

SHRI SITA RAM FOUNDATION BLOG POSTS

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India is a land of culture, tradition, and festivities. The beauty of it lies in how diverse it is. **The season of festivities that last nine nights starts this year i.e. 2020 on the 17th of October and culminate on the 25th.** These nights and ten days are **dedicated to the nine forms (avatars) of Goddess Durga and commemorates the victory of good over evil.**

Though Navratri revolves around a single belief, it is celebrated differently across the country. Varied approaches in seeking blessing, different forms of prayer, distinct rituals and of course, the vibrant and diverse food culture.

Navratri is indeed a magical time. **Goddess Durga is worshipped with a lot of fanfare — beats of dhols, dances, colourful displays and of course delicious food become part of the festivities.** In a country where the festival is celebrated in a different way in each region, the food too, is varied.

Endowed with a great significance, it is one of the festivals of the Hindu tradition that is celebrated twice in a year, with great fanfare. **“Nava”- meaning ‘Nine’ and “Ratri” meaning ‘Night’**, this literally means the **“Nine Nights of Divinity”**. These nine nights and days are dedicated to worshipping Goddess Durga’s nine divine forms. Apart from showering offerings to the Goddess, it is also **a common practice for devotees to observe ritualistic fasting to mark the Navratri celebrations.** Some observe these fasts on all the nine days while some keep fasts on the first and last day of Navratri.



A still idol of Goddess Durga

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Importance of Navratri

This festival also **marks the symbolic journey from humanness to divinity** thereby reminding people of the real goal of human life. Being a mark of **victory of good over evil**, this nine-day festival culminates on the tenth day which is **the day of victory and success**.

“Maa Durga” is considered as the ultimate source of power or chief deity who takes care of the entire universe and feeds it. Regarded as the feminine principle of divinity, the nine forms of Mother Goddesses are heralded, worshiped and adorned on these days. The Navratri festival glorifies the eternal power of Durga and seeks her blessing and protection.

Mahishasura Vadh

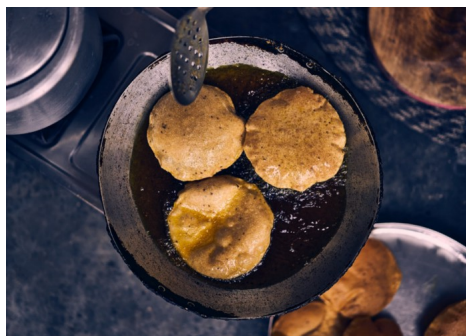
As per the legend, there was a demon called Mahishasura who was a terror to all the three worlds. As per the boons he had received, he could not be killed by any Gods, humans or demons except the feminine energy, which he underestimated to be insufficient to vanquish him. To save all the worlds from his captivity, **Mother Durga, assumed a terrific form and waged a war against him for nine days and killed him on the tenth day.**

Therefore, worshipping **Mother Durga on these nine days is said to end all our sorrows and confer joy, prosperity, wealth, hope, wisdom, success and lasting happiness.**

Ideally, the **first three days are dedicated to the worship of different facets of Mother Durga, the second three days herald Mother Lakshmi and the last three days are in praise of Mother Saraswati** — the three energies that rule over the universe and do the **creation, sustenance, and destruction.** The final day is also called as **“Vijayadasami”** on which **Mother Durga won over the demon.** Any tasks started on this day is said to be successful. Thus, this festival drives home **the message of heralding divinity, realizing the true purpose of life, demonstrating gratitude and sense of charity and several other values.**

This year whether you plan to feast or fast, here’s a comprehensive guide to delicacies to try out during navratri.

Besides worshipping deities, Navratri festival also means the **observance of a strict Vegetarian (Sattvic Bhojan)** but a healthy diet especially for the **people who observe fast.** **People completely shun non-vegetarian food.** One is expected to eat **only pure vegetarian food** and the food prepared for fasting must be cooked without adding onion and garlic, and even **the use of regular salt is completely avoided and only rock salt is used.**



Delicious Delicacies

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Some Amazing Delicacies

When fasting, one resorts to eating only fasting-approved ingredients like **sabudana (tapioca balls)**, **kuttu ka atta (buckwheat flour)**, **makhana (fox nuts)**, etc. We do understand that it can get a bit monotonous after a while to eat the same food for 9 days but believe me, it is so much you can experiment and cook delicacies with the vrat special ingredients too. Let me tell you, this food is no doubt, vegetarian and bit different from the food that we eat the rest of the days but it is equally nutritious.

How....???

Well, let's take a look at some of the amazing and popular food items that are different, healthy and nutritious at the same time.

5 Most Popular Navratri Foods:

1. **Sabudana Khichdi**
2. **Kuttu Atta Ki Poori**
3. **Sama Chawal Pulao**
4. **Aloo Ki Kadhi**
5. **Sookhi Arbi**

1. Sabudana Khichdi (Sago/Tapioca Pearls)

Loaded with good quality starch and carbohydrates, sabudana acts as an instant energy booster during these fasts. **Sabudana khichdi made of tapioca pearls**, also known as sago khichdi in the Southern part of the country, is one of the most relished Vrat dishes during Navratri fasting. Being low in fat and protein, you can spruce it up with peanuts, fresh coriander, and mild spices. It has a cooling effect on our body and is easy to digest.

2. Kuttu Atta Ki Poori (Buckwheat Flour)

Being rich in proteins, B-complex vitamins and minerals like phosphorus, magnesium, iron, zinc, copper, and manganese, it is also packed with high fiber that helps in detoxification of the body. Also, these fibers help to keep hunger pangs at bay thereby, making us crave less while fasting. Accompaniments to **Aloo Bhaji — (dish of Potatoes)**, it lifts up our energies and is considered as one of the common and favorite Vrat food.

3. Sama Chawal Pulao (Barnyard Millet)

Yet another energy booster, that contains a high amount of fiber, B-complex vitamins and important minerals like iron and magnesium, **Sama Chawal can be a perfect replacer for rice as it tastes almost similar to broken brown rice** when cooked. Combined well to make a wholesome pulao that tastes best with aloo kadhi, kaddu ki sabzi or lauki ki sabzi.

4. Aloo Ki Kadhi (Potato Curry)

Kudos to this one ingredient who fits in all — whether fasting or normal days. **It's the Potato!** This is something we love to savor round the year. In lieu of, legumes and lentils, ingredients like potatoes are permissible. The soothing flavors of this lovely curry made with light spices will have you licking your fingers.

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5. Sookhi Arbi: (Dry Colocasia)

A complete change from the usual leafy vegetables that we make for lunch! **“Colocasia’ is a great summer vegetable that is quite versatile.** Made with mild spices at home, this food goes well and liked by all during navratris. Rich in fibre and other nutrients, this may also help in weight loss, to the ones who aspire.

The above is a list of food items that we can prepare at home and can get easily from various restaurants and fine dinings. These are now not only considered as the food items that are being made at home but people are participating in it with great numbers than ever before!

Kudos to our food industry who are making extra efforts and are offering it during Navratri as a **Special Navratri Thali — (Navratri Platter)** in their Menu.

So now, next time you want to enjoy a tour in the Heritage City and simultaneously observing a fast, you don’t have to worry about food at all because it is easily available at your doorstep.

Wishing you all, A Very Happy and Prosperous Navratri from Shalimar Spices!

Jai Mata Di !

Stay healthy, Stay safe. This too shall pass.