



Ayurvedic Recipes from Ganesh's Café in Rishikesh

(Ayurvedic Café in Ram Jhula, Rishikesh, 5 minutes further down the road from Parmath Niketan Ashram. Ask for cooking classes, Ayurvedic consultations and Vedic astrology!)

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Getting Started

You will need a few things to cook these recipes but once you have stocked up, the recipes are very easy.

Basic kitchen utensils:

- Pressure cooker - if you cook a lot of beans and grains, this is definitely a worthwhile investment! It shortens cooking time by almost two thirds.
- Mortar and Pestle - I prefer pounding spices freshly each time in a mortar but you can buy the powder versions of them if you prefer.
- Flat non-stick pan for the breads, a chapati pan is ideal, but any other flat one will do too.
- Small grinder if you want to make your own spice mixes

Spices:

Invest in organic spices. They might not always seem to be the most perfumed ones but non-organic ones have been boosted with fertilizers and other chemicals. Also check your spices regularly for age. If you are like me, chances are some of date back to 2007!

- Turmeric (powder)
- Cumin seeds
- Coriander seeds
- Grated coconut
- Fenugreek leaves (dried)
- Cinnamon (sticks or powder)
- Cardamom pods (at least green ones, better green and black)
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The other ones in the recipes should be easy to find anywhere, you probably have them already.

Basics:

- Wholegrain flour - none of the white and processed stuff, please buy fresh whole grains and either mill them yourself or at the shop when you buy it. Health food stores offer that service. It's the only way to get all the nutrients like essential oils and vitamins into your body!
- Chickpea flour
- Lentils and beans - try different types and find your favourites. Pulses and grains give us all the protein our bodies need - we do NOT need meat to get all the protein we need!

Cinnamon Masala (makes 100g)

Masala just means spices and every cook and household will have their fiercely guarded recipes and mixes. Ganesh shared his Cinnamon Masala mix with us which you can use on just about everything! Especially good on sweet dishes, müsli or yoghurts, you can also add it to curries, rice dishes and, and, and...

- 50g cinnamon stick
- 30g black cardamom (weigh with the skin but only use the seeds inside)
- 2 nutmegs
- 10g cloves
- 5g black pepper
- 5g green cardamom (same as black)

Leave all spices to dry properly in the sun for a day or roast them gently on a low flame in a pan for 10-15 minutes. Optionally add 2 tbsp of candied sugar. Grind everything in an electric grinder until you get a coarse powder and keep in a jar or tin. Will keep for 3-4 months.

Garam Masala (makes 100g)

This spice mix can be added to any curry or main dish. Feel free to vary as you prefer.

- 50g coriander seeds
- 20g cumin seeds
- 10g cloves (at least one, even if you don't like them!)
- 5g black cardamom
- 5g green cardamom (or 10g if you can't find the black)
- 5g black pepper
- 1 small nutmeg

Open coriander pods and take out the seeds. Crush nutmeg with a hammer or stone. Leave all spices to dry properly in the sun for a day or roast them gently on a low flame in a pan for 10-15 minutes. Grind everything in an electric grinder until you get a coarse powder and keep in a jar or tin. Will keep for 3-4 months.

Fresh Aloe Vera Juice (4 small glasses)



Ganesh had an aloe vera plant in the café's garden, they grow indoors really well, just make sure you get an organic one if you want to eat/drink it's juice. Alternatively you could use the juice in bottles you can get at health food stores and organic supermarkets. Aloe vera is good for skin and to cleanse our body

- 15 cm aloe vera leaf (you can leave the skin on, just cut off the wooden bits)
- 1 tomato (with skin but without seeds)
- Handful of mint leaves
- 3-4 tulsi leaves (very healthy plant, good against colds, coughs... and negative thoughts!)
- 2-inch piece of marrow (from the family of pumpkins, but don't substitute if you can't find it, just leave it out)
- 1 small apple or 1/4 papaya or 1 pomegranate (just the seeds) or a carrot, finely chopped
- 2 cups of water
- (if you really need it sweeter, add 1 tsp of honey afterwards)

Put all ingredients into a mixer/blender, blend for 2 minutes and strain the juice into the glasses.

Spinach Chapati (makes 6 flat breads)

- 1 1/2 cups chickpea flour
- 1/2 cup wheat semolina
- 1/2 cup wholegrain wheat flour
- 1 handful finely chopped fresh spinach
- 1 inch of ginger, finely chopped
- 1/2 onion (or 1 small one), finely chopped
- 1-2 Tbsp coriander leaves
- 2-3 Tbsp mint leaves
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 cinnamon masala (see recipe)
- 1 tsp dried fenugreek leaves
- 1 pinch of caraway seeds



Mix all ingredients in a bowl and add just enough water to make a thick dough (probably around 1 cup). Mix everything very well with your hands and leave to rest for 1/2 hour. Make 6 even-sized balls of dough, roll them in wholegrain wheat flour, flatten and roll into flat breads, using enough flour to stop them sticking. Heat a chapati pan (or use any other non-stick pan) and roast the bread for 5-10 minutes on a middle flame until light brown patches appear. Eat immediately or keep under a clean cloth. Spread a little ghee (Indian clarified butter) on them before serving.

Don't worry too much about getting all the ingredients, and feel free to substitute some of them for more local ones, it will work as well!



Vegetable and Mint Parantha (makes 6)

(see step-by-step pictures on next page)

Traditionally, parantha is a fried flat bread with a filling. This recipe is a lighter version, roasting the parantha in a dry pan just like chapatis.

Ingredients for the dough:

- 600 kg wholegrain flour (wheat or any mix with chickpea, spelt, be as creative as you like)
- a pinch of salt
- water

For the filling:

- 100g steamed cauliflower or any other vegetable
- 5-6 big fresh mint leaves
- 1/2 onion chopped
- 2 pinches salt
- 1 pinch cumin seeds
- 1 pinch fenugreek leaves
- 1 pinch garam masala

Mix flour, salt and enough water to make a dough with a spongy consistency. Leave to rest for 30 minutes, better 1 hour. Divide into 6 equal parts.

Mix all filling ingredients well and divide mass into 6 equal parts.

Roll one dough ball out to chapati size using a little flour to avoid sticking. Put filling into the middle, fold as shown and carefully roll out again, keeping the filling inside the dough. Heat a chapati pan (or use any other non-stick pan) and roast the bread for 5-10 minutes on a middle flame until light brown patches appear. Eat immediately or keep under a clean cloth. Spread a little ghee (Indian clarified butter) on them before serving.

Alternative fillings could be potatoes, spinach, fried onions and any mix of spices and herbs. You could also think of filling them with apple and cinnamon or any other sweet combination.



Yogi Porridge (serves 2)

Whole grains are a very nutritious way to start the day. Oats and corn make a good 50:50 mix, but feel free to just try different ones and mix.

- 80-100g freshly ground, pounded or flaked grains (you need to break them open for them to soak up the liquid when cooking. Doing this yourself ensures you keep all the valuable nutrients in your breakfast. Ready-made flakes and oatmeal have been in the packet for weeks and the essential oils and vitamins have gone.
- 1 almond and 1 walnut
- 4-5 raisins
- 1 tsp honey
- juice of 1/2 lemon
- a pinch of cinnamon or cinnamon masala

Boil the grains in water or milk for 1 minute and leave to soak for 5 minutes with the lid on the pan. Add nuts, raisins, honey, lemon and spices. Eat warm.



Apple Cinnamon Halva (serves 2)

Indians love sweets, however they are not traditionally part of a meal. Especially not as a dessert. Enjoy this dish for breakfast or with some tea in the afternoon with friends.



- 1 small apple
- 1 cup wholegrain bread crumbs or wheat semolina
- 2 Tbsp ghee (clarified butter) or good cooking oil
- 1 Tbsp grated coconut
- 1 cup (soya/rice) milk or water
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon masala (see recipe above) or cinnamon powder

To garnish:

- 10 sultanas
- 2 almonds or cashew nuts
- 1 Tbsp coconut flakes
- 1 Tbsp honey or agave sirup
- or any other variation of dried fruit and nuts

Brown the diced apple in the oil/ghee on a low flame, add breadcrumbs/semolina the grated coconut and the spices, stir well. Add the milk and leave to simmer for another 5 minutes. Spoon into little bowls and garnish as you like.

Kitcheri - India's comfort food (serves 2-3)

This is like Spaghetti with Tomato Sauce or Digestive biscuits, Indians love Kitcheri. It is easy and quick to make, easy to digest and a nourishing meal in itself. Pulses and grains make a perfectly balanced meal with all the minerals and protein we need.

- 1 cup green mung beans (or any fast-cooking pulses you have available)
- 1 cup good (brown or basmati) rice
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp garam masala (see recipe) or any spice mix you have available
- 1 tsp fenugreek leaves (or any other herbs you like)

Mix and wash the beans and rice 2-3 times and drain. Add 6 cups of fresh water and the spices. Cook in the pressure cooker 15-20 minutes or 35-40 minutes in a saucepan (add 2 cups of water so it stays soupy). Add herbs and eat as it is or with steamed/stir-fried vegetables.

Palak (serves 2)

This is a great way of preparing any greens, typically fresh spinach. Serve with brown rice or chapati.

- 400g fresh washed and torn spinach
- 1 Tbsp oil (olive, soya, peanut, mustard seed, whatever you have handy)
- 1 small onion
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 small tomato
- 1/2 tsp garlic-ginger paste or 1 crushed garlic clove and 1 cm grated ginger
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp garam masala (see recipe or ready spice mix)
- optional: 100g diced tofu or organic paneer (Indian cheese) to make it a main dish

Brown onion and cumin seeds in the oil in a pan over medium heat. Reduce heat, add all other ingredients and leave to simmer for 3-5 minutes. Add diced tofu or organic paneer while simmering if you like.

Spinach Kitcheri

Mix kitcheri and palak as described above.



Vegetable Kima or Mashed Veggies with Soja (serves 2)

- 50g soya protein (dry soya meat) - soaked as described on packet and finely chopped
- 400g seasonal vegetables to taste - steamed and chopped
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- 1Tbsp cooking oil (olive, peanut, soya or whatever you prefer)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 crushed garlic clove and 1/2 tsp grated ginger (or 1 tsp garlic-ginger paste)
- 1 Tbsp tomato puree
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp fenugreek leaves
- 1 Tbsp coconut powder
- 1 pinch cinnamon or cinnamon masala

Heat oil over middle flame, brown onion and spices, add soya and vegetables. Add 1 cup water and leave to simmer for 3-4 minutes over a low flame, just so it is lightly bubbling. Serve with chapati or brown rice.

Ganesh's Vegetable and Bean Curry (serves 2)

- 4 Tbsp good cooking oil (he uses sunflower, peanut or soya)
- 300g of your favorite vegetables, lightly steamed
- 100g cooked beans, chickpeas or lentils
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 chopped small onion
- 1 crushed garlic clove and 1/2 tsp grated ginger (or 1 tsp garlic-ginger paste)
- 1 Tbsp tomato puree
- salt
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp garam masala (see extra recipe or use ready mixed)
- black pepper
- 1 tsp dried fenugreek leaves
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon masala (see extra recipe or use plain cinnamon)
- 1 Tbsp coconut powder

Heat oil in pan over a middle flame. Gently roast the cumin seeds and the garlic-ginger. Add the vegetables and the beans, a couple of Tbsp of water to stop them sticking to the pan, add all the spices and the tomato puree, eventually a little more water, stir for 2-3 minutes and serve with spinach chapati or brown rice.



Masala Chai (makes 2-3 small glasses)

- 1 tsp black tea leaves
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup milk
- 1 pinch of cinnamon and 2 crushed cardamom pods - or 1/2 tsp cinnamon masala

Boil water, tea and spices for 1-2 minutes, add milk, boil for another minute and strain into the glasses. Very addictive!

