



Where is the Top of the World?

2021 Member's Handout written by Faye Spencer, KAFCE State Vice-President

Hindu religion started in India. There was no one founder, book or founding incident. Around 1500 B. C., the Indo-Aryan people migrated to the Indus Valley. Their language, culture and religion blended with the indigenous people. Eventually Hinduism was developed. The word Hinduism is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "dwellers by the Indus River."

Hindus believe in one god but that one god may manifest into thousands of forms. The three main forms are *Brahma*, the creator of the universe, *Vishnu*, the preserver of the universe, and *Shiva*, the destroyer of the universe.

One of the main philosophies of Hinduism is the concept of the soul's reincarnation. Ultimately, through the cycles of reincarnation, the soul can achieve salvation, eternal liberation from endless cycle of birth and death. How a person lives, either good or bad, will determine the next life or rebirth, whether ascends or descends to or from salvation, whether the soul's next life becomes another human being, animal, bird, fish or insect. It is because of this reincarnation belief, traditional Hindus are vegetarians (do not eat meat or fish). To eat meat might mean eating the soul of a human being who is going to be reborn.

There are many Hindu festivals throughout the year. The festivals typically celebrate events from Hindu mythology, often coinciding with seasonal changes. Worshipers offer the god's favorite foods during festival temple visits and daily home devotionals.

HOLI is a full moon spring festival in February or March. It celebrates when good wins over evil. God Vishnu came down to earth disguised as a man-lion to save a follower from an evil tyrant who was going to execute the follower in a bonfire. Now mothers will carry children around a bonfire asking Vishnu to protect them. Farmers will throw seeds into the bonfire and ask for blessings for the future crop. This is also the time that people throw powdered dye and colored water at each other just like when god Krishna playfully threw paint over some milkmaids. Favorite foods are **samosas** (triangle-shaped fried snack packets, stuffed with vegetables or a meat filling), **onion bhajis** (pronounced "bah-jees", fried onion snack cakes), and **garam doodh** (spiced, sweetened warmed milk).

Diwali (or Diwali) Festival of Lights. It is held in October or November. After Prince Rama defeated an evil tyrant and was crowned king, he was returning to his kingdom at night. People lit lamps at all the homes to guide him.

Other Hindus associate Diwali with the Goddess of Fortune, Lakshmi. To entice the goddess to enter their homes and provide a wealth for the next year, homes are cleaned top to bottom and every door and window is light. Sweet treats are prepared as gifts to visitors and festival goers. Festival meals would include **Mattar Paneer**, (peas and Indian curd cheese), **Pulao Rice** (method of cooking rice with vegetables and spices, pronounced "poo-low") and **Coconut Burfi** (bur'-fee).

Ganesh Chaturthi another important festival celebrates the birth of the elephant-headed god, Ganesh. He is the son of Shiva, the destroyer of the universe, and Parvati, a mother



goddess, whose name in the Sanskrit language means "daughter of the mountain", referring to the Himalayas Mountains. The festival is held in late August or September, lasting 7 to 10 days. Ganesh is a very popular and most worshipped god. He is a god of wisdom, success, and good luck, giver of favors and remover of any obstacles. During the festival, worshippers will bring offerings of Ganesh's favorite foods. The story of his favorite foods happened one night, when Ganesh's mouse who drives a chariot, was frightened by a snake. Ganesh fell out of the chariot and his stomach burst open, spelling out the last foods he had eaten, **kheer** (sweet rice pudding), and **laddoos** (round sweet balls).

Traditionally, Samosas and Onion Bhajis are deep-fat fried. I have attempted to modify recipes to present a healthier baked version.

Samosas Pastry Dough Wrapper

2 cup all-purpose unbleached flour	1 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoon butter, melted	1/4 cup warm water, as needed

In food processor or electric mixer with dough hook, put all ingredients. Mix until flour looks like large bread crumbs. Add water, a little at a time, to form a firm dough. Knead dough on flour surface for about 2-3 minutes or until smooth. Cover bowl and refrigerate while making Samosas Filling, Aloo Mattar (Potatoes and Peas).

Samosas Filling: Aloo Mattar (Potatoes and Peas)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil	1 teaspoon fresh ginger, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped	1 small onion, chopped
1 teaspoon cumin powder	1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 pinch turmeric
3 large potatoes, chopped	1 cups water
1 10-ounce package frozen peas, thawed	

In large skillet, heat oil over medium heat, Add ginger, garlic, onion, chili powder and salt and fry about 3 minutes, stirring frequently or until mixture is brown and fragrant. Add potatoes and water. Stir to combine. Cover skillet, lower heat and simmer 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add peas and simmer 2-3 minutes until peas are heated through. Serve potatoes and peas hot or room temperature with garnish of cashews sprinkled on top.

Assembling Samosas

Remove dough from refrigerator and place on floured surface. Knead dough for about 5 minutes. Divide dough into walnut size pieces. Roll each piece into a smooth ball with hands. On floured surface, roll balls into thin rounds with rolling pin. Cut each round in half. Put about 1 tablespoon of filling onto a piece of dough. Fold dough over filling to form a triangle. Seal edges of dough with fingers then with fork tines. Repeat with rest of dough.

Traditionally Samosas are deep-fat fried, but they can be baked: Place the samosas on an oiled cookie sheet. Brush the tops with plenty of oil. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes in 375 degree oven.

Eat hot or at room temperature, served with coriander chutney or ketchup.

Onion Bhajis (or Pakoda or Pakora)

1 large onion	1 potato, boiled, or 1/2 head cauliflower,
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1/2 teaspoon garlic powder	1/2 teaspoon onion powder	
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/4 teaspoon chili powder	
1/2 teaspoon cumin powder	1 teaspoon cumin seeds	
1/2 teaspoon coriander powder	1/2 cup chickpea (garbanzo) flour	2 tablespoons
rice flour		
1/2 cup water	Vegetable oil, or cooking spray	

Chop the onions, potato or cauliflower. Mix together in medium bowl, adding spices and salt. Set aside for 5 minutes. Add chickpea and rice flours. Mix well to coat the vegetables. Add water 2 tablespoons at a time. Mix to make a moist mass of dough, but not soggy. Oil muffin tins well. Drop into each well the dough, filling about 1/3. Spray the tops of dough with vegetable oil. Bake at 425 degrees for 25 minutes.

Garam Doodh Yield: 2 mugs

Hindu Cookbook: Holiday cookbooks from around the world by Kerena Marchant

2 1/2 cups milk 2 tablespoon honey Pinch of nutmeg

Bring milk to a near boil. Let simmer 5 minutes without boiling over. Remove from heat and stir in honey and nutmeg. Serve warm in mugs.

Mattar Paneer Yield: 6 to 8 servings

10 oz. paneer or mozzarella cheese (10.5 string cheese snack sticks)		
6 tablespoons vegetable oil	2 onions, finely chopped	3/4 cup water
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 pound frozen peas, thawed	1 teaspoon sugar
3/4 teaspoons turmeric	1/2 teaspoon chili powder	2 tsp. gr. ginger
1 tablespoon fresh chopped coriander (cilantro) leaves		

Cut paneer or mozzarella cheese into small cubes. Fry in oil until brown. Remove cheese from pan, drain on paper towels. Sauté finely chopped onions 3 to 4 minutes. Add water and salt, bring to boil. Add the peas and sugar, cover and lower heat to simmer. Cook mixture for about 10 minutes. Add paneer, turmeric, chili and ginger. Simmer for additional 10 minutes, uncovered. Put matter paneer in serving dish and garnish with chopped coriander leaves on top. Often served with rice and bread (naan, poori or roti).

Pulao Rice with Peas and Nuts Yield: 6 to 8 servings

2/3 cup basmati rice	4 tablespoons ghee, butter or oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds	1 medium onion, sliced
4 whole cloves	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon garam masala	1/2 teaspoon salt
5 oz. frozen peas,	1/4 cup cashew nuts
1/4 cup raisins	1 cup water

Soak the rice in water for 30 minutes up to 2 hours. Wash rice until water is clear, 15-20 minutes. Drain rice. In melted ghee, butter or oil, fry cumin seeds for about 3 minutes, don't burn. Add onion, cloves and cinnamon. Fry gently until onion is brown. Add the rice and cook for 2 minutes to get rid of the remaining water in the rice. Stir in the garam masala, salt, peas, nuts and raisin. Pour in the water and bring to a boil. Turn down to a simmer, stir and cover saucepan. Cook



for 15 minutes. Take pan off heat and leave for 5 minutes, covered, before serving. Pulao Rice goes well with Mattar Paneer.

Coconut Burfi Yield: 20 pieces

1/3 cup honey	1/2 cup peanut butter	10 to 12 dates, finely chopped
1 qt. envelope (= 3.2 oz. = 1 1/3 c.) non-fat dry milk		1 1/3 cup shredded coconut
5 tsp rose water (optional) or substitute 2 1/2 tsp vanilla extract or 2 1/2 to 1 1/4 tsp almond extract or plain water.		

Hand mix honey, peanut butter, dates and powdered milk in a bowl. Make the sticky mixture into a non-sticky dough by kneading or use in a food processor. Roll dough into a log about 20 inches long. In a small bowl, mix the coconut, rose water or plain water. Spread out the coconut and rose water mixture on wax paper. Cut the log in half and roll each half in the coconut till covered. Cut each log into 10 pieces. Store in refrigerator for up to a week. Serve at room temperature

Kheer Yield: 6 servings

1 pound ready-made rice pudding	1 cup milk	1/4 cup golden raisins
1 tbsp. chopped almonds	1 tbsp. chopped pistachios nuts	1/2 tsp. gr. cardamom
1 tbsp. sugar to taste	1 tsp rose water or 1/2 tsp vanilla or 1/2 -1/4 tsp almond extract	

Garnish-with extra pistachios nuts and raisins

In sauce pan, put cup of milk (depends on the thickness of the pudding) and add rice pudding. Bring to boil. Add raisins, almonds, pistachios, cardamom and sugar. Return to boil. Reduce heat and simmer mixture for about 6 minutes, stirring so does not stick or scorch. Remove from heat. Stir in rose water. Put into serving dishes. Garnish with ground or chopped pistachio nuts and/or golden raisins. Serve hot or cold. (As the pudding cools, it will thicken.)

Ladoos Yield: 12 to 15 balls

1/2 pound butter (2 sticks)	2 cups chickpea flour	1 1/2 tbsp. grated/dried coconut
1 1/2 tbsp. chopped walnuts or hazelnuts		1/2 tsp. gr. cardamom or cinnamon
1 c. confectioner's sugar		

Melt butter in frying pan. Add the chickpea flour and stir with wooden spoon over gentle heat for 15 minutes to toast the flour. It is toasted when it has a nutty smell. Stir in the coconut, nuts and cardamom or cinnamon. Fry for another 2 minutes and stir to mix in all ingredients. Remove from heat. Add sugar and mix well with a fork so there are no lumps. Let cool. When cool, moisten hands and roll mixture into 12 to 15 balls about 1 1/2 inches in diameter.

Notes: Chickpea flour is also known as Gram flour, Channa dal, and besan or Bengal gram. It is a pulse flour made from a variety of ground channa dal (chickpea). Gram flour contains a high proportion of carbohydrates, higher fiber relative to other flours, no gluten, and a higher proportion of protein than other flours.

Resources:

Holiday Cookbooks from Around the World: Hindu Cookbook by Kerena Marchant

Recipes were modified from websites and reviewed by consultant, Kamila Kostolna Dandu, Salina, KS- instructor of Northern and Southern Indian, Slovak and Puerto Rican cuisines.