Cochin, because they were not widely available in Kerala. Of course, Cochinitis is Israel today use a lot of olive oil.)

- 2 lbs. chicken
- 4 large tomatoes
- 2 apples
- 1-1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tbs. olive oil

- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tbs. sugar
- 5 large onions
- 1-1/2 tsp. salt, pepper
- 2 tbs. grated coconut (optional)
- 1 cup chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. ginger, ground
- 1 (or more) tbs. curry powder
- 3 cups clear broth or coconut milk

Directions:

1. Cut chicken into serving pieces and fry in 1 tbs. oil until lightly browned.
2. Add water and simmer for 20 minutes until chicken pieces are tender. Drain and put aside.
3. Add onions, garlic, tomatoes, parsley and apples (all diced) to the frying pan and saut over medium heat.
4. Add sugar, ginger and curry powder.
5. Sprinkle with flour and pour in clear broth or coconut milk.
6. Add coconut and chicken and saute for an additional 10 minutes over medium heat.
7. Serve hot with rice.

Source: Embassy of Israel. © Recipe Copyright American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Reprinted with permission.*

* <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Food/Chickencurry.html>

During Yom Kippur (Day of Atonment), the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, the Cochinis usually fasted for around 27 hours, spending most of the time in intensive prayer in their synagogues. After returning home at around 8:00 pm, the fast was broken with a wheat pudding called Ural. This dish is akin to the ‘halva’.

Ural

Ingredients:

- 400 grams whole wheat
- 500 grams sugar
- 2 cups of ghee

Optional:

- Some blanched almonds
- Some broken cashews
- Cardamom powder
- Saffron strands

Directions:

1. Wash the wheat thoroughly and leave it to soak overnight.
 2. Drain the water, grind the wheat and add more water. Keep it again overnight. Drain this water too; the paste left behind must not feel glutinous.
 3. Add about four cups of water to the smooth, milk-like paste
 4. Cook the paste that is left behind with a little water over low heat.
 5. Boil sugar with some water in a pan, until it becomes a thick syrup.
 6. Add the wheat paste and the nuts, cardamom powder and saffron.
 7. Keep stirring until the paste becomes translucent, with the consistency of 'halva'.
 8. Add the ghee a little at a time, mixing it well with the paste. The whole process takes about an hour.
 9. Let cool in a flat, greased tray until the mixture jells. Cut into squares.
- (Rose water or vanilla flavouring can be added in place of the cardamom powder. Use rosewater sparingly as an excess will turn the halwa bitter)

A special sweet made by the Cochin Jews during Rosh Hoshanah is the halwa. Although the name is similar to the Middle East confection made from sesame seeds, the Cochini halwa is made from semolina and is a very soft and melt-in-the-mouth pudding-style dish. This halwa is distributed among neighbours and friends and reminds you of mishloah manot, the exchange of treats on Purim.

Sarah Cohen's Kodithiyal
Cashewnut chikki (brittle)
Kashuandi mittai

The nut brittle is a universal snack. In Kerala, where cashewnut is relatively abundant, this is a delightful, easy-to-make, everytime snack, especially for children.

In India, the legendary Lonavala chikki (named after a hill station near Mumbai) of Maharashtra, is made with peanuts and available in packaged form all over the country.

Ingredients

- 1 cup broken cashewnuts
- 1/2 tsp ground cardamom
- 1/3 cup dry coconut
- 4 tsp clarified butter
- 1 cup jaggery, grated
(or two cups of sugar, caramelized)
- A pinch of salt

Directions:

1. Pan roast the nuts in ghee on low heat. Add dry coconut and roast for another three minutes..
2. Spread out the nuts/cocout in a baking dish, brushed with lightly with 2tsp of clarified butter.
3. In a heavy iron skillet, pour a a quarter cup water, add the grated jaggery and bring to boil on medium heat until the syrup thickens. Reduce heat.
4. Add 2 tsp of clarified butter to syrup and the cardamon and stir.
5. Pour mixture over nuts in the baking dish. Even the top lightly with a rolling pin. The mixture will cool quickly. Turn it onto a large platter and cut or break into desired shape/pieces.
6. The Kodithiyal (brittle) has a reasonable long shelf life.
7. Store in an air tight box, they have a good shelf life.

(Roasted, skinned peanuts, almonds and pistachios can all be used instead of cashewnuts to make crunchy, fast-vanishing brittles. Use the same method. If sugar is preferred, heat the sugar in a skillet until it melts and turns golden brown. You can add a pinch of baking soda into the sugar syrup and shut the heat down when it begins bubbling. The peanut brittle, called kappalandi mittai is inexpensive and available in roadside shops across Kerala).

Rissole comes from the Latin *russeolus*, meaning reddish. A rissole is a small croquette, with sweet or savory ingredients enclosed in pastry or sometimes rolled in breadcrumbs and baked or deep fried. In Portugal, rissoles are known as rissóis (singular “rissol”). Rissoles can easily be made

from common ingredients in your kitchen and are a very popular snack found in cafes round the world. The Israeli Falafel and the Parippu Vada of the Cochinis are cousins and examples of rissoles.

Falafel

The Falafel is today considered one of modern Israel's signature street foods, although it is claimed as national favourite in every Middle East county and in the souqs of the Gulf kingdoms. Most often, falafel is served inside pita bread, with salad and sesame seed sauce and can be a complete meal in itself.

The falafel is originally a Yemeni recipe made from chickpeas and the name comes from the Hebrew pilpel (pepper). In Israel, the modern falafel wrap has pickled eggplant and the Indian amba (mango) along with chopped tomatoes, cucumbers and hot sauces, a complete fusion of many tastes.

Falafel

Makes about 20

Ingredients:

- 1 cup - chickpeas
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 large onion - chopped finely (about 1 cup)
- 1 tsp - red chilli powder
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4-6 tablespoons flour
- 4 tbs coriander - finely chopped
- Vegetable oil for frying
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directons:

1. Wash chickpeas, drain.
2. In a food process, blend together chickpeas, chopped onions, salt, chilli powder, garlic, cummin and salt.
3. Add baking powder and 3 tbs flour, and process again.
4. Make small balls from the mixture. (A touch of flour will prevent the paste from sticking to the fingers).
5. Heat oil in a deep skillet and fry the balls, a few at a time, until golden brown.

6. Place on paper towels to drain away the oil.

Split Pea Rissoles (Filowri - related to the Falafel)

Among the Jews of Cochin, this dish was also called philoorie - and is said to have been adapted from the ancient falafel which is a staple in Israel and other countries in the Middle East.

However, this delicious snack is also made in Hindu, Christian and Muslim households and is a mainstay in small tea shops across Kerala as an accompaniment to the afternoon tea. In Malayalam, it is called Parippu Vada. Gila Rosenblatt of New Jersey (US) serves the Parippu Vada to the great delight of her audience when she gives lectures/demonstrations of Cochin Jewish cooking to Jewish groups.

Parippu Vada -
(Deep fried Lentil Fritters)
Serves 10 -12

- 1 cup - Yellow split peas dal (channa dal) -
- 5-6 Shallots-. finely chopped
- 1 tsp - Ginger, minced- a tsp
- 1/2 cup - Chopped coriander/parsley
- 2 or 3 green chillies - chopped
- A few curry leaves
- 2 pinches Asafoetida (kayampodi)
- 1 cup - Vegetable oil Oil-

Directions:

1. Wash and soak the split peas in water for about eight hours. Drain and rinse. Keep aside 2 tbs. of peas.
2. Grind the peas, to a coarse paste in food processor/blender..
3. If the mixture is too dry, add a little water, (Too much water will make the paste unusable).
4. Add the other ingredients and mix well. Add the reserved peas to the mixture after pulsing. Shape into flat, round patties.
5. Heat the oil in a deep frying pan.
6. Deep fry the filowri (rissole - vada), for about 8 to ten minutes until the crust become deep brown and crisp.

7. Remove from pan, using a slotted ladle so that oil drains away.
8. Serve hot vadas with coconut chutney* and hot tea

The Parippu Vada is also a favourite snack in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, where it is made with the bengal gram (kadala parippu) or yellow pigeon peas (thora parippu in Malayalam /thubar dal in Hindi).

Spicy Cochin okra

Okra (known as gumbo or lady's finger, bhindi in Hindi, bam-ya in Hebrew, bamay in Arabic, vendakkai in Malayalam), is a green, edible seedpod that can be cooked in several ways. As one of the most popular vegetables in Kerala, it is very often the main item in curries or is dry roasted/stir-fried with spices to make an excellent side dish.

Serves 3.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 kg okra
- 1" ginger, grated fine
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 4 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 3 green chillies chopped fine
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin powder
- 2 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp red chilli powder or milder cayenne powder
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Trim ends of the okra and cut into half inch pieces.
2. In a deep frying pan, heat the coconut oil on medium flame.
3. Add the onion, ginger, garlic, chillies and cumin. Cook until the onions begin to glaze.
4. Add the okra. Stir everything well and cook the mixture for about 15 minutes.
5. Reduce heat and add the coriander powder, red chilli powder, turmeric and salt. Stir fry until the okra becomes tender or turns deep brown.

To make a gravy-based okra dish that goes well with rice, follow the directions as above but add 3 tbsp of tomato paste, 1 cup of water and 1 tbsp.

vegetable soup base, 2 tsp. lemon juice or vinegar before the okra turns brown. Cook for half hour on low heat until the okra becomes soft.

For a creamier option, add 3 tbsp of coconut cream.

Note: To remove the stickiness of okra, cut each okra into two pieces. Throw away the ends, Heat a little oil in a skillet and stir fry the okra on medium heat. The stickiness goes away. You can also add a tbsp of white vinegar to okra when it is being cooked. This should also take care of the stickiness.

Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston. Texas

Okra in Coconut Milk

This is a variation from the Spicy Okra.

- Along with the same ingredients, also include:
- 2 tsp ground fennel
- 1 cup thin coconut milk.

Directions:

1. Follow the same steps until you add the coriander, red chilli powder, turmeric and salt. Here, add the fennel powder as well.
2. Instead of stir frying, pour coconut oil over the mixture and bring it to boil. Take it off stove.

Devilled Okra (Olathiya Vendakka)

This is a side dish generally served with Chutulli Meen* (See recipe on page..)

Directions:

1. Cut 12 okras lengthwise into strips.
2. Dip them into a mixture of chickpea flour (gram flour), salt and pepper.
3. Deep fry in coconut oil.

Lamb in coriander sauce

- Malli aracha attirachi
- Serves 8
- Ingredients:
- 1 kg lamb, cubed
- 4 onions, chopped
- 3 tomatoes, skinned, chopped
- 3 large bunches coriander leaves, chopped fine
- 5 green chillies, chopped

- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2" ginger, chopped
- 3 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- 1/2 tsp cloves, powdered
- 2 tsp pepper
- 2 tsp of Kashmiri chilli powder (or mild cayenne pepper)
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 6 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt to taste
-

- Directions:

- Heat coconut oil in a deep-bottomed pan. Saute onions until translucent.

- Add the coriander leaves, chillies, garlic, ginger, coriander powder, cardamom powder, cloves, chilli powder. Mix well with the onions on medium heat.

- Add curry leaves and fry two minutes. Add the chopped tomato. Stir.

- Add the lamb, salt and pepper, a cup of water and bring to boil.

- Reduce heat, and simmer for about 1 hour, adding water if the mixture gets dry.

- _____

Lamb with vegetables (Attirachiyyum Pachhakariyum)

Ingredients:

- 1 kg. lamb cut into cubes
- 1 large onion
- 1 tsp, ginger grated
- 5 garlic cloves, chopped
- 4 cups of mixed vegetables
(peas, green beans, chopped carrots, chopped sweet potato, okra)
- 1 lemon, squeezed
- 3-4 green chillies, chopped fine
- 1 sprig of curry leaves
- 1 bunch coriander
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Vegetable/coconut oil

Directions:

1. Brown the meat in a large pot in a little oil.
2. Add the onion, ginger and garlic. When the onion turns translucent, reduce heat and add pepper and Salt.
3. Cook for an hour on low heat. Add all the vegetables. Add the juice from the lemon and the green chillies.
4. Cook for another two hours on low heat. Towards the end, add chopped curry leaves and coriander. Stir well.
5. Garnish with more coriander.

Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

(Handed down by maternal grandmother Sarah Tovachy Elias)

Kochi Lamb Varattiyathu/Chuttirachi

Fried lamb dish

In the late 20th century, lamb became a rare treat for the Jews of Matancherry because the community had no shohet. The Jews in Ernakulam had the shohets, who slaughtered only chickens, although there were no congregational gatherings in any of their synagogues. Today, Babu Josephai, caretaker of the Kadavumbhagam Synagogue in Ernakulam and Sam Abraham, who spent several years in Israel before returning to India to run a flourishing automobile business are the community shohets.

This dish of tender chunks of lamb, marinated in spices and cooked with shallots, coconut and fennel is an ancient recipe of the Cochin Jews.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg lamb (mutton - in Kerala, this generally means young goat)
- 8 shallots, chopped
- 2 tsp cinnamon powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 3 tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 2" ginger, grated
- 4 green chillies, chopped
- 2 sprigs curry leaves
- 5 cloves

- 2-3 tsp dried red chilli powder
- 1/2 cup coconut bits
- Coconut oil - 5 tbsp

Directions:

1. Grind shallots, cinnamon, coriander, ginger, green chillies, cloves garlic and some salt into a smooth paste
2. Marinate the mutton pieces and chill for about 3 hours.
3. In a deep pan, cook the mutton with 2 tbsps of coconut oil and 1/2 cup of water for about 30 minutes. Keep lid on.
4. Reduce heat and let simmer uncovered until. - for 8 to 10 mins all liquid disappears.
5. Heat 3 tbsp of coconut oil in a wok and saute the onions, pepper corns, curry leaves, fennel seeds and coconut bits until they turn dark brown.
6. Transfer the cooked mutton to the wok and stir fry for about a minute.
7. Garnish with skinned and chunky crushed tomatoes for a tangier taste.

[http://www.ricardocuisine.com/recipes/3842-turmeric-flavored-rice-Resaya Pulav](http://www.ricardocuisine.com/recipes/3842-turmeric-flavored-rice-ResayaPulav)
Rice with turmeric and coconut milk

This attractive yellow rice dish is cooked in coconut milk with turmeric (and chicken stock, if needed) and is an original Cochin Jewish creation. There is an interesting fusion of warm and spicy flavours here and the Resaya Pulav or Plaf is accompanied by chicken or beef dishes.

Katz and Goldberg has mentioned a grand banquet in Sassoon Hall (on Synagogue Lane in Mattancherry) during the Simchat Torah celebrations of 1986, “when a lavish meal was laid out - 19 fowls were on the table, not to mention huge trays of steaming yellow rice, biryanis, vegetables and other specialties.”*

*page 185

This is the famous [Resaya Pulav](#) as served today on Jewish holidays at the Koder House in Fort Cochin.

Servings: 4

Ingredients”

- (1 1/2 cups) basmati rice
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- 2 tbs clarified butter (Coconut oil can also be used)
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp garam masala (optional)
- Salt to taste
- 1 cup of raisins and toasted cashewnuts

Directions:

1. Soak the rice for about 30 minutes in a bowl of cold water. Strain.
2. Melt the butter in a deep skillet and stir in the onion and cook on low heat until browned. Add the garlic, turmeric and the garam masala.
3. Add the rice to the skillet and stir. Add the coconut milk and chicken broth, season with salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and stir. Add the turmeric and salt..
4. Cover the skillet and and simmer until the rice is tender and all the liquid has been absorbed.
5. Sprinkle the raisins and the cashewnuts over the rice.

Breakfast delights

Breakfast

For the Cochin Jews, like other Keralites, breakfast is mostly something made with rice. Apart from eggs, breakfast is generally vegetarian and involves the much-loved grain coming in different incarnations onto the breakfast plate, each outdoing the other in taste, in combination with an array of chutneys and dips.

It all begins with a batter of rice and urad dal (black grams), which are ground together with a little water overnight. When the batter rises with the dawn, it is ready to be ladled into medium-sized iron griddles or flat saucepans: to be made into blintz-like dosas, the smaller, spongy uthappams, or if steamed to take the shape oof little rice cakes (idlis). Press it through a mold and it becomes idiyappam or string hoppers. There are also Vellaypams and Adas in the rice treasure chest.

Throughout Kerala, in small teashops, the favourite breakfast remains

the famous ‘puttu’,* created when fresh, grated coconut is added to the batter and steamed in small bamboo logs.

See the puttu recipe on page

Idiyappam

Idiyappam is a favourite breakfast food across Kerala and the Cochin Jewish community also adopted this with gusto as it goes along well with various kinds of savoury stews or just plain with coconut milk and sugar.

Ingredients:

1/2 kg - rice flour (Rosematta red rice flour and white rice flour mixed)

2-3 cups boiling water

1/2 tsp salt

String hopper mould or idiappam press (called Seva Nazhi in Malayalam). This is available in South Asian groceries)

Dry roast the flour in a wok.

In a bowl, mix the salt and flour well with a ladle.

Add the water gradually and, mix contents into a pliable dough.

Put a little of the dough into the lightly oiled,, string hopper mould and squeeze the lever onto string hopper mats in a circular fashion.

Place mats in a steamer and steam for about 5 minutes.

You can add grated coconut, cardamom powder and sugar with the idiyappam to get a delightful variation on the simple idiyappam. .

Payasam

Serves 6 - 8

This Kerala rice pudding called the payasam is a beloved treat, a soupy pudding served as dessert at every feast. The payasam is also made with vermicelli (known as lockshen in Israel and semiya in Malayalam), instead of rice. Adding condensed milk will add richness to the payasam. Other varieties of payasams are also made throughout Kerala: with plantains, jackfruits, red toor dal and jaggery, moong dal and jaggery (the last is a temple offering of the Hindus). There are also some made with coconut milk.

For Cochin Jews, it was a wedding custom for women in the community to gather at the bride’s home early in the morning. They sang songs and the prepared ‘a sweet rice dish in a huge pot called chembu’ and the rituals were called chembidiale* This dish was, of course, the payasam.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup Basmati rice
- 4 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder
- 12 raisins
- 6 cashewnuts, crushed
- 2 tbs ghee

Directions:

1. Wash and soak rice for 2 hours.
2. Drain and squeeze the soaked rice with your hands.
3. Boil water, add rice and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Boil milk in another pan and add to the rice and cook on low heat stirring occasionally until the milk thickens.
5. Add sugar and cardamom and cook for another 5 minutes.
6. Heat ghee in a frying pan and fry crushed cashew and raisins till golden brown.
7. Add this to the payasam and mix well.

Spicy Pineapple Salad

A fresh and tangy salad, ideal as a starter during lunch.

- 1 pineapple, cut into small chunks
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 2 green chillies, chopped fine
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tsp, ground white pepper
- 1 bunch coriander, chopped fine
- Salt to taste

Directions

1. In a salad bowl, briskly whisk the lime juice, red chilli powder, salt, pepper and brown sugar.

2. Add the pineapple, green chillies, chopped onion and coriander and mix well.

Modakam or Sweet Kozhukotai

In Jewish Cochin, this was just a sweet dish. However, in Hindu households it was specially made on festival days and offered to the deities. The Bene Israelis of Mumbai call this Modak and is even today an important item at weddings and is served when the bridegroom brings the bride home for the first time.

Ingredients:

- Rice flour - 1 cup
- 2 coconuts, grated
- 3/4 cup jaggery,
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder
- 1 tbsp clarified butter
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- Pinch of salt

Directions::

1. Mix the grated coconut well with the jaggery.
2. Heat the ghee in a deep pan and stir in the coconut/jaggery. Cook until mixture thickens. Add cardamom powder. Stir.
3. In another pan, bring 2 glasses of water of water to boil. Add the rice flour and sesame oil. Add salt. Stir to prevent clumping.
4. Let cool. Roll the dough into small balls. Hollow out the centre and put the coconut/jaggery mix into each. Pinch the edges to close the dough balls.
5. In a steamer or vessel with a sieve, grease the base and arrange the dough balls. Steam for about 15 minutes. The Modakam is ready when the stickiness of the dough goes away.
6. Let cool.

The 'thoran' is a signature side dish in Kerala cuisine and is part of every feast along with being a common, everyday dish. Cabbage, beans or raw banana are the main vegetables used in this Cochin Jewish stir-fried dish. Coconut dominates, while onion and ginger are optional. Sometimes, car-

rots are added for colour and crunch. The Konkani community that lives in the vicinity of Synagogue Lane and elsewhere in Cochin call this stir fried dish 'Sukke' and add chopped potatoes into the mix. - Bala Menon

Cochin Cabbage Thoran

Serves 5-6

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cabbage, shredded and chopped fine
- 1/2 cup grated coconut
- 4-6 shallots
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 4 green chillies, chopped fine
- 1/4 tsp, chilli powder
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Mix turmeric powder, chilli powder, salt and chopped cabbage and keep aside.
2. Heat oil in a wok and splutter mustard seeds. Add curry leaves.
3. Add chopped cabbage, cover the pan and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Coarsely grind green chillies, shallots and coconut. Add this mixture to the cabbage and stir well.
5. Close pan and cook for another 2 minutes on low flame.

Cochin Beans thoran

Serves 5-6

The ingredients and directions for this dish is the same as the cabbage thoran, except that cumin and garlic have been added to the mix.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups beans, chopped fine
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- Plus all the ingredients used in the cabbage thoran.

Follow the same directions, but add the cumin and cloves when grinding the coconut and chillies mixture.

Cochin Kaaya (Raw Banana) Thoran

(This tasty preparation can also be made with the skin of the Nendran plantain, in place of the bananas).

Serves 6

Again, this dish has the same ingredients as the cabbage thoran, with the addition of garlic, ginger and additional shallots. There is also more grated coconut added.

Ingredients:

- 4 raw bananas
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 5 green chillies, chopped fine
- 8 shallots, chopped fine
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 1” ginger, grated
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- Salt to taste
- 3 tsbs coconut oil

Directions:

1. Cut the bananas into small cubes and cook in water with turmeric, salt and chilli powder till done.
 2. Drain water and keep aside.
 3. Coarsely grind coconut with green chillies, shallots, garlic and cumin.
 4. Heat coconut oil in a wok and splutter mustard seeds.
 5. Add curry leaves and ground coconut mixture. Stir for 2 minutes.
 6. Add cooked bananas and stir well.
 7. Cook over low flame for a few minutes, stirring constantly.
-

Cochin tuna salad

Ajeeth J

To preserve the Tuna

Ingredients:

- 1 kg tuna - filleted
- Water- to cover the tuna
- 100 gm - Bay leaf -100gm
- 80 gm Salt- to every litre of water added
- Sunflower or Virgin Olive Oil to cover the cooked fish

Directions:

1. Layer the bottom of the pan with half the bay leaf.
2. Put the fish down in a single layer on top of the bay leaf.
3. Cover with the rest of the bay leaf. Add the water and salt by measure.
4. Allow to cook for 25 minutes and cool in the water itself.
5. Drain the fish and allow the fish to rest for some time.
6. Take a sanitised, dry vessel with lid. Put the fish and cover with the oil.
7. This fish can now be used for months on end for sandwiches, salads or eaten as is..
8. Be careful to take out the fish with a dry and sanitized spoon or ladle.

For the salad

- 20 gms ash gourd
- 20 gms snake gourd-
- 20gms ridge gourd-
- 20gms yellow pumpkin-
- 5gms sliced shallots-
- For the dressing
- 10 ml oil from the preserved fish -
- 3 gms chopped garlic-
- 2 whole red chillies
- 5 ml lemon juice-

Directions:

1. Cut the vegetables lengthwise and blanch in water.
2. Slice the shallots into thin rounds.
3. Heat the oil and add the garlic and whole red chillies.
4. Cool the oil and whisk the lemon juice into it.
5. Break the tuna into flakes and gently mix it with the vegetables and sliced shallots.

6. If you have lettuce, then spread it on a plate and put the mixture on top of it and drizzle the dressing on top.

Chef's note- The vegetables need to be shocked after blanching by rinsing them in chilled water to maintain the colour, the crunchiness and the nutrients

Courtesy: Ajeeth Janardhan Executive Chef, Brunton Boatyard, Cochin.

·—————

Cochin Jewish lamb chops (serves 3-4)

Ingredients

6 to 8 double mutton chops

2 tomatoes, chopped fine

2" ginger grated

4 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 tbsp pepper

1 tsp cardamom powder

salt to taste

Oil for frying

Directions:

Combine all ingredients to make a paste.

Coat the lamb chops with the marinade and leave covered in refrigerator overnight.

In a deep-bottomed pan, cook the chops in a little water until the pink is gone and they are almost done.

In a skillet, heat oil and pan fry the chops, turning over frequently until the skin turns dark brown.

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(Reference Ruby of Cochin who writes she had to go and buy salted fish for the Shabbath...)

The dried fish that Ruby talked about (See: Mutta Curry, page 104), were the kozhuva, mullan and the 'manthal' (in Malayalam), the most popular among salted fish used in households throughout Kerala. The kozhuva, also called netholi or podimeen is known to us as anchovies. The mullan is a small, bony fish which we call 'silver belly fish' or 'pony fish' or 'tooth pony'. The 'manthal' is known as the Malabar sole. The kozhuva is the most popular and many Cochins bring packets of this dried fish to Israel when they visit Kerala.

Unakka Meen Varruthathu

Fried Salted Fish

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1/4 kg anchovies or toothpony or Malabar sole
- 6-8 shallots, chopped
- 1” ginger, chopped
- 2-3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3-4 green chillies, slit lengthwise
- 2 tbsp red chili powder
- 1/2 tsp - turmeric powder
- No salt is needed
- Coconut oil for deep frying

Directions:

1. Wash the fish well, at least three or four times, to get rid of the excess salt. Soak in water with some chopped lemon (this will help remove the smell).
2. Cut off tail and head of fish.
3. Grind the shallots, garlic, chilli powder and turmeric powder into a coarse paste.
4. Marinate fish in paste for about an hour.
5. In a heavy frying pan, heat coconut oil and fry the green chillies and curry leaves. Take it out of the pan with a slotted spoon. Keep aside.
6. In the same pan, deep fry the fish in batches on medium heat, turning over until they become dark brown and crisp.
7. Garnish with the chillies and curry leaves.

Nangu - Manthal curry

Dried Malabar Sole Curry

- 1 kg dried, salted Malabar sole
- 8 shallots, chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped fine
- 6 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1/2 mango, chopped fine/or tamarind extract/kudampuli - Gam-

booge (as a souring agent)

- 1/2 cup grated coconut
- 4 green chillies, halved and slit lengthwise
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1/ tsp tumeric powder
- 1” ginger, grated
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 3 tpsp coconut oil

Directions:

1. Grind the grated coconut, red chilli powder, turmeric and cumin with a little water to make a paste.
2. Wash fish and soak in cold water for about an hour to let the salt leech out. Drain.
3. Rub the coconut paste on the sides of fish and set aside for about an hour.
4. Heat 2 tbsp coconut oil in a deep pan on low heat. Add shallots, ginger, garlic and green chillies and saute until the onions turn translucent.
5. Add curry leaves, tomato and mango pieces (or tamarind extract/ gambogee). Stir fry.
6. Add the fish along with 2-3 cups of water and let it come to boil.
7. Let simmer for about 10 minutes to allow excess water to evaporate.
8. Drizzle a tbsp of coconut oil and mix well.

The Pomegranate - known as Maatalanaranaga in Malayalam, Rimon in Hebrew and Anaar in Hindi - is said to be the fruit that Moses received from scouts who ventured into the ‘promised land’.

Exodus 28:33-34 describes embroidered pomegranates on the me’il (“Robe of Ephod”), worn by the Hebrew High Priest. The Book of Kings 7:13-22, says the fruit was carved on the pillars in front of King Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. The pomegranate has also been found emblazoned on ancient Judean coins.

The fruit is widely grown in India where it has been used in traditional Ayurvedic remedies, especially in Kerala, for thousands of years. For the Cochin Jews, like Jews elsewhere, the exquisitely coloured and flavourful arils of the pomegranate symbolized prosperity and abundance and it became traditional to consume the fruit during Rosh Hoshana.*

*The pomegranate is reputed to have 613 seeds, corresponding with the 613 mitzvot or commandments of the Torah.

In Israel, a kosher dessert wine made with pomegranate has been developed by Rimon Winery in the Upper Galilee.

Pomegranate Salad

1/2 cup pomegranate seeds

1 tbsp lemon juice

1/2 tsp vinegar

1/4 cup oil

Pepper and salt to taste

1 bunch spinach, washed, shredded

1 bunch lettuce, washed, shredded

3 oranges, peeled, slices separated

1/4 cup cashewnuts, chopped rough

1/4 cup blanched almonds, chopped

Directions:

Mix and lemon juice and vinegar together in a small bowl

Pour the oil into bowl and gently whisk the mixture.

add salt and pepper to taste

Combine spinach and lettuce in a large bowl. Pour lime and vinegar mixture and toss salad.

Decorate with orange slices and garnish with pomegranate seeds, cashews and almonds.

2. Arrange the orange sections on top and sprinkle with walnuts and pomegranate seeds.

From: restaruant in israel.rtf

name: Cochin opening hours: sun-thu: 12:00-24:00 Kfar Yuval phone: 04-6940042 , 050-6901186 food type: Breakfast, Indian. kosher: Rabanut

A group of four to a maximum of 40 people can arrange to experience an authentic kosher Cochin Indian meal at the home of the Ephraim family on Moshav Nevatim. The Ephraim family opens their home and hearts when they welcome visitors. Curious guests can learn about the history of the Cochin Jews, as well as their community today, while eating such homemade

delicacies as dosha, a crepe-like dish served in shamandee, a coconut gravy; pastel; hubah and a warm side dish of hummous.

“Before weddings, the Shabbath before the wedding is called Nadakana Shabbat. After a festive lunch at the bridegroom’s house, all the women go to the bride’s house where they are treated with cakes and a cool drink called ‘sherbet’.” - page 178

From: Nanari.rtf

Tha Nanari or Narunneendi drink, also called the Indian Sarasaparilla, was very popular across Kerala in the early and middle years of the 20th century. At a time when there was no soda pop or artificial ingredients available, the nanari root allowed households to make a refreshing drink during the summer months. Senior members of the Cochin Jewish community still remember this drink, although it is difficult to come by in Israel and urban Kerala seems to have forgotten its health benefits.*

*In Kerala, the root (*Hemidesmus Indicus* or Anantamuli in Hindi) is considered effective in treating arthritis, bowel problems, rheumatis, insect bites and skin infections. It is interesting to note that the Sarasaparilla root was once available in drugstores across the United States to make tonic and was a principal component of root beer.

Sarsaparilla Limeade
(Nannari Soda Sherbet)

Ingredients

10 tbsp naruneendi syrup
(The syrup is made by boiling the roots with jaggery or sugar.)
4 tbsp lime juice
Cold water or club soda

3 pieces Naruneendi Root (2 inch length pieces)
500 gms sugar
8 cups water - 7 glasses (or water required to make a syrup)
1 egg

Directions:

1) Soak Naruneendi root pieces in one glass of water for 6 to 8 hours.

2) Crush soaked roots and add to 7 glasses of water taken in a vessel.

3) Add sugar to the above mixture. Boil in medium flame to make syrup. Stir well continuously.

4) When the mixture becomes medium thick, pour egg to it. Stir well. This is done to remove dirt from syrup. Now you can see brown coloured froth above the syrup. Allow to boil for 1 minute. Turn off stove and drain the syrup. Garnish with slice of lemon.

Pineapple and Banana Cocktail

Ingredients:

- 3 ripe bananas
- 1/2 a fresh pineapple
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt

Directions:

1. Cut banana and pineapple into small cubes. Place in bowl.
2. Mix equal parts of lemon juice and pineapple juice in a jug. Pour over the fruit. Sprinkle sugar and salt
3. Ladle the cocktail into tumblers with crushed ice.

Kokum Sherbet

Ingredients

- 1 cup dried kokum
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp cumin powder
- 6 cups of water

Directions:

Soak the kokum overnight in hot water; squeeze out the juice; strain.

Bring 6 cups of water to a boil in a bowl and add the sugar, cumin and the kokum juice. Stir and let simmer until syrup thickens. Cool. The syrup can be mixed with cold water to make the kokum sherbet.

(For the Bene Israelis, a raisin sherbet is a popular drink to end fast-

ing on the days leading to Yom Kippur. This sherbet is made by boiling a handful of black raisins in water and then mashing them. The water is then strained and cooled.)

Cochin Pepper Water

The Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery, published in London in the 1870s, tells of a recipe from Kerala (but calls it Anglo-Indian). This pepper water, known as 'rasam' to the Jews of Cochin and other people from Kerala provides instant relief if you have a cold and a runny nose. Drink it hot! Also, in Kerala, tamarind is sometimes substituted for lemon juice. It is equally delicious.

Ingredients

- Fresh lemon - 1 or 2
- 1 large onion, 2 small onions
- 15 peppercorns
- 4 cloves of garlic,
- 1 1/2 table spoons of curry powder
- 1 tbs of salt.
- 1tbs of butter

Directions:

1. Squeeze the lemon into a pint and a half of cold water.
2. Slice the onion and mash it along with the pepper, garlic, curry powder and salt.
3. Bring the liquid to a boil in a a saucepan. Cover and let simmer for about 20 mins.
4. Strain.
5. Chop the small onions and fry them in butter, until golden brown.
6. Add to liquid and boil up once more. The 'pepper water' is ready.

The British verion says "Bottle the pepper water when cooled, cork closely, and store in a cool, dry place.

[From Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery, page 534,
Cassell Petter & Galpin, London, 1870.

Jeeraka Vellam (Cumin water)

The cumin is an ancient seed and has been referred to as “ketzah” in the Old Testament in the Book of Isaiah 28:25, 27:

““When he has levelled its surface,
does he not sow the black cumin and
scatter the cumin...

“...for the black cumin is not threshed with a threshing sledge,
nor is a cart wheel rolled over the cumin,
but the black cumin is beaten out with a stick,
and the cumin with a rod”.

Cumin Water is called Jeeraka Vellam in Malayalam and is served as a warm, golden coloured water, even in small teashops across Kerala, instead of plain tap or well water.

It is considered a powerful digestive aid and mouth freshener.

The cumin seed (*nigella sativa*), is a principal ingredient for creating the toasty flavour and fragrance of Kerala recipes.

Directions:

Add a heaped teaspoon of cumin seed to boiling water. Let cool.

“The curry we usually ate on Saturday night was eggs cooked in sauce and dried salted fish fried, as we must have hot meal and there is no time to cook meat. We had to cook quickly after dark on Saturday, as we couldn’t light a fire during the Shabbath. There was a woman selling the salted fish, who lived on the other side of the Misro Palli and I had to go and buy the fish from her” - Ruby of Cochin - page 32. (See salted fish recipes on pages...)

Ruby Daniels lived in the middle of Synagogue Lane, halfway between the Paradesi Synagogue to the south and Kadavumbaghams Synagogue to the north. The Misro Palli was an open area off Synagogue Lane and is believed to have once been a midrash or school (hence the name Misro. Palli means place of worship, but there never was any place of worship there.).
-Kenny Salem

Mutta curry

Eggs cooked in rich onion sauce

This delicious egg dish is a favourite all over Kerala and also goes by the name of Mutta Masala. Hard-boiled eggs buried in a soft pile of fragrant, browned onions, with tiny jolts of chillies, cardamom and cloves at every bite and maybe a hint of cinammon or fennel, is eaten with rice or any type

of bread and is a perfect meal any time of the day.

(Serves 6)

Ingredients:

- 12 eggs, hard-boiled
- 5 large onions, sliced
- 3 tomatoes, chopped rough
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped fine
- 2" ginger, grated
- 4 green chillies, halved and slit lengthwise
- 2 pieces of cinamon
- 4 cardamom pods, skinned and crushed
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 3 tsp coriander powder
- 5 cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp fennel seeds
- 1/2 tsp cumin powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 bunch coriander leaves, chopped
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 4 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Shell the hardboiled eggs. Make about seven or eight thin gashes on the sides of each. Keep aside.
2. In a heavy, deep-bottomed pan, heat the coconut oil.
3. Add onions, garlic, ginger, green chillies, fennel seeds and the curry leaves. Fry on low heat, stirring often until the onions begin to glaze and brown.
4. Add the powders - cumin, coriander, red chilli, turmeric and salt. Stir and let mix well with other ingredients.
5. Add the chopped tomatoes. Keep stirring for about three minutes.
6. Add the hardboiled eggs.
7. Add the pepper and cook on medium flame until the fragrant mixture begins to leave the sides of the pan.
8. Sprinkle the chopped coriander leaves. Leave for about an hour to allow the spices to soak through the eggs.

9. (You can halve the hardboiled eggs before adding to the pan, if you so desire. The addition of 2 pieces of cinnamon will produce a more aromatic sauce. Leave the fennel seeds out, if you don't like it's sweet bite).

Minty Carrot Chicken

A version of this simple Cochin Jewish recipe was published in *The Book of Jewish Food*, by food writer Claudia Roden (Knopf 1996), attributing it to Queenie Hallegua of Cochin. In a variant of this dish, carrot is used along with potato to add bulk to dish.. Sometimes the carrot is finely grated, thickening the gravy considerably.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg chicken, cut into pieces
- 1/ kg carrots, halved and cut into lengthwise slices or rounds
- 3 large onions, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 3 green chillies, chopped fine or sliced lengthwise
- 2" ginger, chopped fine
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 3/4 cup mint leaves, chopped fine
- 4 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. In a heavy skillet, heat the coconut oil and fry the onions until brown.
 2. Add garlic, ginger, turmeric and chillies and mix well.
 3. Add the chicken pieces and cook for about 15 minutes.
 4. Add the carrots along with 2 cups of water and salt and cook for another 20 minutes.
 5. Add the chopped mint and simmer until gravy reaches desired consistency.
 6. Drizzle a tbsp of coconut oil over the gravy.
- Courtesy: Reema Salem, Mattancherry Cochin.

Kerala is indeed a 'banana republic'. The fruit is said to have been cultivated in the humid, Malabar lowlands since 500 BCE and there is mention of the Kerala banana (kadhali pazham) in Indian epics like the Ramayana.

There are 27 varieties of bananas that grow in Kerala's rich, red soil - large ones like the Nendrakka, small ones like the Njalipoovan, Chundillakannan and Palayankodan, the Kadhali (small golden Kadhali and the large red-skinned Chenkadhali) and more than a dozen varieties of cooking and table plantains. which come under the name of Robusta in Kerala. Bunches of several varieties hang in wayside teashops across Kerala.

The King of Bananas, however, is the Nenthrapazham or Nendran, a horn plantain cultivar known in scientific circles as Kochchi Kesel. This is a BIG banana, much Larger than the commercially popular Cavendish (Chiquita) variety. The Robusta is part of the Cavendish family.

The Nendran has firm flesh, is not very juicy and is sometimes treated as a delicious meal in itself, when fully ripe. In Kerala, this banana is steamed and is a popular breakfast item. The steamed portions are also mashed with puttu (see recipe on page...) to make a hearty breakfast. Also popular with the puttu is the njalipoovan which is a plump and fragrant fruit.

The Pazham Pori or Banana Fritters is a delicacy that spans all cultural, religious and income segments of the Kerala population. Inexpensive, nutritious and delicious, the Pazham Pori is a staple snack enjoyed at any time of the day. For the Cochin Jews in Israel, it still remains a great treat at tea time, as it was in Kerala for hundreds of years.

Banana Fritters (Pazham Pori)

Ingredients:

- 4 fully ripe plantains/nenthrapazham/Ethapazham
- 3/4 up rice flour
- 1/4 cup all purpose flour/maida
- 3 tbsp sugar (if you wish to sweeten the bananas further)
- 2 cardomom pods crushed
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 1/4 cup water
- Coconut oil for frying

Directions:

1. Mix the rice flour, all purpose flour, turmeric, cardamom and sugar with water and make into smooth batter.
2. Slice the bananas diagonally into pieces that are about 2" long and about 1/2" thick.
3. Coat the banana slices well in the batter.
4. Heat coconut oil in a wok.

5. Slide the slices into the hot oil and deep fry on medium heat till the edges start to brown. Turn frequently so that they are evenly cooked.

6. Remove the banana with a slotted ladle and place on paper towels to drain.

7. Serve with hot tea or coffee. It's after 4:00 in the evening. Pazhampori samayam (Time for banana fritters).

Spicy gingered plantain in cashew/coconut sauce

In Kerala, there are scores of ways to make use of the many varieties of bananas. This recipe is suited for the Nendran or other varieties with a firm flesh. Do not use very ripe ones.

Ingredients:

2 large Nendran plantains/Ethakkya

- 1/2 cup of dry coconut (copra), chopped
- 3 tbs cashew nuts, roasted
- 3 tbsp ginger, chopped fine
- 1/2 tsp of red chilli pepper (or more if desired)
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- Pinch of cumin powder
- 1 coriander, small bunch
- 2 tsp jaggery
- 1 cup of sour cream
- 1/2 tsp cumin seeds, crushed
- Clarified butter/ghee for frying
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Peel and slice the plantains into 2" or 3" pieces. Set aside.
2. Blend the cashew nuts, coconut pieces, chilli powder, jaggery, turmeric and ginger, along with the sour cream in a processor.
3. Coat the plantain slices with the paste.
4. In a skillet, heat the clarified butter and gently slide the spiced slices in. Cook on medium heat for about 3 minutes for every three slices, turning once. Let it brown slightly. Add a little water to thin the sauce if needed.
5. Remove from heat, sprinkle a little salt (this brings out the sweet-

ness), the cumin and garnish with chopped coriander.

(Optional: You can use thick yoghurt instead of the sour cream and sugar instead of jaggery.)

Variant of Spicy Gingered Platian

2 large Nendrans
1/2 cup of lemon juice
3 tbs, ginger, smashed
2 tsp red chilli powder
1/2 tsp cinnamon powder
Coconut oil for frying

Diectioms:

Pour the lemon juice over the skinned and sliced plantains. Coat well.

Mix the ginger, red chilli powder and cinnamon powder in a separate dish.

Coat the ‘lemony’ plantains with the spices and fry in coconut oil oil until brown.

Steamed Banana:

Take a ripe Nendran, make some slits in the skin.

Put it in a steamer/pressure cooker for about 20 minutes.

Let cool, cut into three pieces, remove skin and server.

The steamed bananas are much sweeter and juicier and ideal to mash with the breakfast puttu.

“Upperi” or “Kaya Varuthathu”

Fried Nendran Bananas

Ingredients:

- 3 raw Nendran bananas
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 cup coconut oil

Directions:

Peel the bananas and slice each into thin rounds. (The thinner the rounds, the crunchier they fry.)

Dissolve the salt in a bowl of water along with the turmeric. Immerse the sliced bananas in the liquid for about an hour.

Heat oil in a deep frying pan. Fry the banana rounds in batches until the water in the fruit evaporates. When they start turning crisp and golden, take out with a slotted ladle.

Drain on paper towels.

The national festival of Kerala is known as Onam* and celebrated by Keralites with food and cultural programs wherever they settle. However, it took around 60 years for the Cochinites in Israel to begin public Onam celebrations. Many said they marked it in their own homes even through the early years of hardship and difficulty of getting the required ingredients.

It was Sima Molly Muttath Pal* of Hadera, a town close to Haifa, who first organized a community Onam feast. In her book, *Being Indian, Being Israel*, Prof. Maina Singh Chawla, quotes Sima as saying in 2008: “We have been talking nostalgically about Onam as we celebrated it with our childhood friends in Kerala and in 2004 we decided to call in a few friends... and more people joined in every year.”

Chawla adds that Onam “became an occasion to bond together along ethnic lines and reconnect symbolically with an Indian past.”

Over the next few years, the festival grew exponentially and in 2011, the Onam celebrations, with a variety entertainment program and a traditional feast, attracted more than 2000 people at the Central Bus Terminal hall in Tel Aviv.

Onam feasts are purely vegetarian with food served on banana leaves. The spread is sumptuous and comprises 14 or more dishes, ending with one or two ‘payasams’ (See payasam recipe on page...). Two of the principal dishes of Onam are presented here. One is the rich and delightful medley of vegetables called Aviyal and the other is the delicately flavoured Olan.

Avial (Mixed Vegetable Curry)

A dense mixture of vegetables in a coconut & yoghurt sauce

Serves 4

1/2 tsp. cumin seed

1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut

5 cups mixed vegetables of your choice, cut into bite-size pieces

1 small onion, sliced

2-4 green chilies, cut in half lengthwise and seeded

1 Tbs. turmeric
10-15 curry or basil leaves
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup water
6 Tbs. yogurt

Directions:

In a blender make a paste of cumin seed and coconut and set aside. In a medium saucepan combine vegetable, onion, chilies, turmeric, basil or curry leaves, salt and water. Cover and simmer until tender, about 10-15 minutes. Stir in coconut paste. Simmer another 2 minutes. Add yogurt and stir well.

*Sima Molly passed away in December 2012 after battling with cancer. Sima was very helpful with her inputs on Jewish life in Cochin and for tidbits on Kerala cuisine for this book.

*Being Indian, Being Israeli: Migration, Ethnicity and Gender in the Jewish Homeland, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2010. pg 185

Vegetables in Coconut-Milk Sauce:Olan - Rewrite
<http://www.peppertrail.com/>

This simple dish of delicate vegetables cooked in coconut milk and spiced with fresh green chilies and curry leaves is a must at all feasts. Coconut milk has a tendency to separate when cooked at high temperatures, so be careful not to let it get too hot.

1 cup ash gourd or zucchini, cut into half-inch cubes
1 cup shelled black-eyed peas (thawed if frozen), or 1 cup tender black-eyed peas in pods, cut into 1-inch pieces
3 to 4 fresh green chilies (serrano or Thai), slit lengthwise (less for a milder taste)
Salt to taste
3 cups coconut milk*

For seasoning and garnish:

2 tablespoons coconut oil
12 to 15 fresh curry leaves

Place the cut vegetables and green chilies in a saucepan and pour in enough water to cover. Stir in the salt, and cook over medium heat, until

the vegetable cubes are fork tender. Pour in coconut milk and bring to a slow boil. Reduce the heat, and simmer for five minutes. Remove from the stove, and garnish with coconut oil and fresh curry leaves. Stir gently and keep covered for ten minutes, to allow flavors to blend. Serve hot with plain boiled rice.

Makes 4 to 6 servings if served with another curry, as is traditional.

Tarator

Cucumber salad

The Tarator is a newcomer to Cochini Jewish cuisine. Similar to the cucumber salad made in Mattanchery homes, this starter dish comprises pieces of cucumber served with yoghurt and coriander/mint. The tarator is a traditional Balkan dish, and popular in Israel and in all \ Mediteranean countries. The cucumbers can be substituted with lettuce or carrots.

Chef Ajeeth Janardhanan serves the tarator as part of his Jewish repertoire in the restaurants of Brunton Boatyard, Cochin.

Ingredients

- 1 long cucumber, grated
- 1 garlic clove, minced or smashed
- 4 cups yoghurt
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 large dill, finely chopped
- 4 cashews, crushed
- 3 tsps olive oil

Direction:

Put all those together and mix well. When ready garnish with olive oil (or other favorite oil). Serve chilled or with crushed ice mixed in.

In Moshav Shahar, on the road between Kiryat Gat and Asheklon, a Cochini Jew named Irit and her husband Sandro run the famed La Terra Promessa winery, along with a restaurant. The vineyard's name means "The Promised Land" in Italian and was established in 1998 by Parma-born Sandro Pelligrini and Irit. Visitors to the vineyard can also enjoy a unique meal combining Ital-

Puttu (moulded steamed rice and coconut) and its perfect partner, Kadala (a black Bengal gram curry). Puttu were originally steamed in large, hollow bamboo canes. Nowadays the mix is steamed inside an ingenious metal contraption shaped the same way to create a long, tubular shape.

From: majboos.rtf

Majboos

Majboos. is an Arabic dish similar to the Malabar chicken biryani of the Muslim community. In the Middle East and the Persian Gulf kingdoms and among the Bedouins , it also goes by the name of Kabsa. It is now served regularly in the Menorah Restaurant at Koder House in Fort Cochin as part of its Cochin Jewish fare. The Majboos can also be a vegetarian dish, if the chicken is replaced with eggplant and zuchini.

Ingredients:

1/2 kg rice
1 kg boneless chicken, cubed
2 large onions, chopped
3 tomatos, chopped
4 cloves
1 tbsp cardamom powder
5 whole cardamom pods
3 cinnamon sticks
1/2 tsp turmeric
2 tsp red chilli powder
1” ginger, smashed
6 cloves of garlic, smashed
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup split peas, boiled.
1 bunch of coriander leaves, chopped
Salt to taste
Vegetable Oil - 1 1/2 cup

Directions:

In a bowl, combine chicken with salt, turmeric and chilli powder and keep aside for about an hour.

In a deep frying pan, heat vegetable oil and fry the chicken until it loses its rawness or is half done. Take chicken out with a slotted ladle.

Add onions, tomatoes, ginger, garlic, cinammon powder to the pan and saute for a few minutes. Add the raisins and the boiled peas.

Add washed rice along with enough water to cover the rice. Stir well.

Add the chicken cubes, cardamom pods and cloves and let mixture come to a boil. Cook covered on medium heat for about 30 minutes.

Uncover and stir contents well. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves..

From: halwa.rtf

<http://www.phyllis-chesler.com/1061/jews-hindus>

The halwa (also known as halwa, halva, halava, helva, etc.) is one of the oldest known confections in the world. The halwa recipe is said to date back some 3000 years ago and to have originated in India or Turkey. In modern Israel, the halwa is a flaky, tahini-based candy, but this is only one of hundreds of different varieties consumed in the Middle East and South Asia. 'Halwah' comes from the Arabic word for "sweet".

In Cochin, the Jews made the halwa mainly with semolina. In Israel, they now use tahini and honey, along with nuts.

In Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market you can't miss the halvah merchants, their tables piled high with huge slabs of the treat in a multitude of flavors, filled with different nuts and seeds, colored and flavored with various extracts. And because the dessert is pareve--neither meat nor dairy--it has always been the perfect kosher deli dessert. Many American Jews grew up on Joyva Halvah; Joyva brought the ancient treat to the United States in 1907, The first batch was produced on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and more than a century later, production continues.

Israeli Honey-Sesame Halvah

It is challenging to achieve the flakiness so famous in Israeli halvah without good experience in candy making. However, even if it comes out smoother and chewier than you are used to, and more like caramel or fudge, this halvah will be incredibly delicious and satisfying.

2 cups honey

1 1/2 cups tahini, well stirred to combine

Up to 2 cups toasted sliced almonds or other nuts (optional)

Directions

Yield

serves 10-12

Heat honey on medium heat until your candy or instant-read thermometer reads 240° F, or indicates the “soft ball” stage of candy making. To confirm that you are at the “soft ball” stage, drop a bit of the honey into a cup of cold water. It should form a sticky and soft ball that flattens when removed from the water.

Have the tahini ready to heat in a separate small pot, and once the honey is at the appropriate temperature, set the honey aside and heat tahini to 120° F.

Add the warmed tahini to the honey and mix with a wooden spoon to combine. At first it will look separated but after a few minutes, the mixture will come together smoothly.

Add the nuts, if using. Continue to mix until the mixture starts to stiffen, for a good 6-8 minutes. Pour mixture into a well-greased loaf pan, or into a greased cake pan with a removable bottom.

Let cool to room temperature and wrap tightly with plastic wrap. Leave in the refrigerator for up to 36 hours. This will allow the sugar crystals to form, which will give the halvah its distinctive texture.

Invert to remove from pan and cut into pieces with a sharp knife.

Will keep for months in the refrigerator, tightly wrapped in plastic--if you don't eat it all first!

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/culture/2/Food/Ashkenazic_Cuisine/Israel/halvah.shtml#less

Rewrite

Halvah probably originated in India. Traders from there brought this treat over the the middle east,

Today, Jewish halvah, as opposed to others, is made from sugar/honey and tahini (sesame paste). Jewish/Israeli Halvah is fairly distinct in that it is dairy-free (pareve),

Cashewnut Halva

Ingredients of Kasuandi/Thenga Halva :

Serves: 4

1. 1 medium-sized, fresh coconut
2. 1 cup ghee
3. 500 gms unsalted, split cashewnuts
4. 1 kg sugar
5. 6 white cardamoms, powdered
6. ½ tsp nutmeg powder

• Method of Preparation of Kasuandiparippu Chertha Thenga Halva

- Cut coconut into very tiny pieces.
- Heat ghee in a frying pan and fry coconut till brown, stirring constantly. Remove from pan, drain and set aside.
 - Add cashewnuts to pan and fry till brown. Remove from heat and set aside with ghee in the pan.
 - Place sugar and 1 ½ cups water in a fresh pan. Place over moderate heat and stir till sugar has dissolved. Bring to boil and boil to the thread stage. (A little syrup poured into a cup of cold water will form a thin thread.)
 - Add reserved coconut and cashewnuts with ghee from pan, and keep stirring and cooking till it solidifies.
 - Sprinkle in cardamom and nutmeg powders, mix well and remove from heat.
 - Spread on a flat greased tray, allow to cool and cut into squares.

_____Thengapapal Chertha Ari Halva - Rice Halva with Coconut Milk

Ingredients :

Serves: 12

Halva with its west Asian antecedents is an important sweet dish for the Malabar Muslims. In fact, a key road in Calicut is called Sweetmeat Street (popularly known as SM street) after the halva shops that lined its sides

once upon a time.

1. 1 kg rice flour
2. 2 litres coconut milk (1st extract)
3. 2 kg sugar
4. ½ tsp salt
5. 2 tbsp ghee
6. 4 white cardamoms, powdered
7. 100 gms unsalted cashewnuts
8. 100 gms sultanas (kishmish)
9. 1 tsp rose-water

10.

11. Method of Preparation :

12. Mix rice flour with coconut milk in a pan. Add sugar and salt, and cook, stirring continuously, till it has the consistency of a very thick porridge.

13. Stir in ghee, cardamom powder, cashewnuts and sultanas. Continue cooking and stirring till it begins to solidify.

14. Sprinkle in rose-water, mix well and remove from heat.

15. Spread on a flat greased tray, allow to cool and cut into squares.

Thenga Halva - Coconut Halva

Ingredients :

Serves: 6

1. 2 1/2 cups coconut milk (1st extract)
2. 1 1/4 cups milk
3. 1 1/4 cups sugar
4. 1/2 medium -sized, fresh coconut, grated
5. 50 gms unsalted butt

Method of Preparation :

- Mix coconut milk with milk in a pan and bring to boil. Add sugar and grated coconut, and continue cooking, stirring continuously till it solidifies.

- Mix in butter and remove from heat.

- Spread on a flat greased tray, allow to cool and cut into squares.

Back home in olden days, it is usually grounded in Ammikkallu (Mortar-

Pestle with an elongated rolling pin made of stone) without adding water;

Recipe for Ulli Chammanthi /Shallots /Small Onion Chutney

Ingredients :

Shallots /Pearl Onions /Chuvannulli/Cheriyu Ulli : 2 cups

Red Chillies : 6-8 Or substitute with Red Chilli Powder : 2 tsps (use it according to your tolerance level.

Curry leaves : few

Tamarind /Vaalan puli : a small sized ball (gooseberry sized)

Coconut oil : as needed

Salt to taste

Directions:

Method 1 :

1. Grind all the ingredients listed above except coconut oil, together into a coarse paste. Drizzle coconut oil on the top.

Method 2 :

1. Heat coconut oil in a kadai /pan. Add the shallots /small red onions, red chilly and tamarind and saute for a minute. Remove from the fire; allow to cool and grind along with salt. Drizzle coconut oil on the top.

This is a very hot chutney. Add or reduce red chillies according to your taste. Optional - To bring down the heat, if you want can substitute red chilli powder with Kashmiri chilli powder or paprika powder.

—
Kallu means coconut toddy in Malayalam, and Kallappam is a popular rice pancake, made using 'Kallu' as the rising agent. It tastes similar to lacy edged Palappam. In Israel, yeast is used instead of toddy.

This can be taken with any type of stew or spicy veg/non-veg curries.

Kallappam

Ingredients:-

2 cups rice

Raw rice soaked in water for 6 hrs – 2 cups

1 cup cooked rice – 1 cup

1 1/4 cup grated Coconut

1 tsp cumin seeds

6 shallots

1/2 tsp yeast (or 1/2 glass of fresh toddy)

2 tsp sugar

Pinch of salt

Salt – a pinch(just to adjust the sweetness of the batter..use it accordingly)

Method:-

Combine sugar and yeast in 1/4 cup of luke warm water and keep it aside for 5-10 mts.It'll rise to almost double in size.Now grind together all the above ingredients except salt and yeast adding very little water to a smooth paste.Mix in yeast mixture, stir well and allow it to ferment for 8-10 hrs. Here I always keep it in an electric oven, after heating it for 15-20 seconds.

Just before preparing add a pinch of salt and stir well.The batter should be similar to the consistency of iddli batter.

Heat the tawa/pan and apply 1/2 tsp of oil, just like you do for preparing dosa.Pour a ladlefull of batter into the tawa.It'll spread by itself, no need to use the ladle bottom to spread it.

Close the pan with a lid and allow it to cook inside.

After 1 or 2 minutes, turn the appams and cook the other side too until it is lightly browned.

Always cover it with the lid.Serve hot .

Ginger Lime Sherbet

Ingredients:

100 gms fresh ginger

1 cup lime juice

1 cup water

2 tbsp. water

2 cups sugar

Directions:

Wash, peel and grind ginger to a fine paste.

Add 2 tsp. water, pass through a clean muslin cloth to extract juice.

Dissolve sugar in one cup water on low heat.

Add ginger and lime juice after sugar has dissolved.

Heat till mixture boils (approx. 5 minutes).

Remove from heat and cool till warm.

Pour into clean sterile bottle.

Refrigerate and use as concentrate, when required.

PINEAPPLE AND BANANA COCKTAIL

Take equal parts of banana and fresh pineapple; cut into small cubes and cover with lemon or pineapple juice. Serve in glass tumblers with ice.

Ginger wine

In Ginger Wine which I usually make, I will add 1/4 cup of Lime Juice and 1/2 kg of

Ripe Black Grapes. Then we have to keep it in porcelain container for 45 days after adding 1 tsp of yeast. Other ingredients - 1 kg sugar and 1/4 kg Ginger (as mentioned). After 40 days filter through muslin cloth and then we can store this in Fridge also.

Ingredients for Ginger Wine Recipe

Ginger - 1/4 kg

Sugar - 3/4 kg

Citric acid - 20 gm

Water - 2 1/4 lt

Preparation Method of Ginger Wine Recipe

- 1) Clean ginger and slice it into small pieces.
- 2) Add water to the sliced ginger and bring it to boil.
- 3) Once it starts boiling, add sugar and bring the flame to sim for 20 mins.
- 4) Remove from the flame and allow it to cool.
- 5) Add citric acid to the cooled mixture.
- 6) Refrigerate.

Ginger Wine

An easy alternative to making real wine at home is Ginger Wine. Chopped ginger and some spices are boiled together for several hours, resulting in a refreshing drink. Add some brandy or rum to it and it becomes a high-quality, delicious 'ginger wine'. Serve as a welcome aperitif.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup ginger peeled and chopped
3/4 cup sugar
8 cups water
2 pieces cinnamon
5 cloves
4 cardamom
juice of 3 limes
1/4 cup honey
couple of tbsp Brandy (optional)

Directions:

Crush ginger , cinnamon , cloves and cardamoms.

Bring the water to a boil in a pot and add the crushed ingredients and 1/2 cup sugar. Bring to a boil and then keep it on very low flame and simmer for 2 hours till the liquid has reduced to half.

Then caramelize the 1/4 cup sugar and add to the pot.

Let it cool down .Taste and then add the lime juice and honey according to taste.Mix well.

Add brandy if required and serve.

Ginger Wine Recipe

Ingredients:

Sugar - 1.4 kg
Brandy - 75 ml
Water - 4.4 ltr
Fresh yeast - 1 tsp
Lemon (zest and juice) - 1 no.
Ginger (peeled and bruised) - 40 gms.

Raisins (stoned and chopped) - 110 gms.

Preparation:

1. Add the water, sugar, lemon zest and bruised ginger to a very clean saucepan. Bring to the boil, simmer for 1 hour.
2. Remove any scum and transfer to a large bowl. When it is luke-warm, add the yeast and leave overnight.
3. Next day, strain the lemon juice and add to the mix along with the chopped raisins. Place everything in a suitable vessel.
4. Stir the wine every day for 14 days. Add the brandy. In a few weeks it will be ready to bottle.

__Lime And Ginger Wine - Spicy

Ingredients:

1. Water – 750 ml + 750 ml (for boiling)
2. Sugar – 450 gm
3. Cardamom – 8 no's
4. Cloves – 8no's
5. Nutmug ½
6. Red chilly – 2 no's
7. Lemon – 3 no's
8. Cinnamon – 3 pieces
9. Ginger – 3 pieces
10. Caramelized sugar ½ spoon

Preparation:

- Crush all the ingredients except lemon, sugar and caramelized sugar.
- All the crushed ingredients and sugar boil in a pot for half an hour in slow fire.
- There after add the lime juice (with 750 ml water) and caramelized sugar boil for another 5 minutes.
- Keep the pot out of the oven and cool the syrup and keep it strained.

If needed add 30 ml Rum for flavor and keep the wine in a closed container for tree weeks and then keep it in a refrigerator and can be used.

Kokam Sherbet

Kokam, which resembles a small, dark purple plum, is the fruit of a tropical evergreen tree (*Garcinia indica*) that grows only in India.

The dried, very dark purple, flattened rind is rather sticky and has curled edges and a fruity, balsamic aroma with tannic notes. Its flavor is sharp, acidic, and salty, with refreshing dried-fruit sweetness.

Kokam is used in India as a souring agent like tamarind or amchur. Big glasses of kokam sharbat (a cold beverage) are drunk to counteract the blazing heat.

What to buy: Kokam is sold whole or in small leathery pieces. The deeper the color, the better the quality. Look for kokam at Indian markets and buy in small quantities, as the soft, pliable rinds dry out and lose their flavor.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup kokam
- 1 teaspoon toasted and ground cumin seeds
- 4 cups water
- 2 cups sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak dried kokam in hot water to cover until soft. Using a blender or food processor, puree with cumin seeds. Strain the puree, discarding the solids.
2. Boil water with sugar to make a syrup. Add the strained puree to the cooled syrup and mix well.
3. Add 1/4 cup of the mixture to a large glass of ice-cold water and mix well. Serve chilled with ice.

Dry Cocunt Chutney Chamangthi podi

Ingredients:

Grated coconut, roasted

-

1 Cup Sliced shallots

-

5 no Sliced ginger

-

1/4 inch piece (1tsp)

Tamarind -
a small ball
Red chillies
-
3-4 no (cut into half's)
Curry leaves
-
one sprig
Salt
-
to taste

Method of Preparation :

Grate roast evenly in a mixer. Make sure that that the Coconut is fresh. Roast coconut, red chillies, ginger, curry leaves and shallots in a non stick pan until golden brown. Keep on stirring so that it is evenly roasted. It will take around 3-4 minutes. Towards the end add a little bit of tamarind. Add required salt, grind all the above ingredients to a powder. If oil come outs add some shallot so that oil is absorbed. The chutney will stay for around 3-4 weeks. It can served with rice, iddly or Dosa.

Ulli Chammanthi

Posted by Annita on November 6, 2008

I've blogged about an Onion chutney before, eventhough this one is also prepared with Onions , this is not a chutney, we call it Chammanthi. Chutneys and chammanthis are different, chammanthi is usually prepared in 'Ammikkallu /Arakallu ' (a variety of Mortar-Pestle), without adding any water. Here you can prepare it either in a small jar of an Indian mixer or in a wet grinder. This chutney goes well with Kappa/iddli.

Recipe follows

Ingredients :-

Shallots /Pearl Onions(Kunjulli) – 10 medium sized

Red Chillies/Green chillies – 5-6 (use it according to your spice level. Or else you can substitute 2-3 tsps of Chilli powder. You can also mix paprika with red chilly powder for a bright red color.)

Curry leaves – a sprig

Tamarind (Vaalan puli)- a gooseberry(nellikka) sized ball

Salt – to taste

Coconut oil – as needed

Method:-

Grind all the ingredients except coconut oil, together into a coarse paste. Season with coconut oil and serve.

Note :- Alternatively you can saute onions,curry leaves and chillies(only if you're using red chillies/chilly powder,we dont usually fry green chillies ,it can be ground raw along with other ingredients) in a little oil before grinding.Rest of the procedure remains same.

Atta is the flour used to make most South Asian flatbreads, such as chapati, roti, naan and puri. Most atta is milled from the semi-hard wheat varieties, also known as durum wheat, that comprise 90% of the Indian wheat crop, and is more precisely called durum atta.[1]

Hard wheats have a high content of gluten (a protein composite that gives elasticity), so doughs made out of atta flour are strong and can be rolled out very thin.

nd now, the recipe, according to us:

Chapatis.

(Makes 8 chapatis – can be doubled, tripled, etc.)

Ingredients:

1 cup of atta flour + extra for flouring surfaces

1 tsp salt

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil or ghee

1 cup warm water (approximately)

olive oil or ghee (optional) for frying

butter, margarine or ghee (optional) to coat when finished

Directions:

1. Combine flour and salt with a fork
2. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil or ghee and pretend you're making pastry – chop it around with a fork or knead it in with your hands.
3. Make a well in the middle and add warm water, kneading as you add it, until the dough feels soft but not crazy-sticky.
4. Turn dough out onto a floured surface and knead for about 10 minutes – until it's really soft and squishy and verging on sticky.

5. Wrap the dough up in plastic wrap and set it aside on the counter. You can leave it for 30 minutes or a full day.

6. When you're ready to make chapatis, unwrap the dough and divide it into 8 chunks.

7. Heat a heavy pan to medium-high. We used a ceramic 7□ pan (not teflon) but other people use cast iron. You can choose whether to oil it with ghee, olive oil, or not at all; we don't oil it at all.

8. Take one of the chunks and roll it into a ball in the palm of your floured hand. Flatten it, then use a floured rolling pin to roll it out to a 7□ circle. Do not flip it while you're rolling, just change the direction you roll. Leave the unused chunks covered lightly until you're ready to roll them out.

9. When the pan is heated, place the rolled-out chapati dough top-down on the centre of the pan. Count to 15 and flip it over. The cooked side should be lightly browned but not burnt or crispy.

10. Watch the dough circle until a few small, puffy bubbles appear on it – in the middle and/or sides. This can take anywhere from 15 seconds to a full minute, depending on your heat setting.

11. Flip the dough back over to the first side again.

12. Right after flipping, use a wad of paper towel or a thick, clean towel, and press down around the edges. The chapatis will balloon up!

13. When it's puffed up, remove it from the heat and smear it with butter or ghee (this is optional but tastes SO GOOD!)

14. Check out both sides of the chapati and see if it's done to your liking. Adjust your cooking times accordingly for the next attempt.

Notes:

Our chapati was cooked for about 15 seconds on the first side, then about 15 seconds on the second, then flipped over again to puff up. Depending on the heat setting you use, it can take longer. The general sentiment is that it should be a fairly quick dough to cook and will require attention as you do it. Experiment with timing and, as well, with the thickness of the dough when it's rolled out. We found that the chapatis tasted best when the dough was about 1 mm thick.

Roti is also known as chapati or fulka. Roti is Indian flat bread made with whole-wheat flour. Roti is served with a variety of cooked vegetables, lentils, and yogurt.

Recipe will makes 4 Rotis.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup lukewarm water (Use more as needed)

Also needed

- 2 teaspoons ghee (clear butter)
- 1/4 cup whole-wheat flour for rolling

Method

1. Mix flour, salt and water together to make a soft dough (add more water as needed).
2. Knead the dough on a lightly greased surface to make the dough smooth and pliable.
3. Set the dough aside and cover with a damp cloth. Let the dough rest for at least ten minutes or more.
4. Divide the dough into 8 equal parts.
5. Make smooth ball and press flat. Take 1 ball; press it in dry flour from both sides.
6. Roll in to a 5-inch circle. If the dough sticks to the rolling pin or rolling surface, lightly dust the roti with dry flour. Tip: Use the dry flour just enough you need to roll the roti, too much use of flour will make the roti dry.
7. Heat the skillet on medium high heat. Note: An iron skillet works best. To know if the skillet is hot enough, sprinkle few drops of water on the skillet. If the water sizzles right away, the skillet is ready.
8. Place the roti over skillet.
9. After roti start changing color and start puffing in different places flip the roti over.
10. Flip again after a few seconds. Take a flat spatula and press lightly on the puffed parts of the roti. This will help the roti puff.
11. Flip the roti again. The roti should have light golden-brown spots on both sides.
12. Butter the roti, the side that is facing the skillet.
13. Keep the rotis in a container with a paper towel covering the bottom.
14. Roti can be kept outside for up to 2 days wrapped in aluminum foil or in a closed container. For later use, roti can be refrigerated for 5-6 days.

This sounds a lot like an old Alexandria (Virginia) recipe my dad's family has made for generations – they call them “puffs”. My daughter loves to help make them and watch them puff – she also squeals in delight as they do

it! With us, they're usually a breakfast food – and we negate all nutritional value by stuffing them full of eggs, bacon, jelly – whatever is handy. I think they're also similar to Navajo fry bread.

thenga chammandi

Back to the recipe, I think chammanthi is something that you can call the perfect homely food. If you can give me a plate of steaming rice & freshly ground coconut chammanthi, I'll be one happy soul. In fact, more happier than eating a piece of cake :) I promised this chammanthi recipe long time ago when I posted the manga chammanthi, but i forgot about it. I guess there are a zillion ways of making chammanthi... with & without shallots, with & without ginger, with & without curryleaves & it goes on. Below is one of my all time fav chammanthi recipe, which I ask Sarasa chechy to make for me every time I go home. It tastes heavenly especially if its made on ammikallu (picture given below). The coconut milk just oozes out from the freshly ground coconut & that gives a very moist chammanthi. Ok, I need to stop writing, otherwise my keypad will be drenched with my drool. I miss home :(

Thenga Chammanthi (Coconut Chutney)

Serves: 4-5

A spicy coconut accompaniment for rice, dosa & idli.

Ingredients

- Coconut – 1 cup (If you use freshly scraped coconut, nothing like it)
- Dried red chilli flakes -1-2 tsp (refer notes)
- Small/pearl onions – 4, sliced
- Ginger – 1/2 tsp, chopped
- Tamarind (valan puli or sambar puli) – size of a small lime (refer notes)
- Salt
- Coconut Oil
- Curryleaves – 3-5 leaves

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a pan & add small onions, ginger, curry leaves & dried red chilli flakes. Fry for 2-3 minutes, till you get the roasted smell.

Add coconut & mix well. Just fry it for a minute or two. DO NOT brown it. Remove from fire & let it cool. Add tamarind & salt to this mix. Grind it in the smallest jar of the mixie. Ideally no water should be added, but I end up adding 1/2 – 1 tbsp of water. You can serve it with rice,kanji or idli & dosa.

Notes

If you dont have dried red chilli, you can use chilli powder. Use around 2 tsp (adjust to suit your taste). Also you can increase or reduce the qty of tamarind to suit your taste. But first do a taste test of tamarind, some variety tends to be very strong. Also its better to add salt after tasting tamarind, because some tamarinds can be very salty. So adjust the qty of salt accordingly. Try to grind the chammanthi without water, if its possible.

Thenga chuttaracha chammanthi holds a very special place among all the chutneys, mostly for the method it is prepared and the distinct taste from the dry-roasted coconut.Traditionally this is made after roasting the coconut in the wood burning fire-herth. You toss in the coconut pieces and the red chilies in the ashes and the coal pieces left after you burn the wood and let them roast. I cannot guarantee you that the method I explained here will give you the chutney with the exact same taste,but I gaurantee it will taste delicious! The coconut gets a smoky flavor from the wood fire-herth, whereas sadly we cannot replicate that on the stove top.But still this tastes good and quench my taste buds when I'm in a mood to have some chuttaracha chammanthi.

Another major difference from the traditional one ,is the way it is ground. As most of you know, we used to grind everything using stone. Ammikallu, for semi wet grinding, aattukallu for wet grinding and ural for dry grinding. Still I have them in my parent's house, though they don't use them much anymore, maybe ammikkallu/arakallu being an exception. Guess I should take some pictures of those when I visit Kerala next time, since my kids won't even know what these are, when they grow up.The chutneys made on ammikkallu is definitely different from what we make using a mixer grinder.

Ingredients:

Coconut pieces- from 1/4th of a coconut

Dried Red Chilies- 4-5

Tamarind- gooseberry size (around 1 tsp)

Salt- To taste

Shallots- 2-3 small

Curry leaves- 2-3

Method:

1.Dry roast the coconut pieces in a large non sticky pan, on medium heat.Turn the sides when they turn brown.Once both the sides are done take them out from the pan.The coconut shouldn't burn, but there shouldn't be any white left on them.

2.Dry roast the red chilies too,turning the sides in between, till they change the color.

3.Let the coconut and chilies cool down a bit.

4.Grind them with the other ingredients in a mixie/grinder.Sprinkle a couple of spoons of water to let the chutney come together.I don't grind it fine, we prefer it to be a bit coarse.

5.Serve with warm rice and any other side dishes of your choice.

Some would disagree about the origins, as well as the recipe. The word halvah (alternatively halwa, halva, halava, helva, halawa, elwa, etc.), originally derived from the Arabic root alw (“sweet”), is used to describe many distinct types of confections across the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and the Balkans. Halva based on semolina is popular in India, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Another common type, based on tahini (sesame paste), is more popular in the eastern Mediterranean and Balkan regions, in countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Greece, Cyprus, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Macedonia, Albania, Northern Cyprus, Syria, Central Asia, the Caucasus region and Turkey.

Halvah may also be made from a variety of other ingredients, including sunflower seeds, various nuts, beans, lentils and vegetables, like carrots, pumpkins, yams and squashes.

Marak Oaf

Cochin Jewish Chicken Soup

Marak Oaf is a hearty chicken broth with vegetables and meatballs and is a great starter course. The dominant flavour is coriander.

Ingredients

1kg of chicken, cut into pieces, bone in
3 large potatoes
3 medium carrots
3 large tomatoes tomato-2
2 large onions- peeled and sliced
4 stalks of celery
1 bunch of coriander leaves
salt and pepper to taste
1 1/2 tbs of vinegar

Directions

Fill a big pot with 2 litres of water, add all ingredients, except the coriander.

Boil on high flame.

Add 3/4 tsp of turmeric

When the pot starts bubbling, lower the heat and close the lid.

Cook for 30 to 40 minutes.

Check if the chicken is done; then add the coriander leaves

Take pot off fire and let cool for 30 mins as spices mingle with the broth.

<http://www.grouprecipes.com/47615/cochin-lamb-soup.html>

Cochin Lamb Soup

Ingredients

lamb legs; 500 gms chopped in small pieces.

lamb stock : 6 cups.

Onions: 50 gms sliced.

Garlic: 2 pods crushed.

cloves:2 nos.

cinnamon : 1/2" -1 piece.

Peppercorns: 3-4 pieces crushed.

curry leaves : 3 leaves.

Turmeric: 1/2 tsp.

salt : for taste

Seasoning:

onions finely chopped: 150 gms

vegetable oil :15 gms

Cornflour: 5 gms

white pepper powder for taste

Garnish.

shallots finely diced :20gms shopping list

clarified butter :10 gms

mustard seeds : 10 gms.

How to make it - 45 minutes to make - serves 4

- Add all ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to boil.
- Remove from the flame when the water is reduced to almost 5 cups and the lamb is cooked well.
- Strain the soup in a large sieve.Keep aside.
- In a fry pan add the clarified butter and sautee the onion kept for seasoning till brown in color.
- Add the cornflour till its done.
- Add salt and pepper and add this mixture to the soup and boil on a low flame.
- Splutter the mustards in clarified butter kept for seasoning and fry the shallots till brown.
- Remove the soup from fire and add the garnish on top.
- Serve hot.

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Cochin Jewish Lamb Chops
(Attirachi Varattiyathu)
(Serves 4)

This is a rare, exquisitely flavoured and aromatic dish from Jewish Cochin. Lamb has not been very common in Kerala Jewish kitchens for several years now because there has not been a shohet or ritual slaughterer in the community.

and aromatic spices, delicately cooked with ground coconut, shallots, fresh plum tomatoes and finely tempered with fennel seeds and curry leaves.

Ingredients

- 6 to 8 double mutton chops
- 1 tbs freshly ground black pepper • 2-3 tbs soya sauce
- 1-2 tbs Worcester sauce
- 1tbs tomato sauce
- 2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- a pinch of ground green cardamom
- salt to taste
- oil for frying

Method

Marinate the meat with all the above ingredients overnight. Cook the chops (add some water if required) till almost done. Remove the chops from any liquid left and pan fry them. Use leftover liquid to baste. Serve the chops with soft bread, mashed potatoes or French fries.

Coriander/Coconut Chutney

- 1/2 cup plain yoghurt
- 1 cup - coriander leaves, loosely packed
- 1 cup coconut - freshly grated
- 2” ginger. chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 shallots - chopped
- 3 green chillies
- 2 tsp vinegar
- Salt to taste

Process all ingredients in a blender until smooth.

Serve alongside fried fish or spread thickly on bread slices with butter and a sprinkle of sugar on top to make a delightful tea-time sandwich.

Can be stored in a refrigerator for up to five days.

Variant: **Coriander/Coconut Chutney** with raw mango. Follow the same steps but add pieces of a large raw mango before processing. A pinch of sugar balances the sourness of the mango.

Courtesy: Bezallel Eliyahou, Quidroon , Israel.

Idiyappam or Noolappam (String Hoppers)

Idiyappam is a favourite breakfast food across Kerala and the Cochin Jewish community also adopted this with gusto as it goes along well with various kinds of savoury stews or just plain with coconut milk and sugar.

Ingredients:

500 gms - rice flour (red rice flour and steamed flour mixed)

1/2 tsp salt

500ml boiling water

String hopper mould or idiyappam press (available at South Asian stores)

Directions:

Dry roast the flour.

In a bowl, mix the salt and flour well with a ladle.

Add the water gradually and, mix contents into a pliable dough.

Put a little of the dough into the lightly oiled,, string hopper mould and squeeze the paster onto string hopper mats in a circular fashion.

Place mats in a steamer and steam for about 5 minutes.

You can add grated coconut, cardamom powder and sugar with the idiyappam to get a delightful variation on the simple idiyappam. Serve with coconut milk and sugar or choice of your curry.

While up North I had the opportunity to eat a meal of traditional food of the Cochin Jews. I don't have contact info, unfortunately. I was staying in Rosh Pina, and I imagine if you ask around there, they could point you in the right direction. The "restaurant" is really the converted porch of a house on a moshav which I believe has a large number of Cochin Jews. We were given about 12 courses, of which at least half were delicious, and the others were at least tasty and interesting.

Linda Hertzman (née Salem) is a Cochin Jew who has made a name for herself in the catering business in Vancouver, Canada. Known as the Spice

Chef, “she routinely wows Vancouver’s Jewish Community with exceptional food that goes far beyond ordinary Ashkenazi fare”.*

Linda grew up in Cochin’s Jew Town in Mattancherry and made aliyah* in 1983 - but came to Toronto soon after getting married. Although she had a degree in psychology, her first love was cooking and so completed courses in food service and restaurant management from George Brown College and Seneca in Toronto. Her family’s first venture was the Raisins, Almonds & More kosher food store in Toronto. The Hertzmanns later moved to Vancouver with their three children - where they purchased a restaurant and called it Aviv’s Kosher Meats, with Linda working in the kitchen and then branching out into catering. She now runs a successful company called Classic Impressions, specializing in gourmet kosher cuisine for any occasion, from “elaborate b’nei mitzvah receptions to intimate brisses, luncheons, weddings and everything in-between... Our reputation is for food that lingers in memory long after the last forkful has been consumed.” Her Toronto-born husband Steve manages the Kosher Food Warehouse in Vancouver.

Linda says: ““I put a lot of Cochini fusion into my dishes, making items like kubbah, a dumpling with a meat filling and pastels, similar to blintzes but more savoury. I love playing around with flavours, trying out different things....” She also makes great hammin, the traditional Cochini cholent or kofta kababs and fish with a mix of other Sephardic flavours. “It’s all about themes these days,” says Linda. “We’ll still have salmon on the menu, but it’s more likely to be miso salmon rather than lemon pepper.”

Here’s the fusion Salmon Miso recipe from Linda:

(Miso is a fermented bean paste and is a traditional Japanese seasoning. Made with rice, barley or wheat and soyabeans combined with salt and a yeast mold called koji, it is a concentrated, savoury food additive. The mixture, which is aged sometimes for up to three years, can be used in sauces and spreads and in meat and vegetable pickles, dips and casseroles. Beware, it is high in sodium! - Bala Menon)

Serves 6 portions

1 kg of salmon fillets

1 cup miso paste

1/2 cup brown sugar or honey

2 tsp sesame oil

2 tsp fresh, minced ginger
2 tsp fresh minced garlic
1/4 cup rice vinegar

Directions:

Add all ingredients in a large skillet in about 1” of water and bring the mixture up to boil.

Let cool.

Marinate the salmon in the mixture for up to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C)

Bake the salmon until the fillets are cooked. Alternately, grill them.

Serve with sticky rice.

http://www.dvo.com/recipe_pages/india/Cochin_Masala_Fish_with_Pearl_Onions.html

Cochin Meen Kari)

Category: Fish Curries

Makes 4 to 6 servings

This recipe is generally made with mackerel but I find that almost any firm fish works well--even salmon and tuna. With its thick and spicy gravy, this dish is a perfect accompaniment to fresh chapati (whole-wheat grid-dle breads). The cumin and coriander seeds are meant to remain coarsely ground in the masala paste. They add to the flavor.

- ___ cup Coconut Milk (or store-bought)
- _ cloves fresh garlic (large), peeled
- ___ leafs fresh curry
- _ to 3 fresh green chili peppers, such as serrano, stemmed
- _ tablespoon cumin seeds
- _ tablespoon coriander seeds
- ___ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ___ teaspoon ground asafoetida
- ___ teaspoon salt, or to taste
- _ tablespoon coconut oil or peanut oil
- ___ to 20 pearl onions, peeled
- _ 1/2 pounds firm white fish fillets, such as sea bass or halibut, about 3/4-inch thick, cut into 2-inch pieces
- ___ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro, including soft stems
- _ to 2 cups water
- _ cup coarsely chopped tomatoes

1. Prepare the coconut milk. In a blender or a food processor, blend together the garlic, curry leaves, green chili peppers, cumin, coriander, turmeric, asafoetida, salt, and 1/4 cup coconut milk to make a smooth paste.

2. Heat the oil in a large nonstick wok or saucepan over medium-high heat and cook the pearl onions, stirring, until golden, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic-coconut milk paste and cook over medium heat until fragrant and golden, 5 minutes.

3. Add the fish and cook, turning once, about 2 minutes per side, then add the remaining 1/4 cup coconut milk and the cilantro and cook until the oil separates to the sides, about 2 minutes.

4. Add the water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover the pan, and simmer until the sauce is thick and the fish is tender but not breaking apart, about 5 minutes.

5. Transfer to a serving dish, cover with another dish, and keep warm. To the same pan, add the tomatoes and cook, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Spread evenly over the cooked fish as a garnish. Serve hot.

Simple Sardine Fish Curry

This version of fish curry uses the kodampuli (*Garcinia cambogia* or the Malabar tamarind) for that refreshing sourness that enhances the flavours of everything else that goes into the dish. The dried kodampuli is purplish black in colour;

Ingredients:

- 1/2 kg sardine
- 1/4 cup pearl onion or shallots, chopped
- 3 to 4 pieces, Dried Kodampuli -
- 1/2 cup grated coconut
- 1.5 tbsp -red chilli powder
- 1 tbsp - ginger, chopped fine
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 3 green chillies - sliced
- 3 sprigs of coriander
- 2 tbsp coriander powder
- Salt - to taste
- Oil - 2 tbsp,

Directions:

1. Grind the coconut with few spoons of water into fine paste.
2. Soak the kodampuli in 1/4 cup water for 5 minutes. Discard water and again soak in 1/4 cup water for 10 minutes.
3. Clean and cut the fish into 1.5 to 2 inch. long pieces.
4. Take an earthen pot / mud vessel (alternatively use thick bottom metal skillet) add the fish pieces and pour water till the fish pieces are just immersed. Add all the ingredients mentioned in the list including ground coconut and kokum along with soaked water into the fish pot, mix well and set aside to marinate for 15 minutes. Do not refrigerate.
5. Place the pot on fire and cook in medium flame for about 10 to 12 minutes till the fish pieces are soft and tender. Do not use ladle to saute in between. Lower the flame and just swirl the pot lightly. Adjust salt and spice according to taste.
6. Heat oil in another pan, saute pearl onion and curry leaves till the onions start to brown. You can also add 1/2 tsp of chilly powder if you need extra spice.
7. Add this seasoning to the curry and serve hot with rice.

_____The answer is that the Hebrew word for “fowl” (owph, pronounced “oaf”)

CHICKEN WITH GREEN CHILIES & TAMARIND

A rich, piquant curry from the Jews of Kochi, who enjoyed very spicy foods like this green chili-laced curry. Because of the quantity of chilies called for, remove their seeds so their flavor can come through without the burning heat. It is not necessary to remove the chilies from the dish before serving.

- 1/2 t. tamarind concentrate
- 7 to 10 fresh green chilies (serrano or Thai), to taste
- 5 T. vegetable oil
- 12 to 15 fresh curry leaves
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 2 t. minced garlic
- 2 t. minced ginger
- Ground masala:
 - 3 t. coriander

1 t. cumin
1/4 t. turmeric
1/8 t. cayenne
1 cup chopped tomato
1 t. salt
1/2 t. sugar
2 pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs,
trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes

1. In a small bowl, combine the tamarind concentrate and 2 tablespoons hot water. Using your fingers, break up tamarind to dissolve completely.

2. If your fingers are sensitive, wear rubber gloves for this step. Remove and discard stems from green chilies and slice in half lengthwise. With a sharp knife remove seeds and ribs; discard. Set chilies aside.

3. In a wide, deep pan heat the oil over medium high heat. Toss in the curry leaves and after they crackle for a few seconds add the onion and fry until soft. Stir in the garlic, ginger, and green chilies and fry until the onion begins to brown. Add the ground masala, tomato, salt, sugar, and 1 cup water and fry until tomato breaks down and mixture becomes paste-like. Sprinkle in a little more water if the mixture dries out.

4. Put in the chicken and dissolved tamarind and simmer over medium low heat, covered, for 35 to 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. The sauce should be moderately thick. Taste for salt before serving.

Serves: 6 to 8

Recipe can be prepared a day in advance and reheated.

The Cochin Jewish Cake is considered a jewel in the community's culinary repertoire.

Mathew Anthony, son of Dr. Mary Anthony (nee Malkah Salem) of Mattancherry (who had a flourishing medical practice in Ernakulam in the latter half of the 20th century) speaks wistfully of this 'Jew Town food'.

"There was this very rich Jewish Cake which my mother used to make and distribute to friends. I used to take this cake to school and it was a big hit with my school principal's wife. She tried to make it several times using my mother's recipe but it always turned out to be a dud, apparently. The

real taste of the cake is now only a memory for me...”

Katz and Goldberg writes in their Last Jews of Cochin: “All during the week preceding Rosh Hoshanah, every house is filled with the sweet aromas of cakes and cookies in the oven. A Rosh Hoshanan specialty is the delicious “wedding cake.”...(A) rich batter of semolina, eggs, sugar, ghee, nuts and raisins...(are mixed)...in a large bowl called kangalam. The individual sized cakes...are distributed among neighbours, especially non-Jewish friends.”

Fruit has always been a major item for Cochini Jews during the Rosh Hoshana holidays. Katz and Goldberg recounts how the rosh Hoshana tables in many homes were laden with ‘more than a dozen dishes of cut fruit’. These included pneapples, bananas, oranges, green and red grapes, pomegranates, bamblamus, guavas melons and zappotas, followed by dried fruits like dates, figs and raisins. Also mentioned are plenty of legumes, leeks and green pumpkins*

Katz and Goldberg pg 173-174

Cochin Jewish Cake

(also known as Wedding Cake or

Rosh Hashanah Cake or Cochin Jewish Spice Cake)

These cakes are special items made for the Jewish New Year and community weddings. Spices like cardamom and clove give it a deliciously warm flavour. The addition of cinnamon and nuts like almonds are optional. Some families make this cake also for the Festival of Shavot which falls 40 days after Passover. - Dr. Essie Sassoon

Ingredients:

1/2 kg semolina

- 1/2 kg sugar
- 1/2 kg cashew nuts
- 1/2 kg raisins
- 1/2 kg ghee (clarified butter of buter)
- 12 large eggs
- 12 cardamom pods, husked and crushed
- 12 cloves, powdered
- 2 or 3 nugmegs, powdered
- 1 1/2 ounce brandy or rum

Directions:

1. Roughly chop cashewnuts and raisins together or rough grind them.
2. Crack the eggs into a large bowl, add sugar and whisk at speed until it becomes a creamy yellow.
3. Slowly add the powdered spices - cardamom, cloves and nutmeg to the egg and sugar mixture, stirring well with each ingredient..
4. Add the crushed cashewnuts and raisins. Mix well.
5. Add the semolina gently, stirring well to prevent clumping.
6. Add the ghee.
7. Add brandy or rum. Let mixture stand for about two hours.
8. Preheat oven to 180 degrees and grease baking trays with parchment/baking paper.
9. Pour mixture into tray, level off and bake for between 30 to 45 minutes or until the top starts browning. Test with a toothpick or skewer. If it comes out clean, the cake is done. In not, bake for another few minutes. Don't use a knife for testing; it may lead the batter to collapse.
10. (For small, individual sized cakes, grease and line small baking tins with butter paper and pour batter into them.)

Burdoor/Bolkasria

Cochin Jewish Sponge Cake

Flour, eggs and sugar are brought together to create this light and fluffy cake. It is similar to the pound cake of the U.S. or the Madeira cake in Britain. Only a little butter is used and a variety of fillings can be used between the cake layers. This cake which can contain sweet fillings between layers is very popular in Israel where it is called 'tort. The Cochin Jews also cut up this cake into pieces which are then dried in the oven to create the crisp and dry bolkasria, similar to a biscuit.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups all-purpose/self raising flour
- 12 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups sugar
- Juice of 2 lemons, juiced
- 2 tps lemon rind, chopped fine
- 2 tsp clarified butter
- 2 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

Directions:

Break the eggs into a large bowl. Separate the yolks and place in another bowl.

Add the sugar to the yolks and whisk briskly until it is pale yellow in colour and has the consistency of cream.

Mix in the lemon juice and rind and whisk again.

Beat the egg whites with the salt and baking powder until peaks form.

Spread this mixture atop the egg yolk mixture.

Fold in the flour gently with a spatula, mixing well.

Pour the batter into a large baking pan, brushed with the clarified butter.

Preheat oven to 325 ° F. Bake for about 45 minutes until the edges begin to come off the pan and the cake is spongy to the touch.

KUBBAH HAMIDH Baghdadi Jewish recipe

2 cups rice

1 cup minced lean mutton

Soak the rice in water for an hour. Drain and grind fine while still wet. Mix the well-minced meat (free from fat) with the ground rice to make a thick paste.

This mixture is used for the casing.

1 1/2 cups minced meat

1/4 cup minced onion

parsley (optional)

salt and pepper

Mix the minced meat and onion and season to taste_

This is used for the stuffing.

Take a small piece of the casing paste and flatten it till about 1/4 inch thick and about 3 inches in diameter. Put some stuffing onto it and work the casing round to form a ball. Continue till all the material is used up. Complete one Kubbah before making the flat casing for the next.

1 lb. bones

8 cups water

2 lb. vegetable marrow or turnip or egg plant

1/2 tsp. tomato paste

~1 --~1 cup lemon juice according to taste

1 tsp. dried mint

Bring the bones to the boil. Add the vegetable in large slices (use one vegetable only), the tomato paste, the lemon juice and the dried mint. Boil for about 1.~ hours. Add the Kubbahs and boil again until they are well cooked, about 1/4 hour. Remove bones, season and serve.

The success of this dish depends on the casing of the kubbah being made very thin.

That was followed by the “Kubba” stuffed chicken dumpling in Jewish gravy, this least spicy curry went well with the chapattis and “Plav”

Kubbeh is a small pocket of dough that is stuffed with ground beef and pine nuts. Kubbeh for soup is usually boiled, whereas Kubbeh served on a platter is fried. Enjoy this traditional recipe for kosher Kubbeh Soup, or Marak Kubbeh in Hebrew.

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 Tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 carrots, cut into rounds
- 3 zucchini, cut into rounds
- 2 Tablespoons chicken soup powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon salt
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 1/2 liters (10 cups) water
- frozen kubbeh

Preparation:

1. Heat the oil in a skillet. Saute the onion until transparent. Add the tomato paste slowly and heat through.

2. Fill a soup pot with 2 1/2 liters (10 cups) of water. Stir in the tomato and onion mixture from the skillet and the carrots.

3. Bring to a boil.

4. Add the zucchini, spices and frozen Kubbeh.

5. Turn down the flame, and cook, partially covered, for another 20-30

minutes.

“It was a time we did not have electricity and no oven to keep the food warm for shabbat. One or two rich families had a big oven built, as big as a room, where they kept burning coconut shells on the side and closed the small doors. On Friday evenings most of the Jews would bring their food, either hammin or rice in a pot, and keep it in one of those ovens.” Ruby Daniels about life in Cochin in the early 20th century.*

Page 40, Bridges magazine, Volume 7, Number 1, “More Memories of Cochin Jew Town”, by Ruby Daniel

One of the most traditional of Jewish foods that survived thousands of years of upheaval, dispersal and settlement has been the cholent. It is said that in ancient days, Jewish mothers kept their iron vessels with the meat/vegetables or whatever was then available near embers left burning in their stoves or pottery kilns. All the ingredients cooked on through the night and became a delightful dish for Shabbat.

The Ashkenazi Jews called this dish cholent, Central and Western Europeans called it shalet and in Cochin, it went by the Sephardic name of hamin (Arabic for hot), with the distinct flavours of Kerala melding the ingredients together. Like mothers everywhere, Cochini Jewish women also immersed half a dozen eggs in the mixture to be a mystery treat for children the next day when the hamin is ladled into the bowls. The main ingredient was chicken that melted from the bones and mixed with the rich gravy.

Cochin Jews in Israel have made one change today in their way of cooking the hamin.. They now use electric crockpots and platos - but the elders aver that the hamin does not compare well with the dish cooked with real heat!.

There is no fixed recipe, however, for cholent/hamin. It is said that that anything kosher and edible goes. In 1998, an Israeli-wide cholent competition organized in Jerusalem attracted 131 entries. The prize went to a Tripolitanian spinach cholent which had stuffed vegetables, chicken and beef, semolina dumplings and a mixture of spices*

*<http://jewishmag.com/43mag/cholent/cholent.htm>

I remember we had a big baker's oven, for all of Jew Town., which was

used for the Shabbath dish -Hamim. The oven was called Porna - in Malayalam. and it was in Puthan Veedu or Sassoon Hall, the house next to Sarah Cohen's home on Synagoguge Lane. The name Sassoon Hall still hangs outside the house, which is now the property of the synaggouge and has been locked up for years now . 'Porna' came from the Spanish word 'horno' for oven or furnace. This, in turn, came from the Portuguge word for oven or kiln "Forno." - Dr. Essie Sassoon

Cochini Hamin

made with chicken and rice

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 2 cups rice
- 1 kg chicken, cut into desired pieces.
- 3 large onions, chopped
- 5 carrots, grated
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 potato, chopped
- 2" ginger, grated
- 5 cardamom pods, husked/crushed
- 1 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp pepper
- 5 cloves
- Salt to taste
- 6-8 eggs
- 3 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 cups water

Directions:

1. Heat the oil in an oven-proof pot (a pot that can be put on the Shabbat plata*)
2. Add the onions and sautee until tender. Add salt, turmeric and pepper and fry for a minute.
3. Add the grated carrots, ginger and tomatoes and potato along with the chicken pieces. Mix well.
4. When the chicken is half done, add the rice that has been thoroughly washed.
5. Add 4 cups of preferably boiling water. Stir well and close pot.
6. Lower heat to minimum and cook for 20 minutes or until rice is cooked. (If a crockpot is being used, allow the rice to cook slowly for 16 to 20 hours)

7. Hard boil the eggs and place in pot. The eggs will turn a delightful brown color the next day.

8. Transfer the pot to a pre-heated oven or Shabbat plata until lunch the next day. (The oven can be adjusted to Shabbat setting).

9. Remove the eggs and garnish the hamim with the shelled and halved eggs.

Legumes are abundant in India and there are several varieties that can also be used when cooking Hamim. The most popular for Cochini families

*Shabbat plata is a flat, electric warming tray without knobs or dials and which can be left plugged in before Shabbat. This is very popular in Israel today.

Unakki Vevichatu

Dried vegetables in curry sauce

This dish can be made with a combination of vegetables like beans, peas, carrots, zuchini or pumpkin.

From Sarah Cohen's Live Encounters and then Essie Sassoon unaki (dry in malayalam) and vevichathu (cooked)

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup mixed vegetables
- 2 onions, chopped rough
- 1 sprig of curry leaves
- 1" ginger chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp tumeric
- 1 bunch of coriander leaves, chopped
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. In a deep skillet, heat the coconut oil. Fry onions, garlic, curry leaves and ginerr for about four minutes or until the onions turn brown.

2. Add vegetables mix of your choice, the turmeric powder and cook until all the liquid is absorbed.

3. Sprinkle coriander leaves over dish.

(A non-vegetarian version calls for the addition of cooked meat balls into the vegetables just before serving.)

Cochin Jewish

Vegetable Stew - Essie

(This is similar to a cholent (without the meat and made on weekdays).

Ingredients:

- 2 large onions, chopped
- A selection of vegetables of your choice
- 1 kg (potatoes, carrots, any variety of beans, green peas, or any other vegetables cut to bite-sized pieces)
- 4 cardomoms, husked, crushed
- 4 cloves, crushed
- 2 sticks of cinnamon
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1” ginger, chopped fine
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 12 whole black peppercorns
- 2 tbs all-purpose flour
- Salt to taste
- (6 hard-boiled eggs optional)

Directions:

1. In a deep-bottomed pan, sautee the onions in 2 tbs of oil on medium heat until they glaze over.
2. Add ginger and curry leaves and fry for about 2 minutes.
3. Add the flour and continue frying.
4. Add two cups of water and bring to a boil. Add salt, cinammon, cardamom, cloves, peppercorns and all the vegetables.
5. Cover pan, reduce heat and let simmer until vegetables are done. If you find the mixture is too thick, add more water.
6. When the vegetables are cooked, add coconut milk and let it come to full boil again. Take off from stove.
7. Cut hard-boiled eggs into halves and add to stew. Do not stir. Just tilt the pan from side to side. Serve hot.

Tova Simon, a Cochini Jew in Moshav Machesiya, near the northern Israeli industrial area of Beit Shemesh, cooks with lots of coconut, cardamon and fresh Kerala spices at her popular takeaway. Her full-set homecooked meals include delectable fish and vegetarian dishes that can be ordered and picked up for Shabbat and special occasions. The Israeli Tourism department has listed Tova’s takeaways as ‘authentic rural ethnic cooking’, and bloggers have described her tapicoa dish as “tasting like heaven”.

There was a time when kappa (tapioca) was found only in the homes of poor agricultural labourers or in toddy shops across Kerala. Over the past two decades or so, the tuber slowly went mainstream and is today served in high-end restaurants in Cochin and elsewhere. It becomes a main dish when combined with coconut and spices or a snack when it sliced thin and fried or a dessert when steamed with butter, sugar/jaggery and coconut.

Kappa

Cochini Tapioca/cassava

Ingredients

- 1 kg.tapioca
- 5 green chillies, chopped fine
- 6 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- 1 cup finely grated coconut
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp powdered cumin
- Salt to taste
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 6 shallots, chopped fine
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 2 tbsp coconut oil

Directions:

1. Grate the skin off the tapioca and cut into pieces.
2. In a bowl, boil the tapioca in salted water with the turmeric on high heat until it softens. Drain.
3. Mash the tapioc with a flat spatula. (it will be of slightly thicker consistency than creamy, mashed potatoes). Add salt, grated coconut and chillies. Mix well.
4. In a frying pan, heat the coconut oil. Splutter mustard seeds and brown the onions and curry leaves.
5. Pour the mixture onto the tapioca. Stir.

Ruby of Cochin - An Indian Jewish Woman Rememers, by Ruby Daniel & Barbara C. Johnson, . The Jewish Publication Society. Philadelphia, PA, 2002.

Puttu cake

“A week before delivery, all the women of Jew Town gathered at the to-be-mother’s house to make arrangements for the ‘labour bed’. (Almost all children throughout Kerala in the years before the 1960’s were born in their own homes, with the assistance of midwives). A special treat at this gathering was a type of rice cake - called Cheratta Puttu - (Cheratta means coconut shell).

Ruby describes the dish thus: “A kind of cake made with coconut mixed with rice flour and a little salt. It is poured into coconut shells with a few pieces of bananas on the top and cooked by steam. It is very tasty” - page 175, Ruby of Cochin.

Cheratta Puttu Serves: 5

Ingredients:

- 1/2 kg coarse rice flour (rosehatta rice preferred)
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 tbsp cumin seed
- 2 1/2 cups lightly salted water
- 2 coconut shells (halved)

Directions:

Dry roast the rice flour using pan.

Let it cool for 2 mins.

Add salt to the warm water and mix well.

Now add the warm water little by little to the rice flour mixing them well.

Stop adding water when the consistency of the flour becomes somewhat moisture.

When you hold the mixture tight in your palm, it should form a ball.

Rice flour should have moisture in it but not lumps.

Clean the halved coconut shells using water.

Sprinkle 1 Tbsp of grated coconut in each coconut shell.

Divide the rice flour into two. Add each portion to each coconut shell.

Sprinkle another 1 Tbsp of grated coconut at the end of the filling.

Boil water in electric rice cooker (or) in a large pan (or) in idli cooker (or) any other steamer.

Place the steamer partition on the electric rice cooker. If you are using idli cooker, place the

bottommost idli plate or if you are using any other steamer prepare the steamer for placing the shells.

Place a wet cloth on the steamer and invert the coconut shell onto it, the mouth of the shell facing boiling water.

Steam for 10- 15 mins. Turn off the heat and slowly take off the coconut shell from steamer along with the cloth to

avoid any fall off of rice flour.

Place it on a plate and gently remove the coconut shell alone from the steamed rice flour.

Serve hot with chicken curry.

Note:

1) Use white rice flour, wheat flour, rava or any other whole grains in the place of red rice flour.

2) Adjust the steaming time according to your steamer. Normal steaming time is 10 min in medium flame.

Chiratta Puttu

Ingredients:

1 kg coarse rice flour

2 cups of grated coconut

1 tbsp cumin seed

Chiratta

2 or 3.

2 1/2 cups of salt water

Method of preparation

1. Powder soaked raw rice pertaining to puttu podi (with little grains). Roast it for a little while without causing any colour change.

2. Add salt and cumin seed, pour a little water and rub it gently to make a mixture.

3. Put a hole in the coconut shell (chiratta), place some grated coconut in it, and fill the shell with the mixture and put some grated coconut on the top also.

4. Steam in a vessel for 10 minutes and serve hot.

Puttu can be prepared with ragi,wheat or almost any grains of your choice.But rice puttu is the most ancient and tastier one.Lots of innovative recipes related to Puttu is getting popular day by day. Puttu stuffed with vegetable,meat,fish,pulses or fruits(Jack fruit puttu is getting popular) are all now available.However it is ,a Malayalee will definitely fall for

Puttu...especially when they are away from home.Puttu made in authentic “Chiratta”(Coconut Shell) ,known as “Chiratta Puttu” has a unique flavour and appearance.Puttu is usually made in a mould called “Puttu Kutti “.

Puttu-Kadala is Kerala’s all the time favourite breakfast and it occupies a vip position in Authentic Kerala Cuisine menu.

Chiratta Puttu & Kadala Curry

Mould for Chiratta Puttu

Here goes the my recipe for ChirattaPuttu....

Mix the salt in water and add it to the flour little by little.Mix well with hand.The mixing should be appropriate such that all the rice grains should be damp enough for steaming.The flour should not turn into a dough form,but has to be in a powdered form itself.The technique of Puttu lies in wetting this flour.

Puttu Flour

Water added to the flour.

Add half of the grated coconut into it and mix well.Now the flour is ready to use.Mixing jaggery with grated coconut is also popular in some parts of Kerala.

Now to fill the mould, first add 1 tsp of grated coconut into it .Now fill the mould with dampen rice flour and close the lid.

Damped Flour

Filling the mould

Heat the pressure cooker after filling 2/3 rd of it with water .The mould can be fixed to the cooker,just after the steam is released .Now allow it to cook in steam for 5-7 minutes.You can see steam coming out from the small holes on the lid of the Puttu maker.

Steaming Puttu

Detach the mould from the cooker and turn it over onto a serving dish.

The grand wedding party is held at the bridegroom’s house. All the people go there and have lunch. Only fish curries with rice are served at this time. All these different kinds of curries and rice are cooked in butter. They do not eat meat at the time, because in the morning they had eaten all kinds of sweets made with butter and again at four o’clock they’re will be a party where all the sweets and cakes are made with butter” Ruby of Cochin- page

_ afikoman - is the final “dessert” matzoh eaten at the Passover Seder - page 196

Afikoman means ‘dessert’ or “something which comes after (a meal)”. For Cochini Jews, this meant a piece of matzoh which was broken at the start of the Passover Seder and is the final part of the meal. You are not permitted to eat anything after eating this matzoh piece because it is considered a substitute for the Korban Pesach (cdcdcdcdcd), based on the Mishnah in Pesachim 119a. (where this was the last thing eaten at the Passover Seder during the time of the First and Second Temples.)

“If there is a house where someone had died that year, they invited people and read the Psalms there and they are served a hot drink and cakes. For this day, we usually made a special drink instead of coffee and tea. Coriander seeds and cumin seeds are boiled together in water, and a little cardamom, cloves and cinnamon are added; then it is served hot with sugar. Good for health and it is also tasty.” - Page 165

mooli

this is a drink that is served on various occasions. for example when the community gathers to make matzoh for passover, or after prayers in the afternoon in the synagogue, or when prayers are conducted in houses during mourning.

ingredients-

coriander seeds-one or two cups -fried in a dry pot with out any oil
fennel seed or anise seed (special type-perinjerkam)-2 table spoons
about 3 liters of water-(or a big pot full)

cardamom

cloves

cinnamon

tie the (malli) coriander seeds and the perinjerkam in separate ly in gauze -boil the water put the two ingredients tied in the gauze into the boiling water -continue boiling for about an hour-till we get a brownish colour for the fluid . taste if it is too strong dilute with warm water.

can be served with or without sugar.

Abu Abraham

Noted cartoonist and writer Abu Abraham (1924 – 2002) was a welcome visitor at Nevatim in the summer of 1967. Abu's father A.M. Mathew was a lawyer in Cochin and many from the Enrakulam community knew him and received him with delight .”A young man named Joshua took me around and showed me his poultry farm and all the crops he had cultivated. “ What struck him most was what the Nevatim settlers did with their moshav. “The place, I noticed, was fast becoming a little Kerala. There were, for instance, most of the same fruits and vegetables growing - papayas and mangoes, aubergines, okra, drumstick, bitter-gourd and what not.”•

The only other complaint from an elder was they could not get Burma rice* in Israel and coconuts were very expensive.

Amid the Alien Corn - by Abu Abraham

The Sydney Morning Herald, Thursday, July 13, 1967

—Rice has always been the staple food of Kerala, like as it is all over southern India. During the early part of the 20th century, a substantial amount of rice was imported from Burma, although Kerala itself was famous for its rice paddies and abundant produce. But Burma rice, especially the pearl paw san variety was prized because of its bold, round appearance and it increases to three to four times its size after cooking and retains its fragrant aroma, In India, its own Basmati variety is now the preferred choice.

Plain rice:

—————

BEET BORSCHT

12 lg. beets, peeled & grated

3 qts. water

1/3 c. lemon juice

4 tbsp. sugar or equivalent sugar substitute

1 lg. onion, whole (optional)

1 tsp. salt

3 eggs (optional)

Sour cream (about 1/2 c.)

Place grated beets, onion and salt in pot of water. Simmer, covered, for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Remove the onion. Add lemon juice, sugar and simmer 15 minutes.

Variation: If you desire, you can make a creamy borscht by adding eggs. Place eggs in a large heat proof bowl (or put them in a blender). Very slowly, add the hot beet borscht, stirring constantly so that there is no curdling. (Turn blender on HIGH and slowly pour in eggs.) Cool and refrigerate. Serve cold with a tablespoon of sour cream to each portion.

Variation: 1 small hot boiled potato to each portion of cold soup is nice.

Note: If you use a blender, just cut the beets into 1 inch cubes. There is no need to grate them.

___ Polish Beet Borscht

2. Combine the whole beets, onion, and water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Add the beet stems. Cover and simmer over low heat about 1 hour or until the beets are tender.

sweet and Sour Cabbage, Beet, and Tomato Borscht Pareve or Meat

This version of borscht is best served hot, but is delicious cold as well with a big dollop of fresh sour cream with a slice of good rye bread.

- 1 onion, chopped
 - 1 carrot, chopped
 - 4-6 raw beets, 3-4 diced and 1-2 coarsely grated
 - 1 14-ounce can tomatoes
 - 4-6 new potatoes, cut into bite-size pieces
 - 1 small white cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
 - 4 cups vegetable stock
 - 3 tablespoons sugar
 - 2-3 teaspoons white wine vinegar or cider vinegar or sour salt (citric acid)
 - 3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus extra for garnish
 - salt and ground black pepper
 - sour cream, for garnish
1. Put the onion, carrot, diced beets, tomatoes, potatoes, cab-

bage and stock into a large pan. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.

2. Add the grated beets, sugar, vinegar or sour salt to the soup and cook for 10 minutes more. Taste for a good sweet-sour balance and add more sugar and/or vinegar if needed. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

3. Stir the chopped dill into the soup and ladle into warmed bowls. If you like, garnish each bowl with a generous spoonful of sour cream and a sprinkling of more dill.

Variation: To make meat borscht, place 2 1/4 lb chopped (not ground) beef in a large pan. Pour over water to cover and crumble in 1 kosher beef bouillon cube. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until tender. Skim any fat from the surface, then add the vegetables and proceed as above. For kashrut, omit the sour cream. This still goes great with the rye bread!

Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths, celebrates the autumn harvest; a similarity to the Thanksgiving holiday observed in the United States which is not coincidental. Prior to making their way to the New World, the Pilgrims, themselves the victims of religious persecution, spent several years among Sephardic Jews in Holland. When they later celebrated the legendary first Thanksgiving, their conscious frame of reference was Sukkot.

Any dish incorporating the harvest of one's own region is appropriate for Sukkot, but particularly those which feature a number of ingredients within, like stuffed vegetables, fruits, and main-dish pies -- miniature cornucopia symbolizing the plenty with which we have been blessed and for which we hope throughout the coming new year. the temporary hut constructed to symbolize the wanderings in the desert by the Children of Israel and in which as many meals as possible are eaten during the eight-day holiday (one week in Israel). According to the Talmud, the table should be decorated with pomegranates, themselves a symbol of plenty, and flasks of wine.

“And you shall take on the first day the fruit of the beautiful (hadar) tree, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days!” Leviticus 23:40.

The fruit mentioned in the Bible is etrog , a citron used in the waving

rituals of the festival of Sukkot - the Feast of the Tabernacles. This year, 2013, Sukkot starts on October 19. The fruit is believed to predate other citrus species and it found engraved on several antiques in Israel and archaeological findings. In Cochin and Ernakulam (until the mid-1950's) Jewish families used to erect pandals temporary shelters with coconut palm fronds and open to the elements outside their homes. They spend some time and ate some of their meals in these shelters. Sukkot commemorates the 40-year travails of the Israelites in the Sinai desert. (Today, only a communal shelter is symbolically erected at the synagogue.)

The etrog, called Narthangai in Malayalam/Tamil has a valued place in southern Indian kitchens, where it is used for making pickles and preserves.

The Narthangai achar

Etrog Pickle

(Some call this Vadukapulli achar - although Vadukapulli is not etrog, it is Wild Lemon).

The pickle is easy to make.

- 2 etrogs
- 1 tsp mustard seeds,
- 1 tsp fenugreek,
- 2 tsp of red chilli powder
- 2 green chillies - sliced,
- 1" ginger - chopped fine
- Salt to tast
- 3 tbs of coconut oil

Directions:

1. Combine salt, sliced green chillies and finely chopped ginger,
2. Fry the mustard seeds, fenugreek and red chilli powder together in a little coconut oil
3. Mix the etrog pieces well with the spices and the pickle is ready to serve.

(In Tel Aviv, there is a brewery that uses the rinds of the etrgo to make a brand of beer during the holiday of Sukkot.)

‘Meen Achar’ or Fish Pickle was a ‘must’ accompaniment with all meals at most homes of the Cochin Jews. Fish was abundant at all times and I remember my mother and our neighbours all making these pickles. My mother (Reema Salem of Synagogue Lane, Mattancherry) still makes this delightful pickle and I bring over some bottles to Toronto every fall when I visit my parents in Kerala. - Kenny Salem.

Fishes such as seer fish, sardine, mackerel, butter fish, pomfret and anchovies are some of the popular species of for pickling. Fillets of tuna and veluri were also used. For sardines and anchovies, the bones are left in - because they are crisply fried.

Meen Achar

Ingredients

- 1 kg fish, cut into small pieces
- 1 tbsp red chilly powder (Kashmiri chilli powder gives a brighter red colour and is not very hot)
- Half tsp - Fenugreek powder
- 1/2 cup - garlic, chopped fine
- 1” - Ginger, chopped very fine or crushed
- 1.5 tbsp pepper, ground
- 1 tsp cumin, crushed
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp mustard seeds
- 6 green chillies, chopped very fine
- 3 sprigs curry leaves (1/4 cup)
- salt, as required
- Half cup - vinegar
- 2 cups sesame seed oil (called nallenna in Malayalam)
- Coconut oil for frying

Directions:

1. Marinate the fish pieces with 1 tbs of chilli powder, 1/2 tsp of pepper, 1/2 tsp of turmeric, 2 tbs of vinegar and salt for about three to four hours.
2. Fry the marinated fish pieces in coconut oil in a deep pan on low heat, until crisp and dark brown. Keep aside.
3. Heat the sesame oil in a heavy wok and splutter the mustard seeds.

Fry the curry leaves in the same oil.

4. Add the ginger, fenugreek powder, cumin, garlic, green chillies and the remaining vinegar.

5. Reduce heat. Add the fried fish, salt to taste and stir gently. Let the mixture heat through. Cool.

6. Transfer to glass jars, drizzle some sesame oil over it and seal. It will keep for many months when refrigerated.

A simpler Meen Achar is made without the cumin, pepper, fenugreek, green chillies and ginger. Keep the other ingredients as recipe above.

Directions:

1. Marinate the fish in a paste made of a little sesame oil, garlic, turmeric, red chilli powder and salt.

2. Deep fry the fish in coconut oil. Drop the fried fish in a jar with enough vinegar to cover the fish.

3. Pop the mustard seeds in sesame oil, add the curry leaves and add them to the jar. Seal.

A special type of pickle - which is tart and sweet and spicy -and made only on festive occasions or feasts in Kerala is the Puli Inji or Inji Puli. Excellent with rice and yoghurt.

Ingredients :

- 3 pieces of ginger (about 2" each), grated fine
- 2 ping-pong sized balls of tamarind pulp
- 4 green chillies, chopped fine
- 3 dry red chillies, crushed
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
- 1/4 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 1/4 cup jaggery, crumbled
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- A pinch of asafoetida
- Salt to taste
-

Directions:

1. Soak the tamarind in 1 cup of hot water for a 10-15 minutes. Squeeze pulp to extract juice. Strain it through a cheesecloth.

2. Heat coconut oil in a heavy bottomed pan and fry the ginger until brown. Remove, let cool
3. In a blender, grind the fried ginger into a powder..
4. Pour the tamarind juice into the pan. Add salt, chilli powder, turmeric powder and mix well.
5. Bring mixture to a boil; reduce heat and let simmer until gravy begins to thicken.
6. Melt the jaggery in a cup of boiling water. .
7. Heat coconut oil in a shallow pan and splutter the mustard seeds. Add fenugreek seeds, asafoetida, green chillies, curry leaves and sauté until the mixture turns a dark brown.
8. Pour spice mixture into tamarind mix. Stir.
9. Add the crushed ginger and melted jaggery. Reduce heat to medium and let the mixture thicken to the consistency of heavy sauce.
10. Serving size is 1 - 2 teaspoons.

Kannimanga Achar (Uppu Manga) Tender Mango Pickle

Made with small green mangoes, this pickle sits at the top of the pyramid among all pickles in Kerala. The combination of mustard oil, the jolt of the chillies and the sheer delight of biting into the wrinkled fruit has made this item a favourite, spanning generations and centuries. The pickle is traditionally left to mature in a beige and brown-coloured ceramic jar called the ‘bharani,’ the design of which is believed to have originated in China.

Ingredients :

- 1 kg baby green mangoes
- 2 tsp mustard Sseeds
- 1 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 4 tbsps of red chilli powder
- 1/4 tsp asafoetida
- 3 tbsps sesame oil/ mustard oil Nallenna

Directions:

1. Immerse the mango in heavily salted water in a jar for about 3 weeks.
2. (Alternately, in a jar layer mangoes over crystalline salt, repeating process until many layers are formed. Seal jar and keep aside for three weeks)
3. Dry roast the mustard seeds in a deep frying pan, along with the

fenugreek seeds. When the mustard splutters, remove pan from stove. Let cool.

4. Grind the mustard and fenugreek to a powder. .

5. Dry roast the red chilli powder, stirring constantly. Add the ground mustard / fenugreek powder and mix well.

6. Drain the brine from the mangoes into the pan and bring it to a boil on high flame. Simmer until the gravy gets thicker. Let cool.

7. Put the shrivelled mangoes into clean jar and pour gravy on top. Mix well. Sprinkle the asafoetida.

8. In a pan, on low flame, heat the sesame oil /gingely oil . Let cool and pour into jar.

9. Seal jar with clean white cloth, soaked in oil and close it tight with lid. Store in a dark, cool place for about 2 months,

10.

Lime pickle

Cheru narangya Achar

Lime is call ‘cheru narangya’ or ‘little orange’ in Malayalam. (Narangya is a generic word for all citrus fruits)

(Limes, not lemons, are used in Kerala to make this

Ingredients:

- 6 limes
- 2” ginger, grated
- 3 tbsp sesame seed oil or mustard oil
- 2 tbsp dried red chilli flakes
- Salt - As required
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- Vinegar - 1-2 Tbsp

METHOD

Boil water in a pan and add the limes in it. After 2 minutes remove the pan from the heat source. After 10 more minute drain the limes from the water. Now pat them dry with a kitchen towel & set aside. In a frying pan heat a little bit of the sesame oil and saute the limes for 1-2 minutes and let it cool. Once its cooled cut each lime into four pieces.Set aside Now heat the rest of the oil and add the julienned ginger. Saute till it is golden brown. Remove the pan from the heat source and add the chilli powder and asafoetida. Pour this onto the cut lime pieces and mix well. Add the salt. When you taste the pickle mixture if it taste too salty that’s the correct amount of salt

required for the pickle as the lime pieces will absorb the excess salt. Now wash out the pan with the vinegar and pour into the pieces. Mix well. Set in a cool dry place. After 2-3 days check the pickle for salt and chilli & adjust according to taste. Transfer it into clean, dry, air tight jar. The pickle can be served after 2-3 weeks.

20
limes
250 gm
rock salt
½ tsp
black peppercorns
500 ml
(2 cups) white vinegar
500 gm
caster sugar
1 tsp
dried chilli flakes

1 Using a sharp knife and working from top to bottom, cut limes into quarters, making sure not to cut all the way through. Reserve any juices. Combine salt and peppercorns, stuff into limes and stand upright on a tray.

2

Combine remaining ingredients in a wide saucepan, add any reserved juices and bring to the boil. Place limes in the pan, cut side up, return to the boil, then cover and simmer over low heat until limes turn yellow (10 minutes). Remove pan from heat and allow to stand until cool (30-35 minutes).

3

Loosely layer limes into 2 sterilised 1-litre jars and pour the cooking liquid over them. Don't worry if liquid does not cover limes; this will happen in time. Seal and store in a cool dark place for at least 2 weeks before using.

Etrog Jam

A jam or jelly made of citron [etrog] is distinctive because of its strong and tangy flavour and can be a favourite with children. In Cochin, sweet oranges were mixed into the jam, while in Israel, apples are also added into

the mix.

Ingredients:

- 1 etrog
- 1 orange
- 5 cups of water
- 1 or 2 cups sugar

Cut the etrog lengthwise into thin slices. This helps for easy removal of the numerous seeds.

Do likewise for the orange.

Soak the cut slices overnight in water. Drain the next day.

Put fruit slices in a pot of water and bring to boil. Change the water and bring to boil again. Drain water again. (This helps in removing the bitter aftertastes.)

Pour the sugar over the fruit and simmer over low heat until it starts congealing. Keep stirring to prevent burning. The process should take between 30 and 45 minutes. If it is a little runny, add some orange marmalade.

For observant Jews, the fruit spread invokes the spirit of Sukkot for weeks together.

Guava Jam

What many Cochinites remember today is the guava jam they enjoyed during the summers in Kerala. The guava comes from the Spanish word guayaba and is abundant in Kerala. Called pera or perrakka in Malayalam it is similar to the pear, and the inexpensive fruit is a favourite with Kerala's squirrels and birds (especially parrots), as well. The fruit that grows in Kerala is round, has a slight citrus aroma and the rind, pulp and seeds are all eaten with relish.

Ingredients

- 1 kilo ripe guava
- 1/2 kg brown sugar
- 2 tbsp of lime juice
- Water

Directions:

1. Cut guavas into halves. Remove seeds with a teaspoon. Cut the remaining fruit into small pieces.

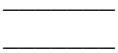
2. In a deep bottomed pan, over medium heat, boil the guavas in water filled up to level of the fruit.
3. Remove from heat when mixture turns mushy.
4. Strain using a cheese cloth.
5. Add the lime juice and sugar to the guava liquid. Bring to boil.
6. Reduce heat and let the jam change colour and thicken. When it starts bubbling, take off stove.
7. Let cool.

Rosh HaShanah is the Jewish New Year. It falls once a year during the month of Tishrei and occurs ten days before Yom Kippur. Together, Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are known as the Yamim Nora'im, which means the Days of Awe in Hebrew. In English they are often referred to as the High Holy Days.

The Meaning of Rosh HaShanah

Rosh HaShanah literally means “Head of the Year” in Hebrew. It falls in the month of Tishrei, which is the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar. The reason for this is because the Hebrew calendar begins with the month of Nissan (when it’s believed the Jews were freed from slavery in Egypt) but the month of Tishrei is believed to be the month in which God created the world. Hence, another way to think about Rosh HaShanah is as the birthday of the world.

On Rosh HaShanah it is customary to greet people with “L’Shanah Tovah,” which is Hebrew that is usually translated as “For a Good Year” or “May you have a good year.”



The kitchen becomes a lab to experiment, a place laden with opportunities, where ordinary ingredients magically arrange themselves to present wonderful, cooked-to-perfection dishes. These recipes are shared with neighbours and friends and become community ‘heirlooms’ passed through generations. (This is my paragraph)



Rachel Roby (nee Sassoon) of Petah Tikvah is an expert in Cochini cuisine and often takes the lead for making authentic Cochini-Jewish food for many community celebrations in Israel today.. Most of the Jews from Mattanchery gather during the many festivals in Binyamina, where many

of them live, to savour the delicacies made by Rachel.

Rachael has also been featured in a popular children's book, [Passover Around The World](#), in which the writer tells how Rachel's grandson Ovadya helps his grandmother during seder; arranging the silver kiddush cups on individual silver platters and how the 12 pieces of matzah are placed around the seder tray. (Rachel Roby is Dr. Essie Sasson's younger sister.)• The book also features a recipe "Grandma Rachel Roby's Charoset". (See recipe on page....)

*[Passover Around The World](#)

by Tami Lehman-Wilzig (Author)

Lerner Publishing (Kar-Ben) (Jan 1 2007), Minneapolis. US.

page 26-28

Bananas Sauteed in Butter/Ghee

This is an instant dish to satisfy a sugar craving or as a rich evening snack with tea/coffee. Children will love it.

Ingredients:

- 6 medium sized bananas
- 6 tsp of sugar
- 4 tsp of butter/ghee

Directions:

1. Cut bananas into two; slice the two halves vertically - so now you have a dozen slices.
2. In a skillet, heat the butter and slip in the banana slices.
3. Fry three to four minutes on each side or until it starts browning.
4. Lower the heat and sprinkle sugar over the bananas. The sugar will start melting and crust atop the banana slices.
5. Remove from heat and let cool. Eat is as is or topped up with icecream of your choice.

The ninth day of the month of Ab is a day of 25 hours of fasting and lamenting in memory of the destruction of both the First and Second Temples of worship in Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. For some unknown reason, the Cochin Jews called that day "Seerya". No meat is eaten on the first nine days of Ab.

One family sent to all Jewish families in the town a sort of porridge made of rice, coconut and a kind of red beans, which would be eaten only during the first nine days of Ab.

For breaking the fast, we made something special. Rice flour dough is spread on a kind of leaf. They put coconut cooked in jaggery on the dough and fold the leaves and then it is steamed. Jaggery is unrefined sugar, brown in colour, whereas for happy occasions we used white sugar only.” Pages 160, 161 and 162.

Conjee and Payyar

Rice porridge with beans

Kanji (rice congee), a kind of easily digestible rice porridge is a staple for aged seniors, convalescing patients, those breaking fasts or observing some sort of penance among all communities of Kerala. For the Cochin Jews, this dish was standard during the month of Ab.

The gruel is prepared by boiling rice in water for a long time until the grain softens and begins to disintegrate. The liquid is rich in starch and other nutrients.

(Optional: Sprinkle 2 tbsps of finely grated coconut over the kanji)

Payar for kanji Ingredients:

Vanpayar/ Red Gram-1/2 cup
rose moong dal or red cow peas
Water- 2 ½ cups
Salt to taste
Turmeric-powder- a small pinch

Freshly grated coconut-1/4 cup
Chumannulli / Shallots-6-8
Dry red chillies-3-4 nos
Jeerakom (Cumin seeds)-1/2 tsp
Garlic cloves-2
Turmeric powder-1/4 tsp
Salt to taste

Coconut oil-1 tsp
Mustard seeds-1/4 tsp
Chumannulli / Shallots -2, sliced
Curry leaves- few

Method:

Pressure cook vanpayar/ red gram with water, a pinch of turmeric powder and salt and keep aside.

Ground coarsely, coconut, shallots, dry red chillies, garlic, cumin seeds, turmeric powder and salt to taste.

Make a well in the centre of Vanpayar and add the ground coconut mixture in the centre and close the lid of cooker and cook on low heat till steam comes out. Open lid and stir the mixture well. Turn off the flame.

Heat 1 tsp coconut oil in a non stick pan and splutter mustard seeds then add sliced shallots and curry leaves and sauté till shallots are golden brown.

Now add cooked vanpayar-coconut mixture, stir well for a minute and turn off the heat.

Serve hot with Kanji.

This rice flour dough which Ruby talked about was the famous Sharkara Ada, a perennial favourite with Keralites.

Sharkkara ada

Ingredients:

Rice flour (Unboiled) - 2 cups

Shredded coconut - 1/2

Jaggery(Sharkkara) - 200 gm

Cardamom(Elakka) powder - 2 nos

Ghee - 2 tsp

Salt - As reqd

Water - 4 cups

Banana leaf without central stip

Preparation Method of Sharkkara ada Recipe

Roast the rice flour for a few minutes.

Mix it with 2 cups of warm water.

While mixing, add ghee, cardamom powder and salt to taste.

Make little large size balls and keep it aside.

Make 'Sharkkarapavu' by boiling 2 cups of water with jaggery.

When it turns to semi liquid, filter and removes the solid particles.

Add shredded coconut and mix well.

Flatten the rice balls on the banana leaf with hand.

Spread a spoonfull of coconut mix.

Fold the banana leaf with content and steam cook in an oven.
Serve when warm.

Ingredients :

Rice Flour : 1 cup

Grated Fresh Coconut : 1 cup

Powdered Jaggery : 1/2 cup

Cardamom Powder : 1/2 tsp

Ghee : t tsp

A pinch of salt

Plantain Leaves

Method :

Slightly roast the rice flour for a couple of minutes and cool.

Combine the rice flour and salt in a wide bowl.

Add required boiling water to make a soft dough. Allow it to cool a little.

Grease your hands with oil / ghee and knead the dough till soft. The dough should be soft and smooth.

Mix the jaggery and water in a pan. The amount of water should be just enough to soak the jaggery and make a thick syrup.

Then add the grated coconut and cardamom powder to it and cook for a couple of minutes. Switch off the flame and cool.

Divide the dough into medium or large size balls.

Place each ball in the center of plantain leaf and flatten it to form a thin poori. Place a tablespoon of coconut mixture on it and fold the leaf to seal the edges.

Repeat the same process with rest of the dough.

Now steam cook for 10 - 12 minutes in idly cooker or steamer. Switch off the flame and let them cool completely.

Take the steamed dumplings from the idly cooker, remove the plantain leaf and serve as a evening snack.

Cochin Jewish Halla Bun or Rotti

(Challah for Shabbat)

Challah or Shabbat bread is eaten at the beginning of the Shabbat meal on Friday night and again on Saturday. Before the meal, the blessing “Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha’olam, hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz” (Blessed are you, Lord, our God, king of the universe, who brings forth

bread from the earth.). The classic challah, now being made the the Cochins is Israel is the spiral variety - the shape of which is said to signify the cycle of life. Also, instead of toddy, yeast is used to make the dough rise.

Ingredients:

- 6 cups flour
- 1 3/4 cups water
- ½ cup toddy (kallu)* - or active yeast
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together and knead well to make a large dough ball.
2. Cover this with a wet cloth and leave to rise for an hour.
3. Divide this dough into 12 to 14 portions and make balls.
4. Dust cutting board with flour and roll each ball using a rolling pin.
5. Pre-heat oven to 325 and bake the hallah until light brown.

Classic Challah

(The spiral one - Sarah Cohen of Mattancherry in Cochin makes these even today on special occasions).

Ingredients:

- 6 cups flour
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup sugar
- Salt to tastet
- ¼ ounce active dry yeast

Directions:

In a large bowl, whisk together ½ cup of the oil, the salt, and ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons of the sugar. Add the boiling water and whisk again to dissolve the salt and sugar. Add the cold water and mix again.

In a cup, dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Add the teaspoon of sugar and mix. Beat the eggs in a separate bowl and add to the oil mixture, reserving 1 tablespoon to brush on the loaves. When the yeast bubbles, add the yeast mixture to the bowl and stir.

Add 6 cups of the flour 1 cup at a time, mixing the flour in completely after each addition. Place the dough on a floured surface and knead until smooth, adding a little flour at a time from the remaining cup of flour.

The dough is done when you rub your palm across the dough and it feels smooth. Shape the dough into a ball.

Add the remaining 1 teaspoon of oil to the bowl and rub all around the bowl and on top of the dough. Place the dough into the oiled bowl and cover with plastic. Let rise 1 hour.

Divide the dough into 2 or 3 balls, depending whether you are making 2 or 3 loaves. Divide each ball into 3 pieces. Roll the pieces into strands of the same length and then braid.

Place on a parchment-lined cookie sheet and let rise 45 minutes. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Brush the tops and sides of the loaves with the reserved beaten egg mixed with a teaspoon of water. Bake for 35 minutes, or until browned.

Yogurt and Cucumber Sauce

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup cucumber, chopped very fine
- 1 lemon, squeezed
- 1/4 tsp red chilli powder

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Add salt to taste.
3. Finely chopped coriander provides a delightful garnish
4. (Finely chopped green chillies - without the seed - makes the sauce more visually appealing)

Ajeeth Janardhanan

executive chef at cgh earth brunton boatyard

Tarator - Jewish food - Tarator is a Jewish specialty, a starter, where cucumber bits are served with hung curd and mint. at Brunton where flavours blend and seasonings temper alongside in layers of tales and taste.

Tasty, it's a perfect balance between traditional spices and modern Indian cuisine .

The History Café style, an authentic culinary adventure

Mastering traditional flavors and imagination is the key factor of his art. Janardhanan Ajeeth and the other chefs of the Brunton Boatyard restaurant

have been looking for ancestral and past family inherited recipes of the different city communities. Jewish, Portuguese, Arabic, Kuchi and Konkani recipes have fortunately been safeguarded and are today part of the restaurant menu, for the best satisfaction of gourmet lovers!

Ajeeth spent most of 2009 visiting families across Kochi, trying to get recipes of long ago. Address:

0484-221-5461 - through to 5465.

Puttu is served with a stew of chickpeas.

Panakam

Spiced Jaggery Water

(A very popular thirst quencher in old-time Cochin)

Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp grated jaggery
- 4 tumblers of water
- 4 cardamom pods, skinned and crushed
- 10 peppercorns, crushed
- 3 tsp lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp dry ginger powder

Directions:

1. Dissolve the jaggery in a bowl of water.
2. Add all the ingredients and stir well.
3. Chill and it becomes a refreshing drink to beat the humid, Kerala heat.

Sambharam

A refreshing summer drink of diluted buttermilk.

Ingredients:

6 leaves of the lime tree, crushed

- 2” ginger, grated and smashed
- 3 green chillies, chopped fine

Directions:

In a bowl of thin buttermilk, add the lime leaves, ginger and chillies and stir well.

Serve chilled. (In old Cochin, the buttermilk was kept in earthenware pots which helped cool the drink).

—

Meruba - from essie

Meruba is a special sweet, a jewel-like confection made by Cochin Jews during the blessings of new fruits (Brakot) on the night of Rosh Hoshana - Jewish New Year. In Cochin, it used to be made with a fruit called ‘sabar-gil’, which was similar in taste to a pear. In Israel, of course, we use pears or green apples and pray during the blessing: “May it be thy will to renew unto us a good and sweet year” - Dr. Essie Sassoon.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of pears/green apples
- 1 kg sugar
- Lemon juice to taste
- Cardamom powder to taste
- Vanilla essence to taste

Directions:

1. Remove the skin and cut the fruit into small chunks.
2. In a bowl, mix sugar into the fruit and leave it overnight.
3. Next morning, fill the bowl with water till the fruit level and boil for two hours.
4. Repeat process every day for five days, until the syrup is thick and reddish in colour.
5. Add lemon juice, cardamom powder and vanillas.
6. Stir, let cool and preserve in clean dry bottle or jar.

Meruba

(Made with apples)

ora - farchy, gadot and abraham families

- 1 kg of golden or red apples

- 1 kg of sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Some drops of rose water

Directions:

1. Peel, core and cut the apple into small pieces.
2. In a bowl, cover the fruit with sugar and leave it overnight to chill in the refrigerator.
3. The next day, using a slotted ladle, remove the fruit pieces from the sugar syrup (the result of the sugar pulling out all water from the fruit). Keep it aside.
4. In a deep pan, bring the sugar syrup to a boil on high heat.
5. Add the fruit pieces along with the lemon juice. Stir.
6. Reduce heat and let the mixture simmer for about 20 minutes. Let cool.
7. Remove the fruit from the syrup and bring it back to boil.
8. Add the fruit bits again and simmer for about 15 minutes. Let cool.
9. Repeat procedure. You will find the fruit turning brown and becoming translucent after the fourth or fifth time on the stove.
10. Remove the fruit from the syrup and boil it for the last time until syrup thickens and begins to look like honey. Add the fruit bits again and simmer for about 10 minutes. Let cool and add few drops of rosewater.
11. Return the apples to the pot, and simmer over low heat for about 5 minutes.
12. Store in jars.

Recipe Courtesy: Gadot family, Houston, Texas

Ural

(Eaten to break fasts)

- Ingredients:
- 1/2 kg wheat
- 1/2 kg sugar
- Rose water to taste
- Water

Directions:

1. Wash and soak the wheat at night.
2. Drain water and grind the wheat well.
3. Mix with a small amount of water to form a smooth paste.
4. Strain through a cheesecloth and remove the milky substance from the husk of the wheat until the water runs clear. Allow to settle.
5. Discard excess water.
6. Add sugar and boil over low heat until it becomes thick, stirring constantly.
7. Pour into flat dishes. Allow to cool and jell.

Jewish Recipes - From Ajeeth J
Executive Chef
of Brunton Boatyard, Fort Cochin
Cochini Potato Fritters (Aloo Bondas)
(For about 30 croquettes)
Ingredients:-

Filling:

- 1.5 kg potatoes
- Salt / kosher salt to taste
- 10ml fresh lime juice
- 50gms fresh coriander/cilantro
- 5gms turmeric powder
- 5gms fresh ginger
- 4 green chilies

Coating:

- 150 gms chickpea flour (besan) / lentil flour (gram dal)
- 50 gms rice flour
- 20 gms cornstarch
- Salt / kosher salt to taste
- 4 gms Baking Soda
- 3gms Turmeric powder
- 5 gms Garam Masala
- 2 gms Asafoetida
- 5gms Cayenne
- Water as needed.

For frying

- Vegetable / peanut oil

Directions:-

For the filling

1. Peel potatoes, wash and clean in running water and place in pan with water add salt and boil till fork tender.
2. Mash the potatoes while still warm.
3. Combine the warm mashed potatoes with salt, lime juice, turmeric powder, chopped chilies, cilantro and ginger.

For the Coating:

1. In a large bowl combine the flours and add the spices and baking powder.
2. Add enough water to make a thick batter without lumps
3. To fry
4. Make the mashed potato mixture into small lemon sized balls.
5. Allow the batter to rest for 30 minutes and place close by
6. Heat oil till medium hot
7. Dip the balls into the batter and fry till golden brown
8. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain into paper towels
9. Serve hot or at room temperature with tamarind, coconut or mint chutney

The Churullappam or Mutta Kuzhalappam is a coconut and sugar-filled crepe snack popular with the Cochin Jews. Similar to the Padhar of the Bene Israelis of Bombay, this is also a constant favourite in Hindu and Christian households in Kerala. The Hindus call this 'Motta Paapa (Egg Delight). In Bengal, this sweet is made the same way with thickened milk and without the egg and is called Patishapta.

Crepe with coconut and jaggery filling

Ingredients:-

For the Crepes:-

- 250ml coconut milk
- 1 large egg
- 20 ml Ghee / clarified butter / coconut oil
- 30 gms Jaggery
- Few drops of vanilla extract
- A pinch salt / kosher salt
- 60 gms all purpose flour or rice flour

For the filling

- 100 gms jaggery
- Water, as required
- 300 gms grated coconut (fresh / frozen)
- A pinch of cardamom powder

Directions:

For the Filling:

1. Melt jaggery, strain and add to the coconut
2. Add the cardamom powder
3. Mix well and allow to cool

Directions:

For the Crepes:-

Add all the ingredients except the flour and whisk till smooth.

1. Add the flour slowly and whisk to make a smooth thin batter with the consistency of heavy cream
2. Strain for lumps and set aside for 2 to three hours prior to use
3. Heat a non-stick pan or a cast iron skillet if you are really skilled and heat to medium heat
4. Use a small ladle to pour about 20ml batter on the heated pan and rotate the pan to coat the bottom
5. Once the edges are cooked to brown flip and cook till golden brown
6. Stack between butter papers
7. Over each crepe spread 2 to 3 spoons of mixture
8. Roll up or fold, pinching the ends together.

Courtesy: Ajeeth J Executive Chef

The Brunton Boatyard

The Cochin Jews have always been known for their hospitality. It is recorded that in the year 1686 a delegation of Jews from Amsterdam, led by Moses Pereyra de Paiva, arrived in Cochin - granting recognition for the Cochini settlement as one of most farflung outposts of the Jewish diaspora. The Dutch were by then masters of Cochin and the community prospered economically and culturally.

Paiva wrote in his *Notisias dos Judeos de Cochin* (published in 1687) “that if the King Messiah had come to them through the door, I do not know if they could have shown greater affection”

De Pavia was full of praise for the Cochini cuisine. “It was a splendid lunch which David Raby gave us with such magnanimity...(there is) nothing to match its excellence.”* There are no details of what was on the banquet table, but Raby’s descendents in Binyamina in Israel, believe it is the same chicken and fish dishes of today that so delighted foreign guests in those days.

The Rabys or the Rahabis were the most famous and immensely wealthy of the Cochin Jewish families in the 17th and 18th centuries. They were prominent international traders, shipping magnates and diplomats for the Raja of Cochin. Today, their anglicised name is Roby.

This legendary hospitality continued even in the late 20 th century, On Friday evenings the head of the Jewish community, the late Sattu Koder and his wife, Gladys, held an Open house for friends, acquaintances and new comers to Fort Cochin, and Jews passing through from all over the world. Ambassadors, dignitaries like actor Fredrick Marsh, Eisenhovr’s daughter, nameless sailors calling at Cochin port and once Rajeev Gandhi before he was prime minister. OSattu Koder was a teetotaller but he ensured that this guests enjoyed the best of liquors and a lavish spread.

Cited by Katz and Goldberg, The Last Jews of Cochin, pg 90.

Tea is drunk everywhere in Kerala, as it is in most of India. The advantage for Kerala is that much of the tea is locally grown in the high ranges of the state. Scores of beautiful tea plantations dot the hill areas of Munnar, Devikulam, Anayirankal, Chithirapuram, Grampi, Pathanamthitta, Villingakkunnu, and Ponmudi with several thousands of workers employed in each of garden.

From homes to small teashops in every Kerala village, tea is a brew that is drunk with milk and sugar.

However, the Cochini Jews - like their Hindu, Muslim and Christian neighbours, sometimes spiced up their tea, adding cloves, cardamom and ginger or cinammon for that extra punch. Ginger is a favourite additive to tea, especially after a heavy meal or when you get that uncomfortable, bloated feeling. No teabags, however; loose tea needs to be boiled the old-fashioned way to get that original, refreshing taste.

Spiced Chaaya (Spiced Tea)

(Use either ginger or cardamom)

Serves 4

- 3 1/2 cups water
- 1" ginger, grated; or
- 6 cardamom cloves, husked and crushed
- 6 cloves, crushed
- 1 cup. milk
- 6 tsp. sugar
- 4 tsp. loose tea (Earl Grey, Assam etc.)

Directions:

1. In a saucepan, bring water to a boil.
 2. Add the crushed cloves, cinnamon and cardamom/or ginger.
 3. Reduce heat and let simmer for about 10 minutes.
 4. Add the tea leaves, milk and sugar and bring it to a full boil for about 2 minutes and simmer for another 3 minutes.
 5. Strain Pour into another saucepan and back again to aerate the tea.
- Repeat, Pour into cups and serve.

Cochini Cabbage Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 kg cabbage
- Some curry leaves or mint leaves
- 1 bunch coriander
- 4 tsp sugar
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 or 4 tsp vinegar

Directions:

1. Cut the cabbage into strips.
2. In a bowl, combine the chopped cabbage with vegetable oil, coriander/mint, sugar, and vinegar.
3. Stir well, chill for 30 minutes and serve.

Courtesy: Goulie Sheer, Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

Cochini Spicy Chicken - ora

Ingredients:

- 1 kg of chicken
- 2-3 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped rough

- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1” ginger, grated,
- 1 bunch of coriander, chopped fine
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- 1/.2 tsp pepper,
- 1/2 tsp paprika,
- 1/4 tsp cumin powder
- 1/2 tsp red chilli powder
- 2 green chillies, chopped fine
- 3 tsp tomato paste
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp coriander powder

Directions:

1. Clean chicken and cut into ten to twelve pieces.
2. In a deep pot, heat vegetable oil. Add the chicken and fry, turning the pieces over and over until it begins to brown.
3. Add onion, garlic, ginger and coriander. Sautee until the onion begins to glaze over.
4. Add sugar, tomato paste, turmeric, coriander powder, pepper, paprika, cumin, green and red chillies.
5. Add 3/4 cup of Water and cook on low heat for another 30-40 minutes until the chicken is well cooked and the sauce thickens.

Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

Coil Appam - Kuzhallappam (Malayalam)

Cigar shaped snack

Ora Farchy remembers her mother Rebecca making this savoury snack in Moshav Shahar in southern Israel. Her mother learnt to make it in the Jewish settlements of Paravur/Chennamangalam and most Cochini Jews consider this a traditional, centuries-old snack.

The Syrian Christians of Kerala claim it is their main snack for festive events and Sojo Joshua (who has a popular food blog <http://sojosmasala.blogspot.ca>) remembers “my mom making this in large quantities during New year, Christmas and every month in between ... I think it is a Syrian Christian snack as it is more popular in Christian populated areas like Kottayam. and I have heard from my grandmom that achappam, kuzhalappam, avalose unda etc have Syrian Christian roots.”* -Bala Menon)

Ingredients:

- 5 cups of flour

- 1/3 cup of Grits
- 1 ½ tsp. of salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp. of sugar
- 5 tsp of vegetable oil
- 1 1/4 cups sesame seed, roasted and ground.
- 1/3 cup coconut, grated
- 1 onion, chopped very fine/mashed
- 1/3 tsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp. mustard seeds, ground
- 1 tsp. caraway seeds
- ½ tsp. cumin
- 2 1/4 cups of Water
- 3 tsp. sesame seeds, whole

Directions:

1. In a wok, roast the grated coconut until golden brown. Set aside.
2. Add a little water and knead the flour into dough. Mix all ingredients into the dough.
3. With a rolling pin flatten the dough to a thin paper like layer and with a cup or can cut out circles.
4. Roll the circles into cigar shape and close edges tight.
5. Fry in a deep pan until the coil appam turns brown.
6. Courtesy: Ora Farchy, Houston, Texas

avalos-onda

Popular throughout Kerala among all communities, this is a common evening accompaniment with tea, made of rice, coconut and sugar. The avalos unda or podi (the powdered version), which can stay fresh for an extended period, remains popular in Cochini homes in Israel, with brown sugar replacing the jaggery.

Ingredients

- 2 cups coarse rice flour
- 1 cup grated or dessicated coconut
- 1/4 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/4 tsp cardamom powder
- 2 tbs water
- A pinch of salt

- 2 tsp ghee
- 3/4 cup sugar

Directions:

1. Mix the coconut and the rice flour well in a bowl. Add salt and cumin seed.
2. Heat a skillet (in Cochin, an earthenware vessel called chatti or a bronze vessel called uruli was used) and dry roast the mixture.
3. Keep stirring until it turns into a mellow brown colour.
4. Heat jaggery/brown sugar in a pan over medium flame until it liquifies and thickens into a syrup. (A drizzle of lemon juice into the syrup is optional.)
5. Add the fried mixture, ghee and cardamon powder and mix well.
6. Shape the batter into ping-pong sized balls, while it is still hot. Let cool and store in jars.

The powdered version (avalos podi) is ready after step two; leaving out the jaggery/sugar and the ghee. Sugar or thinly sliced banana is sometimes added when the powder is eaten alone; This is delicious too, with the flavour of roasted coconut and cumin bursting on your taste buds.)

Arikarakal

Ingredients

- 3 cups rice flour
- 3 small eggs or 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- ¾ cup grated coconut
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 100 grams butter/ margarine or ½ cup oil

Directions:

1. Mix flour and baking powder with butter or margarine or oil.
2. Add sugar and mix well. Slowly add eggs and knead well.
3. Add vanilla and grated coconut and knead again.
4. Roll out dough on flat surface sprinkled with flour using a 1/2” thick rolling pin. Cut into shapes of “8” using a cookie cutter until all dough is done.
5. Pre heat oven to 150 degree C (300 degree F) and place arikarakal on cookie sheet and bake for 15 to 16 minutes.

Watch over oven to ensure that the arikarakal do not get burnt.

Chukhunda

Tiny, sugared rice/coconut balls

Shavuot (Pentecost) is the day on which G_d gave the Torah to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai over 3300 years ago. The Cochinis consider this a very spiritual day, with specific prayers in synagogues, lighting of lamps and special meals. Dairy foods are customary.

Children get special attention on Shavout. “Before G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people, He demanded guarantors. The Jews made a number of suggestions, all rejected by G-d, until they declared, “Our children will be our guarantors that we will cherish and observe the Torah.” G-d immediately accepted them and agreed to give the Torah.”*

In Kerala, children were given sweets individually and they also clustered together in the synagogue to enjoy a shower of tiny, baked balls called chukkunda. The congregations of Mala, Paravur, Chennamangalam and Ernakulam followed this practice - it has not been recorded in the Paradesi synagogue in Mattancherry.

* http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2151/jewish/The-Role-of-Children.htm

Ingredients:

2 cups grated coconut

1 1/2 cups rice

1 1/4 cup sugar

Coconut oil for frying (optional)

Directions

Soak rice in cold water for about an hour. Drain.

Grind the rice to a coarse flour.

Dry roast the flour in a deep saucepan. Transfer to bowl.

Stir fry the grated coconut.

In another pan, on low heat, melt the sugar with a little water. (Don't let it caramelize). Let cool.

Add the coconut and the rice flour to the syrup and mix well.

Make tiny pellet sized balls from the mixture.

Fry the pellets in coconut oil in a wok or steam them in a suitable pot.

Halva was the same as the halva available in stores, but we made them at home.

Even today, Rachel Roby makes about 100 puris for Shabbat. in Israel.

Matzah bread

Ingredients:

- 1 cup wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour for dusting*
- 1/3 cup water, or more if needed (In Cochin, it was from purified well and the water was generally left outside in earthenware pots to let it cool)
- Salt as needed
- Coconut oil (optional)

Directions:

1. Mix water and flour till you get the right consistency for the dough.
2. Knead quickly into balls and roll on a flour-dusted flat surface, with a rolling pin.
3. Make about 7 or eight pieces of about 8” inches in diameter. Pierce with a skewer all over the rolled dough to prevent it from rising
4. Place on hot griddle and bak quickly, until the matzah becomes brown and crispy.
5. Optional: Lightly daub coconut oil atop the matzah and sprinkle salt.

Matzah Ball Soup

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup Matza meal, powdered Matzah bread
- 4 tbsp oil
- Salt, as needed
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 tsp pepper

Directions:

Crack the eggs into a bowl and whisk it till peaks form. Add cold water, salt and pepper and combine well.

Add matza meal. Keep in refrigerator for between 30 minutes to an hour.

Form the dough into small balls. Cook the balls in boiling, salted water for about 30 minutes. Drain and drop into pot of simmering soup.

Matza balls can also be fried in oil to become a tasty snack.

Hindi Name	English Name	Malayalam	Hebrew
Adrak	Fresh Ginger	Vetiver roots	Khus-khus Poppy
Ajwain	Carom seed. Sub: Thyme	Seeds Kokum	Garcinia indica
Amchoor (Amchur)	Dried Mango powder. Also called Khatai. Sub: Citric Acid	Lassun Lavang Makhna	Fresh Garlic. Cloves. Also called Lavang Popped Lotus seeds
Amjud	Celery	Methi	Fenugreek Seeds
Amla Emblica.	Indian Gooseberry.	Methi, Hari	Fresh Fenugreek Leaves
Anar-daana	Pomegranate seeds.	Methi, Kasoori	Dried Fenugreek Leaves
Chakra Phool	Star Anise		
Dalchini	Cinnamon.	Maval petals	Cock's comb. Sub: Yellow Red
Dalchini,	Jungli Cassia. Sub: Cinnamon		Food Color
Dhania	Dried Coriander seeds	Mirch, Degi	Kashmir Paprika, Sub: Hungarian
Dhania,	Hara Patta	Paprika	
Fresh Cilantro	Dhania,	Mirch, Kali	Ground Black Pepper
Dried Coriander leaf	Sukha Patta		Red Chili pepper,
Elaichi	Cardamom	Mirch, Lal Sub: Cayenne	pepper
Goal Mirch, Kali	Black peppercorn		Fresh Green
Goal Mirch, Safed	White peppercorn	Mirch, Hari	Chili Pepper, Sub: Serrano
Goal Mirch, Pilli	Green peppercorn		Rock candy
Goal Mirch, Lal	Red peppercorn		Liquorice root.
Gond Katira	Katira Tree sap	Mishri	Fresh Lime. Citric Acid
Gulab Jal	Rose Water	Mulathi	Salt
Haldi	Turmeric	Nimboo (Nimbu)	Long Pepper. Sub: Cayenne
Hing	Asafoetida.	Nimboo Phool	
Imli	Tamarind.	Namak	
Jaifal (Jaiphal)	Nutmeg.	Pippali	
Javitri	Mace.		
Jeera	Cumin seed		
Kala Namak (Kalonji)	Black Rock salt,	Podina Rai	Peppermint leaves Black Mustard seeds
Nigella	Also called Wild Onion seeds	Rai, Kuria	Cracked Black Mustard seeds
Kamarkas	Sage		Alkanet Root.
Kari Patta	Curry leaf.	Ratan Jot	
Kesar	Saffron. Also called Zaafraan	Subs: Red Color Sarson	Mustard seeds
Kewra	Screwpine	Saunf	Anise/Aniseed
	Essence	Saunf, Moti	Fennel seed
Khas	Essence from	Sirka Soa	Vinegar Dill

Sumaq	Sumac.
	Sub: Citric acid
Tej Patta	Indian Bay leaf
Tulsi	Holy Basil.
	Sub: Sweet Basil

dear bala, sorry i did not reply promptly i was holidaying in the north after the week of tension with the rockets. here are the names of common spices-

chillies-pilpil
 salt-melach
 vineger-hometz
 oil-shamen
 turmeric-kurkum
 corriender-kusbara cloves-siporen
 cinomen-kinomen
 cocunet-kokus
 leomon-le-mon
 flour-kemach
 rice-o-rice
 sugar-sukar
 black musterd seeds-hardal
 cuminseeds-kamun
 cardamom-hael
 ginger - zngbyl
 anise - ahnees
 basil - bahzeeleekoom
 Bay leaf - ahlehdafnah
 caraway seeds
 garlic - shoom
 mint - nahnah
 sesame - soomsoom

English Name	Hebrew Name	Malayalam Name	Hindi Name
Chillies	Pilpil	Mulaku	Mirchi

The Spice Story

“He who controls the spice, controls the universe,” was the declaration by Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, a villainous character in the 1984 movie *Dune*. The film was based on a novel written by Frank Herbert in 1965. In the story, a special spice is shown as vital for the survival of great empire and, it was essential ‘the spice must keep flowing at all times.’

Through the centuries, it was the search for new routes to the spice-rich coasts of Malabar and the East Indies that opened up new worlds to explorers in Europe. The lure of pepper, along with cinammon and cloves helped the Portuguese, Spanish, the Dutch and the English establish vast empires from the 14th century onwards, the legacies of which continue even today.

The ancient world talked about Malabar’s pepper as one of the most valuable commodities in the world, coveted for its medicinal and culinary qualities and for use in religious practices. In ancient Egypt, the pharaohs were mummified with peppercorns in their nostrils. The Romans exchanged it for gold and writers wove fantasies about the plant.

Even in the 14th century, a Franciscan monk named Oderic from Italy, visited Malabar and wrote:” (The pepper plant) grows with numerous bright looking green leaves and climbs up the trees; the pepper pods hanging down in clusters like grapes.” He talks of a pepper forest and “crocodiles and huge serpents infest this forest; and in the season of getting the pepper the people are obliged to make large fires of straw and other dry fuel to drive away these noxious animals.”

An ancient document *Periplus Maris Erythraie* (70 AD), has details about the spice trade and the legendary port of Muziris (believed to be Muchiri, just off the modern Kerala town of Kodungallor, at the mouth of the mighty Periyar river. The town, also known in antiquity as Mahodayapuram and later as Craganore was also the first major settlement of the Cochin Jews. The Jews called the town Shingly (derived perhaps from Chagala Azhi, a smaller river which empties into the Periyar.

The discovery of the Hippalus trade winds in the Indian Ocean helped navigators find quicker routes to Malabar for the Arabs and later the Europeans

The Kerala Government has launched an ambitious Spice Route project, centred around Kodunagallor. In February 2011, Kerala approached UNESCO to get the ‘Heritage’ tag for the project, arguing that the Spice Route was as important a link in intercontinental trade as the trans Asian silk route.

The ‘Spice Route’ project links the Muziris Heritage Project of the

government to nearby areas of the erstwhile Kingdom of Cochin, which was the epicenter of India's spice trade. Today, the World Pepper Exchange and the Indian Spice Board are located in Cochin along with the Indian Spice Board is headquartered

<http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=711456>

Heritage Tag for Spice Route: Kerala Approaches Unesco

Thiruvananthapuram | Feb 10, 2011

Footnote: Frank Herbert, author of *Dune*, Chilton Publishing Co., 1965 novel. The novel won the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award for Best Science Fiction in 1966.

Capsicum annum L and tabasco-like *frutescens* species are the popular chilies for Indian cuisine. Until the beginning of the sixteenth century, hot chili pepper, one of the principal spices of Indian cuisine today, was totally unknown in India. The honor of introducing India to *Capsicum annum* L, chili peppers, belongs to the Portuguese traders. When the Portuguese ventured abroad in search of a new sea route to the land of black pepper, chili pepper traveled on merchant ships, along with tobacco and cotton, to the next trading posts.

Because of their familiarity with pungent spices, Indians were quite taken with the fiery red chili. Today chilies appear in a variety of ways in Indian cuisine. Tolerance for hot chilies is substantial, especially in tropical south India. The diversity and intensity of pepper used in this cuisine rivals that of Mexico and Southwestern United States.

(Rewrite) My nose leads me further along the harbour to the spice warehouses, where dried ginger sits in a thousand sacks, alongside cardamom and turmeric, cloves and cinnamon, nutmeg, tamarind and pepper.

America by accident

Spices were an important component of ancient commerce well before the 15th-century, but were monopolized for centuries by Middle Eastern and North African middlemen who guarded the Asian provenance of their valuable sources closely and became fabulously wealthy for it. Back then, the colorful grains were used for flavoring food, but also for such tasks as making perfume, embalming the dead, preserving meat and sprucing up salve recipes in traditional medicine.

Europe dangled at the far end of the trading chain for spices, without access to eastern sources or the power to contest exorbitant prices. At one

trade in pepper in the 1650s while he was an East India Company Governor in Madras (now Chennai) in India. The Salem pepper trade continued until 1806.

Elihu Yale. (2013). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/651366/Elihu-Yale>

Most of the pepper imported into Salem from India and Sumatra were re-exported to European ports like Stockholm, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Antwerp or to Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore for local American distribution. In 1806, one single consignment of five hundred tons of pepper was valued at over one million pounds - brought from Sumatra to Salem by the sailing ship *Eliza*,* The Salem pepper trade also produced some of America's first millionaires.

F. Rosengarten, Jr. 1969. *The Book Of Spices*, p. 23-96, Jove Publ., Inc., New York

In New Haven, Connecticut, a college was re-named in Elihu Yale's honour, in gratitude for his financial support in the early 18th century. That college is today's Yale University. (Note: Elihu Yale was not Jewish, contrary to what many people believe).

Pepper (*Piper nigrum*) originated on the Malabar Coast of India in what is now called Kerala. It was known to the ancient Romans, and returning crusaders no doubt brought some of the precious and tasty spice back to Europe after their adventures, but it was not until the fifteenth century that commercial trade had its beginnings. Seafaring know-how had advanced sufficiently by then to make it technically possible, and the huge demand for spices provided the impetus for voyages of exploration to seek out the sources – the explorations that ultimately changed the map of the known world.

Peppercorns that we all know - and available in black, white, red, or green – all come from the same pepper vine. It is the picking and processing that gives it distinctive colours and pungency.

We think of it as a cheap, everyday spice but it was once, quite literally, worth more than gold. It is said that Alaric the Visigoth demanded three thousand pounds of pepper as part of his ransom from the citizens of Rome when he besieged their city in the year of 408.

Red pepper, generally known as chili pepper, belongs to the capsicum family of vegetables. The two commonly used chilies are- the milder paprika or Spanish pepper (*capsicum annum*) and the fiery cayenne (*capsicum frutescens*). Besides these widely cultivated varieties, there are about ten capsicum species, grown in South Central America, parts of South America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

One of the oldest plants cultivated in the Americas, cayenne pepper is considered to be native to the Cayenne region of French Guiana, on the northeast coast of South America. It is one of the oldest cultivated crops of the central and south Americas and the West Indies. Since about 7500 BC capsicum has been a part of the human diet. Based on scientific research, the word “chile” is a variation of “chil” from the Aztec dialect. The same peppers are now grown in India, Japan, and Africa. The earliest documented evidence of cayenne pepper dates back to the fifteenth century when Christopher Columbus and his crew discovered it in the Americas. The discovery of this hot spice was very important in that era of booming spice trade.

This fiery spice adds flair to dishes from Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East. Unlike the milder varieties, cayenne pepper uses the seeds and membranes of a high-capsicum chili, making it especially hot and pungent. There is much confusion about exact naming and identification because of pepper’s easy cross pollination and different regional names in dozens of languages and dialects. Words such as pepper, chili, chile, chilli, aji, paprika, and capsicum are often used interchangeably.

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By Pliny’s time, pepper had long been part of European commerce and imagination about the East. Alexander the Great is believed to have brought pepper back from his expeditions. He introduced its Sanskrit

Curry Leaves

anyone familiar with South Indian cuisine in particular and South East Asian cuisine in general will remember those little pointy leaves floating in their gravy. The spicy, hot chicken, prawn and mutton dishes with little nigela and mustard seeds get their bitter aroma and aromatic antithesis from these little leaves.

Used almost throughout South East Asia, the curry leaf is known by a different name in very language of the region. While the Burmese call it Pindosin or Pyim daw thein, the French have a more musical Feuilles de Cari for it. The Indonesians call it Fogli di Cari while the ancient Sanskrit scholars referred to it as Hoja. As the aroma wafted westward, the Spaniards and the Englishmen also gave it names, so the humble leaf is called Bignay in Spanish and Curry blatter in German while the Dutch called it Kerribladeren. Reaching northwards, the Danes termed it Karry blad. In India, where it forms an indispensable part of the central and south Indian cuisine, it is called kariapak, katneem or meethi neem (notice all the names refer to it as a sweet form of neem leaves from a medicinal tree).

The curry leaf plant (or tree if you wish), is a native of Tropical Asia, southern India and Sri Lanka. Belonging to the Rutaceae family, the *Murraya Koenigi* plant grows to a height between 2 and five meters, depending on various factors. The leaves are small, pointed and in clusters, giving off a strong aroma faintly reminding one of citrus and anise. The aroma is delightful when added to curries and while frying spices, and lends that extra something to south Indian dishes.

The plant is found almost across the length and breadth of the India and Sri Lanka which is perhaps why it is so much in use in the cuisine. Probably, their flavor traveled to the rest of the south Asian countries, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar with human migration from the Indian subcontinent, and then took up home in these new countries' cuisine also. Today, they are found and used only in countries that have, historically, had Indian influences. But now with the migration of Indian cuisine to other cultures, their flavors are also finding special favor.

Curry leaves are very tender and best used fresh. . In cooking, it is best to use a fresh piece, fried in hot oil and ghee for the aroma. Contrary to popular belief, the curry leaf does not come from the curry plant, nor is it the secret behind the flavor of the curry powder. While some people

may add it to their curry powder, it is largely a seasoning leaf, to be used only in specific curries to provide specific tanginess. Very rarely it is used ground along with other spices, more often than not, it is the first thing in the oil to be used to make the curry itself.

Apart from cooking, the curry leaf has a number of medicinal uses also. It is an essential ingredient of almost all traditional medicine systems of peninsular India, sometimes with amazingly good results. Unani, Ayurveda and other systems use it to cure ailments such as piles, to allay heat of the body and are useful in leukoderma and blood disorders, and this has been proven by experts of western medicine also. In India, the curry leaf is used to prevent conditions such as nausea and stomach upsets. It is also used in treating skin irritations and poisonous bites. Its oils are invaluable as repellants and to cure skin disorders common to the tropics.

- (kari veppila - this is now available in South Asian groceries

As with many Keralan dishes, you start by sizzling the curry leaves (highly aromatic, slightly bitter leaves of the kari tree, nothing to do with Indian “curries”)

The myriad uses of the little pointy leaf make it a good idea to grow it in a small pot at home. All it needs is some watering during a dry spell and some sunshine during cold months. It can withstand a small amount of frost and needs moderate light and warmth to grow. A small pot with these aromatic leaves can be kept in a partially indoors area (like a verandah), to stave off insects etc too, as well as ensure a fresh aroma to the area.

Ghee (Clarified or rendered butter, neyyu in Malayalam, samnah in Arabic)

Ghee is deeply embedded in the Indian psyche, related as it is to the Hindu religion through its extensive use in temples and the cuisine of every region in the country. In Kerala, along with coconut oil, it is the most favoured medium for cooking and adding flavour to any dish.

International chefs are now opting for ghee for frying and sauteeing food because of the rich, buttery flavour it imparts to all items. Ghee is pure butter fat, with no milk solids and can be heated to much higher temperatures than any oils without burning. It is also very easy to make!

Simmer unsalted butter in a saucepan over low heat. When all the water boils off you will find the protein solids settling in the bottom. Pour out the golden liquid at the top without disturbing the milk solids. You have your ghee!

If you want the ghee to have a wonderful, nutty flavour, let the liquid boil for some more time until the solids at the bottom turn brown.

Ghee has another big advantage over butter. It can be stored for long periods without refrigeration and will not oxidize if kept in an airtight container. Many Cochin Jewish dishes use ghee - as a base or as a drizzle over prepared dishes. Half a kg (500 gms) of unsalted supermarket butter yields about 1 1/2 cups of ghee. Ghee from cow's milk, which is yellow in colour is considered the best for cooking.

In the Indian Ayurvedic system of medicine, ghee is generally aged to become potent health tonics. The Kumbhiighrta is aged more between 10 and 90 years while the Mahaghrta ghee is aged more than 100 years, with traditional physicians preserving it through generations)

Coconut Milk

Coconut milk, contrary to what is generally believed, is not the liquid found inside the coconut. That is sweet coconut water (a refreshing drink on its own!). Coconut milk is made in Kerala from the freshly grated flesh of coconuts. The thick, creamy version of coconut milk is obtained by mixing some 275 ml of boiled and cooled water to one full grated coconut and squeezing out the liquid in a hand press or wringing it in a sterile piece of muslin. This milk has a high fat content and is rich-tasting. Second and third squeezings - after being soaked in warm water - will provide thinner, less creamier and less sweeter versions. All three are used in the Cochini Jewish kitchen.

Coconut cream is what floats to the surface, when the coconut milk is refrigerated.

Shallots

The name ‘shallot’ is said to have come from the ancient Philistine city of Ashkelon of Greek times (covering the areas of modern day Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gat). It is grown widely in India and is very popular in southern Indian dishes, especially all time favourite curries like the sambar. Shallots have a milder, sweeter taste than the ordinary onion and are used in a variety of chutneys and dips. Indian names for shallots include kanda or gandana or pyaaz and kunjulli/cheriya ulli/chuvanna ulli in Malayalam. Scallions or green onions and pearl onions can be substituted for shallots in many dishes.

Jaggery (called *sharkara* in Malayalam) is unrefined cane sugar in which the molasses are not separated. Ranging from golden brown to dark brown in colour, it is used in several traditional recipes in Kerala and across India. It is available in South Asian stores in large, rough chunks or in moulded cube forms.

Turmeric is a yellowish/orange root used in Indian dishes. The root, which grows in abundance in the highlands of Kerala, adds a warm flavour and an attractive yellow coloring to cooked food. Turmeric has also long been used in Kerala as a natural treatment for stomach ailments. Recent research has also indicated that the spice, which is also known as “Indian Saffron”, could be helpful in countering Alzheimers disease.

Long before cardamom’s 20th-century arrival in Guatemala—indeed, some 2000 years before Europeans set foot in the New World—it was among the spices carried from India to the Middle East by Arabian mariners and caravan traders. Like many spices, it was used as a medicine well before it found culinary uses. The Ebers Papyrus, a pharmacological document dating from about 1550 BC, provides evidence that Egyptians were already using cardamom, as well as other spices, in medicines; they also used it in cosmetic ointments, perfumes and aromatic oils, for fumigation and for embalming.

In India, cardamom was sometimes prescribed, along with cinnamon, ginger and turmeric, to remove fat and cure jaundice and urinary infections. The Indian Ayurvedic system of medicine, based on the earliest Brahmanic texts, recommended that spices such as cardamom and cloves

be wrapped in betel-nut leaves and chewed after meals to increase the flow of saliva, help digestion and eliminate bad breath, and millions of Indians do precisely that today.

Cardamom first appeared in Europe after the scientists attached to the staff of Alexander the Great sent it back from India in the fourth century BC. Alexander had plants and other specimens sent to his tutor, Aristotle, and it was Aristotle's successor, Theophrastes, "the father of botany," who first mentioned cardamom in the West. It was later used in Rome to make perfume. When Roman trade collapsed after the empire's fall, cardamom, too, disappeared from Europe. It reappeared only in the early Middle Ages when the Crusaders returned from the Middle East, bringing with them—among many other comforts—spices used for medicinal and culinary purposes. In Scandinavia, Germany and Russia, cardamom is still commonly used in breads, cakes and pastries, though it has not been as warmly accepted elsewhere in Europe.

In Saudi Arabia, however, cardamom enjoys almost universal popularity, and a well-prepared pot of Arab coffee—with praise for the generous quantities of cardamom in it—is a staple subject of traditional colloquial poetry in Arabia. During the period between Ramadan and the Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah, consumption increases as between one and two million Muslims enter the country as pilgrims, swelling the population during a three-month period. Throughout the kingdom, green coffee beans are lightly roasted, crushed with a mortar and pestle, or ground in an electric coffee mill, and boiled briefly with ground cardamom seeds. If you order ready-ground cardamom coffee in a speciality store in Arabia, the clerk will add five or 10 grams of ground spice to 250 grams of coffee, but for special occasions, or to honor a guest with a particular display of generosity and good manners, quite large quantities of cardamom may be used. The spice gives the brew a greenish tint and a heady fragrance, and in some variations, it is the cardamom, and not the coffee, that is the dominant flavor.

The cardamom cultivated in Guatemala is *Elettaria cardamomum*, a native of India's Malabar coast. Growing from large rhizomes resembling ginger, the plant puts out clusters of tall, graceful stems topped with rough, palm-like leaves. From the base of the cluster grow soft, horizontal, crooked panicles up to a meter (3') long that bear white flowers and, eventually, cardamom pods. The plant thrives in the moisture of a tropical climate.

Cashew, the edible seed or nut of *anacardium occidentale*, a polygamus Tropical and sub-tropical evergreen was first discovered by the Spanish explorers in the region known as state of maranhao in Northern Brazil. The name cashew comes from the Tupi-India tribe of Brazil “acaju”. In the 15th century Portuguese missionaries brought the cashew to east Africa and to India and believed to have planted as a Wind breaker and prevent soil erosion. Cashew played an important part in the diet of the original Indian inhabitants of the region where Cashew was first discovered. Thus we can assume the Portuguese who Planted cashew trees in East Africa and in India were already aware of the importance of cashew as an edible nut.

It has been proved that nuts in general provide more than twice the energy furnished by meat and fish. They are also richer in proteins.

Kudampuli (scientific name: *Garcinia cambogia*) also known as Gambooge, Malabar Tamarind, Fish Tamarind etc is an essential ingredient in all the seafood loving kitchens in Central Kerala, the coastal South Indian state. Belongs to the Mangosteen family. As the name suggests (Puli = sour in Malayalam), the dried fruit is used as a souring agent in Kerala’s famous fish curries and other seafood preparations. *cambogia* looks more like a small yellowish, greenish or sometimes reddish pumpkin. When the fruit is sun dried for several days, it becomes black with a shrivelled body It is often mistaken for kokum.

Kudampuli is known for its medicinal values in Ayurveda. It helps to promote digestion, and a decoction (kashayam) made out of it is used against Arthritis and some uterine deceases. It is also known to cure ulcers.

The green fruit shown in the first picture is a young version, it will turn yellow when ripe. Once fully ripe, fruits are collected, cut in half, de-seeded and are sun-dried for a day. The sun-dried fruit halves are smoked till black, and are rubbed with a mixture of salt and oil before transferring to earthenware pots and tightly sealed. These will stay fresh for years. Before use, wash the pieces under running water quickly to remove any dust accumulated from the drying and smoking process, then soak these for 10 minutes in water. Kudampuli pieces are added along with the water in which it was soaked in to curries and it gives a delicious sour taste that is so unique.

Tuemric is the root of a pereniial plant belonging ot the ginger family. It is dried, then ground and is an essnential iingredient in Indian curry blends. The curry gets its colour from this spice.

How we kept kosher in Cochin

“Since a healthy and whole body is in keeping with the service to G-d, since it is impossible to understand or know anything about G-d when one is sick, therefore one must distance himself from those things which ruin the body and instead should accustom himself to those things which cause the body to heal and mend...”

- Ramban, The Mishnah Torah, 4th chapter of Hilchot Da'ot.*

Nahmanides (1194–c. 1270), Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman Girondi, Catalan rabbi, philosopher, physician, Kabbalist and biblical commentator

Foods that we grew up with is naturally the food we identify with. It is the same with food that we term Jewish. While the cholent, kishke and gefilte fish are considered true Jewish food by the Ashkenazi, it is very different for the Sephardic and for those from far-flung tiny communities.

In Cochin, where we grew up and so did our ancestors for more than 2000 years, it was fresh coconut-milk laced, highly spiced, aromatic dishes of tropical grains, vegetables, fruits and nuts and permitted meats that were quintessentially kosher and Jewish. For the Cochinites, these continue to be Jewish food.

Kosher is a Hebrew word which means ‘fit’. Kashrut is the Hebrew word for keeping kosher. The laws of Kashrut is the Jewish law describing the kind of foods that Jews are permitted to eat or are foods that are fit to eat and how it must be prepared and eaten.

The Kosher laws were commanded by G_d to the children of Israel, given to Moses in the Sinai desert and which was then delivered to the people. These laws are found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 and was handed down the generations until it appeared in written form in the Mishnah and Talmud, along with various rulings by Rabbinical authorities.

In the Kingdom of Cochin and much earlier, throughout our 2000-year joyful history on the Malabar coast, the observance of kosher laws has been absolute and a mark of our identity. For Cochinites, our food was Jewish because we adhered to the dietary laws as stated in the Hebrew Bible.

As observed by foreign scholars, the Jews of Cochin acculturated with the norms and rules of Kerala society without being assimilated into the dominant culture of the Hindus.*¹

Protected by the rulers of Cochin and enjoying equal status with the

1 Nathan Katz and Ellen Goldberg, The Last Jews of Cochin, 1995

high-caste Nair and Namboodiri communities, the Jews remained strict in their observance of food laws, earning respect from the wider community and the privilege of living without being disturbed in their religious and temporal lives.

Only animals and fish that were edible according to Jewish law were used. Animals were slaughtered ritually with special prescribed knives. Meat and dairy products and the utensils used to cook them were strictly kept apart.

Blood is forbidden for consumption. So all meat was washed clean and salted for half an hour and drained and washed again. Gelatin was never used; instead food starch and tapioca became the binding agents in Cochini Jewish cuisine.

Eggs were examined after cracking them open to see if there was any trace of blood. If blood was found it was declared non-kosher and discarded.. Internal organs, even chicken liver, were roasted on a wire mesh so that all blood was drained away.

One of the major commandments of kosher law is “You shall not boil a kid in the mother’s milk”. So meat and milk were never combined. In Cochin (and in Israel today), Cochini Jews strictly observe a waiting period of 6 hours after meat is consumed before ingesting a dairy product or anything containing milk. All dishes accompanying meat are made with margarine or vegetable shortening/oil instead of clarified butter/ghee. It must be noted that most middle-class Cochin Jewish families ate only fish and vegetables on weekdays in Kerala .

Kosher chicken was used only on Fridays. There were two reasons for this bent towards vegetarianism: One, Kerala is part of the tropics and experiences intense heat and humidity. In this atmosphere, it made more sense to consume fresh fruits and vegetables and cooling dairy products like yoghurt.

Two, towards the middle of the 20th century, there was a problem of getting ritually slaughtered meat because there were no shohets. After the death of Jackie Cohen (Mattancherry matriarch Sarah Cohen’s husband), who was the community shohet, it became almost impossible.

Chicken thus came to be used only for Shabbat with meat and lamb becoming rare on our menus. Beef was available to the community only when a Bene Israeli shohet was specially brought in from Bombay at the time of communal festivities or weddings and other special occasions. The slaughtered meat was at that time distributed to all households. I remember how the Bombay shohets used to be housed in Queenie Hallegua’s house, occupying two rooms earmarked on the ground floor as servant’s

quarters.

Wine and dairy products like cheeses were consumed only when made by members of the community.. The wine for kiddush was mainly made at home by the respective households.

Passover

In old Cochin, Passover dominated the religious life of the Jews and preparations for the festival began the day after Purim. There was an obsession with cleaning and scrubbing the house and every piece of furniture and utensils. Houses were whitewashed and even the wells were cleaned as the taboo of chametz (forbidden food) took on a dinosaur-like life of its own.

This Pessah Work of the Cochin Jews has been described in detail by Dr. Barbara Johnson in her dissertation *Shingly or Jewish Cranganore...*^{2,*}

I remember how in all houses on Synagogue Lane, the dining room tables which were made of antique teak wood would be scrubbed clean. Boiling water would be poured over them before drying them out in the sun.

Every nook and corner of the house were cleaned; wardrobes turned over; the pantry was the focus of attention and every article of hamaz (*chametz*) was thrown out. If, for example, there was an unopened bottle of whiskey, it was either stored in a room called *hamaz muri* (*chametz* room) or it was sold to a non-Jew and bought back after Passover. The locked *hamaz muri* was opened only after Passover.

Most families had a separate room (*pessah-muri* in Malayalam) to store the Pesah utensils. Some families that did not have this facility made the utensils *kosher* by holding them with tongs and immersing them in boiling water.

All edible articles, mainly spices and rice were stored in this room. (Rice is not consumed by Ashkenazis and some Sepherdic communities during Passover) but the Cochin Jews have traditionally eaten because it is not expressly forbidden and it is their staple food). Rice was purchased several days before Passover and examined meticulously about three or four times for the presence of wheat and then stored for Pessah. Rice flour and spices were powdered at home.

Everything was in accordance to the rules of kosher. Dr. Nathan Katz has observed: “The Cochin Jews developed Pesah customs influenced by Brahmin asceticism and Simhat Torah royalty symbols influenced by the

2 Barbara Johnson , ‘Shingly or Jewish Cranganore, the Traditions of the Cochin Jews of India’ with an Appendix on the Cochin Jewish Chronicles, M.A. Thesis, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts 1975.

local nobility that fitted nicely into the framework of halakhah (Jewish law).^{*3}

Until about 1990 or so, the Mattancherry Jews would rent a flour mill for a whole day; the women would all go and thoroughly clean the machinery to ensure that the community could get *kosher* flour.

When matza was made in Cochin the wheat was also powdered this way. From the 1990s, however, ready-made matza began to come from Mumbai, courtesy of the Israeli consulate

The culmination of Passover work, which lasted up to 30 days, was the making of the 'Massa' as the matzah was called. The massa is an unleavened bread and is mandatory for Jews to make it part of the Passover Seder (the ritual service and ceremonial meal) and is generally eaten throughout the eight-day festival.

The making of the bread was a community affair, with all the women gathering together in one house.. The men mixed and kneaded the dough and the children ran with the rolled dough balls to their mothers who baked them on griddles in small kilns burning dried coconut husks. There was a lot of singing of hymns during the matzah work and it was a fun time for the community. **

The Passover Seder Plate is a special plate containing six symbolic foods used during the Passover Seder. The six items are:

1. Marort; Lettuce was used as the maror (bitter herb) in Cochin and today in Israel.
2. Charoset; A sweet, brown, pebbly mixture, representing the mortar used by the Jewish slaves to build the storehouses of Egypt.
3. Karpas; celery dipped into vinegar (Sephardi custom) .
4. Z'roa; A roasted shank bone, symbolizing the *korban Pesach* (Pesach sacrifice), a lamb offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and roasted for the meal on Seder night. In Cochin, a roast chicken wing (kai oram in Malayalam) was used.
5. Beitzah; A roasted egg, symbolizing the *korban chagigah* (festival sacrifice). In Cochin, we boiled the egg, and this represented the holiday offering.

In Cochin, most families had silver Seder plates that were handed

3 *Source Citation: Katz, Nathan. "The Jews of Cochin: Brahmin Pesah, Maharajah Simhat Torah, and caste behavior." B'Or Ha'Torah 20 (2010): 89+. Academic OneFile. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.

down from generation to generation. The Cochin Jews also kept a third bowl of wine on the Seder table. although I can't recollect its significance. Essie.

Kenny Salem adds:

Beef and lamb have been rarities on Cochini Jewish dining tables (in Cochin) since the 1950s. There were no shohets available and I remember a wedding in the community when a shohet came down from Bombay in 1978 to do the ritual slaughtering to make beef and lamb available for the feast. (This was the last official Jew Town wedding - between Leslie Salem and Glennis Simon, both of whom are now in Haifa, Israel)

I remember my father Gumliel Salem telling me about a Jewish shohet by the name of.....who ran a kosher meat outlet near the Kadavumbhagam Synagogue on the far south of Synagogue Lane. However, after his passing, the community has had only chicken and fish to choose as non-vegetarian dishes. This chicken also needs to be brought from Mumbai today.

Of course, in Israel beef and lamb and new meats like turkey have become part of the everyday menu of the Cochin Jews.

Kosher Basics

The meat of all herbivores with cloven hooves and 'chew the cud' are permitted. All others, including, horse, pig, rabbit and carnivores are forbidden.

There are also a series of laws prescribing how the animal should be ritually slaughtered and be completely free of blood. There are also rules about which parts of the animal can be eaten. Animals that die of natural causes and those which are hunted are forbidden.

Reptiles, turtles, snails, insects of all kinds, frogs etc are not fit for consumption.

Only fish with scales and fins are allowed to be eaten. All crustaceans like crab, lobsters, shrimp and creatures like shark and eel are forbidden.

Meat and milk must never be combined during a meal. Meat and dairy products must be kept apart and there should be a reasonable waiting period between their use.. Separate utensils must be used for each.

Foods that do not fall into the categories of meat or dairy are called parve or neutral food and there is no bar on them being eaten along with meat or dairy preparations.

All fruits, vegetables and grains are parve (meaning neutral) foods, but

it must be ensured that they are insect free. If the foods are processed, they need kosher certification, meaning that no milk or meat have come into contact with them. Coffee and tea are parve if taken without milk or cream.

Fish and eggs are also considered parve, but must be blood-free.

All salt is kosher; what we call kosher salt is the crystalline vareity used for 'kashering' (to remove blood from meat).
