

QUICK & HEALTHY



# LOCAL DELIGHTS

THIS YEAR, COOK UP AND ENJOY THESE LOCAL TREATS WHILE YOU TAKE IN THE NATIONAL DAY PARADE IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME. YOUR WAISTLINE WON'T PENALISE YOU FOR IT.

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Spice up your National Day with a bowl of curry laksa.

**WHO CAN RESIST SILKY,** smooth bee hoon bathed in a spicy coconut broth, or fragrant basmati rice spooned with tender chicken? We can't either, which is why this National Day, we say go ahead and celebrate in a style Singaporeans know best – by digging into your favourite local dish! But we couldn't do that without sharing four healthier recipes from local chefs that have even the nutritionists nodding in approval.

## CURRY LAKSA

(serves 5)

Substitute the coconut milk with low-fat milk and you'll get a perennial favourite that's kinder to your arteries. This version is taken from the Health Promotion Board website ([www.hpb.gov.sg](http://www.hpb.gov.sg)).

### You'll need:

1kg thick beehoon, cooked and drained  
 200g skinless chicken breast, cooked and shredded  
 2 pieces fish cake, sliced  
 300g beansprouts, boiled  
 4 pieces tau pok, sliced  
 1 cucumber, peeled and shredded  
 1 laksa leaf, washed and finely shredded  
 1 litre low-fat milk  
 1 cup water  
 1½ tsp unsaturated oil

### Grind into paste:

30 dried chillies  
 10 small onions  
 12 buah keras  
 2 stalks laksa leaf

### Grind coarsely:

1 cup dried prawns, soaked  
 ½ tsp belachan, roasted

### To prepare:

● Heat oil and fry the paste until fragrant. Add the coarsely ground ingredients and fry for 1 to 2 minutes.



A version of the lemak cili padi that's tasty and heart-healthy.

- Pour in water and tau pok, and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Stir in milk and cook over low heat for another 5 minutes.
- Pour gravy over the pre-cooked bee hoon and serve with beansprouts, shredded chicken and fish cake. Add laksa leaf and cucumber as desired.

4 pieces lime leaf  
 Salt to taste

### Grind into a fine paste

20g chilli padi  
 50g red chilli  
 20g fresh turmeric  
 20g young ginger  
 5 cloves garlic  
 5 pieces shallots  
 2 pieces lemon grass  
 150ml water

### To prepare:

- Cut chicken breast into 5cm cubes. Heat olive oil in a medium pot over low heat. Add in the paste and fry until fragrant.
- Add the diced chicken and give it a good stir for 3 minutes until the meat is coated with the paste.
- Add low-fat milk, lime leaf, salt and simmer over medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes or until the chicken is fully cooked. Serve with steamed white rice.

## LEMAK CILI PADI

(serves 2 to 4)

The original lemak cili padi is laden with coconut milk and oil. To create a healthier dish, Chef Iskandar Latif from Oosters Belgium Brasserie has used less oil and replaced coconut milk with low-fat milk.

### You'll need:

1.5kg boneless, skinless chicken breast  
 100ml olive oil  
 250ml low-fat milk

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### CHICKEN BIRYANI

(serves 4)

Raffles Hotel's chef Bharat Singh Negi makes a mean biryani – all without the use of ghee. His version of the favourite Indian dish uses mustard oil instead, which is both high in monounsaturated fatty acids (which lowers bad cholesterol) and low in polyunsaturated fatty acids (which lowers both good and bad cholesterol).

#### You'll need:

600g boneless chicken leg  
2 cups basmati rice  
11 tbsp mustard oil  
4 cups water  
Salt to taste  
1 sprig coriander for garnish  
½ cup sliced onions  
3 tsp black cumin seeds  
6 tbsp ginger paste  
2 tbsp garlic paste  
4 tsp red chilli powder  
2 ½ cups yogurt  
30ml lemon juice  
½ tsp saffron  
30ml milk  
3 tbsp mint  
9 sprigs coriander

#### Garam Masala:

6 pieces green cardamom  
2 pieces black cardamom  
6 pieces cloves  
2 sticks of 2cm cinnamon  
2 pieces bay leaves  
Pinch of mace

#### To prepare:

- Pre-heat oven to 190 deg C. Clean chicken, remove its skin and cut into 8 pieces.
- Wash rice, leave it to soak for 30 minutes. Drain, replenish with 4 cups of water, and add salt, half of the garam masala mix and half of the black cumin. Bring to a boil and cook until the rice is half-cooked. Drain excess water. Clean, wash and chop mint and coriander, and add to rice.
- Whisk yogurt and divide it into two



The fragrance of this chicken biryani is enough to make you salivate.

portions. Dissolve saffron in warm milk and add it to one portion of the yogurt; mix well.

- Heat mustard oil in a pot and add remaining garam masala mix and black cumin; saute onions until golden brown. Add ginger and garlic pastes, and red chillies; stir for 15 seconds before adding chicken. Stir-fry for 2 minutes. Pour in a portion of the plain yogurt and stir. Add 200ml of water; bring to a boil and simmer till chicken is ¾ cooked. Add lemon juice and salt to taste.

- Place semi-cooked chicken in claypot. Sprinkle half each of saffron-yogurt, mint and coriander. Then, spread half the rice over the chicken. Top it with the remaining saffron-yogurt, mint and coriander, and layer on the remaining rice. Place moist cloth on top, cover with a lid and close tightly. Place the sealed claypot into the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes. Remove claypot from the oven. Plate and garnish with a sprig of fresh coriander.

## BUBOH CHA CHA

(serves 4)

Traditionally, this dessert uses fresh coconut milk. But here, it has been replaced by low-fat evaporated milk. To compensate for the fragrant, rich flavour of coconut milk, Chef Gina Choong from Kitchen Capers has added pandan leaves.

### You'll need:

200g yam  
200g sweet potato  
200g tapioca  
5 pandan leaves  
800ml low-fat evaporated milk  
150g fine sugar

### For the tapioca nuggets:

100g tapioca flour  
70ml boiling hot water  
2 drops red food dye  
2 drops green food dye

### To prepare:

- Mix the tapioca flour and hot water to form a sticky dough. Leave it aside to cool and then divide it into two portions. Mix one portion with the red food dye and the other portion with the green dye. Knead each dough to even out the colour. Next, pinch and shape the dough into tiny pebbles. Heat up a pot of water until it boils. Drop in the dough pebbles to cook. When they float, remove and strain off the water.
- Peel the yam, sweet potato and tapioca, and cut them into small chunks. Steam them over high heat for 25 minutes till soft.
- Place the evaporated milk in a large pot and heat. Add the pandan leaves and simmer over a low heat. Add the cooked yam, sweet potatoes and tapioca. Simmer for another 10 minutes and add sugar. Stir to dissolve. Add the cooked tapioca nuggets and serve hot or cold with crushed ice.

Cap off your National Day celebrations with a favourite local dessert.

