

SATTVIK: TRADITIONAL FOOD & NUTRITION FESTIVAL 2023

December 23 to 26, 2023, Sola Bhagwat Temple, Ahmedabad



Thrummying chatter and the fragrance of fresh foods warmed the air at the 21st Sattvik Traditional Food and Nutrition Festival, organized by SRISTI and the Honey Bee Network in collaboration with GIAN and many other HBN volunteers. Each stall presented a unique take on innovation and tradition, demonstrating the diversity in farm produce, formulations, and flavours from various regions of the country. The Festival was inaugurated by Dr Shamsher Singh (IPS) DGP (Law & Order), Gujarat Police, and gave a platform to about 100 farmers and stallholders to present a wide array of organic products. It was a resounding success with about 55,000 visitors feeding their creativity by learning of new nutritious ingredients, savouring a range of innovative recipes, and reconnecting with traditional foods.

The 21st Sattvik Traditional Food and Nutrition Festival, as is its annual custom, sought to revive the joys of heritage cuisine, and bolster a grassroots movement championing organic farming, traditional varieties, and local produce.

Prof. Anil Gupta, founder of HBN, urged universities to expand research into soil health, and translate this into dietary improvements. This year as well, the Festival brought focus to grains from drought-prone areas, and continued the mission to popularize diverse millets. HBN has been advocating for the prioritization of such grains in the public procurement and distribution system, and for consumers to use them as staples. Not only would this increase the income of disadvantaged populations, but it would also help them benefit from a healthier diet.

Recipe Competition

A recipe competition was held on December 19 at the SRISTI premises; 41 participants presented around 110 dishes. The thought put into each dish was evident from the nutrient-dense and flavourful fare. While several dishes catered to both the need for wholesome nutrition and the younger generation's taste for "trendy foods", many contestants saw this opportunity to share their culinary legacy, and presented their own twist on a recipe taught by their grandmother, mother, or mother-in-law. They were evaluated on six parameters, including nutritional value and diversity, by judges Sangeeta Jani, a chef, and Shukanyaben Pondugala of the FSSAI.

The following five winners were announced and honoured after the inaugural ceremony of Sattvik.



Palak Seth: A young home cook with a popular online cooking channel. She delighted with her beetroot hummus, green hummus, ragi lavash, pearl millet bites, corn green *agmaggio*, gulab jamun, and sev kheer.

Tarulataben Panchal: Having already won the competition five times, her creativity shone again through herbal corn silk tea, kadamba flower (*Neolamarckia cadamba* (Roxb.) Bosser) pickle, hot fenugreek seed coffee, and potato skin chips.

Jayashree Chauhan: Also a Sattvik veteran, she presented *chiba dhokli*, and *saptarangi pudla*. Her multi-coloured pudlas brought a fresh look to culinary creativity (her recipe is featured on the next page.)

Vibha Champaneri: A home cook who shares her recipes on many online fora, her recipes allow for guilt-free indulgence of one's sweet tooth. She made *kangvo* (finger millet sweet), and sorghum flour *malpua* with ragi-date *rabri*.

Dr. Maheshkumar Panchal: A Ph.D. in Sanskrit, he travels to teach children at many villages, picking up new recipes along the way. He made over twelve unique dishes, including drumstick flower and rose laddoos, papaya curry, fennel leaf curry, *panfuti* (*Kalanchoe pinnata* (Lam.) Pers.) curry, banyan shoot curry, and

hibiscus and neem leaf curry. Several other interesting recipes added to the fray of flavours, such as stuffed purple yam cakes, green turmeric kheer, quinoa kheer, *Ardisia solanacea* leaf fritters, *damrut* (a traditional Tamil *halwa*), carom leaf and tulsi chutney, vegetable ragi soup, bitter gourd-ragi pancakes, bitter gourd cream rolls, horse gram soup, butterfly pea tea, moringa and sweet potato soup, and many more.

Organic from Fields to Meals

For the past two decades, Sattvik has helped organic farmers expand their markets, and directly sell high quality produce to the growing class of conscious urban consumers. Farmers from drought-prone areas are given priority. Prior to the Festival, SRISTI

conducts on-farm verification to ascertain that each participating farmer is following the best organic practices.

Over 90 farmers had set up shop at the *Khedut Haat* (Farmer's Market), alongside a few artisans and wellness practitioners. The market square in the middle of the grounds was brimming with visitors who eagerly await the annual Festival to purchase bulk provisions for staples like grains, legumes, oil, jaggery, dry fruits and nuts, and spices, among others.

The *Khedut Haat* simplifies the process of introducing diversity to one's diet by offering a very wide range even among simple, everyday foods. Several customers were interested in the wild honey from Himachal Pradesh, based on the species of bee, season, and source of pollen or nectar. Many also flocked to the stalls featuring handmade items such as Hariyali Handi - non-toxic nonstick ware, funky cow dung art, toothbrushes made of wood, bronze items, and sparrow nests among many other products. For those who missed buying their requirement of organic products, SRISTI organizes the Haat thrice a week, and would help connect with the innovative farmers and artisans.

Hunger for Learning

Not only did families delight in the festive spirit of the season, they also engaged with the learning





experiences that the Festival offered. The Creativity Corner saw about 2,500 students pursue their curiosity and engage each other through carpentry, broom-making, step ladder making, painting, quizzes, folk songs, paper crafts, and robotics. The traditional copper and brass ware exhibit paid tribute to designs reminiscent of one's grandparents' dinner table. The display was a hotspot for selfies, with the novelty of these antiques fascinating the younger crowds.

Posters on innovation, and other displays explaining the activities of the Honey Bee Network were around every corner. This being the very first Sattvik with stalls for the Honey Bee Network, volunteers spoke with several visitors to bring about greater awareness and excitement for grassroots innovation. The Festival was also a stage where unsung heroes among grassroots innovators were honoured.

The "Millet Man of Sikkim", Tshering Lepcha, has conserved several varieties of millets and brought samples to

show visitors while explaining their benefits. Farmers might also prefer these grains that generally give high nutrition for less input, and can be cultivated sustainably. Millets found a place on every stall owner's menu. While some served traditional dishes like *khichdo* and *rotlo*, there were quite a few eye-catching innovations such as millet kebabs with drumstick leaf chutney, ragi smoothie, and millets kimbap (a Korean seaweed roll).

A 'Kavi Sammelan' (poets' meet) on the last day of the festival featured renowned Gujarati poets like Anil Chavda, Tejas Dave, Madhusudan Patel, Vipul Parmar, Bhavin Gopani, and Krunal Shah. Their compositions highlighted the beauty in folk culture, while touching upon current issues. While the Festival may have concluded, the spirit of Sattvik remains. SRISTI hosts the *Khedut Haat* thrice a week in Ahmedabad (Sundays - SRISTI campus, Sola Bhagwat, Navjivan Press, Palodia) and concrete plans are in the works to engage with the innovative home cooks throughout the year.



RECIPES FROM SATTVIK

We bring our readers a sample of the tastes from the Sattvik Traditional Foods and Nutrition Festival 2023, with two delicious and innovative recipes - one from Kashmiri communities, and the other from a chef in Ahmedabad. More to follow in the next issue!

SAPTARANGI PUDLA

by Jayashree Chauhan (Ahmedabad, Gujarat)

Ingredients

1 cup of sama flour (barnyard millet)
3 teaspoon (tsp) of besan (chickpea flour)
3 tsp each of wheat and coconut flour
2 tsp of semolina
Curd
Ginger paste, coriander stems
2 chopped chillies, cumin seeds, salt to taste

Colours

White from grated coconut, good for raising HDL.

Blue from blue pea flowers with anthocyanins and other antioxidants.

Green from mint leaf juice to aid digestion.

Yellow from fresh turmeric, which improves liver function.

Red from beetroot juice and red chilli, good for

lowering BP.

Brown from ragi flour that provides umpteen fiber.

Black from activated charcoal and black sesame seeds, which improve the health of the kidney and heart, respectively.

Instructions

Mix all the dry ingredients into curd for a dosa batter-like consistency.

Add ginger paste, coriander stems, two chopped chillies, cumin seeds, and salt to taste.

Spoon mixture into seven different bowls in equal parts.

Mix the 'colouring' ingredients into each, and lightly fry into small pancakes.

Glaze these vibrant pudlas with a little oil, and stack them.

Serve with a chutney of chani bor (wild jujube, *Ziziphus nummularia* Rhamnaceae (Burm. F.) Wight & Arn.).



BUM CHOONTH YAKHNI

(Quince Fruit White Curry Recipe)

by Humeria Mohiuddin Lone (Sheikhpora, Anantnag)

Quince fruit makes for a delicious curry with curd, and is known for its sweet and tangy flavors. It is sometimes called "Quince Fruit Raita".

Ingredients (Two Servings)

300 g of fresh Quince apples
500 mL of plain yogurt
20 mL of desi ghee/vegetable oil
1 tsp of turmeric powder
4 garlic cloves
1 tsp each cumin seeds, ginger powder & red chili powder
5 green elaichi (cardamom pods)
2 tsp of salt
3 pieces each Almonds, Cashews, and Raisins

Instructions

Peel, core, and dice the quince fruits. Keep in a bowl and sprinkle 1 tsp vinegar / lemon juice to prevent browning.

In a frying pan, heat 1 tablespoon (Tbsp) of vegetable oil over medium to high heat. Sauté the diced quince for 5-7 minutes till slightly golden brown. Transfer from pan back to a bowl, and set aside.

Add 2 Tbsp of vegetable oil to that same pan, and heat on medium. Add cumin seeds and let them sizzle for a few seconds. Add the chopped garlic, red chili powder and salt.

Sauté for about 3-5 minutes, until they are translucent and fragrant.

Stir in the ginger, fennel, and turmeric powder. Cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly to toast the spices.



Reduce the heat to low, and whisk in the plain curd. Add few cardamoms until it's well incorporated into the spice mixture. Be sure to whisk continuously to avoid curdling. Gradually add the curd stirring well to combine.

Add the sautéed quince fruit slices to the white curry sauce add pieces of dry fruits. Stir to combine.

Cover the skillet and simmer the mixture for about 15-20 minutes or until the quince becomes tender and fully cooked.

Once the quince is tender and the flavors have melded together, remove the curry from the heat. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves. Serve the Quince Fruit White Curry hot with steamed rice or Indian bread like naan or roti.

Benefits

This balanced meal is rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and contains antioxidants, including vitamin C and various phytonutrients. (S.Z. Hussain et al., 2021)