

Nourishing Peace Cookbook

Wholesome recipes & drinks

PUBLISHED BY MILKCOOP DENIYAYA SRI LANKA 2026



Nourishing Peace Cookbook

Local food growing,
wholesome recipes & drinks.
A celebration of the knowledge,
harvests & culinary traditions of
women farmers in Deniyaya &
surrounding communities.

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FRONT COVER IMAGES Picking Gotu Kola and a dish of Gotu Kola Sambol.
Magpie eating insects.

MESSAGE FROM THE...

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



KS Lankathilaka

From Garden to Plate

Food is essential for all living beings. From the earliest days of human history, humanity has relied on nature for survival. During the Stone Age, early people obtained food by hunting, fishing, and gathering from the surrounding environment. As these natural resources became less reliable, communities began cultivating edible plants and domesticating livestock. With the dawn of the Neolithic era, people developed new ways of preparing food to meet their growing needs.

As civilisations evolved, food became far more than a basic necessity—it became a profound expression of culture, tradition, and identity. Today, food is celebrated not only for its nutritional value but also for its power to bring families and communities together. It remains foundational to the health, well-being, and shared spirit of humanity.

MILKCOOP was established in 2010 to create better marketing opportunities for the fresh milk produced by four dairy farming families. Sri Lanka has a rich, diverse culinary heritage, beautifully symbolised by our traditional national dish, kiribath (milk rice). Lovingly prepared with rice and rich coconut milk, this dish transcends boundaries and is shared between families across all cultures and backgrounds as a powerful, peace-giving ritual. Inspired by this timeless heritage of unity and nourishment, MILKCOOP is deeply committed to supporting local farmers to enhance food security through training programs, improved infrastructure, assisting with market opportunities and caring for the natural environment to further sustain and connect Sri Lankan families.

Every member of our cooperative works tirelessly from dawn until dusk, tending the land and caring for their livestock. Through their dedication, locally produced foods from small rural communities are reaching wider markets, preserving traditional farming practices while directly supporting rural livelihoods.

This book, prepared by Mrs Jo Dean—an Australian volunteer who worked alongside MILKCOOP in Deniyaya, Southern Sri Lanka—offers a unique insight into our island's rich rural food culture. Drawing on her expertise in food technology and her immersive experience in our community, she has curated a collection of recipes that demonstrate how nutritious, delicious meals can be prepared using ingredients readily available in rural areas. This publication will be a valuable resource for anyone who loves to cook or wishes to explore the authentic flavours and traditions of Sri Lankan rural cuisine.

Every member of our cooperative works tirelessly from dawn until dusk, tending the land and caring for their livestock. Through their dedication, locally produced foods from small rural communities are reaching wider markets, preserving traditional farming practices while directly supporting rural livelihoods. MILKCOOP are grateful of the support provided by AusAID, Sri Lankan Support Unit through the Empowerment of Rural Plantation Women with Sustainable Livelihoods: Improving knowledge and skills in Climate Adaptation Project.

As the Executive Director of MILKCOOP, I extend my sincere appreciation to Mrs Jo Dean for her dedication, hard work, and invaluable contribution to this publication. I am confident that this book will inspire readers to appreciate the richness of our culinary heritage, the vital importance of supporting local food producers, and the profound way that locally grown, healthy food can unite us all.

K. S. Lankathilaka

Executive Director, MILKCOOP



Coconut milk boiling for milk rice

FOREWORD



Janaki Kathriarachchi

There is an ancient truth that many of us have forgotten: **everything in nature carries energy**. The soil beneath our feet, the seeds we plant, the water that nourishes them, the hands that cultivate them, and the food we finally place on our tables all exist within the same living web. When we care for nature with respect rather than domination, we do more than grow crops — we cultivate harmony. The food that emerges from such a system carries not only nourishment for the body, but also the quiet vibrations of balance, gratitude, and peace.

After spending more than twenty-five years working in Sri Lanka's organic agriculture and food sector, this belief has become the foundation of my life's work. Through Three Star Organic Farm and later Ranbath Organic Food & Catering Services, my mission has never been simply to produce organic food or preserve traditional recipes. It has been to honour the profound relationship between people and the earth to demonstrate that the way we grow, prepare, and share food has the power to influence our health, our communities, and even our collective wellbeing.

Organic and biodynamic farming are often described through scientific terms — soil health, biodiversity, ecological balance, and nutrition. While these are undeniably important, there is another dimension that cannot be measured so easily. A field cultivated without violence to the earth, enriched with living soil and natural cycles, possesses a different vitality. Food grown with patience, respect, and genuine care seems to carry an unmistakable life force. Likewise, meals prepared with generosity and shared around a table become acts of connection that nourish far beyond physical hunger.

Nourishing Peace captures this deeper truth with remarkable authenticity.

This collection is born from the wisdom of the women of the MILKCOOP Society, representing rural women's groups living alongside the magnificent Sinharaja Rainforest. These women are far more than cooks; they are

custodians of an ancient relationship with the land. Their knowledge has not been learned from textbooks but inherited through generations of observation, experience, and daily practice. In their gardens, seeds are exchanged with neighbours, harvests are shared freely, and recipes become stories passed from mother to daughter. Their lives remind us that food has always been about community before commerce.

Within these pages, readers will discover far more than recipes. Every preparation reflects a philosophy of living that respects seasonal abundance, values local biodiversity, and understands that health begins long before food reaches the kitchen. From nourishing heirloom rice varieties that have sustained Sri Lankan communities for centuries to restorative herbal porridges such as *Kola Kenda*, each dish reflects the extraordinary intelligence of our traditional food culture — a wisdom that modern science is only beginning to fully appreciate.

As a researcher exploring women's entrepreneurship and sustainable food systems, I see these women as powerful examples of resilience, innovation, and quiet leadership. Their contribution extends beyond preserving culinary traditions; they protect biodiversity, strengthen local economies, and demonstrate that sustainability flourishes when women are empowered to lead within their communities.

In an increasingly hurried world, where food is often reduced to convenience and agriculture to industrial production, *Nourishing Peace* offers something profoundly different. It invites us to slow down. To recognise that every meal begins with the soil. To appreciate that every ingredient carries a story. To remember that when we choose food grown in harmony with nature, we also nurture harmony within ourselves.

My hope is that this book inspires each reader not only to recreate these beautiful recipes but also to embrace the values they represent: respect for nature, gratitude for those who cultivate it, compassion for one another, and faith in the quiet yet transformative power of wholesome food.

For when we nourish the earth with kindness, the earth returns that kindness to us. And when we nourish ourselves with food grown in peace, perhaps we become instruments of peace ourselves.

Janaki Kathriarachchi

Award-winning Entrepreneur, Women's Empowerment Advocate, Founder of Ranbath Organic Food Pvt Ltd & Three Star Organic Farm Pvt Ltd

PREFACE



Jo Dean, author, Australian Volunteers Program

Food carries the memories of a people. It holds the stories of our families, the wisdom of our ancestors, and the love shared around the table. In Sri Lanka, food has always been much more than nourishment. It is how we welcome others into our homes, celebrate special moments, care for our families, and maintain a deep connection with the natural world around us.

For generations, traditional recipes have been passed from woman to woman—from mothers and grandmothers to daughters and younger generations. Along with ingredients and cooking methods, these recipes carry stories, cultural practices, and knowledge of the seasons that have supported Sri Lankan families for centuries.

Nourishing Peace was created to honour this precious heritage and the extraordinary women who continue to keep it alive.

This cookbook is a collection of beloved local recipes created with the women of the MILKCOOP Society, representing 78 rural women's groups living in communities surrounding the magnificent Sinharaja Rainforest. During my journey with these women, I experienced much more than farming and food. I shared laughter, songs, dances, stories, and friendships. Through these moments, I witnessed the strength, happiness, and connection that grow when women come together with kindness, trust, and a shared purpose.

These women are guardians of local knowledge. They grow organic foods using traditional practices that have been carefully passed through generations, while also embracing new ideas that strengthen their connection with the land. Through MILKCOOP, we have shared knowledge, introduced new tools and techniques, and explored ways to better understand the health of the soil that supports their gardens. By learning more about soil life, natural growing methods, and sustainable practices,

these communities continue to nurture the land while improving the quality and abundance of their harvests.

Their gardens provide fresh and nutritious ingredients for their families, while their cooperation creates stronger and more resilient communities. Women exchange seeds, planting materials, produce, and knowledge, creating networks of support that extend far beyond the garden gate.

Many women have also taken steps to add value to their harvests, transforming seasonal produce into foods that can be enjoyed throughout the year. Through traditional preservation methods, they dry and store jackfruit, prepare herbs and spices, and create products that reduce waste while creating new opportunities for income. Some women have developed small enterprises that support many others by providing services such as drying, grinding, and packaging locally grown products.

The wisdom of these women reminds us of the importance of working with nature's seasons. By growing, harvesting, preserving, and sharing food at the right time, communities can build a reliable year-round food supply. This connection to the seasons strengthens food security, protects traditional knowledge, and helps rural families become more resilient.

Many of the ingredients celebrated in these recipes—such as traditional red rice, jackfruit, gotukola, thebu leaves, herbs, and spices—have nourished Sri Lankan communities for generations. Today, research is helping us understand the valuable nutritional qualities of these traditional foods, but the women of Sri Lanka have long understood their importance through experience, observation, and generations of shared knowledge.

This book is a celebration of the women who grow, cook, preserve, sing, dance, and share. It is a tribute to their generosity, creativity, and determination. My hope is that Nourishing Peace inspires families to gather around the kitchen, reconnect with local foods, respect the wisdom of previous generations, and continue passing these traditions forward.

Every recipe in this book carries a piece of Sri Lanka's heart. May it bring nourishment, connection, and peace to every home where it is shared, both locally in Sri Lanka and throughout the world.

Jo Dean volunteered with MILKCOOP as an Organic Farming Mentor. Her assignment is funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Volunteers Program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
THANK YOU... STHUTHI... NANDRI...

With gratitude & appreciation

A cookbook is never the work of one person alone. Behind every recipe are the hands that grow the ingredients, the people who share their knowledge, and the many acts of kindness that help bring ideas to life.

A celebration of woman farmers

Nourishing Peace is first and foremost a celebration of the women farmers of the MILKCOOP Society represented in communities surrounding the magnificent Sinharaja Rainforest. We offer our heartfelt thanks to these women for sharing their recipes, traditional knowledge, gardening experiences and culinary traditions. Their generosity, creativity and connection to the land are at the heart of this book.

Our sincere appreciation goes to K. S. Lankathilaka and the MILKCOOP team for their sharing of recipes, encouragement and support throughout this project, and for their ongoing commitment to local food production, women's empowerment and stronger rural communities. Australian volunteer mentors, Jo and Geoff Dean, supporting training for the women in organic food and tea production — caring for soil, plants and people, combined in the pages of this cookbook.

We extend a special thank you to Fiona Campbell, TerraCircle volunteer, whose graphic design expertise, encouragement and support helped bring this beautiful cookbook together. We are particularly grateful to TerraCircle for providing a small micro-grant towards printing during the development stage of this cookbook, helping make it possible for these recipes and the knowledge they carry to be shared more widely at the UN Year of the Woman Farmer celebration in Deniyaya.

Our thanks go to Charith Weerasingh from the Australian Volunteers Program, Colombo, for his support throughout the process, helping to connect key people for this project to move forward to fruition.

We are especially grateful to Janaki Kathriarachchi and Randima Balasooriya, Ranbath Organic Food & Catering Services (Pvt) Ltd for their guiding hand, thoughtful feedback and generous sharing of knowledge around traditional foods, organic growing and wholesome cooking. Their insights have helped strengthen the connection between the recipes in this book and the values of nourishment, sustainability and respect for nature.

Finally, thank you to everyone who contributed time, ideas, encouragement, photographs, recipes and practical assistance along the way. Every conversation, shared meal and exchange of knowledge has helped shape this collection.

May the spirit of generosity that made this book possible continue each time a recipe is prepared, a meal is shared, a story is graciously entrusted and knowledge is passed to another generation.

With gratitude and peace,

The Nourishing Peace Cookbook team

MILKCOOP, Deniyaya, Sri Lanka



CONTENTS

Executive Director V

Foreword VII

Preface IX

Acknowledgements Thank you... Sthuthi... Nandri... XI

Foundations of Sri Lankan Cooking 1

Growing Organic Gardens for Good Health 3

Breakfast Favourites 7

- String Hoppers 9
- Egg Hoppers 9
- Milk Rice 11
- Chilli Onion Sambol 11
- Kola Kenda 12
- Avocado Smoothie 12

Nourishing Curries 13

- Jackfruit Curry 15
- Wild Fern Curry 16
- Wing Bean & Dahl Curry 17
- Dahl Curry 17
- Brinjal Curry 19
- Sweet Potato Curry 19
- Sweet & Spicy Mango Curry 20
- Mixed Vegetable Coconut Curry 20
- Ambarella Curry 21
- Okra & Tomato Curry 21
- Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23

Nalala Labu Curry 24
Drumstick Curry 24
Banana Flower Curry 25
Vegetable Paneer Curry 26
Sesame & Cashew Nut Curry 27
Soursop Curry 28

Sambols, Chutneys & Condiments 29
Sri Lankan Pol Sambol 30
Sri Lankan Pickles 30
Gotu Kola Sambol 31
Passionfruit Leaf & Gotu Kola Sambol 31
Lunu Miris 32
Sri Lankan Tamarind Chutney 33
Coconut Chutney 34

Snacks, Street Food & Short Eats 35
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers 37
Banana Bites 38
Vegetable & Egg Kottu Roti 39
Sri Lankan Parippu Wade 40
Jackfruit Cutlets 40
Kokis 41
Samosas 43
Mushroom Bites 44

Rice & Side Dishes 45
Cold Red Rice & Fresh Vegetable Salad 47
Southern Sri Lankan Stir-fry 48
Vegetable Rice Stir-fry 49
Roasted Beetroot, Carrot & Herb Salad 49
Winged Bean & Avocado Salad 50

Preserved, Fermented & Sun-Dried Foods 51
Sri Lankan Fermented Green Mango Pickle (Achcharu Style) 53
Sri Lankan Fermented Chilli & Onion Relish (Village Lunu Miris Style) 53
Sun-dried Tropical Fruits 54
Sri Lankan Fermented Carrot & Cabbage Mix 55
Sri Lankan Fermented Murunga Leaves 55
Herbal & Energising Drinks 57
Mixed Fruit & Leaf Smoothie 58
Fresh Ginger Energizer Drink (Ginger Tonic) 59
Cinnamon & Coconut Energizer Drink 59
Cooling & Refreshing Drinks 61
King Coconut Water Refresh Drink 62
Sri Lankan GInger Beer (Inguru Drink) 62
Sri Lankan Herbal Gotu Kola Drink 63
Fresh Hibiscus Iced Tea (Vadamal) 65
Wood Apple Juice (Divul Drink) 66
Cucumber & Lime Cooling Infusion 66
Traditional Village Baking 67
Pumpkin & Kithul Cake 69
Sri Lankan Coconut & Date Legume Flour Cake 70
Mung Kavum 70
Halapa 71
Genoa Cake (Tea-soaked Fruit Cake) 72
Deniyaya Seasonal Preservation Calendar 73
Ayurveda & Fermentation (The Wheel) 77
Quickly Find Specific Recipes 81
Index 82



Local baskets and clay pots

FOUNDATIONS OF **SRI LANKAN COOKING**

Essential Ingredients & Spice Glossary

- **Core Sri Lankan Spices:** Ceylon Cinnamon (Kurundu), Roasted Curry Powder, Turmeric (Kaha), Chilli Powder, Black Pepper, Fenugreek Seeds (Uluhal), Mustard Seeds, Allspice
- **Aromatics**: Curry Leaves (Karapincha), Pandan Leaf (Rampe), Garlic, Ginger, Onion
- **Coconut Forms:** Thin Coconut Milk, Thick Coconut Milk, Fresh Grated Coconut
- **Sweeteners**: Kithul Treacle, Jaggery, Honey, Stevia
- **Special Ingredients**: Goraka (Garcinia), Maldive Fish Flakes, Jackfruit (Polos), Gotukola.



Traditional Cooking Equipment

- **Clay Pots (Mati Athiliya)**: Slow, even cooking for curries
- **Mortar & Pestle (Wangediya):** Pounding sambols and pastes
- **Bamboo Drying Trays (Batapothu Watti)**: Sun-drying fruits and spices
- **Coconut Scraper (Hiramanaya):** Fresh coconut preparation
- **Grinding Stone (Miris Gala)**: Traditional sambol making.



Hopper pan

INSET: String Hopper Press and Hopper Baskets

GARDENING

GROWING **ORGANIC GARDENS** FOR GOOD HEALTH

Jo Dean and Janaki Kathriarachchi

Organic home gardening offers a wonderful way to grow fresh, chemical-free food right outside our door. When we nurture vegetables, herbs, spices, nuts and fruits naturally, we know exactly how they have been grown, what has gone into the soil, and how they have been cared for. There is a special satisfaction in harvesting food that has been grown with our own hands, free from harmful chemicals and full of natural goodness.

Connecting with nature

A home garden also gives us a deeper connection to nature. Spending time among plants, listening to birds, feeling the sun on our skin, and watching seeds transform into thriving crops can be deeply restorative. **This biophilic connection**—the simple human enjoyment of being close to living things—helps us slow down, relax, and find moments of peace in our busy lives. Many gardeners speak of feeling calmer and happier after working in the garden, and research suggests there may be good reasons for this. Contact with soil and beneficial soil microbes has been associated with positive effects on wellbeing, while the simple acts of digging, planting, and caring for living things can help reduce stress and encourage relaxation. Studies suggest that interactions with healthy soil may stimulate the release of serotonin, often referred to as one of the body's 'feel-good' chemicals. It is a gentle reminder that human beings have always been intimately connected with the earth and that tending the soil can nurture us as much as it nurtures our plants.



In an organic garden you can find these creatures that manage our plant pests

Fresh home-grown produce

Many gardeners find that home-grown produce is not only fresher but often more nutrient-dense as well. Vegetables and herbs can be picked at their peak ripeness and enjoyed within minutes of harvest, preserving flavour and nutritional value. To grow a garden with a diversity of plants that span all colours of the rainbow translates into a healthy, nourishing meal that gives a balance of essential nutrients for the body. The vibrant colours, aromas, and tastes of freshly harvested food remind us how rewarding it can be to eat seasonally and locally. Growing a variety of crops also encourages us to enjoy a more diverse range of foods, supporting both health and enjoyment at the table.

Healthy plants begin with healthy soil

An organic garden teaches us that healthy plants begin with healthy soil. One of the simplest and most effective ways to care for the soil is by returning organic matter back to it through **composting**.

Kitchen scraps such as:

- fruit and vegetable peelings
- coffee grounds, and other plant-based materials

can be transformed into rich compost that feeds the soil food web.

This valuable compost provides nourishment for beneficial microbes, earthworms, and other soil organisms that help create fertile, living soil. In turn, these organisms help make nutrients available to plants, improve soil structure, and increase the soil's ability to retain moisture.

Animal manures like cow, chicken or goat manure that has been composted adds valuable nutrients and beneficial microbes to the soil and can be used in liquid compost and vermi-compost with additional benefits from regularly applying it to the home garden.

Many gardeners also save and finely grind eggshells to add to their compost or directly to garden beds. Eggshells are a readily available source of calcium, an important nutrient for healthy plant growth and strengthening the cell walls of plants. When ground into a fine powder, the shells break down more readily and interact with the soil more quickly, making their calcium available sooner. They can also contribute to maintaining optimum soil pH here in tropical soils, an important factor in helping plants access the nutrients they need to thrive.

Together, compost, eggshells, and other organic materials like gliricidia leaves become part of a natural cycle in which organic waste is transformed into valuable resources that nourish both the soil and the plants growing in it.

Home gardens cut costs

Organic home gardening can also help reduce the cost of living. Even a modest garden can provide a steady supply of herbs, spices, leafy greens, salad vegetables, and other produce that would otherwise need to be purchased. Over time, the savings can add up, while the garden continues to provide healthy food and enjoyment throughout the growing seasons. A pinch of seeds, a handful of compost, and a little care can often yield an abundance that far exceeds the initial investment.

Perhaps one of the most heartwarming aspects of home gardening is the sense of community it can create. Gardeners often exchange seeds, seedlings, cuttings, gardening tips, and surplus produce with friends, neighbours, and family. These simple acts of sharing strengthen relationships, preserve plant diversity, and spread the joy of growing food. Stories, knowledge, and traditions are passed from one person to another, helping to build resilient and connected communities.

In many ways, an organic home garden is about much more than growing vegetables. It is about:

- caring for the soil
- nurturing our wellbeing
- producing wholesome food
- reducing household expenses, and
- strengthening our connections with nature and one another.

Whether grown in a backyard, a farm garden, or a few pots on a balcony, a garden offers an opportunity to participate in the timeless cycle of planting, tending, harvesting, and sharing. In return, it rewards us with nourishment, beauty, learning, friendship, a deeper appreciation for the living world around us, and experiencing peace and wellness.

BREAKFAST FAVOURITES

Breakfast is often called the most important meal of the day because it replenishes energy after an overnight fast and provides the nutrients needed to start the day well.

Traditional Sri Lankan breakfasts such as kiribath, kola kenda, pittu, and hoppers combine wholesome ingredients like rice, coconut, and leafy greens to provide sustained energy, nourishment, and satisfaction throughout the morning.


Fill a String Hopper
Press to make these
String Hoppers
Samara making
Rice Flour Hoppers

BREAKFAST

STRING HOPPERS



INGREDIENTS

2 cups rice flour

1 cup warm water

½ tsp salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Mix rice flour and salt.
2. Gradually add warm water and knead into a soft dough.
3. Fill a string hopper press with the dough.
4. Press onto bamboo steamer mats.
5. Steam for 8–10 minutes until cooked through.
6. Serve warm with curry and sambol.

EGG HOPPERS



INGREDIENTS

2 cups hopper batter, fermented at room temperature overnight

4 eggs

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Heat a hopper pan and lightly grease it.
2. Pour a ladle of batter and swirl around the pan.
3. Crack an egg into the centre.
4. Sprinkle with salt.
5. Cover and cook for 2–3 minutes until the egg is set.
6. Serve immediately.



Shiromi grinding Chilli to Chilli flakes

INSET: Chilli drying

BREAKFAST

MILK RICE



INGREDIENTS

2 cups white rice

3 cups water

1½ cups thick coconut milk

1 tsp salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Rinse the rice and cook with the water until soft and most of the water is absorbed.
2. Add the coconut milk and salt. Cook on low heat, stirring occasionally, until thick and creamy.
3. Spread into a lightly greased tray or plate and smooth the surface.
4. Let cool for 10–15 minutes, then cut into diamonds or squares.

CHILLI ONION SAMBOL

INGREDIENTS

1 small red onion, finely chopped

1–2 tsp Chilli flakes

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp lime juice

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Mash together with a spoon or mortar and pestle until well mixed.
3. Serve alongside the kiribath.

SERVING: Traditionally, kiribath is eaten warm with spicy lunu miris for a simple and authentic Sri Lankan breakfast.

BREAKFAST

KOLA KENDA

Herbal Green Porridge



INGREDIENTS

1 cup leafy greens, Gotu Kola, Balloon Vine/Wel Penela, or Moringa/ Drumstick leaves

2 cups thin coconut milk

2 tbsp raw rice

¼ tsp salt

1–2 tbsp thick coconut milk, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash the leaves thoroughly and blend them with a little of the thin coconut milk until smooth.
2. Cook the rice in the remaining thin coconut milk until very soft.
3. Add the blended greens and salt. Stir well and simmer gently for 3–5 minutes.
4. Stir in the thick coconut milk (if using) and heat through without boiling.
5. Serve warm.

AVOCADO SMOOTHIE

Aligetapera



INGREDIENTS

1 cup buffalo curd, thick, traditional Sri Lankan mee kiri

2 large ripe avocados, flesh scooped out

1 cup coconut milk, chilled

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Scoop the ripe avocado flesh into your blender.
2. Add the buffalo curd and chilled coconut milk.
3. Blend on high for 45–60 seconds until completely smooth and creamy.
4. Pour straight into a glass and enjoy fresh.

NOURISHING **CURRIES**

Curries are a cornerstone of Sri Lankan cuisine, bringing together fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs, spices, legumes, and coconut in nourishing and flavourful combinations.

As one of the world's historic spice-trading destinations, Sri Lanka's prized cinnamon, pepper, cardamom, cloves, and other spices attracted merchants from across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe for centuries.

Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial influences, along with the rich culinary traditions of Indian Tamil communities, helped shape the island's diverse food heritage.

Today, Sri Lankan curries reflect this unique blend of cultures, celebrating the island's natural abundance.

These recipes are a celebration of the dedication of MILKCOOP women farmers who grow and nurture the vegetables, fruits, leaves, herbs, and spices that bring these traditional dishes to life in kitchens throughout Katapola, Pasgoda and Pittabedara.



Jackfruit

INSET: Jackfruit Curry

JACKFRUIT CURRY

INGREDIENTS

500g mature jackfruit, cut into small pieces

1 large onion, finely chopped

3 green Chillies, sliced

4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 sprig curry leaves, sticks removed

1 pandan leaf (rampe), tied into a knot

2 cm piece fresh turmeric, grated

1 tsp Chilli powder

½ tsp black pepper

½ tsp ground cinnamon

¼ tsp ground allspice

¼ tsp fenugreek seeds

1 tsp mustard seeds

½ tsp salt (or to taste)

1 cup thin coconut milk

1 cup thick coconut milk

1 tsp coconut oil

HOW TO MAKE IT

Step 1: Prepare the Ingredients

1. Break the jackfruit into bulbs, keep the jackfruit as small bite-sized pieces.
2. Finely chop the onion and garlic.
3. Slice the green Chillies.
4. Remove hard stems from the curry leaves.
5. Grate the fresh turmeric.
6. Grate, squeeze and separate thick and thin coconut milk

Step 2: Season the Jackfruit

1. Place the jackfruit in a large cooking pot.
2. Add the oil, Chilli powder, black pepper, cinnamon, allspice, fenugreek, fresh turmeric, mustard seeds and salt.
3. Add the onion, green Chillies, garlic, curry leaves, and pandan leaf.
4. Mix thoroughly over low heat, add a little water and stir until the jackfruit is evenly coated with the spices.

Step 3: Cook the Curry

1. Pour in the thin coconut milk and stir well.
2. Place the pot over medium heat and bring to a gentle boil.
3. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30–40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the jackfruit begins to soften.

Step 4: Add the Thick Coconut Milk

1. Pour in the thick coconut milk.
2. Stir gently to combine.
3. Continue cooking over low heat for 10–15 minutes until the curry thickens and the jackfruit is tender.
4. Allow the curry to rest and develop the flavour before serving.

CURRY

WILD FERN CURRY



INGREDIENTS

3 cups young fern leaves

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash fern leaves well.
2. Place in a pot with onion and curry powder.
3. Add coconut milk.
4. Cook until tender.
5. Season with salt.
6. Serve warm.



CURRY

DAHL CURRY



INGREDIENTS

1 cup red lentils

1 onion, sliced

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1 green Chilli, sliced

1 tsp turmeric

1 tsp curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash the lentils well.
2. Place lentils, onion, garlic, Chilli, turmeric, curry powder and coconut milk in a pot.
3. Add 1 cup water.
4. Simmer for 20 minutes until soft.
5. Add salt and cook for another 5 minutes.
6. Serve hot.

WING BEAN & DAHL CURRY

INGREDIENTS

1 cup winged beans, sliced

½ cup red lentils

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash lentils thoroughly.
2. Add lentils, winged beans, onion and curry powder to a pot.
3. Pour in coconut milk and 1 cup water.
4. Cook until lentils are soft.
5. Add salt and simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Serve warm.



Spices used in curries

BRINJAL CURRY



INGREDIENTS

3 brinjals, cubed

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

½ tsp turmeric

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. In a small amount of oil, fry the brinjal pieces until lightly browned.
2. Add onion, curry powder and turmeric.
3. Pour in coconut milk.
4. Simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Add salt and cook until thick.
6. Serve warm.

SWEET POTATO CURRY



INGREDIENTS

2 sweet potatoes, cubed

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place sweet potatoes in a pot.
2. Add onion and curry powder.
3. Pour in coconut milk.
4. Cook until sweet potatoes are tender.
5. Season with salt.

CURRY

MIXED **VEGETABLE COCONUT** CURRY



INGREDIENTS

3 cups mixed vegetables

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

½ tsp turmeric

1½ cups coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place vegetables and onion in a pot.
2. Add curry powder and turmeric.
3. Pour in coconut milk.
4. Simmer until vegetables are tender.
5. Season with salt.
6. Serve hot.

SWEET & SPICY MANGO CURRY

INGREDIENTS

2 ripe mangoes, cubed

1 onion, sliced

1 tbsp sugar or jaggery

1 tsp Chilli powder

½ tsp turmeric

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place mango and onion in a pot.
2. Add sugar, Chilli powder and turmeric.
3. Add a little water.
4. Simmer until mango softens.
5. Add salt and cook until slightly thick.
6. Serve warm.

CURRY

AMBARELLA CURRY



INGREDIENTS

2 ambarella fruits, sliced

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp Chilli powder

½ tsp turmeric

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place ambarella and onion in a pot.
2. Add Chilli powder and turmeric.
3. Pour in coconut milk.
4. Simmer until fruit softens.
5. Add salt.
6. Serve with rice.

OKRA & TOMATO CURRY



INGREDIENTS

250g okra, sliced

2 tomatoes, chopped

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Lightly fry the okra.
2. Add onion and tomatoes.
3. Stir in curry powder.
4. Pour in coconut milk.
5. Simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Add salt and serve.


Mixed Leafy Green Curry

MIXED LEAFY GREEN CURRY (SRI LANKAN STYLE)

Leafy greens

1 cup Hummingbird Tree leaves, Kathurumurunga leaves, washed and chopped

1 cup ball cabbage, shredded

1 cup Ceylon Spinach, Mukunuwenna, chopped

1 cup Amaranth leaves, Thampala, chopped

Other Ingredients

1 small onion, sliced

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 sprig curry leaves

1 small piece pandan leaf, optional

½ tsp turmeric powder

1 tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder

½tsp black pepper

½ tsp salt
or to taste

1 cup thick coconut milk

1 tbsp coconut oil

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash all the leafy greens well.
2. Chop the leaves into small pieces.
3. Heat the coconut oil in a pan.
4. Add the onion, garlic, curry leaves and pandan leaf.
5. Cook for about 2 minutes until the onion is soft.
6. Add the turmeric, roasted curry powder and black pepper.
7. Stir for about 30 seconds.
8. Add all the leafy greens and cabbage.
9. Mix everything together.
10. Pour in the coconut milk.
11. Add the salt.
12. Cover the pan and cook for about 8–10 minutes over low heat.
13. Stir gently once or twice while cooking.
14. Taste and add more salt or black pepper if needed.
15. Serve hot with steamed red rice.

COOKING TIP: Do not overcook the greens. They should stay bright green and soft. This maintains optimum nutrition.

CURRY

NALALA LABU CURRY



INGREDIENTS

1 large nalala labu, straight bottle gourd

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder, unroasted / mild curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Peel the thin waxy green skin off the Nalala Labu using a vegetable peeler.
2. Slice the gourd in half lengthwise. If the very center looks spongy with large seeds, scrape that core out with a spoon.
3. Cut the firm light green flesh into 1-inch (2.5 cm) strips.
4. Place the prepared gourd strips, sliced onion, and curry powder into a pot with 2 tablespoons of water.
5. Cover with a lid and simmer over medium-low heat for 3 to 5 minutes until the pieces start to soften in their own juices.
6. Pour in the coconut milk, stir gently, and let it simmer uncovered for another 2 minutes until the coconut is hot and the gourd is perfectly tender.
7. Add salt to taste and serve hot.

DRUMSTICK CURRY

(Moringa Pod)



INGREDIENTS

2 drumsticks, moringa pods, cut into pieces

1 onion, sliced

1 tsp curry powder

1 cup coconut milk

Salt to taste.

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place drumstick (moringa pod) pieces and onion in a pot.
2. Add curry powder.
3. Pour in coconut milk.
4. Simmer until tender.
5. Season with salt.
6. Serve hot.

BANANA FLOWER CURRY



INGREDIENTS

For preparing the banana flower:

1 medium banana flower

1 litre water

1 tbsp turmeric powder

2 tbsp lime juice or lemon juice.

For the curry:

Prepared banana flower

1 medium onion, finely sliced

3 cloves garlic, minced

25mm piece ginger, grated

2 green Chillies, sliced

1 sprig curry leaves

1 pandan leaf, rampe, knotted

1 small cinnamon stick

½ tsp turmeric powder

1 tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder

½ tsp Chilli powder

½ tsp black pepper

1 tsp salt

1 cup thin coconut milk

1 cup thick coconut milk

2 tbsp coconut oil.

HOW TO MAKE IT

Prepare the Banana Flower:

1. Strip dark outer leaves to reach the pale inner core.
2. Finely slice the inner layers, placing pieces immediately into water mixed with turmeric and lime juice.
3. Soak 15–20 minutes, then drain and rinse.

Cook the Banana Flower:

1. Simmer the sliced flower in thin coconut milk with a pinch of salt for 15–20 minutes until tender.
2. Drain any excess liquid.

Make the Curry:

1. Heat coconut oil; fry cinnamon, curry leaves, and pandan leaf for 30 seconds.
2. Sauté onion, garlic, ginger, and green Chillies.
3. Stir in turmeric, curry powder, Chilli powder, black pepper, and salt.
4. Sauté the cooked banana flower in spices for 3–4 minutes.
5. Pour in thick coconut milk and simmer on low for 8–10 minutes until thickened.

VEGETABLE PANEER CURRY

INGREDIENTS

For the paneer:

2 litres full-fat milk
4–5 tbsp lemon juice or white vinegar
½ tsp salt, optional

For the curry:

250 g homemade paneer, cubed
1 medium potato, diced
1 carrot, sliced
100 g green beans, cut into 2–3 cm pieces
½ cup green peas
1 large onion, finely sliced
3 cloves garlic, minced
25mm piece ginger, grated
2 green Chillies, sliced (optional)
1 sprig curry leaves
1 pandan leaf, rampe, tied into a knot
1 cinnamon stick
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder
½ tsp Chilli powder
½ tsp black pepper
1 tsp salt
400 ml thick coconut milk
200 ml water
2 tbsp coconut oil.

HOW TO MAKE IT

Make the Paneer:

1. Pour milk into a pot; bring to a gentle boil.
2. Reduce heat to low, add lemon juice 1 tbsp at a time until curd separates.
3. Let sit for 5 minutes.
4. Strain in a cheesecloth-lined colander, rinse under cool water, press under a heavy object for 30–60 minutes, then cube.

Prepare the Curry:

1. Heat coconut oil; fry cinnamon, curry leaves, and pandan leaf for 30 seconds.
2. Sauté onion until golden, then add garlic, ginger, and green Chillies.
3. Stir in spices and salt.
4. Add potato and carrot, coating with spices.
5. Pour in water and simmer 10 minutes.
6. Add beans and peas; cook 5–7 minutes until tender.
7. Pour in coconut milk, add paneer cubes, and simmer on low for 5 minutes.

CURRY

SESAME & CASHEW NUT CURRY

(Thala Kaju Maluwa)



INGREDIENTS

200 g cashew nuts, soaked 2–4 hours

3 tbsp sesame seeds

1 large onion, finely sliced

3 cloves garlic, crushed

25mm piece ginger, grated

2 green Chillies, sliced

1 sprig curry leaves

1 pandan leaf, rampe, knotted

1 tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder

½ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp black pepper

½ tsp Chilli powder, optional

½ tsp mustard seeds

½ tsp fenugreek seeds

1 small cinnamon stick

1 tsp salt

1 cup thin coconut milk

1 cup thick coconut milk

2 tbsp coconut oil

Juice of ½ lime, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Dry roast sesame seeds until golden, cool, and grind into a coarse paste.
2. Sauté mustard seeds in hot coconut oil until spluttering; add fenugreek, cinnamon, curry leaves, and pandan leaf.
3. Sauté onion, garlic, ginger, and green Chillies.
4. Stir in turmeric, roasted curry powder, Chilli powder, black pepper, and salt.
5. Toss in cashews to coat.
6. Add thin coconut milk; simmer 10–15 minutes.
7. Stir in sesame paste and thick coconut milk; simmer gently on low for 8–10 minutes until creamy. Finish with lime juice.

CURRY

SOURSOP CURRY

(KatuAnoda Curry)



INGREDIENTS

500 g ripe but firm soursop, peeled, seeded, and cut into chunks

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, chopped

25 mm piece ginger, chopped

2 green Chillies, slit

1 sprig curry leaves

1 small pandan leaf, rampe, knotted

½ tsp turmeric powder

1 tsp roasted curry powder

½ tsp Chilli powder

¼ tsp black pepper

½ tsp mustard seeds

½ tsp fenugreek seeds

1 cup thick coconut milk

½ cup thin coconut milk or water

1 tbsp coconut oil

Salt to taste

1 tsp lime juice, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Heat coconut oil; splutter mustard seeds, then stir in fenugreek seeds.
2. Add onion, garlic, ginger, curry leaves, pandan, and green Chillies; sauté 3–4 minutes.
3. Stir in turmeric, roasted curry powder, Chilli powder, black pepper, and salt; cook 30 seconds.
4. Pour in thin coconut milk or water and bring to a simmer.
5. Add soursop pieces gently and cook 5–7 minutes.
6. Lower heat, add thick coconut milk, and simmer gently 3–5 minutes.
7. Adjust salt and stir in lime juice just before removing from heat.

SAMBOLS, **CHUTNEYS &** CONDIMENTS

In Sri Lankan cooking, sambols, chutneys and condiments are the little additions that bring a meal to life, transforming simple rice and curry with vibrant flavours and textures. Celebrating local biodiversity, they combine fresh coconut, Chilli, lime, ginger, herbs, spices, leafy greens and seasonal fruits.

Rooted in generations of culinary wisdom and Ayurvedic traditions, these preparations embrace the relationship between food, flavour and wellbeing. Some are freshly pounded, ground or mixed by hand, while others are pickled or preserved to capture seasonal goodness.

From fiery, salty and aromatic to fresh, tangy, sweet and gently spiced, each accompaniment offers its own character.

Simple yet full of flavour, these recipes invite you to experiment and discover how a small spoonful can bring balance, depth and delight to every meal.

Sometimes, all it takes is a little sambol to make a meal feel like home.



SRI LANKAN PICKLES

INGREDIENTS

2 cups mixed vegetables or fruit

½ cup vinegar

1 tbsp sugar

1 tsp Chilli powder

½ tsp mustard seeds

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Cut vegetables or fruit into small pieces.
2. Heat vinegar, sugar, Chilli powder and mustard seeds.
3. Pour over the vegetables.
4. Mix well.
5. Allow to cool completely.
6. Store in a clean jar and refrigerate.



SRI LANKAN POL SAMBOL

INGREDIENTS

2 cups freshly grated coconut

4–5 shallots, or 1 small red onion, finely chopped

1–2 green Chillies, finely sliced

2 tsp red Chilli flakes

1 tsp red Chilli powder

1 tsp Maldive fish flakes, optional

Juice of 1 fresh lime

½ tsp salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Coarsely pound shallots, green Chillies, Chilli flakes, Chilli powder, salt, and optional Maldive fish flakes in a mortar.
2. Add the fresh grated coconut and grind gently to bruise the coconut and incorporate the flavors without mashing it.
3. Squeeze fresh lime juice over the mixture and toss to fluff evenly.



GOTU KOLA SAMBOL

INGREDIENTS

2 cups gotu kola, finely shredded

1 small onion, finely sliced

1 green Chilli, chopped

Juice of 1 lime

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Combine gotu kola, onion and Chilli in a bowl.
2. Add lime juice.
3. Season with salt.
4. Mix well.
5. Serve fresh.



PASSIONFRUIT LEAF & GOTU KOLA SAMBOL

INGREDIENTS

1 cup gotu kola, finely shredded

1 cup young passionfruit leaves, finely shredded

1 small onion, finely sliced

1 green Chilli, chopped

2 tbsp freshly grated coconut

Juice of 1 lime

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Combine gotu kola and passionfruit leaves in a bowl
2. Add onion, Chilli, and grated coconut.
3. Add lime juice.
4. Season with salt.
5. Mix well until combined.
6. Serve fresh.



LUNU MIRIS

(Fiery Onion Chilli Paste)

INGREDIENTS

1 large red onion, or 8–10 shallots, coarsely chopped

2 tbsp red Chilli flakes

1 tsp red Chilli powder

1 tsp Maldive fish flakes, optional

½ tsp salt

Juice of ½ lime

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Thoroughly grind Chilli flakes, Chilli powder, salt, and optional Maldive fish flakes in a mortar.
2. Add the coarsely chopped onions and pound until they break down into a thick, coarse paste.
3. Squeeze in lime juice and stir to combine.



Roti being cooked over kitchen fire

SRI LANKAN TAMARIND



INGREDIENTS

100 g tamarind pulp

2 cups hot water

½ cup kithul treacle or brown sugar

1 small onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 green Chilli, chopped

1 sprig curry leaves, finely sliced

¼ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder

¼ tsp Chilli powder

¼ tsp black pepper

¼ tsp cinnamon powder

½ tsp salt

1 tsp coconut oil

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Soak tamarind in hot water 15–20 minutes, mash, and strain to extract pulp, discarding seeds/fibres.
2. Heat coconut oil; sauté onion, garlic, green Chilli, and curry leaves.
3. Stir in all dry spices and salt; cook 30 seconds.
4. Pour in tamarind liquid and kithul treacle or sugar.
5. Simmer gently for 15–20 minutes until thickened to a syrupy consistency.
6. Cool completely.

COCONUT CHUTNEY



INGREDIENTS

1 cup grated coconut

2 green Chillies

1 small onion

Juice of ½ lime

Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Place all ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Adjust seasoning if needed.
4. Serve fresh.



SNACKS, **STREET FOOD &** SHORT EATS

Some of the happiest food memories are made over small bites shared with family and friends. Sri Lanka's rich tradition of snacks, street food and short eats celebrates delicious flavours, textures and the simple pleasure of eating together.

From crispy fritters and golden cutlets to spiced savouries and festive sweets, these recipes make the most of locally available ingredients, including garden-grown fruits, vegetables and home-grown mushrooms.

Traditional spices and natural sweeteners bring warmth, fragrance and character to every creation.

Celebrating both familiar favourites and new ideas, this collection invites creativity in the kitchen and the joy of sharing good food.

And what better way to bring everyone together than with a pot of Sri Lankan-grown tea? Warm, welcoming and full of character, it adds the perfect touch of hospitality to every gathering.


Tempura Hummingbird
Tree Flowers

TEMPURA HUMMINGBIRD TREE FLOWERS

INGREDIENTS

Flowers

12-15 fresh light coloured Hummingbird Tree flowers (Kathurumurunga flowers)

Remove the middle part, stamen, from each flower. Wash the flowers gently. Dry the flowers with a clean towel

Batter

¾ cup rice flour

¼ cup plain flour

2 tbsp cornflour

½ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder

¼ tsp cumin powder

¼ tsp coriander powder

¼ tsp black pepper

pinch of Chilli powder, optional

pinch of salt

1 cup very cold water

For frying

coconut oil or vegetable oil

Coconut lime dipping sauce

3 tbsp thick coconut milk

1 tsp lime juice

½ tsp grated ginger

A pinch of salt

green Chilli, chopped, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Remove the middle part (stamen) from each flower. This helps remove the bitter taste.
2. Wash the flowers in salted water for 5 minutes.
3. Drain the flowers and dry them well.
4. Heat the oil to medium-high heat.
5. Put all the dry batter ingredients into a bowl.
6. Add the cold water. Mix gently. Do not mix too much.
7. Dip each flower into the batter.
8. Carefully place the flower into the hot oil.
9. Fry for 2–3 minutes until the batter is light golden and crispy.
10. Remove the flowers and place them on paper towel to drain.
11. Mix all the dipping sauce ingredients in a small bowl.
12. Serve the tempura flowers while they are hot.

BANANA BITES



INGREDIENTS

2 under-ripe bananas, must be firm

coconut oil, for frying

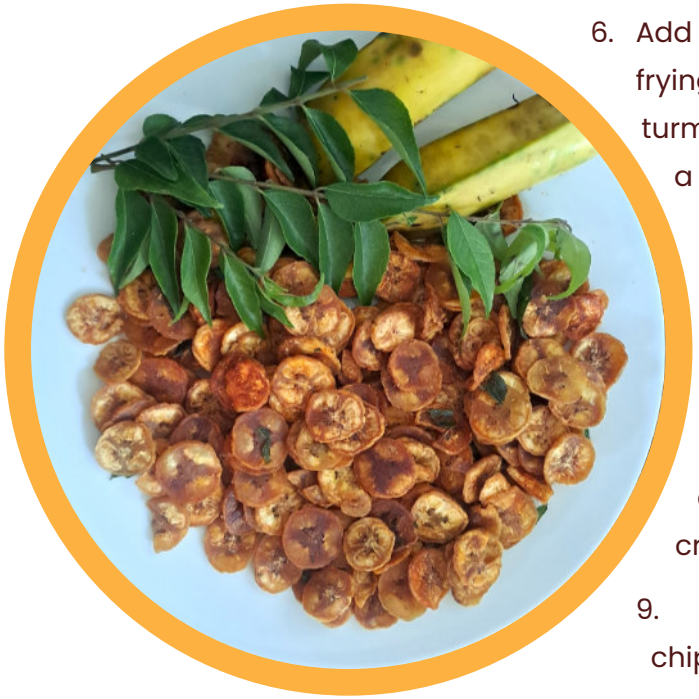
turmeric powder, a pinch

Salt to taste

2 tbsp water

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Mix the yellow water: Stir 2 tablespoons of water, a pinch of turmeric, and a little salt in a small cup. Set it aside.
2. Peel the bananas: Cut off the ends of the green bananas. Peel off the thick green skin.
3. Slice thinly: Slice the bananas into very thin, round coins using a sharp knife or slicer.
4. Heat the oil: Pour coconut oil into a pan and heat it up over medium heat.
5. Fry the slices: Drop the banana slices into the hot oil. Stir them so they do not stick together.
6. Add the yellow water: After 2 minutes of frying, carefully pour 1 teaspoon of your turmeric water into the hot oil. It will make a loud sizzling sound.
7. Remove and dry: When the chips are hard and golden, scoop them out. Put them on a paper towel to dry.
8. Cool down: Let the chips cool completely. They will become very crunchy!
9. Store to stay crunchy: Put the cool chips into a tight, airtight glass jar.



VEGETABLE & EGG KOTTU ROTI

INGREDIENTS

4 godamba roti, chopped into thin strips,
2 eggs
1 cup cabbage, shredded
1 carrot, grated
1 small onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1–2 green Chillies, sliced
1 sprig curry leaves, chopped
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp roasted curry powder
½ tsp black pepper
Salt to taste
2 tbsp oil
2–3 tbsp water or light coconut milk, optional
1 tbsp soy sauce, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Sauté onion, garlic, green Chillies, and curry leaves in hot oil.
2. Add cabbage and carrot; stir-fry 3–5 minutes.
3. Mix in all dry spices and salt.
4. Push vegetables aside, crack in eggs, and scramble.
5. Add chopped roti strips and mix vigorously using a chopping motion.
6. Splash with water or coconut milk to soften and stir-fry 3–5 minutes.
7. Finish with soy sauce and serve hot with a lime wedge.





SRI LANKAN PARIPPU WADE

INGREDIENTS

2 cups yellow split peas or chana dal

1 medium onion, finely chopped

3–4 green Chillies, chopped

2 sprigs curry leaves, sliced

1 tsp fennel seeds

½ tsp crushed black pepper

½ tsp Chilli flakes, optional

1 tsp salt

2 tbsp grated coconut, optional

Oil for deep frying

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Soak split peas 4–6 hours, then drain completely.
2. Reserve ¼ cup whole peas, and process the remaining split peas coarsely without adding water.
3. Mix the processed paste with the whole peas, chopped onion, green Chillies, curry leaves, fennel seeds, black pepper, Chilli flakes, grated coconut, and salt.
4. Shape small portions into flattened patties (1 cm thick) and fry in hot oil over medium-high heat for 3–4 minutes per side until deeply golden.

JACKFRUIT CUTLETS

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked young jackfruit, shredded

1 onion, finely chopped

1 tsp curry powder

1 egg, beaten

Breadcrumbs

Salt and pepper

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Mix jackfruit, onion, curry powder, salt and pepper.
2. Shape into small cutlets.
3. Dip in beaten egg.
4. Coat with breadcrumbs.
5. Deep fry until golden brown.
6. Drain and serve.



KOKIS

(Sri Lankan Crispy Rosette Cookies)

INGREDIENTS

2 cups rice flour

1 to 1 ½ cups thick coconut milk

1 egg

¼ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp salt

1 tsp sugar

Coconut Oil

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. In a large bowl, mix the rice flour, salt, turmeric powder, and sugar together.
2. Whisk the egg in a separate small bowl and pour it into the flour mixture. Slowly pour in the coconut milk while stirring.
3. Mix until the batter is smooth. It should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. If it is too thick, add a little water. If it is too thin, add a little more rice flour.
4. Heat the frying oil in a pan on medium heat. Place your metal Kokis mould directly into the hot oil so the tool becomes very hot.
5. Lift the hot mould out of the oil and tap it quickly on a paper towel. Dip the mould into your batter, but only 75% of the way up. Do not let the batter cover the very top of the mould.
6. Place the batter-coated mould straight into the hot oil. Hold it there for 10 to 15 seconds, then gently shake the handle up and down so the cookie slides off into the oil. Fry for 1 to 2 minutes until golden and crispy, then remove and drain on a paper towel. Keep the mould heating inside the hot oil while you wait to make the next one.
7. Let the cooked Kokis sit on paper towels until they are completely cold.
8. Put a paper towel at the bottom of a clean, dry airtight plastic or glass container. Place the cold Kokis inside, put another paper towel on top, and close the lid tightly. Store in a dark cupboard for up to 2 to 3 weeks.


Making Samosas

SAMOSAS

(Village Tea-Shop Style)

INGREDIENTS

For pastry dough:

2 cups all-purpose flour

3 tbsp warm oil or ghee

½ tsp carom seeds

½ tsp salt

warm water

For spiced filling:

2 potatoes, boiled and mashed

½ cup boiled green peas

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

25 mm ginger, grated

1 green Chilli, chopped

1 sprig curry leaves

½ tsp turmeric

1 tsp roasted curry powder

½ tsp black pepper

Salt

1 tbsp oil

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Rub warm oil into flour, carom seeds, and salt; knead with warm water into a firm dough, resting covered for 30 minutes.
2. Sauté onion, garlic, ginger, Chilli, and curry leaves; stir in spices, salt, potatoes, and peas, cooking 3–4 minutes before cooling.
3. Roll dough into thin ovals, cut horizontally in half, fold into cones, stuff with filling, and seal edges using a flour-water paste.
4. Fry slowly over medium heat for 6–8 minutes until crispy and golden.

MUSHROOM BITES



INGREDIENTS

Base:

250g oyster mushrooms, cleaned and cut into bite-sized strips

Frying Medium:

2 cups pure coconut oil

Garnish:

2 sprigs fresh curry leaves, washed and thoroughly dried

The wet batter:

1/3 cup thick, full-fat coconut milk or 1 beaten egg

1 tbsp lime juice

The dry seasoning mix:

½ cup rice flour or all-purpose flour

1 - 2 tsp freshly cracked black pepper

½ tsp red Chilli powder

½ tsp turmeric powder

½ tsp salt



HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Prep the Mushrooms:
   Ensure your oyster mushrooms are completely dry. Any lingering moisture will make the hot coconut oil splatter violently.
2. Set Up the Coating Stations:
   - *Wet Bowl*: Whisk the thick coconut milk and lime juice together in a medium bowl. Alternatively, beat an egg.
   - *Dry Bowl*: In a separate shallow dish, thoroughly mix the flour, black pepper, Chilli powder, turmeric, and salt.
3. Coat the Mushrooms: Dip a handful of mushroom strips into the coconut milk or egg mixture until fully coated. Lift them out, shake off the heavy excess, and drop them into the dry bowl. Toss and press gently until they are entirely covered in the flour blend.
4. Heat the Coconut Oil: Pour the coconut oil into a deep pan or wok and bring it to medium heat. Test the oil by dropping a tiny bit of batter into it—if it sizzles and floats to the top instantly, it is ready.
5. Fry the Mushrooms: Fry the mushrooms in small batches for 3 to 4 minutes until they turn a beautiful, even golden-brown. Remove them with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.
6. Flash-Fry the Curry Leaves: Turn off the stove heat but keep the pan on the element. Drop the fresh curry leaves directly into the hot residual oil. Stand back, as they will crackle and pop loudly. Fry them for just 10 to 15 seconds until they turn translucent and crisp, then quickly scoop them out.
7. Assemble and Serve: Scatter the crispy fried curry leaves over the hot mushroom bites and serve immediately.

RICE & SIDE **DISHES**

Rice holds a special place in Sri Lankan food culture, at the heart of family gatherings and is deeply connected in the Deniyaya agricultural landscape.

Rice, colourful vegetable dishes and fresh salads, make the most of seasonal, locally available and organically grown produce.

Traditional heritage red rice (rathu kekulu), is a highly nutritious, unpolished whole grain rich in fibre, minerals and antioxidants. With its distinctive nutty flavour and satisfying texture, it is a wholesome staple in Sri Lankan cooking.

Eating rice and curry with the right hand is a beautiful sensory tradition. Using fingertips to gently blend rice, vegetables and curries creates an intimate, tactile connection with food, allowing its textures, warmth and flavours to be truly experienced.

A mindful practice, guided by respect for the meal, bringing nourishment, pleasure and connection to the shared table.


Red Rice

COLD RED RICE & FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

The salad base:

3 cups cooked heritage red rice (Rathu Kekulu), thoroughly chilled

½ cup pumpkin, cut into small cubes and steamed until just tender, then chilled

½ cup green beans, finely chopped

½ cup radish, finely chopped

½ cup capsicum, finely chopped

½ cup cucumber, finely chopped

½ cup fresh moringa leaves, Murunga, soaked in salted water for 5 minutes, and drained

2 tbsp toasted coconut flakes

1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

The dressing:

3 tbsp extra virgin coconut oil, liquid state

2 tbsp fresh lime juice

1 clove fresh garlic, very finely chopped

1 tsp fresh ginger, very finely chopped

1 tsp cracked black pepper

Sea salt, to taste

The topping:

1/4 cup dried cherry tomatoes, chopped

1 sprig fresh curry leaves, fried in a little oil until crisp

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Make the dressing: Add the liquid coconut oil, lime juice, chopped garlic, chopped ginger, cracked black pepper, and sea salt into a small jar. Fasten the lid securely and shake vigorously until well combined.
2. Combine the base: In a large salad bowl, combine the cold red rice, chilled pumpkin cubes, green beans, radish, capsicum, cucumber, and the drained moringa leaves.
3. Add texture: Toss the toasted coconut flakes and toasted sesame seeds into the bowl with the rice and vegetables.
4. Dress the salad: Pour the shaken dressing over the salad. Toss gently but thoroughly to ensure the rice and vegetables are evenly coated.
5. Garnish and serve: Scatter the dried cherry tomatoes and crispy fried curry leaves over the top just before serving.

SOUTHERN SRI LANKAN STIR-FRY

INGREDIENTS

3 cups cooked heritage red rice, Rathu Kekulu, use cold rice cooked the day before so the grains stay separate

1 cup oyster mushrooms, torn into bite-sized strips

1 medium purple sweet potato, peeled, cut into small 1cm cubes, and steamed until just tender

1 cup grated carrot

½ cup white radish, Labu, cut into thin matchsticks

3-4 spring onions, finely chopped, keeping the white bases and green tops separate

2-3 green Chillies, thinly sliced

1 tbsp chopped ginger

1 tbsp chopped garlic

1 sprig fresh curry leaves

1 inch pandan leaf, Rampe

1 ½ tsp freshly crushed black pepper

½ tsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder, optional

2 tbsp coconut oil, or vegetable oil

Sea salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Fry the aromatics: Heat the coconut oil in a large pan or wok over medium-high heat. Add the curry leaves, pandan leaf, green Chillies, and the chopped white bases of the spring onions. Stir-fry for 1 minute until fragrant.
2. Add the spices: Stir in the garlic and ginger, crushed black pepper, roasted curry powder, and a pinch of salt. Cook for about 30 seconds, stirring constantly to prevent the garlic from burning.
3. Cook the mushrooms and radish: Turn the heat up to high. Add the oyster mushrooms and white radish to the pan. Stir-fry rapidly for 2–3 minutes until the mushrooms begin to brown and the radish softens slightly but stays crisp.
4. Mix in the remaining vegetables: Add the steamed purple sweet potato cubes and the grated carrot. Toss gently for 1 minute to coat them in the spiced oil, taking care not to mash the sweet potato.
5. Fry the rice: Break up any clumps in your cold red rice, then add it to the pan. Using a flat spatula, toss and fold the rice continuously on high heat for 3–4 minutes until the grains are hot and evenly coated.
6. Finish and serve: Taste the rice and add more salt or black pepper if desired. Turn off the heat, stir in the green tops of the spring onions, and serve hot.



VEGETABLE RICE STIR-FRY

INGREDIENTS

1 cup basmati rice
2 cups water
1 cup broccoli florets
1 cup bell peppers, sliced
1 carrot, julienned
1 small onion, sliced
2 tbsp ghee
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cumin
2 eggs, optional
Salt and pepper to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Cook rinsed rice in water until tender.
2. Heat ghee; cook onion, ginger, and cumin until soft.
3. Add broccoli, bell peppers, and carrot; stir-fry until tender-crisp.
4. Scramble in eggs if using, stir in soy sauce, season with salt and pepper, and toss with the cooked rice.

ROASTED BEETROOT, CARROT & HERB SALAD

INGREDIENTS

2 large beetroots, chopped
1 large carrot, julienned
2 tbsp olive oil,
juice of 1 lime
2 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
2 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped
½ cup sesame seeds, toasted
2 tbsp grated coconut
1 green Chilli, sliced
½ tsp roasted cumin powder
Salt and pepper to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Roast beetroots tossed in olive oil at 190°C (375°F) for 45–60 minutes until tender.
2. Let cool slightly. In a large bowl, combine roasted beetroot, carrot, basil, dill, mint, toasted sesame seeds, grated coconut, and Chilli.
3. Dress with lime juice, season with cumin powder, salt, and pepper, then toss well.

WINGED BEAN & AVOCADO SALAD



INGREDIENTS

1 cup winged beans, sliced crosswise into thin, star-shaped pieces

1 cup yardlong beans, cut into small 1cm pieces

1 cup tomatoes, diced

1 cup cucumber, diced into small cubes

1 medium avocado, pitted, peeled, and cut into bite-sized cubes

2-3 spring onions, finely chopped

1 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Sea salt, to taste

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Soften the winged beans: Steam the sliced winged beans for 2–3 minutes until they turn bright green but remain crisp.
2. Cool immediately: Rinse the steamed beans under cold water to stop the cooking process, then drain them thoroughly.
3. Combine the vegetables: In a large salad bowl, mix the cooled winged beans, long beans, tomatoes, cucumber, and spring onions.
4. Season: Sprinkle the ground black pepper and a pinch of sea salt over the vegetables. Toss well to distribute the seasoning.
5. Add the avocado: Add the avocado cubes last. Gently fold them into the salad, taking care not to mash the pieces, and serve immediately.

PRESERVED, FERMENTED & SUN-DRIED FOODS

Traditional Sri Lankan food preservation techniques were developed long before refrigeration. Using free energy from the sun for drying, Sri Lankan salt and natural fermentation, these methods extend the life of seasonal produce and support a sustainable approach to cooking, keeping food in storage for later use.

Preserving also transforms ingredients, creating distinctive flavours and textures. Sun-dried fruits, pickles and fermented vegetables develop delicious tangy, sour and savoury qualities that add variety to everyday meals.

Fermented foods can also support gut health and wellbeing. Natural fermentation encourages beneficial bacteria (probiotics), which help maintain a healthy gut microbiome and support digestion.

Traditionally served in small portions alongside rice and curry, these preserves, relishes and pickles provide a welcome contrast to the creamy richness of coconut-based curries.



Nadeeka Dilrukshi with Jackfruit prepared for drying

SRI LANKAN **FERMENTED CHILLI & ONION RELISH** (Village Lunu Miris Style)

INGREDIENTS

10 Chillies, sliced
1 large onion, sliced
1 tsp salt
1 tsp Chilli flakes
1 tsp mustard seeds
2 cloves garlic, crushed
Juice of 1 lime
½ tsp sugar, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Toss sliced onion and Chillies with salt, bruising them lightly with your hands.
2. Mix in garlic, mustard seeds, and Chilli flakes.
3. Press firmly into a clean jar, leave uncovered at room temperature for 12–24 hours, then stir in lime juice and ferment lightly for 1–2 days.

SRI LANKAN **FERMENTED GREEN MANGO PICKLE** (Achcharu Style)

INGREDIENTS

2 unripe green mangoes, sliced
2 tbsp salt
1 tbsp Chilli powder
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp mustard seeds
3 cloves garlic, sliced
1–2 green Chillies, sliced
½ cup vinegar
1 tsp sugar or treacle, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Toss sliced mangoes with salt; let stand 2–3 hours to drain liquid.
2. Mix mangoes with Chilli powder, turmeric, mustard seeds, garlic, and green Chillies.
3. Pack tightly into a clean jar and submerge in vinegar.
4. Seal loosely and leave at room temperature 2–5 days to ferment.

SUN-DRIED **TROPICAL FRUITS**

(Sri Lankan Method)

INGREDIENTS

2 pineapples

4 papayas, firm-ripe

6–8 star fruits

Juice of 2 limes, optional

2–3 tbsp kithul treacle, optional

Bamboo drying trays

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Slice pineapple into rings, papaya into strips, and star fruit into cross-sections.
2. Tossing pineapple and papaya with lime juice and treacle is optional.
3. Arrange in a single layer on bamboo trays.
4. Cover with muslin cloth and expose to direct sunlight for 1–4 days (turning daily) until leathery and chewy.
5. Bring inside at night.
6. Store airtight.



Papaya drying

SRI LANKAN **FERMENTED CARROT & CABBAGE MIX**

INGREDIENTS

1 cup cabbage, shredded

1 cup carrot, grated

1 tsp salt

1 tsp mustard seeds

2 cloves garlic, sliced

1 green Chilli, sliced

½ tsp turmeric powder

1–2 tbsp coconut water, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Massage cabbage and carrot with salt until liquid releases.
2. Mix in mustard seeds, garlic, Chilli, and turmeric.
3. Pack tightly into a jar, ensuring veggies are submerged in their own juice (top with coconut water if dry).
4. Cover loosely; ferment 3–6 days.

SRI LANKAN **FERMENTED MURUNGA LEAVES**

INGREDIENTS

2 cups fresh murunga leaves

1 tsp salt

1 tsp mustard seeds

1 clove garlic, crushed

½ tsp Chilli flakes

Juice of ½ lime

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash and lightly wilt moringa leaves.
2. Mix with salt, crushing gently to soften.
3. Mix in mustard seeds, garlic, and Chilli flakes.
4. Pack firmly into a jar, leave to ferment for 24–72 hours, and stir in lime juice before serving.


"Have a cup of positive tea"
LUMBINI
TEA VALLEY
DALU
Herbal Infusions
Turmeric Chai
Tea Tasting Profile
12 Servings

HERBAL & ENERGISING **DRINKS**

Across Sri Lanka, locally grown teas, herbs and spices have long been used to prepare nourishing drinks enjoyed throughout the day.

Ginger, Ceylon cinnamon, curry leaves, coconut milk and leafy greens create flavours ranging from warming and gently spiced to fragrant, creamy and refreshing.

This collection celebrates ingredients from local gardens and kitchens, including fresh produce that can be dried and stored for enjoyment throughout the year.

Inspired by traditional culinary and Ayurvedic knowledge, these drinks offer nourishment, refreshment and warmth.

Sharing an energizing drink of garden goodness is also an important part of Sri Lankan hospitality. It creates a welcoming space for conversation, where people can exchange ideas, truly listen to one another and better understand diverse perspectives.

Whether catching up with old friends or welcoming someone new, a shared drink offers connection and nurtures friendships.

MIXED **FRUIT & LEAF** SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS

2 ripe bananas

2 cups ripe papaya, cut into pieces

2 cups ripe mangoes, cut into pieces

½ cup fresh murunga (moringa) leaves, washed and sticks removed

6 dates, seeds removed

2 cups fresh chilled water

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash the murunga leaves well and remove any thick stems.
2. Peel and cut the bananas, papaya, and mango into small pieces.
3. Remove the seeds from the dates.
4. Put the bananas, papaya, mango, murunga leaves, dates, and water into a blender.
5. Blend until the smoothie is smooth and creamy.
6. Pour into 4 glasses and serve immediately.





CINNAMON & COCONUT ENERGIZER DRINK

INGREDIENTS

1 large Ceylon cinnamon stick

2 cups water

1 cup fresh coconut milk

1–2 tbsp kithul treacle

1 piece fresh ginger, optional

A pinch of salt, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Simmer broken cinnamon stick and optional ginger in water for 10–12 minutes.
2. Strain the water into a clean pot, stir in coconut milk, and warm gently over low heat without boiling.
3. Remove from heat, stir in kithul treacle and a pinch of salt.

FRESH GINGER ENERGIZER DRINK

(Ginger Tonic)

INGREDIENTS

25 mm piece ginger, crushed

3 cups water

1–2 tbsp kithul treacle

Juice of ½ lime

1 cinnamon stick, optional

2–3 curry leaves, optional

A pinch of salt, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Boil water with crushed ginger, optional cinnamon, and curry leaves
2. Simmer 10–15 minutes until golden
3. Strain, cool slightly, stir in kithul treacle, and mix in lime juice and a pinch of salt just before serving.



COOLING & REFRESHING **DRINKS**

In Sri Lanka's warm tropical climate, refreshing drinks made from fresh, locally grown ingredients are a simple pleasure.

This collection celebrates the island's natural abundance, featuring king coconut water, fragrant hibiscus flowers, distinctive wood apple, crisp cucumber, lime and fresh superfood gotu kola.

Some recipes allow the natural flavours of individual ingredients to shine, while others bring together fruits, herbs and citrus to create delicious combinations.

Simple to prepare, they offer a wonderful way to enjoy seasonal produce and experiment with ingredients from local gardens and markets.

Whether served alongside a meal, enjoyed after a busy day or shared with visitors, these cooling drinks are part of everyday hospitality.

Pour a glass, invite someone to join you and enjoy a refreshing taste of the tropics together.



KING COCONUT WATER REFRESH DRINK

INGREDIENTS

2–3 fresh king coconuts

Juice of ½ lime, optional

1 tsp kithul treacle, optional

Few mint leaves, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Pour fresh king coconut water into a jug.
2. Stir in optional lime juice, kithul treacle, and lightly crushed mint leaves.
3. Serve cool immediately.

SRI LANKAN GINGER BEER (Inguru Drink)

INGREDIENTS

50–75 mm piece ginger, crushed

1 litre water

½ cup sugar or kithul treacle

Juice of 1–2 limes

½ tsp salt

1 cinnamon stick, optional

2–3 cloves, optional

Soda water, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Boil water with crushed ginger, cinnamon, and cloves; simmer 10–15 minutes until aromatic, then cool completely.
2. Strain out solids, dissolve sugar or treacle into the liquid, and stir in lime juice and salt.
3. Chill, and top with optional soda water upon serving.

SRI LANKAN **HERBAL GOTU KOLA** DRINK



INGREDIENTS

1 cup fresh Gotu Kola

2 cups water

½ cup coconut milk

1–2 tsp kithul treacle

A pinch of salt

1 small piece ginger, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Blend Gotu Kola with 1 cup water until smooth, then strain if preferred.
2. Pour into a pan with remaining water and optional ginger; heat gently 3–5 minutes (do not boil).
3. Stir in coconut milk, remove from heat, and mix in treacle and salt.



Gotu Kola growing



FRESH HIBISCUS ICED TEA
(Vadamal)

INGREDIENTS

5–6 fresh red hibiscus flowers, Vadamal, petals only; discard stems, green bases, and yellow stamens

2 ½ cups water

1–2 tsp fresh lime juice or local Narang juice

Scraped kithul jaggery or Kithul Treacle to taste

Ice cubes

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Boil and Steep: Gently rinse your red hibiscus petals. Bring 2.5 cups of water to a rolling boil in a pot, then turn off the heat. Drop the petals into the hot water, cover with a lid, and let them steep for 10–15 minutes until the petals turn pale and the water becomes a deep maroon-purple.
2. Transform and Sweeten: Strain the warm liquid into a glass jug, discarding the used petals. Squeeze in the fresh lime juice and watch the tea instantly magic-shift into a vibrant, brilliant crimson red. Stir in your scraped Kithul jaggery or treacle while the liquid is still warm so it dissolves completely.
3. Chill and Serve: Let the mixture cool to room temperature, then pour it into glasses packed generously with ice cubes. Garnish with a fresh lime wheel and serve cold as a refreshing nourishing drink.



CUCUMBER & LIME COOLING INFUSION

INGREDIENTS

1 large cucumber, sliced

1–2 limes, sliced or juiced

2–3 cups cold water

a few mint leaves

1 tsp kithul treacle, optional

A pinch of salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Combine cucumber slices, lime, and mint leaves in a jug.
2. Pour in cold water and infuse in the refrigerator for 30–60 minutes.
3. Stir in optional treacle and salt before serving over ice.

WOOD APPLE JUICE (Divul Drink)

INGREDIENTS

1 ripe wood apple

2–3 cups cold water

2–3 tbsp jaggery or kithul treacle

pinch of salt

A pinch of black pepper or cumin powder, optional

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Scoop out wood apple pulp and soak in water for 10–15 minutes.
2. Mash pulp thoroughly into the water, strain if desired, and stir in jaggery or treacle.
3. Season with a pinch of salt and optional cumin or pepper, then serve chilled.

TRADITIONAL **VILLAGE BAKING**

Sri Lankan homemade treats are part of the pleasure of celebrations, family gatherings and afternoon cups of tea. Traditional recipes make wonderful use of local ingredients, including coconut, rice and legume flours, spices, dried fruits and natural sweeteners.

Among these is Halapa, a much-loved village sweet made with nutritious kurakkan (finger millet), fresh coconut and jaggery, shaped and wrapped in leaves gathered from the garden before being gently steamed. The leaves lend their own fragrance, making this a beautiful example of traditional cooking directly using what nature provides.

From Halapa to richly flavoured fruit cakes and coconut and date cakes, these recipes celebrate homemade goodness, creativity and traditions passed between generations.

May the flavours linger, the memories remain and the sweetness of sharing stay warm within you.



Kithul tree in Sinharaja rainforest

INSET: leaf of kithul tree

TRADITIONAL VILLAGE BAKING

PUMPKIN & KITHUL CAKE



INGREDIENTS

¼ cup coconut oil, melted

1 cup buffalo curd

2 tbsp kithul treacle

1½ cups pumpkin puree, cooked and mashed pumpkin

2½ cups flour, 1½ cups plain flour and 1 cup wholemeal flour

1 tbsp ground flaxseed

3 tbsp water

1½ tsp baking soda

1 tsp baking powder

2 tsp cinnamon powder

1 tsp nutmeg powder

½ tsp salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Prepare the oven: Heat the oven to 175°C. Line a baking pan with baking paper.
2. Prepare the flaxseed: Mix the ground flaxseed with 3 tablespoons of water in a small bowl. Leave for 10 minutes until it becomes thick and sticky.
3. Mix the wet ingredients: Put the coconut oil, curd, kithul treacle, pumpkin puree and flaxseed mixture into a large bowl. Mix well.
4. Mix the dry ingredients: In another bowl, mix the plain flour, wholemeal flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.
5. Make the cake mixture: Slowly add the dry ingredients to the pumpkin mixture. Stir gently until everything is mixed. Do not stir too much.
6. Bake the cake: Pour the mixture into the prepared baking pan. Bake for 40–45 minutes. Put a toothpick into the middle of the cake. If it comes out clean, the cake is ready.
7. Cool the cake: Leave the cake in the pan for 15 minutes. Then take it out and let it cool completely before cutting.

MUNG KAVUM

(Green Gram Festive Cakes)



INGREDIENTS

For the Kavum mixture:

1 cup green gram flour
1 cup rice flour
1 cup kithul treacle
¼ cup water
½ tsp cardamom powder
pinch of salt.

For the batter coating:

½ cup rice flour
¼ cup thick coconut milk
A pinch of turmeric
A pinch of salt
Water as needed

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Simmer kithul treacle and water in a saucepan for 3–5 minutes until slightly thick.
2. Turn heat to low; vigorously stir in green gram flour, 1 cup rice flour, cardamom, and salt until a thick dough forms.
3. Roll warm dough to 1 cm thickness on a dusted board and cut into traditional diamond shapes.
4. Whisk the batter coating ingredients into a pancake-like consistency.
5. Dip dough diamonds into the coating and deep fry in hot coconut oil for 2–3 minutes until golden-crisp.

SRI LANKAN COCONUT & DATE LEGUME FLOUR CAKE

INGREDIENTS

1 cup chickpea or green gram flour
1 cup grated coconut
8–10 dates, chopped
2 eggs, optional
½ cup coconut milk
2 tbsp kithul treacle
2 tbsp coconut oil or ghee
1 tsp cinnamon powder
½ tsp cardamom, optional
1 tsp baking powder, optional
½ tsp salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Mix flour, cinnamon, cardamom, baking powder, and salt.
2. Whisk eggs, coconut milk, oil, and treacle separately; fold in dates and grated coconut.
3. Combine wet and dry ingredients into a thick batter.
4. Pour into a tray lined with a banana leaf or baking paper, bake at 170°C (340°F) for 30–40 minutes until golden, and cool before slicing.

TRADITIONAL VILLAGE BAKING

HALAPA



INGREDIENTS

For the dough:

1 cup kurakkan, finger millet, flour

½ cup all-purpose flour, plain flour, helps bind the dough so it doesn't crack

1 cup fresh grated coconut, unsweetened desiccated coconut can be used if rehydrated with a splash of warm water

¾ cup kithul treacle or jaggery liquid

A pinch salt

¼ cup warm water, only if needed to adjust dough consistency

For wrapping:

8-10 leaves kenda leaves, substitute with pieces of banana leaves or parchment paper if unavailable

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Prepare the sweet base: In a small saucepan over medium heat, gently warm the kithul treacle or jaggery liquid. Remove from heat and stir in the fresh grated coconut and a pinch of salt. Let the mixture cool slightly.
2. Combine the flours: In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the kurakkan (finger millet) flour and the all-purpose flour until well combined.
3. Form the dough: Pour the warm coconut and treacle mixture into the bowl with the flour. Use a wooden spoon—and then your hands once it cools down—to mix everything into a soft, pliable, and non-sticky dough. If the dough feels too dry or crumbly, add warm water one tablespoon at a time.
4. Prepare the leaves: Clean the Kenda leaves (or banana leaf squares) with a damp cloth and wipe them dry.
5. Flatten the dough: Take egg sized portion of the dough and place it in the center of a leaf. Using your fingers, gently flatten and spread the dough outwards into a thin, even circle across one half of the leaf.
6. Fold and seal: Fold the other half of the leaf over the flattened dough, pressing down gently along the edges to enclose it safely. Repeat this process with the remaining dough and leaves.
7. Steam to perfection: Set up a steamer over boiling water. Arrange the folded wraps inside the steamer basket in a single layer (or slightly overlapping). Cover and steam on medium-high heat for 15 to 20 minutes.
8. Cool and serve: Remove from the steamer and let them cool for a few minutes. The halapa is ready when the leaf peels away cleanly from the dark, chewy millet cake. Enjoy warm with a hot cup of Ceylon tea

GENOA CAKE

(Tea-soaked Fruit Cake)


Basket of hand-rolled tea-leaves

INGREDIENTS

For the Overnight Fruit Soak:

2 cups mixed dried fruits, sultanas, raisins, currants, and chopped candied peel

1 cup strong brewed hot Ceylon black tea

For the Cake Batter:

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp Ceylon cinnamon powder

½ tsp cardamom powder

½ cup unsalted butter, or ghee, at room temperature

½ cup brown sugar or grated jaggery

3 large eggs

Grated zest of 1 orange or lime

½ cup raw cashew nuts, split, for decoration

A pinch of salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Soak the fruit: Place the mixed dried fruits in a bowl and pour the hot, strong black tea over them. Stir well, cover, and leave to soak overnight at room temperature until the fruits absorb the liquid.
2. Prepare for baking: Preheat oven to 150°C (300°F). Lightly grease an 8-inch round cake tin and line the base and sides with baking paper or an oiled banana leaf.
3. Mix dry & wet bases: In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cardamom, and salt. In a separate large bowl, cream the softened butter and brown sugar (or jaggery) together until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the orange or lime zest.
4. Combine and decorate: Fold the sifted dry ingredients into the wet batter, alternating with the tea-soaked fruits (including any remaining tea liquid at the bottom of the bowl). Mix gently until just combined. Spoon the batter into the prepared tin, smooth the top, and arrange the split cashew nuts carefully on top in a decorative circular pattern.
5. Bake slow: Bake for 60 to 75 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 20 minutes before transferring it to a wire rack to cool completely.

DENIYAYA SEASONAL PRESERVATION CALENDAR

The gardens of Deniyaya, near the Sinharaja rainforest, reflect the richness and diversity of Sri Lanka's tropical landscape. Throughout the year, home gardens offer a changing abundance of fruits, vegetables, leafy greens, herbs and spices, each with its own season and place in the kitchen.

This calendar celebrates the traditional knowledge of growing, harvesting and preserving food, passed between generations. From sun-drying fruits and spices during brighter weather to preparing pickles, chutneys and fermented foods when harvests are plentiful, each season brings its own opportunities.

The monthly observations are a gentle guide. Weather, rainfall and local harvests naturally influence what is available. Above all, they invite us to observe the garden, appreciate its abundance and make the most of what the land provides.


GB Natural
Black Pepper Seeds
GB
Natural
Moringa
GB Natural
Pure Bee Honey
GURUBĒULA
GB

Deniyaya Seasonal Preservation Calendar

JANUARY: **A Time for Preparing and Preserving** As the year begins, gardens continue to provide tropical fruits, leafy greens and spices. Brighter days offer opportunities for sun-drying banana, pineapple and spices when the weather allows. Traditional jars, trays and storage spaces are part of the household's seasonal preparations.

FEBRUARY: **Making the Most of the Sunshine** Often one of the relatively drier months, February brings welcome opportunities for drying fruits, herbs and spices. The warmth of the sun helps preserve seasonal harvests, capturing their flavours for enjoyment in the months ahead.

MARCH: **Garden Greens and Seasonal Harvests** Home gardens offer fresh leafy vegetables, herbs and seasonal fruits. Gotu kola and moringa bring their familiar flavours to everyday cooking, while sunny spells provide further opportunities for drying and storing garden produce.

APRIL: **A Season of Celebration and Sharing** The Sinhala and Tamil New Year brings families together around traditional foods. Fresh chutneys, fruit relishes, Achcharu and seasonal sweets are part of the celebrations, making use of the garden's abundance and familiar pantry ingredients.

MAY: **Mango and the Arrival of the Rains** As the southwest monsoon approaches, mangoes and other seasonal fruits offer opportunities for pickling, chutneys and preserves. Green mango, with its distinctive tartness, is particularly suited to traditional Sri Lankan pickles.

JUNE: **Working with the Monsoon** With the arrival of heavier rains, the garden remains lush and productive. Fresh vegetables, leafy greens and fruits continue to find their way into the kitchen. Pickling, fermenting and other preservation methods help make good use of available harvests when outdoor drying becomes more difficult.

DENIYAYA SEASONAL PRESERVATION CALENDAR

JULY: **The Abundance of the Home Garden** The rainy season brings fresh growth and a variety of leafy vegetables, herbs and seasonal produce. Traditional pickles, relishes and fermented vegetables offer ways to enjoy these ingredients beyond their immediate harvest.

AUGUST: **Preserving the Garden's Goodness Garden** produce continues to inspire small-batch pickles, chutneys and fermented preparations. Family recipes and traditional methods help preserve the distinctive flavours of seasonal vegetables and fruits for later enjoyment.

SEPTEMBER: **Fruits, Flavours and Familiar Traditions** Bananas, pineapple and other tropical fruits feature in the changing garden harvest. Some are enjoyed fresh, while others find their way into dried fruit preparations, chutneys and traditional preserves when suitable weather and ingredients are available.

OCTOBER: **Preparing for the Wetter Months** As rainfall increases, attention often turns to the pantry and stored harvests. Dried fruits, herbs and spices are kept carefully protected from moisture, while jars of pickles and preserves provide a welcome variety for everyday meals.

NOVEMBER: **A Season of Rain and Nourishment** With some of the heaviest rainfall of the year, outdoor drying becomes less reliable. Fresh garden produce continues to nourish households, alongside stored fruits, herbs, spices and fermented foods prepared in earlier months.

DECEMBER: **Harvests, Traditions and the Year Ahead** As the year draws to a close, home gardens continue to provide seasonal fruits, vegetables and herbs. Families enjoy their stored preserves and make use of fresh harvests as they become available, carrying traditional food knowledge and seasonal rhythms into another year

AYURVEDA & **FERMENTATION** (THE WHEEL)

SIX THEMES inspired by Ayurvedic philosophy and Sri Lanka's traditional food knowledge...

1. Drying, Preserving & Renewal
2. Seasonal Fruits & Pickles
3. Garden Herbs & Leafy Greens
4. Fermentation & Traditional Foods
5. Tropical Fruits & Nourishing Drinks
6. Food, Balance & Community





Six themes inspired by Ayurvedic philosophy and Sri Lanka's traditional food knowledge

Food, plants and wellbeing have been closely connected in Sri Lanka for generations. Ayurveda is an important and recognised part of the country's healthcare system, alongside Western medicine and other traditional medical practices. Its approach to wellbeing offers a valuable perspective on the relationship between food, the natural environment, seasonal living and the body.

This wheel brings together six themes inspired by these connections. They celebrate the diversity of Sri Lankan ingredients and traditional food practices, from preserving seasonal harvests and preparing fermented foods to enjoying garden herbs, tropical fruits and shared meals.

Particularly important is the knowledge held by generations of people living around the Sinharaja Lowland Rainforest. Families, elders and traditional practitioners have developed a deep understanding of local plants, including their traditional medicinal uses, food value and place within the surrounding ecosystem. Sharing this knowledge between generations helps keep cultural traditions alive and encourages respect for the natural environment.

Sinharaja is a remarkable home for biodiversity, with many plant and animal species found nowhere else. Conserving this unique rainforest is important not only for its ecological value, but also for the cultural identity, heritage and continuing knowledge of the communities connected to it. Protecting the forest and its biodiversity helps safeguard the natural resources and traditions that have sustained local life for many generations over thousands of years.

Photo left:The Sinharaja Lowland Rainforest sustains biodiversity, the community sustains knowledge, and food brings those connections into everyday life.

Together, the six themes celebrate a living connection between nature, traditional knowledge, nourishment and community — recognising that caring for the environment and sharing what we know are both essential to wellbeing and sustainability.

Theme	What it celebrates	Connection to food, nature and wellbeing
1. Drying, Preserving & Renewal	Sun-dried fruits, tamarind chutney, pickles and ginger drinks	Traditional ways of making seasonal harvests last, reducing waste and enjoying distinctive flavours throughout the year.
2. Seasonal Fruits & Pickles	Green mango pickle, lunu miris, mango curry and refreshing drinks	The changing abundance of tropical fruits, the flavours of local ingredients and the creativity of traditional preparations.
3. Garden Herbs & Leafy Greens	Fermented cabbage and carrot, polos curry and traditional herbal drinks	The ways ingredients are transformed through preparation and fermentation, alongside familiar seasonal dishes and traditional food practices.
4. Fermentation & Traditional Foods	Fermented cabbage and carrot, polos curry and traditional herbal drinks	The ways ingredients are transformed through preparation and fermentation, alongside familiar seasonal dishes and traditional food practices.
5. Tropical Fruits & Nourishing Drinks	Wood apple juice, coconut chai and spiced drinks	The richness of Sri Lanka's tropical produce, the enjoyment of fresh ingredients and the traditional preparation of cooling and warming drinks.
6. Food, Balance & Community	Pol sambol, parippu wade, egg hoppers and chai tea	The pleasure of shared meals, hospitality and bringing people together through food, conversation and cultural traditions.

The six themes are an interpretive framework for this collection, inspired by Ayurvedic philosophy and Sri Lankan food traditions. They are not formal Ayurvedic classifications or medical prescriptions.

QUICKLY FIND
SPECIFIC RECIPES

Our index — an alphabetical list of ingredients and dishes with page numbers so you can find specific recipes quickly.

INDEX

A

Amaranth 23
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23

Ambarella 21
Ambarella Curry 21

Avocado 12, 50
Avocado Smoothie 12
Crunchy Bean & Avocado Salad 50

B

Balloon Vine 12
Kola Kenda 12

Banana flower 25
Banana Flower Curry 25

Bananas 25, 38, 58
Mixed fruit & leaf smoothie 58

Beans 26
Crunchy Bean & Avocado Salad 50
Vegetable Paneer Curry 26

Beetroot 49
Roasted Beetroot, Carrot & Herb Salad 49

Brinjals 19
Brinjal Curry 19

C

Cabbage 23, 39, 55
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Sri Lankan Fermented Carrot & Cabbage Mix 55

Carrot 26, 39, 49, 55
Roasted Beetroot, Carrot & Herb Salad 49
Sri Lankan Fermented Carrot & Cabbage Mix 55

Cashew 27, 72
Genoa Cake 72
Sesame & Cashew Nut Curry 27

Ceylon Spinach 23
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23

Chilli 11, 17, 20–21, 30–31, 34, 49, 53, 55
Ambarella Curry 21
Dahl Curry 17
Jackfruit Curry 15
Lunu Miris 11
Sri Lankan Fermented Chilli & Onion Relish 53
Sweet & Spicy Mango Curry 20
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37

Cinnamon 15, 25–27, 33, 59, 62, 70, 72
Cinnamon & Coconut Energizer Drink 59
Fresh Ginger Energizer Drink 59
Genoa Cake 72
Sri Lankan Coconut & Date Legume Flour Cake 70
Sri Lankan Ginger Beer 62

Coconut 30–31, 34, 40, 49, 62, 70
Coconut Chutney 34
King Coconut Water Refresh Drink 62
Sri Lankan Coconut & Date Legume Flour Cake 70
Sri Lankan Parippu Wade 40
Sri Lankan Pol Sambol 30

Coconut milk 11, 12, 15–17, 19–21, 23–25, 27–28, 37, 59, 63, 70
Ambarella Curry 21
Brinjal Curry 19
Cinnamon & Coconut Energizer Drink 59
Dahl Curry 17
Jackfruit Curry 15
Kokis 41
Kola Kenda 12
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Mixed Vegetable Coconut Curry 20
Mung Kavum 70
Okra & Tomato Curry 21
Sri Lankan Coconut & Date Legume Flour Cake 70
Sri Lankan Herbal Gotu Kola Drink 63
Sweet Potato Curry 19
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37
Wild Fern Curry 16
Wing Bean & Dahl Curry 17

Cucumber 66
Cucumber & Lime Cooling Infusion 66

Cumin 37, 49
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37

Curry leaves 15, 23, 25–28, 33, 39, 43, 59
Jackfruit Curry 15
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23

Curry powder 16–17, 19–21, 24, 39–40, 43
Brinjal Curry 19
Dahl Curry 17
Mixed Vegetable Coconut Curry 20

Okra & Tomato Curry 21
Sweet Potato Curry 19
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37
Wild Fern Curry 16
Wing Bean & Dahl Curry 17

D

Dates 58, 70
Mixed fruit & leaf smoothie 58
Sri Lankan Coconut & Date Legume Flour Cake 70

E

Eggs 9, 39–40, 49, 70, 72
Egg Hoppers 9
Vegetable & Egg Kottu Roti 39
Vegetable Rice Stir-fry 49

F

Fern leaves 16
Wild Fern Curry 16
Fish 30, 32
Sri Lankan Pol Sambol 30

G

Garlic 15, 17, 23, 25–28, 33, 39, 43, 53, 55
Dahl Curry 17
Jackfruit Curry 15
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Ginger 37
Cinnamon & Coconut Energizer Drink 59
Fresh Ginger Energizer Drink 59
Sri Lankan Ginger Beer 62
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37
Gotu Kola 31, 63
Kola Kenda 12
Passionfruit Leaf & Gotu Kola Sambal 31
Sri Lankan Herbal Gotu Kola Drink 63

H

Hopper batter 9
Egg Hoppers 9
Hummingbird Tree 23
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37

J

Jackfruit 40
Jackfruit Curry 15
Jackfruit Cutlets 40

K

Kurakkan 71
Halpa 71

L

Lime 11
Cucumber & Lime Cooling Infusion 66
Genoa Cake 72
Lunu Miris 11
Sri Lankan Ginger Beer 62
Sun-dried Tropical Fruits 54
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37

M

Mangoes 20, 58
Mixed fruit & leaf smoothie 58
Sri Lankan fermented Green Mango Pickle 53
Sweet & Spicy Mango Curry 20
Mixed vegetables 20, 30
Mixed Vegetable Coconut Curry 20
Sri Lankan Pickles 30
Moringa 12, 24, 47, 58
Drumstick Curry 24
Kola Kenda 12
Murunga leaves 23, 55
Mixed Fruit & Leaf Smoothie 58
Sri Lankan Fermented Murunga Leaves 55
Mushroom 44
Mushroom Bites 44

N

Nalala labu 24
Nalala Labu Curry 24

O

Okra 21
Okra & Tomato Curry 21
Onion 16–17, 19–21, 24, 26–28
Ambarella Curry 21
Brinjal Curry 19

Chilli Onion Sambol 11
Dahl Curry 17
Jackfruit Curry 15
Lunu Miris 32
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Mixed Vegetable Coconut Curry 20
Nalala Labu Curry 24
Okra & Tomato Curry 21
Sri Lankan Fermented Chilli & Onion Relish 53
Sweet & Spicy Mango Curry 20
Sweet Potato Curry 19
Vegetable Paneer Curry 26
Wild Fern Curry 16
Wing Bean & Dahl Curry 17

P

Pandan leaf 15
Jackfruit Curry 15
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Papaya 58
Mixed fruit & leaf smoothie 58
Sun-dried Tropical Fruits 54
Passionfruit leaves 31
Passionfruit Leaf & Gotu Kola Sambal 31
Peas 26, 40
Samosas 43
Sri Lankan Parippu Wade 40
Vegetable Paneer Curry 26
Pineapple 54
Sun-dried Tropical Fruits 54
Potato 19, 26, 43
Samosas 43
Pumpkin 69

R

Red hibiscus flowers 65
Fresh Hibiscus Iced Tea 65
Red lentils 17
Dahl Curry 17
Wing Bean & Dahl Curry 17
Red onion 11
Lunu Miris 11
Rice 11, 12, 49
Cold Red Rice & Fresh Vegetable Salad 47
Kola Kenda 12
Milk Rice 11
Southern Sri Lankan Stir-fry 48
Vegetable Rice Stir-fry 49
Rice flour 9, 37, 70
Mung Kavum 70
String Hoppers 9
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37

S

Soursop 28
Soursop Curry 28
Sweet potatoes 19
Sweet Potato Curry 19

T

Tamarind
Sri Lankan Tamarind Chutney 33
Tomatoes 21
Okra & Tomato Curry 21
Turmeric 17, 19–21, 23, 25–27, 33, 37, 39, 43, 53, 55
Ambarella Curry 21
Brinjal Curry 19
Dahl Curry 17
Jackfruit Curry 15
Mixed Leafy Green Curry (Sri Lankan Style) 23
Mixed Vegetable Coconut Curry 20
Sweet & Spicy Mango Curry 20
Tempura Hummingbird Tree Flowers (Bok Phool Bhaja) 31, 37

W

Wel Penela 12
Kola Kenda 12
Winged beans 17
Wing Bean & Dahl Curry 17
Wood apple 66
Wood Apple Juice 66

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