

## **Festivals and traditional recipes of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Festivals are the lifelines of culture of any society and same is true for food that is the basic need of every living being. But in 21<sup>st</sup> Century everything is becoming fast and so is our food, popularly known as 'Fast Food'. Still, traditional recipes have their own place in the society. The present communication deals with traditional recipes of district Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. Vast amount and specific recipes of traditional foods are prepared for family and friends during festivals or other occasion of celebration like birthdays, marriages and local festivals. These foods are *bhaturu*, *mithdu* or *marchu*, *til-chauli*, *kheer*, *patrodu*, *meetha kaddu*, *seul-ke-laddu*, *babru*, *aasra*, *sagodana* and *dahi-bhalle* etc. Besides source of nutrition, the fermented foods e.g. *Bhaturu*, constitute staple food in larger part of rural areas of Kangra, Kullu, Mandi and Lahaul & Spiti districts of the state while others are consumed during local festivals, marriages and special occasions (Thakur *et al.*, 2004). These recipes are losing their sheen in the fast-food culture. So, there is a need to conserve our traditional food recipes, as the plant materials used to prepare them are generally free from pesticides, thus nutritious and healthy also.

**Key Words :** Fast foods, Recipes, Traditional foods, Himachal Pradesh

### **INTRODUCTION**

The everyday meal in Himachal Pradesh is usually rice, lentil broth, dish of vegetables and *chapatti*. Special dishes are cooked during festive occasions. Diversity can be found in Indian food as well as its culture, geography and climate. Vast amount and specific recipes of traditional foods are prepared for family and friends during festivals or other occasion of celebration like birthdays, marriages and local festivals. In areas with a pastoral tradition, milk and its products are liberally used in cooking. Spices are vital for food preparation and are used to enhance the flavor of a dish. Correct use and blending of the aromatic spices is crucial to the proper preparation of Indian cuisine. Even oil is an important part of cooking, whether it is mustard oil in the north or coconut oil in the south, each section of the country has its preferences. A good cook can create delicious meals using simple ingredients. It is rightly said that each cook stirs the cook pot in his/her own manner. The traditional cook was

**Cite this Article:** Kapoor, Anju and Kanwar, Promila (2017). Festivals and traditional recipes of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. *Internat. J. Appl. Home Sci.*, **4** (11 & 12) : 1075-1084.

and is the mother. Her knowledge and capabilities are handed over to the next female generation. Earlier, food was prepared using only seasonal products, however, during the last twenty-five years, fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs have been available all year round, imported or grown locally. Traditional fermented and other foods are very popular in the tribal and rural areas of Himachal Pradesh. Traditionally, the natural or self-grown fresh plant materials were used for the food and that was very nutritious and also free from insecticide and pesticides. Generally, the dishes were prepared by steaming, roasting or shallow frying on slow fire with minimum loss of nutrients. These may be the reasons that people of that time were comparatively less prone to the diseases. They used to live healthy life.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. PRA method was used for the collection of information that consisted of discussion with key informants and focused group discussion with the groups chosen randomly from different communities of the study areas. The study was conducted in *Saliana, Patti, Averi, Mehnja, Molichack, Padhiarkhar* villages of Kangra district of the state.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although food habits and interests of the people have been changed these days, but those who have their roots in the villages, still relish the traditional recipes prepared during festive and other special occasions from locally available plant materials. In the present paper, an effort has been made to elaborate a number of selected food materials (leaves, grains, flowers, buds, stems, fruits and roots etc.) available locally. They were identified and the traditional methods of preparing them were documented. The traditional recipes prepared by the local people are generally associated either with festivals or with the seasons and in the present paper, popular recipes cooked during festivals have been explained.

Distributions of the recipes according to the local festivals along with time of celebration of the festivals are given in Table 1. Botanical names, local names, common names and families of the ingredients used in various recipes are tabulated in Table 2. Information given in Table 2 reveals that preparations of traditional recipes include raw and ripened fruits,

Table 1 : Distribution of the recipes according to the festivals		
Name of the Festival	Name of the recipe	Time
<i>Lohri</i>	<i>Til-chauli, Khichri</i>	January
<i>Shivratri</i>	<i>Meetha Kaddu, Seul ke laddu and Aloo</i>	Feb-March
<i>Holi</i>	<i>Halva</i>	Feb-March
<i>Naule-ki-sakrant</i>	<i>Bhaturu, Lasude</i>	May
<i>Chidanu-ki-sakrant</i>	<i>Babru, Bhaturu and Kheer</i>	July
<i>Janmashthmi</i>	<i>Aloo, Aasra and Sagodana</i>	August
<i>Patrodu ki sakrant</i>	<i>Kheer, Patrodu, Dahi-bhalle, Mithdu and Bhaturu</i>	August
<i>Saer</i>	<i>Kheer, Patrodu, Dahi-bhalle, Mithdu and Bhaturu</i>	September
<i>Diwali</i>	<i>Halva</i>	October
<i>Karvachauth</i>	<i>Sarson ka Saag</i>	October
<i>Birthday, Marriage and other festive occasions</i>	<i>Mithdu/marchu, Bhaturu, Shakkar parey and Halva</i>	-----

Table 2 : Part of the main ingredients used in preparation of traditional recipes			
Sr. No.	Name of the recipe	Raw material used	Parts used
1.	<i>Til- chauli</i>	Til* Sesame ** <i>Sesamum indicum</i> *** Pedaliaceae**** & <i>Chawal</i> * <i>Rice</i> ** <i>Oriza sativa</i> *** Gramineae****	Grain    Grain
2.	<i>Khichri</i>	<i>Chawal</i> * <i>Rice</i> ** <i>Oriza sativa</i> *** Gramineae**** & Mash* Black gram** <i>Vigna mungo</i> *** Gramineae****	Grain    Grain
3.	<i>Sarson ka Saag</i>	<i>Sarson</i> * Mustard** <i>Brassica compestris</i> *** Brassicaceae****	Leaves
4.	<i>Meetha Kaddu</i>	<i>Kaddu</i> * <i>Pumpkin</i> ** <i>Cucurbita maxima</i> *** Cucurbitaceae****	Ripened fruit
5.	<i>Seul ke laddoo</i>	<i>Seul</i> * Amaranth** <i>Amaranthus gangeticus</i> *** Amaranthaceae****	Grain
6.	<i>Aaloo</i>	<i>Aaloo</i> * Potatoes** <i>Solenum tuberosum</i> *** Solonaceae****	Stem
7.	<i>Bhaturu</i>	<i>Kanak</i> * Wheat ** <i>Triticum aestivum</i> *** Gramineae****	Flour
8.	<i>Patrodu</i>	<i>Kachalu</i> * Colocassia/ Elephant ear** ( <i>Colocasia antiquorum</i> )*** Araceae****	Leaves

Table 2 contd...

Table 2 contd...

9.	<i>Lasude</i>	<i>Lasude</i> * Indian cherry** <i>Cordia dichotoma</i> *** Boraginaceae ****	Buds
10.	<i>Ambua</i>	<i>Aam</i> * Raw mangoes** ( <i>Mangifera indica</i> )*** Anacardiaceae****	Ripened fruits
11.	<i>Babru</i>	<i>Kanak</i> * Wheat ** <i>Triticum aestivum</i> *** Gramineae****	Flour
12.	<i>Kheer</i>	<i>Chawal</i> * <i>Rice</i> ** <i>Oriza sativa</i> *** Gramineae****	Grains
13.	<i>Aasra</i>	<i>Seul</i> * Amaranth** <i>Amaranthus caudatus</i> *** Amaranthaceae****	Grains
14.	<i>Dahi bhalle or Dahi bade:</i>	<i>Urad</i> * Black gram** <i>Vigna mungo</i> *** Leguminoseae****	Grains
15.	<i>Mithdu or marchu</i>	<i>Kanak</i> * Wheat ** <i>Triticum aestivum</i> *** Gramineae****	Flour and granules
16.	<i>Halva</i>	<i>Suji</i> * Semolina** <i>Triticum aestivum</i> *** Gramineae****	Granules
17.	<i>Shakkar parey</i>	<i>Kanak</i> * Wheat ** <i>Triticum aestivum</i> *** Gramineae****	Flour and granules

\* Local name \*\* Common name \*\*\* Botanical name \*\*\*\* Family

leaves, grains and granules of the food stuff. Botanical names and families of the other ingredients used with the main food stuff in traditional recipes are given in Table 3.

### Traditional recipes of Kangra district (H.P.) according to different festivals :

#### **Til-chauli:**

*Til-chauli* means combination of *til* (sesame) and *chawal* (rice). Soak rice for one hour and then strain water. Wash sesame. Take radish and cut it into small pieces after peeling. Now mix all the ingredients along with roasted ground nuts, grated coconut and

<b>Table 3 : Some other ingredients used with the main foodstuff in traditional recipes</b>			
English name	Local name	Botanical name	Family
Ground nuts	<i>Moongfali</i>	<i>Arachishypogeal</i>	Leguminaseae
Coconut	<i>Narial</i>	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Areaceae
Black pepper	<i>Kali mirch</i>	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	Piperaceae
Onion	<i>Payaj</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Alliaceae
Garlic	<i>Lahsun</i>	<i>Allium sativam</i>	Alliaceae
Coriander	<i>Dhania</i>	<i>Coriandum sativum</i>	Umbelliferae
Mint	<i>Pudina</i>	<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	Lamiaceae
Tamarind	<i>Imli</i>	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Fabaceae
Mustard	<i>Sarson</i>	<i>Brassica compestris</i>	Brassicaceae
Cumin	<i>Jeera</i>	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	Umbelliferae
Turmeric	<i>Haladi</i>	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zingiberaceae
Asafoetida	<i>Heeng</i>	<i>Ferula asafetida</i>	Apiaceae
Red chillies	<i>Lal Mirch</i>	<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>	Solanaceae
Omum	<i>Ajwain</i>	<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i>	Umbelliferae
Fenugreek	<i>Methi</i>	<i>Trigonella foenum graecum</i>	Fabaceae
Ginger	<i>Adrak</i>	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Zingiberaceae
<i>Fennel seeds</i>	<i>Mithisaunf</i>	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Miller Apiaceae
Jaggry	<i>Gur</i>	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>	Poaceae
Basil	<i>Bhavri</i>	<i>Osmium basilus Linn.</i>	Lamiaceae
Gram flour	<i>Besan</i>	<i>Cicer arietinum</i>	Leguminosae

Jaggery. *Til-chauli* is used to pay prayers first and then it is distributed among all. It is a special preparation of *Lohri* festival.

#### **Khichri:**

Like *til-chauli*, *Khichri* (Fig. 1) is also associated with *Lohri*. For preparing *khichri* boil black gram dal in a pan for 25-30 minutes and add rice to it. Also add a little of turmeric powder, spices and salt to taste, stir properly. Heat till boiling and then cook on slow fire for 10 minutes. Serve it hot with ghee, milk or curd or *alsi ka tel* (Linseed oil).

#### **Sarson ka Saag:**

For preparing *saag*, sort the mustard leaves, wash and cut them into fine shreds. Put the shreds into the earthen pot with little of water. Cook it on slow fire for 20-30 minutes. Stir it well with wooden spatula specially made for cooking in the earthen pots. Heat small quantity of oil in a ladle, add coriander seeds and red chilies to it. Heat till browning and add hot ladle with oil into the earthen pot and cover the pot immediately. After few minutes open the cover and blend the dish well with the help of ladle. *Saag* is ready to serve. It is considered mandatory to serve *sarson ka saag* at dinner on the day of *Karvachauth*.

#### **Meetha Kaddu:**

*Meetha kaddu* is associated with *Shivratri*. It is prepared by heating oil in a pan and making a rack of *bhalletu* sticks (thin and uncovered sticks of *bihul*, (*Grewia optiva*) tree over the oil in the pan. Cut the ripened pumpkin into big slices and keep them on the

rack. Cook on a slow fire for around one hour.

***Seul ke laddoo :***

Dissolve sugar in equal amount of water and boil it for 10 minutes to make syrup. Mix the puffed seeds of amaranth (Fig. 2) into the syrup in such quantity that the mixture can be bound in the form of *laddoos*. These *laddoos* are the food for the fasts. These are also taken during winters as it is considered that these protect us from cold. Jaggery can also be added instead of sugar.

***Aaloo :***

Boil and peel off the potatoes (Fig. 3) and then cut potatoes into small cubes. Add salt to taste. These are taken at evening time during fast. Sometimes, potatoes are taken fried also. For this heat a small quantity of oil in a pan, add little of turmeric powder and at last, potato cubes. Mix it and keep it on fire for 5 minutes and serve hot.

***Bhaturu:***

*Bhaturu* (Fig. 4) is the fermented bread, which may be fried or roasted. It is prepared from wheat flour. Sieve the flour and then add yeast, ajwain and salt to it. Make dough and keep it for 2-4 hours during summer and 6-8 hours during winters. After that prepare round breads and fry or roast according to the occasion and requirement. Fried *bhaturu* is prepared on Diwali, *Saer*, birthdays and marriages etc. During rainy seasons in some areas roasted breads (*bhaturu*) are taken at dinner and breakfast.

***Patrodu:***

*Patrodu* (Fig. 5) is prepared from healthy leaves of Colocasia (Fig. 6). Make the thick paste of bengal gram. Take few leaves of *Bhavri* (*Ocimum basilus* Linn.), 2-3 medium sized onion, few cloves of garlic, green chillies and salt according to taste. Grind all the ingredients and add these to the paste. Mix it well. Take a leaf of colocasia keeping its lower side upward, apply the paste over it properly. Cover the leaf with another leaf of same size in reverse manner and again spread paste over it and repeat this process for 4-6 leaves. Fold sides of the leaves inside and then roll like bedding. Apply paste on all sides of bed while folding. For making it into a single piece, wrap it in a leaf of turmeric and tie with thread. Take a big pan and add small amount of water to it. Put small sticks inside the pan to make rack over water. Place the folded leaves on the rack and let it steam cook. It takes about 20-25 minutes to cook. Take out the *patrodu*, let it be cool and cut it into small pieces. Before serving, these pieces can be shallow fried or can be deep fried depending upon the requirement, occasion and availability of time. *Patrodu* is specifically prepared on *patrodu-ki-sakrant* (1<sup>st</sup> day of *Bhaadarpada* month as per India Calendar).

***Lasude:***

Sort and wash the buds of tender *Lasude*/Indian cherry (Fig. 7) thoroughly. Heat oil in a pan. Add finely chopped onion, garlic and ginger paste to it. Add the buds and then salt to taste. Cover the pan and cook it on slow fire for 10-15 minutes. Sometimes mango powder/

tamarind is also added to change the taste. It is the main recipe for *noule-ki-sankrant* (beginning of Indian month *Jyaistha*) when new crop of wheat is started in the kitchen.

***Ambua:***

It is a dish prepared from ripened or half ripened mangoes (Fig. 8). Peel and mash the mangoes. Heat mustard oil in a pan and add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, red chilies, ajwain, fenugreek seeds, turmeric powder, sliced onion, garlic and ginger paste in a sequence. Now put peeled mangoes, cook for some time, till it get mixed. Add jaggery and salt according to taste. It accompanies the main dish.

***Babru :***

*Babru* (Fig. 9) is prepared from wheat flour. Make batter and add salt or sugar according to taste. Heat *tawa* on fire and grease it with oil thoroughly. Now pour the batter on *tawa* and spread it by giving round shape like *dosa*. Cook it from both sides and serve hot with tea.

***Kheer:***

*Kheer* (Fig. 10) is a form of rice pudding, prepared with milk and rice. It must be cooked on *Patrodu-ki-sankrant*. For preparing kheer, take small quantity of cooked rice and add milk to it. Keep it on slow fire for 30-35 minutes then add sugar and dry fruits to it as per taste and availability. Serve it hot or cool.

***Aasra:***

*Aasra* is the recipe of amaranth (Fig. 2) seeds. It is also taken during fast. For preparing *asra*, puffing of the seeds is done in an open pan. Puffed seeds are taken in another pan, add buttermilk and salt to taste. Mix it well and serve.

***Sago dana:***

*Sago dana* is also a food for fast. For preparing it, first boil water in a pan, clean *sago dana* and add it into the boiling water. Cook for 20-25 minutes on slow fire, add milk and again cook for 5-10 minutes. In the end add sugar to taste. Serve it hot. Sometimes it is cooked in milk also.

***Dahi -bhalle or Dahi-bade:***

Soak washed black gram overnight. Grind it and give shape of *bhalle/bade*, like round, oval or round with a hole in the center. Now heat oil in a pan and deep-fry them. After that take curd in another pan. Add salt, chilies and black pepper to taste. Mix it well and add fried *bhalle/bade* into it. Decorate them with coriander / mint leaves.

***Mithdu or Marchu:***

*Mithdu* is associated with occasions of happiness and festivals, it may be birthday, marriage etc. It is small sized sweet fermented bread. For preparing *mithdu*, prepare tight dough of wheat flour and semolina with milk, oil, yeast and Jaggery. While preparing dough, add *meethi sounf* and dry fruits to it. After making dough apply oil to it and cover the pan

completely, Leave it for 2-4 hours in summer and 6-8 hours in winters. It is ready when the dough starts cracking. Now make the small balls from the dough and press under two designed wooden structures (specially prepared for the purpose) and deep fry till it turned brown.



**Fig. 1 : Khichri**



**Fig. 2 : Amaranth , plant and seeds**



**Fig. 3 : Potatoes (Crop and Plant)**



**Fig. 4 : Bhaturu**



**Fig. 5 : Patrodu, prepared from Colocasia leaves**



**Fig. 6 : Colocasia leaves**

**Halva:**

*Halva* is associated with the celebration but it has a great importance on Diwali and Holi festivals. It is cooked in the evening to worship Goddess Lakshmi on Diwali and celebration of *holika dahan* on holi. It is cooked after burning *Holi in the evening* at the common place and then distributed to all in the form of *prashad*. For preparing *halva*, heat ghee in a pan, sieve semolina and add to heated ghee. Stir well. Heat it till browning and then add water followed by sugar and cook it till it does not stick to the spatula. Add dry fruits and



**Fig. 7 : Lasude, buds and fruits**



**Fig. 8 : Ambua**



**Fig. 9 : Babru**



**Fig. 10 : Kheer**



**Fig. 11 : Shakkar parey**

serve it hot.

**Shakkar Parey:**

Like *Mithdu* these are also associated with occasions of happiness and festivals. For preparing *shakkar parey*, prepare the dough same as that of *mithru's* dough. Add *meethi sounf*, coconut powder and poppy seeds to it. When the dough is ready make big balls and flatten each ball like *chapatii*. Now cut the chapatti in small rectangles and deep fry till it turned brown (Fig.11).

**Conclusion :**

Although a number of religions exist in India, the different cultures that have influenced by cooking and food habits tend to come closer. However, over the time they may adopt a lot of specialties and cooking methods from the each other's cuisine and blended to perfection. The knowledge of Traditional Foods and their method of cooking can be vital for health development workers as well as for the local population. The tapping of Traditional Knowledge in cooking and the preparation of food in combination with modern techniques may also be very well utilized to prevent the junk food habits. It is hoped that the information will be of use to plan future research in this direction.

**Acknowledgement :**

The authors acknowledge special thanks to the Traditional Knowledge holders for sharing useful and relevant information especially to Smt. Subidha Devi, Smt. Durga Devi, Smt. Lakshmi Devi, Smt. Rani Devi, Smt. Lalita Devi, Mrs. Nirmala Devi, Pushpa Devi and Mrs. Aruna Vyas for sparing their valuable time for contributing effectively in preparing this manuscript.

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