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A vegetarian sojourn

Anila Kurian, DH News Service, Apr 26 2017, 0:29 IST



Palkati kurma

I have been working in the culinary industry for almost 14 years and it has been a thrilling experience every day. I get to learn new things and the experiments never stop.

I hail from Tamil Nadu and food has been a very important part of my childhood. My father worked in the hotel industry and I guess that's where I got my inspiration from.

My fondest food memory is learning how to make different varieties of 'dosa'. I have tried to make 200 varieties of 'dosa', but 'rava dosa' is my all-time favourite. The crispiness and the consistency of the batter is different. It definitely makes my mouth water.

I never knew that this would become my profession but I am glad that I get to do what truly makes me happy. I have worked in different culinary roles and setting, and of cooking wholesome, healthy and well-presented meals. I am happy to say that I have been associated with some of the luxurious brands.

I even served as an executive chef in Iraq and as head chef in Afghanistan. It was an honour serving the US troops in the Middle East. That's where I picked up the tricks of the trade in Afghani and Middle Eastern cuisine.

Now I work as a Sous Chef in Signature Club Resort in the city. It is a lot of work but I enjoy every moment of it. I don't get much time to myself but whenever I do get those extra days, I go back to Tamil Nadu to meet my wife. That becomes my mini vacation. My wife loves the Ambur-style 'biryani' that I make and also the 'parota'. She definitely looks forward to that when I go home.

What makes the culinary world so interesting is the amalgamation of ingredients to create a dish. *One such integrative recipe is the (Palkati) vegetable white soup. South Indian style paneer soup. It's simple to make and can be enjoyed with various options like 'roti', 'parota', 'naan' or even rice. It doesn't take much time to prepare and it's something that everyone can enjoy for lunch or dinner.*
 Chef Thayanithy

(As told to Anila Kurian)

Palkati kurma

- Ingredients**
 Paneer, 250 gm
 Cream, 4 tbsp
 Garam masala, 1/2 tsp

Ground to paste

- Onions, 2 medium-sized
 Coconut, 1
 Asafoetida, 1/2 tsp
 Cashew nuts, 7 to 8
 Garlic cloves, 5
 Ginger, 1-inch piece
 Green chillies, 2

For seasoning

- Ghee, 2 tbsp
 Mustard seeds, 1/2 tsp
 Cumin seeds, 1/2 tsp
 Asafoetida, 1/2 tsp
 Salt to taste

Method

- Cut the paneer into small cubes and set aside.
 Grind the onions, cashew nuts, asafoetida, coconut, garlic cloves, ginger and green chillies to a smooth paste.
 Heat ghee in a pan on a medium flame.
 Add mustard seeds. Once the seeds stop spluttering, add cumin seeds and saute till they become golden brown and turmeric powder, asafoetida.
 Add the ground paste and cook on a low flame for three to four minutes. Add garam masala and salt and mix well. Fry again for two minutes.
 Add the paneer pieces, milk cream, milk and two to three tablespoons of water and cook for few minutes on a low flame.
 Switch off the flame. Paneer in white gravy is now ready to be served.
 Serve paneer white gravy hot with 'roti', 'naan' or 'chapati'.