

MAY 09, 2020

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FEMINA

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GUJARAT SPECIAL

**SMRUTI
THAKKAR**

Recovered and
donated blood
plasma for others

Dr BELA PATEL

Medical Officer
on duty

*Be
unstoppable*

**FALGUNI
KHALPADA**

Creating employment
through making face
masks for donation

**PRIYANSHI
PATEL**

Providing
food packets
to the needy

STANDING STRONG

IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19



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FOREWORD

Despite the sea change that has come about in all of our lives owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, be it in working from home, managing household chores, striving to achieve work life balance, or staying sane, there are individuals who are committed to bringing about positivity in the lives of others through their actions! Our Big Story applauds such women, who in their own way, are fighting against coronavirus.

And while things might get a little gloomy indoors, there are still more positives to look at than focusing on the negatives. We have more at hand time to spend with loved ones or pursue activities we have always wanted to, greater opportunity to live in the present and enjoy the now, and countless chances to be thankful for so much. Read the stories in our *All About You* section and stay happy and inspired.

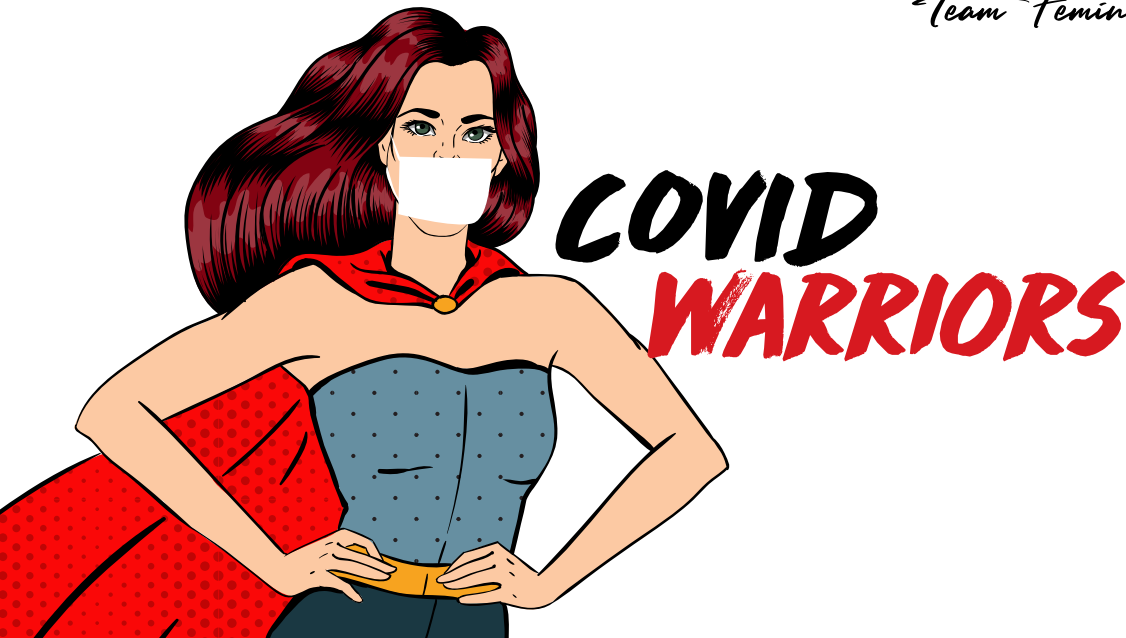
Head on to the *Fashion* section where we show you how to slay at home while dressing comfy.

Make your indoor vacay fun with some easy dessert recipes that are guaranteed to satiate your sweet tooth.

Stay active, keep yourself engaged, and stay safe!

**OUR BIG STORY
APPLAUDS
WOMEN, WHO IN
THEIR OWN WAY,
ARE COMMITTED TO
FIGHTING AGAINST
CORONAVIRUS.**

Team Femina



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Manish Khernar
MD, Alternate Medicine | Clinical Hypnotherapist

TAMING THE MIND

MANISH KHERNAR FROM SWADARSHANA HYPNOTHERAPY AND PAST LIFE REGRESSION THERAPY CENTRE TALKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH DURING LOCKDOWN

Doctor of Alternative Medicine with specialisation in Hypnotherapy, Manish Khernar has been practicing since about a decade now in Ahmedabad. Clearing the air about hypnotherapy, he says, "In India,

"I am a medical doctor working with Covid19 patients. This is very stressful situation for us. I already had some sleeping irregularity issues for which I was taking sessions from Manish Sir. With the help of therapy and meditation tools given by Manish Sir, not just my sleep disorder is normal now but I am able to handle the covid19 stress very effectively. I would strongly suggest everyone should go for this therapy at swadarshana."

Dr Vasant Goswami- MBBS, MD
(BioChemistry)

"I am a single mother and owner of an interior designing firm. Just from this single sentence you can gauge the level of stress I got to handle daily. Thanks to therapies and meditation techniques taught by Manish at swadarshana I could handle it effectively."

Mili Rathod, Owner - JS Designs

there's much confusion related to hypnotherapy—people think it is about controlling the mind. In fact, this is a form of scientific therapy to heal the mind. Despite what pop culture tells us, the person undergoing hypnotherapy never loses full control or awareness; they can always choose to avoid or manipulate answers."

Speaking of the effects of the lockdown on people, Khernar says, "It's

"I am CA by profession, few years back when I was student of CA, due to some social issues my studies were affected badly. Luckily I happened to take therapies from SwaDarshana from Manish Sir and just in few session everything was set. And I could able to crack CA exam successfully now. It has really helped me changing my perspective towards life."

Abhijeet M, CA

a game of psychology now. People need to overcome fear, stress, indecisiveness, confusion and anxiety. Those who have trouble dealing with these things will face issues in their career, relationships, and even health." To help people keep their mental health on track, Khernar has started a Workshop '**Crackdown on Lockdown**' where he gives practical tools that can be implemented in daily routine to bring about positivity and vigour.

He shares some of these tools here:

- **Tools to regulate inner clock:** Wake up on your usual time, leave the bed immediately and bathe right after waking up, groom yourself, wear clean clothes every day, take care of hygiene
- **Tools to work from home efficiently:** Create an office corner, avoid sitting on the bed for office work, keep a diary and note down pending tasks, make your mind acquainted to the idea of working virtually with video conferences, avoid gossip, share positivity
- **Personal tools or instant energisers:** Meditation, yoga, spending meaningful time with family, time and energy management, expressing gratitude for what you have and frontline workers, etc.



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TOGETHER, WE CAN

Kalwyna Rathod speaks to some women
who stand strong in the fight against
COVID-19, helping others in their own way

Selfless Service

This medical officer is available for emergency cases even after her regular shift hours

Dr Bela Patel

A gynaecologist working as a medical officer at Ahmedabad's Juna Vadaj urban health centre, Dr Bela Patel is in her 32nd year of service! Given the many health services offered by the government free of cost to slum populations, Dr Patel is usually occupied with cases and concerns related to family planning, nutrition for mothers and children, vaccination for children, etc. With COVID-19 rearing its head across the globe, Dr Patel's routine has changed notably.

She says, "My job is to scrutinise all the individuals that come to our OPD for medicines for illnesses like fever or diarrhoea. Any person exhibiting the symptoms for COVID-19 is asked to undergo testing for the virus, as per government regulations. While we have clear directives from the government, it is my responsibility to identify high-risk individuals or groups for coronavirus testing. The slum that falls under my ward is a high-risk area with seven to eight people staying in two rooms, and houses extremely close to each other. So I instructed my team to go ahead with random testing, taking 272 samples from individuals with respiratory troubles and those falling in vulnerable groups. From these samples, one person tested positive. So the next step was to analyse where this person had been to, whom they had met, and test those people as well. Since two vegetable vendors recently tested positive, we are targeting highly



vulnerable groups such as those running dairy parlours. Earlier, we had limitations, but now we are able to carry out more tests."

Dr Patel isn't worried about the increasing number of positive cases, citing that it will help develop herd immunity, which in turn will aid recovery. It is also noteworthy that the number of positive cases coming to light are all because of the higher number of tests being carried out.

As the ward supervisor, Dr Patel makes schedules for the Asha workers and sanitary inspectors such that a team of three people assesses different sections of the community each day, and the same team reassesses those sections every six days. She adds, "I guide the grassroots workers on passing on relevant and correct information to the community.

I, myself, come in touch with people who come into the centre for treatment and go out for field work. As we are all exposed to the risk of infection, we are receiving prophylaxis for COVID-19 as per norms.

I stay with my mom who is 98 years old and I am practising self-isolation at home, apart from following basics like sanitising, frequent hand washing, etc." >

"AS WE ARE ALL EXPOSED TO THE RISK OF INFECTION, WE ARE RECEIVING PROPHYLAXIS FOR COVID-19 AS PER NORMS."

Braveheart

Gujarat's first blood plasma donor, who recently recovered from COVID-19, didn't need to think twice about helping critically ill patients recover from the disease

Smruti Sunil Thakkar



2 3-year old Smruti Sunil Thakkar tested positive for COVID-19 in March, after returning to Ahmedabad from Paris. From braving the days spent in quarantine and treatment to defeating the coronavirus and now donating her plasma to help other patients recover from the disease, this girl has only grown stronger.

Battling the virus, there were moments when she felt low and helpless. She says, “One of the most emotional moments for me was when I was transferred to the COVID-19 ward—I could only see my parents as they were passing by; I couldn’t talk to them or touch them. My parents, too, were quarantined, so they couldn’t come to see me. I used to feel depressed, worrying what would happen next and when I’d recover and be able to go home.”

Thakkar is thankful to her sister, other family members, especially her uncle who used to bring fruits and juices for her to the hospital every day, and friends for their prayers and support that helped her get through this tough time. When she finally got discharged from the hospital after 14 days, she didn’t need to think twice about doing her bit to save the lives of critically ill patients—Thakkar is Gujarat’s first plasma donor for COVID-19 plasma therapy treatment! She says, “Vijay Nehra, the Municipal Commissioner of Ahmedabad, contacted me and told me about plasma therapy in detail, explaining how plasma from my blood will be collected and used to save the lives of critically ill COVID-19 patients. I felt that it was my privilege that I was getting a chance to give back to society, just as I was able to beat the virus due to the selfless service of the doctors and healthcare professionals. I will readily donate my plasma again as per doctors’ suggestions and my physical fitness levels.”>

“I WILL READILY DONATE MY PLASMA AGAIN AS PER DOCTORS’ SUGGESTIONS AND MY PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVELS.”



Feeding the Needy

Providing healthy, hygienic meals to underprivileged people for as long as the lockdown continues

Priyanshi Patel

Entrepreneur Priyanshi Patel, Co-Founder of Karma Foundation that is primarily focused on community development across the entire socio-economic spectrum, along with her team, is channelling her efforts to provide free meals to the underprivileged during the lockdown. Speaking of the Mega Kitchen Food Camp organised by Karma Foundation with the support of Girishbhai Dani and Bharatbhai Zaveri, Patel says, “We started this food camp

“THE CAMP’S SOLE PURPOSE IS PROVIDING FREE MEALS TO UNDERPRIVILEGED PEOPLE IN AHMEDABAD TILL THE LOCKDOWN IS LIFTED.”

at Andaz Party Plot on March 24, right after the lockdown was announced in the country. The camp’s sole purpose is providing free meals to underprivileged people in Ahmedabad till the lockdown is lifted. Every day, 10,000 to 12,000 food packets are prepared and till now, we have been able to provide 2,65,000 food packets to the needy people in the city.”

Around 80 volunteers attend the camp daily to prepare food packets for those unable to get food due to the lockdown. As summer is on in full swing, they are preparing dishes that keep well in the heat, like pulao, khichdi, thepla, and desi daal. Explaining the precautions taken at the Mega Kitchen Food Camp Patel says, “The Collector of Ahmedabad personally visited the Mega Kitchen and gave us the go-ahead after seeing the sanitisation process and measures we have in place. Every volunteer’s health is being tracked daily. All of them go through a sanitisation tunnel before entering the premises and all the volunteers are given a cap, pair of gloves, and mask to put on. All the volunteers follow social distancing while preparing the food packets. Moreover, other than the volunteers, no one is allowed inside the Mega Kitchen Food Camp, not even Ahmedabad police. The dispatch takes place outside the gate of the camp to prevent potential spread of the virus.” >

Doing the Right Thing

Creating employment opportunities for the underprivileged while manufacturing face masks for people living in slums and rural areas

Falguni Prashant Khalpada

T rue service is when you use your passion, knowledge, and skills for a cause, putting in place processes that will bring about positive changes. And this is absolutely true for Falguni Prashant

Khalpada, who is using her expertise in textiles for the greater good of the community. Owner of Misty Creations, a kidswear brand that uses all-natural fabrics, Khalpada has been manufacturing fabric face masks and distributing them for donation in rural areas to

“PER DAY, EACH WOMAN CAN MAKE AROUND 300 MASKS, AND CAN EARN AROUND INR 2,500 OVER TWO TO THREE DAYS.”



help stop the spread of coronavirus. She started this initiative on March 25, and till date, has manufactured and distributed over two lakh face masks!

Speaking of the inspiration behind this, Khalpada says, “One of the surgeons working at VS Hospital called me up to enquire about my stitching unit. So I received a sample of a disposable mask that uses non-woven material. The main reason I decided to manufacture fabric face masks is because they can be reused, minimising waste and negative impact on the environment. These masks are made of 100 per cent cotton, and can be simply washed and placed in the sun to be sanitised for reuse. On the plus side, cotton is hygienic and cool for use in summer. I first made 100 pieces and distributed them to my neighbours. The feedback was good, so I went ahead with the initiative.”

Apart from this, Khalpada also wanted to support her factory workers, unlike many other business owners who had left their staff to fend for themselves during lockdown. She says, “I couldn’t leave my factory workers on their own in this difficult time. Right now, they are not just being provided meals but are earning with dignity.” Khalpada has also created employment opportunities for several women in rural and slum areas with her initiative. “Most of these women have government granted sewing machines and basic supplies. So I send cut fabric to them and they stitch the masks. Per day, each woman can make around 300 masks, and can earn around INR 2,500 over two to three days,” she explains.

At Khalpada's factory in Gandhinagar, precautions are taken to prevent potential spread of the coronavirus. She says, “All workers wear masks and gloves and use sanitiser frequently. The supervisor reminds them to wash their hands as well. We’ve placed the dustbin such that the AMC workers can collect waste directly from outside. Personally, I have to go out for buying raw material or giving cut fabrics for stitching, and my kids try to stop me from stepping outside the house. But I convince them by promising to follow all precautionary measures.” **F**



THROUGH THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Aishwarya Acharya lists four things you can do with your partner while quarantined at home!

While the whole world is staying home fighting the widespread coronavirus emergency, there are still things that you can do to spend time productively at home with your partner. Basic household chores and recreational activities can be fun when you have your partner by your side! Here are four things you

can engage yourselves with while quarantined at home.

Cook together

We are all fighting this crisis together, so why not do the chores together

too? One of the things you can enjoy doing together is cooking. Segregate kitchen responsibilities like washing utensils, chopping vegetables, plating, and serving amongst yourselves

and work accordingly. You can also try cooking new dishes every day, bake cookies, or fry some fun, quarantine snacks to munch on in your free time. Shreya Shah, a homemaker, says, "My husband and I love cooking together. Usually I take care of chopping and cooking, while he loves plating and food photography. With the lockdown, we have more >

Basic household chores and recreational activities can be fun when you have your partner by your side!

time to experiment with new dishes.”

Workout together

Don't miss out on your regular workout sessions when at home. Plan your workouts accordingly and adhere to a strict schedule. If you have a treadmill at home, you can exercise on it for a stipulated time and then resort to other alternatives like skipping, yoga, or spot running to ensure your fitness level is maintained. You can also do planks, squats, lunges, and every other indoor exercise that you are aware of.

Clean together

This is the perfect time to catch up on your cleaning marathon. Utilise this time to clean and organise your wardrobe. Sort the clothes that you wear and discard the ones you have barely used or don't plan on using anytime in future. You can later donate them to NGOs. Apart from organising your



wardrobes, you can also dust your house and rearrange your furniture for a change of energy. This way, it will not only keep your mind and body occupied, but it will also give your house a new look and you, a new perspective. IT professional Puja Rajput says, “My husband and I usually take

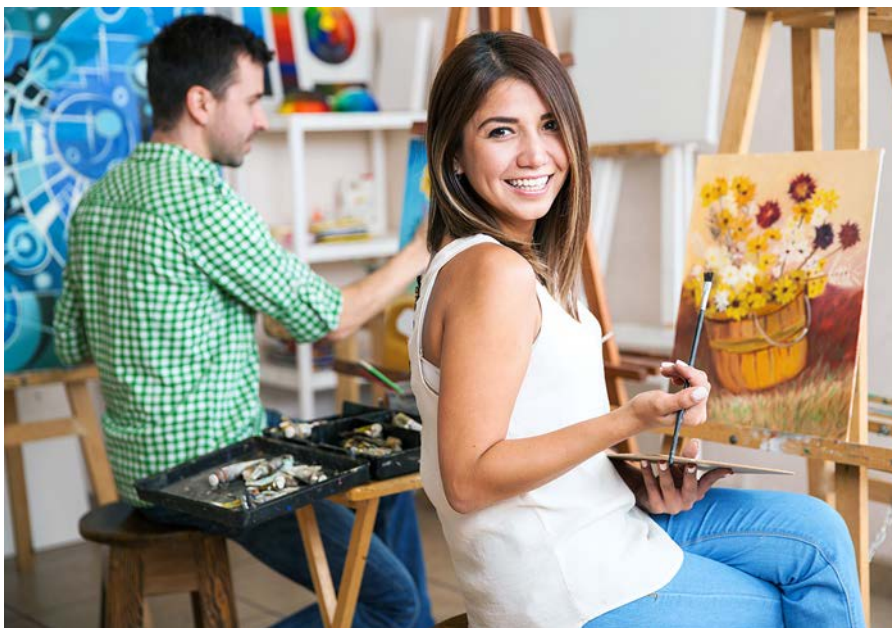
**This is
the perfect
time to
catch up
on your
cleaning
marathon!**

up cleaning and organising chores on weekends.

We try to make it fun by challenging each other in various ways, like setting time-based tasks.”

Engage in hobbies

Assuming that eight hours of your day go into working from home, you still have a lot of time to spare. Once you have wrapped up your work, you can then sit down and discuss what you plan on doing for the day. If you and your partner have different interests, you can settle down on one for the day and keep the other for the next. If you like pottery and you have the bare minimum requirements at home, you can engage yourselves in that. If your partner loves painting, you can modify a part of your room's wall. This will not only distract your mind, but it will also boost your interests further. **F**





READ AWAY THE BLUES!

Shraddha Kamdar lists five eclectic books to keep you company while you're in self quarantine

If you are a reader, you're sure to nod your head in agreement at this list of new and classic books. If you aren't so much of a reader, and suddenly have this newfound time at home while you stay safe from the on-going pandemic, these are just the books for you to start your reading journey with.

Three of the books have book lovers as protagonists. All the books are easily available on e-platforms and can be accessed across platforms. Need we say more?! Now is the time to realise that romantic notion of curling up with a cuppa and a good read! The best part? You can finish all of them in the span of a week!

HOT TEA ACROSS INDIA *by Rishad Saam Mehta*

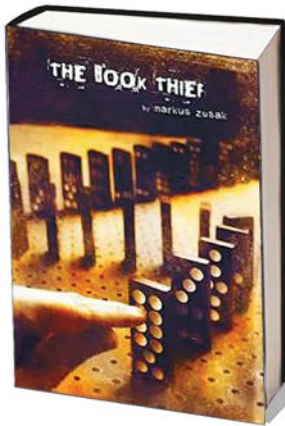
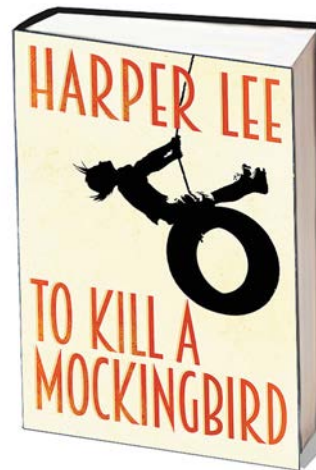
Well, don't go by the title yet. This book is not so much about a magical cup of tea, but about a person who travelled across the country and brought nuggets from each of those journeys between the pages of this book. The tea is what offers him the much-needed and much-wanted comfort through his travels. A mixture of essays on people and places, the book is a breeze that takes you around the country, often leaving you gaping at the pages in wonder. >



TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

by Harper Lee

Harper Lee's masterpiece is a must-read classic for every person on this planet. No, watching the movie instead, will not do! Told simply through the eyes of the lovely and playful Scout, it is a story of growing up and using your gut instinct to know right from wrong. It is the story of a town set in the US in times when racism was at its peak and an incident that shocks the town tests the character of many of its citizens. The hero among them is Atticus Finch, Scout's father, who makes the reader feel a sense of balance in a maddening world.



THE BOOK THIEF

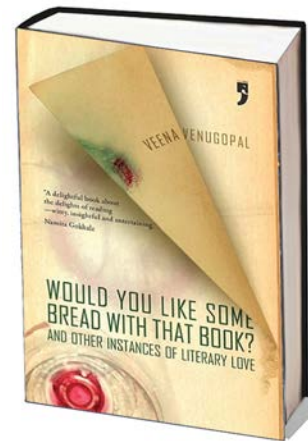
by Markus Zusak

The narrator is death! Zusak's first book, which tells the story of a young girl, who will go to any lengths to get a book to read, is set in 1939 Nazi Germany. A powerful book, it looks at strong human connections in times of distress, and leaves a lasting impact on the mind of the reader. The young Liesel's life is changed forever when she lays eyes on (and thieves) her first book, *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, at her brother's grave. She reads it multiple times when she is taught to read by her foster father, and is soon stealing books from wherever she can to read. Aside from the love of books, the story examines her relationship with her close friend whom she loses, her foster parents and another friend she makes for life.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME BREAD WITH THAT BOOK?: AND OTHER INSTANCES OF LITERARY LOVE

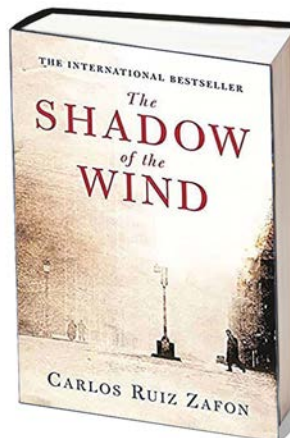
by Veena Venugopal

Well, long-winding title aside, this book is a bibliophile's delight. Business journalist-turned-author Veena Venugopal sure knows how to keep her reader hooked. From her experience of reading a masked book in a local train in Mumbai to her fantasy of meeting the master author and suave Suketu Mehta, this book is a treasure trove. Venugopal writes in an easy, engaging manner, where you only want to be inspired to read some more!



THE SHADOW OF THE WIND

by Carlos Ruiz Zafon



Originally written in Spanish, translated wonderfully by Lucia Graves, this one is a page-turner, exploring a novel within a novel. The protagonist is the son of a bookshop owner and finds the novel *The Shadow of the Wind* by Julián Carax, in the Cemetery of Forgotten Books. Enamoured by its plot, he tries to hunt for all of Carax's books only to find that a mysterious person has been looking for them and burning them one by one. What is the mystery? Read! **f**



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VACAY AT HOME

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Charles & Keith



Pull-on linen blend trousers,
₹1,499, **H&M**

SATIATE YOUR SWEET TOOTH

Esha Shah, Co-Founder of the online food community Foodaholics In Ahmedabad, shares Indian dessert recipes that use simple and commonly available ingredients

KAJU KATLI

Everyone's favourite classic



Esha Shah,
Co-Founder,
Foodaholics In
Ahmedabad

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup cashew nuts

3/4 cup sugar



2 tbsp ghee

4-5 pods of cardamom

SERVES: 4-6 > **PREPARATION TIME:** 30 minutes

Method

- 1) Take half the measure of cashews, at a time, and crush them in a grinder. Pulse them only thrice. Any further grinding will generate heat, and make the cashews release oils, transforming them into a paste.
- 2) Pass the ground cashew powder through a sieve. If you have any cashew chunks left behind after the sifting, grind them together once, and sieve again.
- 3) In a non-stick pan, heat the sugar with half its quantity of water. Melt the sugar and bring the syrup to a sticky honey-like consistency. Do not overcook the syrup. Keep the flame on low.
 - 4) Add the prepared cashew powder to this syrup and mix well.
Cook on low-medium flame for about seven minutes.
 - 5) Add freshly ground cardamom powder and mix well.
- 6) Grease a clean surface like your kitchen counter. Empty the cashew dough onto the surface. Allow two minutes to rest so that the dough becomes manageable with bare hands.
 - 7) Knead the dough to a smooth consistency. Mind the heat.
- 8) With a rolling pin, roll out the dough to a thickness of your preference. Allow 10 minutes to partially cool. At this time, cut into diamond shapes. Allow this to cool completely. Your kaju katli is ready! >



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- Sonam Kapoor

Sunflower Oil Benefits

- Rich in Vitamin A, D and E
- Reduces bad cholesterol
- Contains MUFA, PUFA and is low in saturated fats



Rich in Vitamins & Anti-Oxidants

MOHANTHAL

A traditional Gujarati sweet made with gram flour



INGREDIENTS FOR THE *BESAN* MIX:

2 cups gram
flour or *besan*
(smooth, not coarse)

1/4 cup milk

1/4 cup ghee

FOR ROASTING:
3/4 cup ghee

1/2 cup milk

FOR THE
SUGAR SYRUP:
1 cup sugar

1 cup water

10 saffron strands

5 pods of cardamom

SERVES: 4-6 > **PREPARATION TIME:** 60 minutes

Method

- 1) Take the *besan* in a wide mouth vessel. Add in the 1/4 cup lukewarm milk and 1/4 cup ghee, and incorporate into the *besan* with gentle and circular movements with fingers. Do not knead. Within two minutes, the *besan* will form non-uniform chunks. Cover the vessel and set it aside for 10 minutes.
- 2) After 10 minutes, take a large sieve with medium particle mesh size and pass the chunky *besan* flour through it. Push the flour through the mesh to pass it through. This exercise will yield uniform granules of *besan* mix.
- 3) Take a non-stick pan, heat 3/4 cup of ghee. Once the ghee heats up, add the *besan* mix to the pan and begin roasting it gently. Keep the flame on low; if the burner pressure is less, you can toggle between low and medium.
- 4) About 15-20 minutes into the roasting, the *besan* should become fragrant and a darker shade of yellow. At this stage, begin pouring the 1/2 cup milk, thread by thread, and mix it into the *besan*. Continue roasting for another 15 minutes.
- 5) Once the *besan* starts to look amber, switch off the flame. Continue tossing it in the pan for two more minutes, and then set the pan aside.
- 6) In another pan, heat a cup of sugar with a cup of water. Once the sugar melts, add saffron strands and freshly ground cardamom. Cook for two minutes, until honey-like in consistency. This will give you a loose, dropping type mohanthal; in case you want to slice the mohanthal into cubes, cook the syrup further to 1.5 string consistency.
- 7) Once the desired viscosity of syrup is achieved, pour it into the *besan* mix which is sitting on the side. Mix it in well. The *besan* will further cook in the residual heat of the syrup.
- 8) Pour this mix into a container of choice. Garnish with chopped dry almonds and pistachios (optional). Since this version contains milk, consume within 2-3 days in summers. >

BOONDI LADDOO

Another delicious treat made with gram flour



INGREDIENTS

1 cup gram flour or *besan*

2 cups sugar

1 cup milk

10-15 saffron strands

8 pods of cardamom

Ghee for frying

SERVES: 4-6 > COOKING TIME: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Method

- 1) Pass the *besan* through a sieve to get rid of any lumps.
- 2) Add milk, in four parts, one at a time, and mix it in the *besan* to build a paste. Begin by building a thick paste to avoid formation of lumps. As you proceed adding the milk, the paste will thin down a little.
- 3) With a beater or a spoon, whisk the batter rigorously for five minutes, until smooth. Cover with a lid and keep aside for 10 minutes.
- 4) After the resting time, further whisk the batter rigorously so it blooms well. Now add water, cautiously, to build a dropping consistency. Check by pouring the batter from the spoon, from a height, if it drops without breaking the streak, it's good to go.
- 5) Heat ghee in a deep pan. Drop a spot of batter into the pan. If the boondi comes to the surface immediately and is well rounded, your batter is perfect. If your boondi forms a tail, the batter is too thick; if it comes flat, your batter is too thin. Check and fine-tune the batter accordingly.
- 6) Take a perforated spoon (*jhaaro*) and hold it over the pan. With another large spoon, pour the batter over this *jhaaro*. The batter will drop into the ghee in the form of small beads, automatically. Repeat this until the pan is filled with boondi. Do this on a medium flame. Fry the boondis for about 30-45 seconds and remove them from the ghee. Immediately place them on a large sieve to drain off excess ghee.

Tip: Quick rinse the *jhaaro* after each batch in a bowl of water to ensure that each batch of boondi comes out as perfect as the previous one.

- 7) After all the boondis are fried, leave them on the sieve.
- 8) In a heavy bottom vessel, add two cups of sugar and two cups of water. Bring this sugar syrup to a 1/2 string consistency. Add in saffron strands and freshly ground cardamom.
- 9) Transfer the boondis to the syrup and mix well. Close the lid and allow them to sit in the syrup for 30 minutes.
- 10) After 30 minutes, the boondis will have soaked all the syrup in. Add some melon seeds, and fold in gently.
- 12) Apply some ghee onto your palms, and begin rolling boondis into laddoos. You can decorate the laddoos with slivers of almonds or pistachios! >

RASGULLA

The perfect way to end your meal

INGREDIENTS
1 litre cow's milk
1/2 cup day old curd



1 cups + 1/2 cups sugar
4 pods of cardamom

SERVES: 4-6 > COOKING TIME: 40 minutes

Method

Making the chhena

- 1) Heat the milk on medium flame, until it rises. Do not bring to a boil. Turn off the flame and allow the milk to rest for two minutes.
- 2) Add the curd to this milk and give it a gentle stir. Wait until the milk begins to curdle. Look for the signs of milk crumbles separating from the whey, which will be pale green in appearance. Once this happens, add a cup of ice cold water to the vessel so that the *chhena* doesn't cook any further.


- 3) Strain this over a strainer, covered with a cheese cloth (or a muslin cloth), and drain the whey.

Tip: You can preserve this whey to knead paratha dough, for softer results.

- 4) Tie the cheesecloth from the top and with light manual pressure, squeeze out as much water as you can from the *chhena*, through the cloth. Place the strainer with the *chhena* over a vessel to collect the residual whey. Now place a heavy object (like a mortar-pestle) over the cheesecloth to add pressure. In about 30 minutes, check *chhena*; if it crumbles without any moisture, it is ready.

Making the rasgullas

- 1) In a plate, open the *chhena* into crumbles using your fingers.
- 2) Begin kneading this with the pressure of your palms, gently. Do this for about five-seven minutes until the *chhena* comes together into a smooth dough and starts separating from the plate. If your hands look greasy, the *chhena* is ready to be rolled into balls.
- 3) In a large, wide mouth vessel, add a cup of sugar and five cups of water. Heat to a rolling boil. Throw in the four pods of cardamom.
- 4) Roll the *chhena* into balls. Mind the size, because these will double when cooked.
- 5) One by one, drop these *chhena* balls into the boiling syrup. Don't add all together or it will reduce the temperature of the syrup. Close the vessel with the lid and keep the flame on high.
- 6) In five-seven minutes, check the *chhena* balls. They should've doubled in size by now. With a small spoon, turn the balls upside down, one at a time.
- 7) Close the lid again and allow another five minutes to cook.
- 8) Fill a vessel with normal drinking water. Take one fully fluffed *chhena* ball and drop it into this vessel. If the ball drops to the bottom of the vessel, it means that the rasgulla is cooked perfectly. Conduct this drop test for all the balls and allow them to rest in this vessel. Do not squeeze them at any stage.
- 9) Add the remainder sugar to the residual syrup with one cup of water and wait for the sugar to melt.
- 10) Once this syrup cools down, transfer to a storage container. Add the rasgullas back to this syrup, gently, one at a time.
- 11) Cool in the refrigerator for four hours. Your rasgullas are ready!

You can also choose to have them while they are warm. 



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