

# SEPTIMA

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# RAMADAN RENDEZVOUS

Bindu Gopal Rao

In the holy month of Ramadan, fasting in the day is complemented by great sustenance at other times.

**R**amadan is believed to be the month when the Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed. Muslims across the world observe this period that usually lasts for 30 days. During Ramadan, also called Ramzan in India, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. This tradition cleanses your stomach and intestines. Unfortunately, the benefits of fasting are lost due to the heavy food offered in iftars.

"Most foods contain heavy doses of carbohydrates, fats and proteins which may not be suitable just after fasting," says Dr. Chaitantya Kumar, chef, Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management. "Iftar should contain foods from all food groups - vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, dairy, and meat in moderation."

Fasting is said to be one of the five pillars of Islam. Food is not consumed between dawn and dusk.

"Devotees get up before daybreak and consume seh-

ri, which helps them fast throughout the day," says Rajat Chandana, executive chef, Karma Lakelands Gurgaon. "After the evening prayers, they indulge in an iftar feast comprising some traditional meals. Awadhi cuisine attained popularity under the patronage of the nawabs of Awadh. This cuisine is known for its subtle and delicate flavors and nuanced use of spices. Spices such as cinnamon, peppercorn, cloves, cardamom, bay leaf, cumin, mace, and nutmeg were used in the Awadhi kitchens."

According to Preetanjali Pasari, founder and owner, Butterfingers by Preetanjali, The coming together of friends and family to share food on the table during the morning suhoor and evening iftar is a very important tradition during Ramadan. It connects people spiritually and socially to create new and strong bonds of family, friendship, and community. Doing helps inculcate patience, gratitude, and compassion, and puts the focus on prayer through the days of Ramadan."

This three-course meal incorporates the best ingredients used to break a fast this Ramadan.



Arabic meatball soup, courtesy **Dr. Chaitantya Kumar**, chef, **Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management**



Arabic meatball soup is perfect as a complete meal or as a soup. One's stomach gets very sensitive if you have been fasting all day. Eating heavy, spicy, or fattening food will be a shock to the digestive system. This soup encourages the secretion of digestive juices that help in the remainder of the meal.

## INGREDIENTS

### For the meatballs

- 1 cup ground lamb
- 1 medium-sized chopped onion
- 1 tbsp chopped finger hot peppers or green chillies
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1/2 tsp 7 Spice mix
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil

### FOR THE BROTH

- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 medium-sized tomato

- 3 1/2 oz meat bones (Substitute with meat broth if bones are not available)
- 4 cups water
- 1/4 cup rice
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp 7 Spice mix
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste

## METHOD

1. In a large bowl, combine Ground Lamb, chopped onion, chopped garlic, chopped parsley, chopped finger hot peppers or green chillies, 7 Spices mix, cumin, salt, and black pepper with your hands. Form into 1-inch meatballs.
2. In a non-stick pan heat oil and cook meatballs to golden brown or until it is completely cooked.
3. In a stockpot, heat oil, add chopped onions, chopped garlic, chopped tomatoes. Stir for two to three minutes, add meat bones if available or meat stock cubes and water. If you are using meat bones, simmer for 30 minutes, otherwise once stock comes to boil add rice, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Reduce the quantity of water to 3 cups if you are using meat stock cubes.
4. Add the meatballs and simmer until the meatballs are heated.
5. Add the parsley, 7 spice mix, salt, and pepper.

Awadhi nalli korma, courtesy **Rajat Chandana**, executive chef, **Karma Lakelands Gurgaon**

This dish is from one of the treasures of Awadhi cuisine. Its simple yet distinctive flavors transport you to another world. It is cooked in most houses during Ramadan. After the whole day of fasting, it is easy to make and nourishes you along with giving a festive feel.



### INGREDIENTS

- 6-7 pcs mutton nalli
- 3 tbsp ghee
- 7-8 green cardamoms
- 1 piece whole cinnamon
- 2 black cardamoms
- 2-3 bay leaves
- 6-8 cloves
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp garlic, fried
- 1 tsp onion, fried
- 3 tbsp yogurt (beaten)
- 2 tsp rose water
- 2 tsp garam masala
- ½ tsp nutmeg-coriander powder
- ½ tsp saffron, soaked

### METHOD

- 1 Heat oil in a pan and add green cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, black cardamom, and bay leaves.
- 2 Add the Nalli and sauté until lightly fried.
- 3 Add salt and turmeric and mix well.
- 4 Pour in the water, cover the pan, and cook.
- 5 When it boils, add ginger- garlic paste, coriander powder, red chilli, garlic paste and onion paste.
- 6 Mix well and add yogurt, rose water, garam masala, nutmeg, and cinnamon powder and saffron.
- 7 Cover and cook for 2-3 minutes.
- 8 Now transfer the meat in a heavy bottom pan and strain the gravy.



- 9 Cook on slow fire.
- 10 Once done, garnish with fresh coriander and ginger and serve hot.



Date nut cluster, courtesy **Preetanjali Pasari**, founder & owner, **Butterfingers by Preetanjali**

Considered a blessed practice to break Iftar by eating dates, the sugar and fibre content in dates keeps you going for the day. Nuts and dates in this recipe will keep you feeling full for a longer time. Dates are also associated with Prophet Mohammed's traditions which gives it an almost mystical property and it also signifies the commencement of iftar

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 oz pitted dates
- 1 1/4th oz raisins
- 3 1/2 tbsp almonds
- 1 ¾ oz walnuts
- 1 ¾ oz cashews
- 1 ½ tbsp pistachio
- 3 tbsp mixed seeds (pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, chia seeds)
- 2 tbsp coconut oil

### METHOD

- 1 Purée the dates and raisins without adding water till it is a thick paste.
- 2 In a hot pan, add the coconut oil and toast the nuts and seeds. To this add the purée and cook for a few mins.
- 3 Remove from the heat, let it cool, make the balls to your preferred size.

