

LET'S CHAT about CHUTNEYS

WITH SEPTEMBER 24 BEING OBSERVED AS CHUTNEY DAY, AFTER HRS TAKES A LOOK AT A FEW THAT

MAY BE LESSER KNOWN, BUT ADD A TADKA OF TASTE TO YOUR PLATTER

Deepali Singh

When it comes to chutneys, you don't have to travel to any part of India to have your fill. Each region has its own unique take on dips and relishes, made from ingredients that are indigenous to their area. In the last one year itself, food historian and author Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal, has managed to document almost 200 chutneys from across the length and breadth of the country. "We usually think of the taste factor when it comes to chutneys but they are more than that. Even in small quantities, they supplement our diet with essential nutrients," she informs. With September 24 being observed as Chutney Day, we take a look at a few which may not be as popular, but certainly pack a punch!



PERILLA SEEDS CHUTNEY (WILD SESAME)

Gitika Saikia: Food curator and storyteller

As the tribal fare from North-East parts of the country tends to be simple, it's the addition of spicy chutneys that perks up the dishes. Gitika, who belongs to the Sonowal Kachari tribe of Assam, wasn't very familiar with the huge array of chutneys, until she married her husband who belongs to the Bodo tribe. "They make all kinds of chutneys, including one made of colocasia leaves," she says. Gitika came across the perilla seeds chutney when she went to visit her brother who resides in Bordumsa, in the region bordering Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. "The small town has a weekly market on Thursdays. The Chakma tribe women occupy a small section where they bring their produce from the hills. I tasted the perilla seeds chutney there. It's made using garlic, red chillies and perilla seeds. Some people also add dry fish and a pinch of lime juice to it," she says. Served with rice preparations, this chutney is spicy and also keeps the body warm, especially during winters when it's more widely available.



CURRY LEAF CHUTNEY

Chef Muthukrishnan: Sous chef, South High

While one is familiar with coconut or garlic chutney, it's the not-so-familiar kadi patta chutney found in Kerala cuisine that chef Muthukrishnan finds himself going back to for his dosas and idlis. "Not everyone likes the taste of curry leaves, so we make this chutney once every ten days for the *thali* at the restaurant," he tells us. Made with ingredients such as ginger, garlic, tamarind, desiccated coconut and of course, lots of curry leaves, the chutney goes well with almost everything, including appams, neer dosas, idlis and more. "Just be careful not to over-roast the leaves," warns the chef. Even if had in a quantity, Muthukrishnan says that it aids in cooling the body.

GREEN ONION CHUTNEY

Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal: Food historian and author

Rushina believes that the fantastic thing about chutneys is that we can make them out of almost anything! "Green onion is often associated with Chinese food, and usually used to garnish food, but it has a beautiful green pungency that lends itself beautifully to dishes as a main ingredient as well," she says. She created this simple chutney

when their garden in Dehra Doon had a big crop of onions and they had to find ways to use up older, slightly tougher bulbs. "It's quick, but just be careful not to overcook the green onions so they retain their punch," says Rushina, adding that the chutney goes perfectly well with dal rice, as well as a dip. "Stir it into cream cheese for a fab spread and even use it to make a pasta sauce!" she suggests.

Ingredients

- 3 tbsp of oil
- 1 tbsp black pepper crushed
- Handful of garlic cloves
- Handful of green chillies, broken up
- A big bunch of green onions

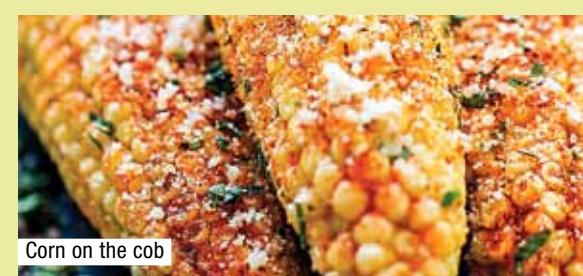


CHUKH

Chef Kedar Bobde: corporate executive chef, Neel

Kedar first tasted Chukh, the fiery red chilly chutney, at his friend's house. The Himachali chutney, he tells us, can be made either with red chillies or green chillies, although the former seems to be more popular. "For the former, you have to combine equal quantities of fresh red chillies and smoked dry chillies and leave them to cool. Dry roast masalas such as ajwain, jeera, coriander seeds, mustard seeds and fenugreek seeds. Other ingredients such as hing, tamarind and turmeric powder also find their way in it," he says. If you're making it with green chillies, then you add ginger-garlic paste to it, minus the turmeric powder. "The chutney made with red chillies is used as a dip or sometimes, used to marinate meats such as mutton. The green one is typically had with rice or chapati," he informs.

TRY MAKING THIS VIRAL CORN RECIPE



Corn on the cob

Most people love corn on the cob, and among a zillion recipes available online, there's one that's getting all the love on Pinterest. It comes from the blogger behind Damn Delicious, who was inspired by the hot corn on the cob served at her local farmers market. Her recipe for buttery, roasted corn on the cob topped with chile powder and cotija cheese has been saved more than 13,000 times. Here's how you can make it.

AROUND TOWN

Powai-based joint serves yummy fare

Melissa D'Costa D'Silva

It's difficult to get the best of both worlds under one roof. However, Powai-based QSR El'Rancho and Pick Pocket is up for the challenge serving up some delicious fare. We tried a few dishes from the menu, and recommend you drop by the next time you are in the vicinity.

FOOD

For starters, we tried the Soft Shell Tacos (₹159) served here in tortillas with an in-house sauce, beans and jalapenos. Packed with flavour, these make for an appetising starter. The Grilled Chicken Pesto Skewers with 5 Spice Rice (₹249) was equally good. Loved the delicately spiced rice, the chicken however, could do with a little less salt. Overall this is a good combination if you are looking for a quick meal. The Chicken Berry Pulao (₹249) was served with a *raitha*. It was strictly okay, the *raitha* does not really complement the pulao, which is a bit dry and needs a gravy and could do with some more tart berries rather than the sprinkling that came with our order. The Turkish Baklava (₹159) is the perfect finish to an interesting meal. Weight watchers would love the fact that it's not soaked in syrup like traditional Baklava, but purists may be harder to please with this not so sweet



Treat. Our verdict: If you want to try both Lebanese and Mexican fare under one roof in a quaint and colourful eatery, El'Rancho and Pick Pocket, ticks all those brackets. With a few tweaks here and there, this QSR could actually be a good meeting and lunching hangout.

WHEN: 11 am to 12.30 am

WHERE: El Rancho & Pick Pocket, Cypress CHS, Hirandani Gardens, Powai

DOON CHETIN

Nikhil Merchant: Food writer and gourmet consultant

Nikhil, who was recently in Kashmir for some work, decided to spend some time learning Kashmiri cuisine from Chef Anil Chouhan, executive chef — WelcomHotel Pine N Peak, Pahalgam. "He taught me a simple and delicious Rainbow Trout, which is fried and served with Doon Chetin, a walnut chutney," he says. While the fish was delicious on its own, Nikhil says that the chutney helped enhance its taste and took it to another level. "The chutney can be either coarse or blended with ingredients such as hung curd, fresh cream, Kashmiri red chilly powder, shahi jeera, dried mint and radish among other things. It completes all the flavour profiles," he adds. Calling it a 'headturner', Nikhil says that while its traditionally served with chicken and fish, back home, he plans to enjoy Doon Chetin with chips.



KNOW MORE

About different hued peppers...



The different colours are its different stages of ripeness

A new social media post has got vegetable fans all worked up after it claimed that every colour pepper is the SAME pepper — just at a different level of ripeness. A Tweet from lifestyle blogger 'Call Me Amye' bought this theory to the attention of other social media users, with people freaking out left right and centre. Here are some pepper facts for you:

The four common colours that you associate with the peppers — red, orange, yellow and green are its different stages of ripeness.

All red peppers start out as green. Following which, they usually turn chocolate brown before turning red. Red, yellow, orange etc. sweet bell peppers start out green and turn red, yellow or orange when ripe.

Sweet bell peppers can be orange, yellow, red, purple, brown, black, ivory or green, depending on the stage of ripeness and the variety.

Green bell peppers are fully developed, but not ripe. However, there is an exception in the form of a variety of green pepper that is ripe.

BRUSH UP ON YOUR FOOD VOCAB

As the world becomes a global melting pot of food, flavours, textures and tastes, it's important to expand your food vocabulary to understand not only the dishes that you want to try, but also make an attempt to pronounce them right. Here are a few, you may have come across:-

CHARCUTERIE

The correct way to pronounce it is: shar-koot-a-REE. It's a way of preparing meats which are often cured or smoked such as bacon, ham or salami. It includes terrines, pâtés and other cured products, and makes for a tasty addition.

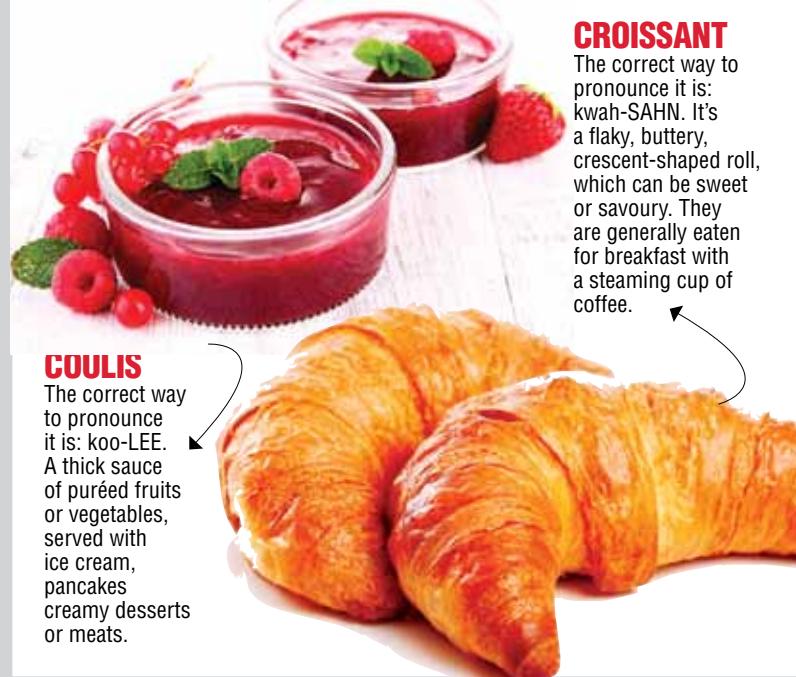
COULIS

The correct way to pronounce it is: koo-LEE. A thick sauce of pureed fruits or vegetables, served with ice cream, pancakes, creamy desserts or meats.



CROISSANT

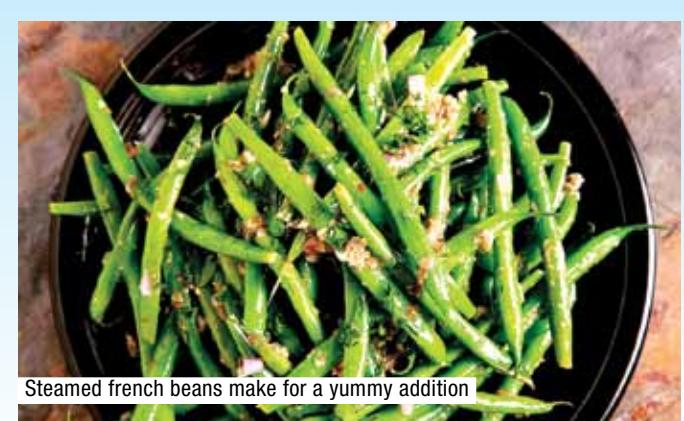
The correct way to pronounce it is: khaw-SAHN. It's a flaky, buttery, crescent-shaped roll, which can be sweet or savoury. They are generally eaten for breakfast with a steaming cup of coffee.



CELEB GRUB TALES

ENJOY BEANS THE WAY BEYONCÉ LIKES THEM

Eating your greens is good for your body. And for those who simply hate them, take inspiration from Beyoncé. The singer admits that one of her favourite meals is her mom's Cajun green bean stir fry. "It is the most tasty, delicious dish," she said when sharing the recipe with People magazine. "And it's green beans, so you don't feel too guilty about eating them. They taste like steak!"



Steamed french beans make for a yummy addition

DIY

INGREDIENTS

- 4 slices bacon, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 cups green beans, trimmed and sliced in half
- ¾ pound baby potatoes, lightly steamed and halved
- 1 tablespoon seasoning salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup water

METHOD

In a very large skillet or wok, fry bacon until crisp, for three to four minutes. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until browned, an additional four to five minutes.

Add green beans, potatoes, seasonings and water and cook, stirring constantly, until beans are just cooked through and tender-crisp, for four to five minutes.

