

Bhel

Bhel is a delectable concoction of puffed rice, fresh finely chopped salad, chutneys, and spices and is one of the most popular street foods

Prep time – 5-10 minutes

Cooking time – 5 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients: 2-3 cups rice crispies (cereal), 2 tomatoes on the vine, finely chopped, 1 onions, finely chopped; ½ cucumber, finely chopped; 1-2 green chillies, finely chopped (optional); pinch of chaat masala; Tamarind chutney; Green chutney; Chopped fresh coriander; Salt to taste; Chilli powder to taste; Squeeze of lemon juice

Method:

In a large mixing bowl, toss together rice crispies, tomatoes, onions, cucumber, salt, chilli powder, chaat masala, and green chillies. Add 1-2 tsp each of the tamarind chutney and green chutney, tossing gently with a spoon. Just before serving, add a squeeze of lemon juice and a sprinkling of fresh coriander.

Bhajis

Easy to cook, ridiculously moreish, and truly inclusive by virtue of being gluten free and vegan, bhajis certainly bring life to the party.

Prep time – 5-10 minutes

Cooking time – 10–12 minutes

Serves 4-6

Ingredients: 2-3 onions, thinly sliced; 1 tsp Cumin seeds; 2-3 Chopped green chillies (optional); Fresh coriander, finely chopped; ¼ tsp Turmeric; Chilli powder and Salt to taste; Oil for frying

Method:

In a mixing bowl, mix together sliced onions (or vegetables), 1 tsp cumin seeds, ½ tsp turmeric, red chilli powder to taste, 2-3 tsp of fresh coriander, and salt to taste. Use your hands or a fork to combine the spices with the onions (or vegetables). This helps to release the natural moisture of the onions. Set it aside for 10-15 minutes to allow the onions or vegetables to absorb the flavours.

Heat 2-3 inches of oil in a wok or frying pan. For these bhajis, the oil needs to be piping hot, as they are flash fried.

Add 3-4 tbsp of besan to the onion mixture, and once more, use your hands or a fork to combine it into the mixture. The water from the mixture helps to make a sticky batter. Do not add more water to the mixture, as this will make the bhajis soft when they are cooked. The more the mixture is squashed and mixed, the looser the batter will become.

Once the mixture is well combined, drop a small amount in the pan of oil. If it sizzles and rises to the top straight away, the oil is ready to use. Drop small amounts of the mixture, without shaping it in any way, keeping it as loose as possible. This helps the bhajis to cook uniformly, as they are not going to be in the oil for very long. Use a slotted spoon to move the bhajis around the pan for 2-3 minutes, turning them to help them cook evenly. They are best at a deep brown colour.

Remove and drain on kitchen paper to remove excess oil.