

Preserved Well

By BINDU GOPAL RAO

Head to the quiet Shri Talkies Road in Karnataka's Sagar, Shimoga district, where the buzz around a small home with a typical sloping Mangalorean tile roof is hard to miss. The house owner is Seetharama Bhat who is locally called Uppinakayi Bhatru (Uppinakayi is pickle in Kannada). He has been making the traditional pickle from Appemidi mangoes for four decades. His experience shows in its taste.

The recipe is a secret. The Appemidi mangoes are mainly sourced from Ripponpet, a small town between Sagar and Thirthahalli. They are also brought from Sringeri, Koppa, Sirsi or Hassan. These fruits are what make the difference to the eventual taste of the pickle. Red chillies—the other important ingredient—come from Byadagi in the neighbouring Haveri district.

The Appemidi mango has been trying to make a name for itself amid stiff competition from Andhra Avakaya, Totapuri and other tender variants. Appemidi is a common term used for a wide



variety of pickle mangoes endemic to the Western Ghats of Karnataka, the demand for which has increased by 20 times in the last two decades. With a geographical indication (GI) tag, these tiny mangoes are known for their distinct aromas. You pick up a

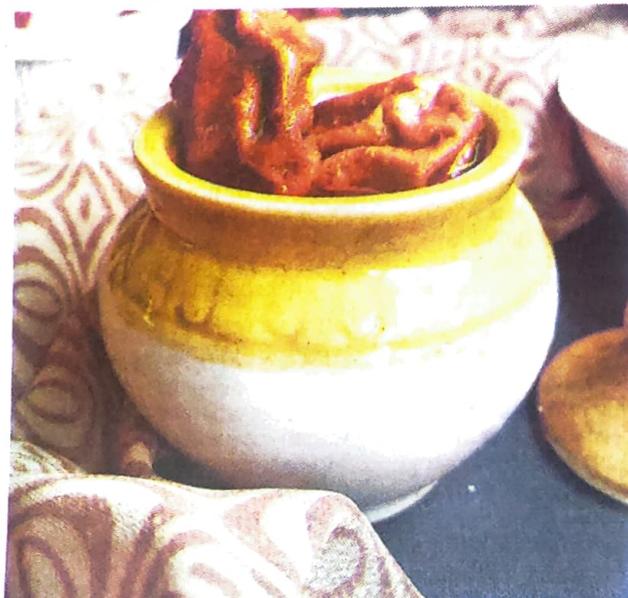
handful and chances are that each smells different from the other. From cumin to orange to camphor, it's an olfactory ride. Integral to the culinary culture of Malnad, these mangoes are now becoming popular outside the state in the form of thick, wet, spicy

pickles made with mustard and chilli powder. Try it with rice, dosa, upma, idli and chapati. Sadly, however, there has been a rapid decline of these mango trees due to poor harvesting practices but conservationists have stepped up to save them.

APPEMIDI UPPINAKAYI OR TENDER MANGO PICKLE

Ingredients

- ❖ Tender Appemidis - 2 cups
- ❖ Crystal salt - ¾ cup
- ❖ Byadagi red chillies - 1 cup (depending on the spiciness)
- ❖ Mustard seeds - ¼ cup
- ❖ Turmeric powder - 2 tbsp.
- ❖ Asafoetida or hing - 1 tbsp.
- ❖ Oil - ¼ cup



Pickle courtesy Pavithra M Adiga, Dice n Cook

Method:

- ❖ Wash the mangoes clean and pat dry until no water is seen
- ❖ Take a glass or ceramic jar with an airtight lid and add salt and tender mangoes. Mix well. Keep it closed for 10 days. This will cause the mangoes to shrink. You must mix this occasionally in the interim using a dry spoon.
- ❖ Dry-roast the red chillies and set them aside. Then, dry-roast the mustard seeds for a few seconds and keep them aside.
- ❖ Using a dry mixer jar, make a fine paste of the red chilli with mustard seeds, turmeric powder and asafoetida, and mix this paste with the salted Appemidi.
- ❖ Heat oil in a pan, cool it down and pour this on the pickle mixture
- ❖ Close the jar and incubate this pickle for one to two months.
- ❖ Serve with rice and ghee or whatever you fancy

