

# Mewari cuisine is a royal feast

The food of Mewar region of Rajasthan has several distinct elements that are sure to add a punch to your plate

**BINDU GOPAL RAO**

Udaipur, Chittorgarh, P r a t a p g a r h, Rajsamand and Bhilwara are some of the areas that are part of the Mewar region of Rajasthan. Extensively ruled by the Rajputs, the Mewar region has always been green and has several lakes and other sources of water, unlike the rest of the state. This also means that there is an extensive selection of typical non vegetarian fare that one can sample here.

Therefore, the food of Mewar or Mewari cuisine has taken after the topography and sees a combination of three aspects — pickling, dried and fresh food as part of its culture.

The food is also influenced by the Royal family of Mewar who have always been very creative about their local cuisine using spices and herbs from different parts of Rajasthan. "They have uplifted the local village food to the royal kitchen of the palace by using spices like saffron, cardamom, black pepper, dry fruits and nuts, as well as rich cream, milk and butter when preparing the curry base," explains **Love Mathur**, Corporate Chef, HRH Group of Hotels, The City Palace, Udaipur.

Some unique ingredients that are used when making Mewari food include lotus stem, *desi gur* (Jaggery), local white corn and home-made ghee that is a must for cooking savoury and sweet dishes.

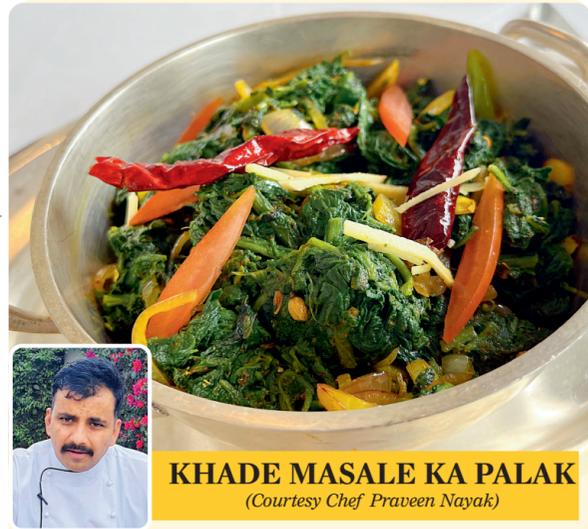
Some of the specific monsoon foods include *Kikoda (Kantola) ki Subji*, *Malpua Rabdi*, *Jhakolva Poori* and *Chane ki Dal*.

**Praveen Nayak**, Sous Chef, Shiv Niwas Palace, Udaipur, explains, "we also serve the food in traditional vessels like the Mewari special *Degchi Ka Sula*. A lamb preparation is cooked in a covered brass pot and a piece of coal with ghee and clove on top is added so that it gives a smoked flavour. Brass, not only looks good but is also a thick material, so the dish gets a distinctive flavour. We also make a *Keema Baati* more like a *kachori* and it is filled with keema."

A few common ingredients are beans, lentils, gram flour, corn, barley, millet, bajra which are majorly used in Mewari Cuisine. Mutton, chicken and fish dishes are included in daily meals as well. Vegetarian fare like *dal baati churma*, *gatte ki subji*, *ker saangri*, *palak pithod* and non-vegetarian dishes like *laal maans*, *jungli maans*, *khade masale ka murga*, *machali jaisamandi* (a sweet water river fish) are some distinctive dishes that are the hallmark of the cuisine.

*Gur ki laapsi*, *chashni ghevar*, *besan ki chakki*, *gur ki kheer* are some of the must try dishes of the region. *Chaumukha thaal*, *degchi*, *parat* and copper buckets are usually the traditional kinds of cookware used to serve these dishes.

Here are some distinct dishes from Mewar that will help you set up your own royal table at home.



**KHADE MASALE KA PALAK**  
(Courtesy Chef Praveen Nayak)

**INGREDIENTS**

- 6 bunch spinach
- 1 tbsp clarified butter
- 1 tbsp chopped garlic
- 2 chopped green chillies
- 2 medium chopped onions
- 1 tsp roasted dried fenugreek leaves powder
- ½ inch julienne ginger
- 2-3 cloves slit and fried garlic
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- Salt to taste

**METHOD**

Wash and blanch the spinach. In a heavy bottom pan add ghee (clarified butter) and heat. Add cumin seeds, garlic, green chillies, ginger, and sauté. Add chopped onion and caramelise it. Add blanched spinach and cook for three to four minutes and adjust salt. Garnish with methi powder and fried garlic flakes.

**Tip:** Put the spinach in an ice bowl when blanched to avoid discolouring.

**MAACHLI JAISAMANDI**

(Courtesy Chef Praveen Nayak)

**INGREDIENTS**

- Fish fillets 300 grams
- 4 tsp oil

**For the green chutney**

- Fresh mint leaves
- 2tbsp
- Fresh coriander leaves 1 tbsp
- Green chili 1

**For the batter**

- Besan 20 grams
- Turmeric powder 1 tsp
- Cumin powder 2 tsp
- Water as required
- Salt to taste salt

**For the gravy**

- Fresh cream 100 ml
- Fresh curds 50 ml
- Turmeric powder 1 tsp
- Red Chili powder 1 tsp
- Cumin Seeds 1 tsp
- Oil 2 tbsp

**METHOD**

Wash the fish and cut into eight equal pieces, rub with salt and rest for 10 minutes. In a bowl add the ingredients for batter and mix well without lumps. In another bowl beat the fresh cream, curd, turmeric, and chili. Prepare the green chutney



by grinding coriander leaves, mint leaves, green chillies, salt, and lemon juice.

Now place one piece of fish, layer with green chutney and close this with another piece fish. Heat a heavy bottomed pan with oil. Dip the fillets of fish in the batter and add them one by one. Shallow fry for a minute and flip onto the other side. Fry the fish for another minute and take them off the flame and keep aside.

In the same pan, add some more oil and cumin seeds. Once the cumin seeds crackle, add the gravy mixture and allow it to cook until a few bubbles start to appear. Turn off the flame.

Pour the gravy in a serving bowl and place the fried fish in it, finish with some coriander leaves and serve.

**KHADE MASALE KA MURGH**

(Courtesy Chef Love Mathur)

**INGREDIENTS**

- 500 grams chicken
- 5 green cardamoms
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 dry red chili
- salt as required
- 3 teaspoon garlic paste
- 1 cup yogurt (curd)
- 2 cinnamon stick
- 2 tablespoon red chili powder
- 3 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 5 cloves
- 2 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 teaspoon powdered turmeric
- 4 teaspoon ginger paste
- 3 onions
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- Mace as required
- 2 tablespoon garam masala powder

**METHOD**

Chop the onions and coriander leaves, separately. Heat a pan over medium flame and add ghee, green cardamom, red chili, cloves, bay leaves and cumin seeds and stir. After it starts crackling, add chopped onion and fry until it becomes translucent. Then add ginger-garlic paste and stir well. Add curd, chicken, red chili powder, turmeric, garam masala powder, salt and water as required. Mix well, cover, and cook until the chicken becomes tender. Once the chicken is cooked, add black pepper powder, and stir. Turn off the flame and transfer it to a serving dish.

Garnish with coriander leaves and serve hot with *phulka* or *roomali roti*.



**RAJASTHANI LAAL MAAS**

(Courtesy Chef Love Mathur)

**INGREDIENTS**

- 2 small onions, finely chopped
- 2 green chillies, finely chopped
- 18-20 red chillies
- 2 tsp coriander seeds (whole)
- 1 tsp jeera
- 1 cup mustard oil
- 10 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1-piece small ginger, finely chopped
- ½ kg lamb (cut into pieces with bones)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup kachri powder (kachri is a dried vegetable, a variety of cucumbers found in Rajasthan and ground into a powder) available online.

- 3-4 pods cardamom
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 cinnamon stick
- A pinch of mace
- 1 pod black cardamom
- water
- Handful of coriander leaves, chopped

**METHOD**

● Heat some mustard oil in a pan. To this add garlic and ginger.  
● After the garlic turns slightly brown add the lamb pieces, mix, and add salt.

- Now add the kachri powder and chopped onions and mix.
- Once the onions have roasted well add the whole spices, cardamom, black pepper, cinnamon, mace, black cardamom. Stir well. Add the red chili powder and let it roast for about a minute.
- Add enough water to cook the lamb. Cover and let it simmer till the meat is cooked.
- Once the meat is cooked, take out all the pieces on a platter and strain

back on fire but on low heat.  
● Add about ½ cup water and some coriander leaves.  
● Let it simmer for a while and when you reach a good consistency of gravy, turn off the heat.  
● Serve hot with a good garnishing of chopped coriander leaves.

