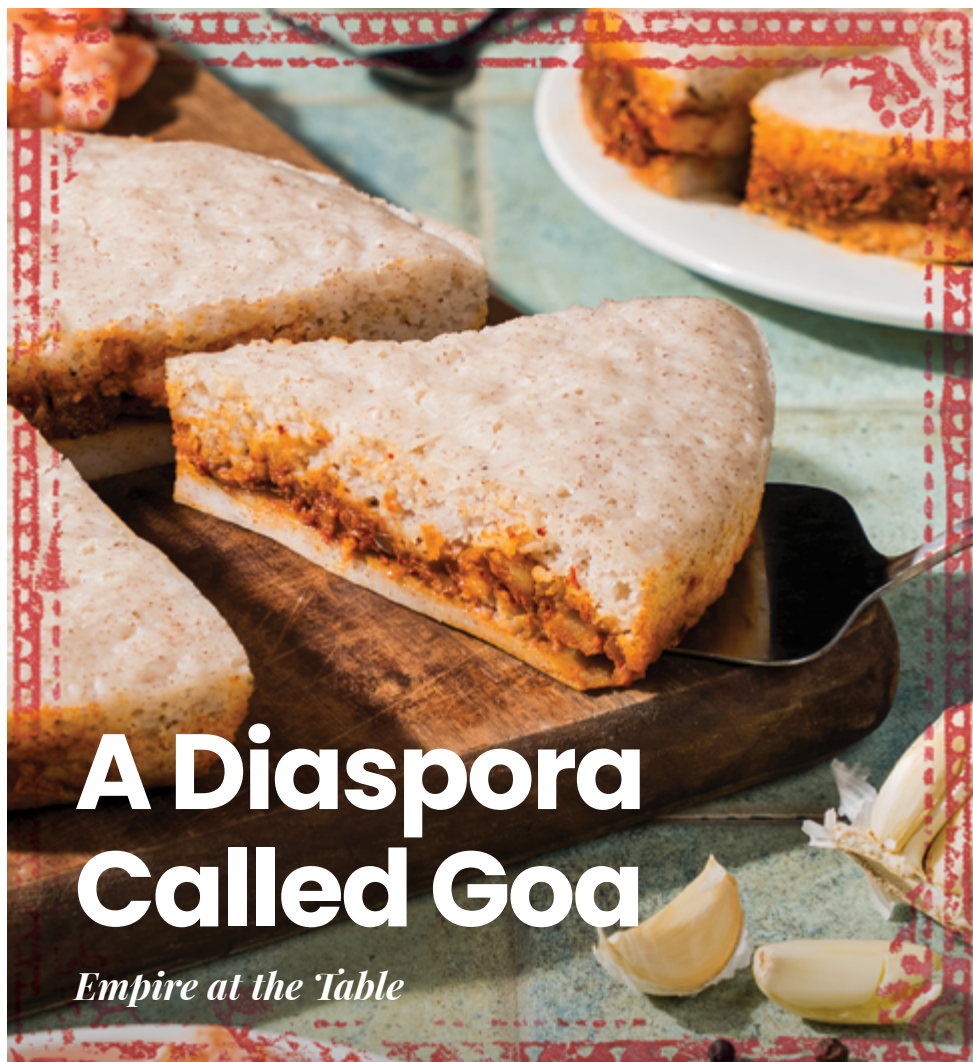


Regional Table

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SECRETS

Heritage recipes for modern kitchens

Issue 05



A Diaspora Called Goa

Empire at the Table

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Interlocutors

- Arminio Ribeiro, Architect and Goan Diaspora Member
- Fernando Monte da Silva, Food Writer, Podcaster and Storyteller
- Hansel Vaz, Feni Specialist and Food Enthusiast
- Dr Maria de Lourdes Brava da Costa, Historian and Academic
- Nalini D'Souza, Filmmaker
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- Zenobia, Food Writer, Chef, Food Critic

We thank our interlocutors for their valuable contributions and thoughtful engagement, which have been intergral to this issue.

Recipes

- Apa de Camarão
- Arroz Refogado
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Antique engraved view of the City of Goa by Allain Manesson Mallet, Frankfurt.

Source: Earthly Mission, "Goa on Ancient Maps and Illustrations" – 1719.

Introduction

Goa, the tiny Indian state known for its beaches and holidays, has a history with wings that spread far beyond its geographical confines. Its more than 450 years as a Portuguese colony, almost an extension of Portugal on Indian terrain, gave Goan history that reach. Goans are spread across the world. Many have not lived in Goa for generations, from Karachi to Canada and Macau to Mozambique, yet continue to identify as Goan. They do so through one of the strongest mnemonic tools of culture: food.

The Goan diaspora that has forgotten its tongue for Konkani still holds tightly to sorpotel and sannas, xacuti and rissois. At the same time, this diaspora carried culinary connections back and forth between Goa and elsewhere. If it gave Lisbon its chamusas, it brought back to Goa its *apa de camarão*. Beyond Portugal, the Arabian Sea carried Goans to British protectorates such as Zanzibar, Bombay, and Burma. Wherever they went, they carried traces of taste and left marks of flavour. These diasporic movements proved vital in the late 1950s until 1961, when Portuguese Goa faced an embargo from the Indian government. Imports such as condensed milk, carbonated drinks, dried cod, and stock cubes had already become familiar through diaspora links and were absorbed into Goan kitchens.

Food lies at the heart of Goa's everyday life and its crossroads of history. *Susegaad*, now a buzzword for a relaxed Goan way of life, was earned through years of hardship, labour, and migration. This series is a tribute to global and homeland Goans alike, whose movements across Goa, India, and the Indian Ocean guarded the spirit of *susegaad*.

Happy cooking,
Team Spice Secrets



This azulejo panel, part of a five-panel series by Jorge Colaço, adorns the lobby of the Institute Menezes Braganza. Executed in Lisbon and installed in Goa, the tiles illustrate episodes from *Os Lusíadas* by Luís Vaz de Camões, including the mythological Adamastor and the voyages of Vasco da Gama.

Source: Photo Blog by Rajan Parrikar – 1935-36.

Apa de Camarão

A Goan pie

At first glance, apa de camarão looks like a pie. But unlike its European counterparts, it is made without any flour. Instead, rice—the anchors of Goan kitchens—forms its casing. What emerges is a prawn pie that feels Western in shape but local in spirit, layered with a sweet-and-spicy prawn filling and baked until set.

While pies elsewhere depend on pastry and latticed crusts, apa de camarão turns to rice, giving it a texture and flavour closer to the coast than to the bakery. Versions of this idea surfaced across Southeast Asia as pai udang in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, suggesting older maritime routes where cooking methods travelled as easily as people did.

Goa, shaped by Portuguese baking traditions, is known for its wheat breads. Rice-based Western forms are rare, apart from everyday bhakris and panpoles. Apa de camarão stands apart—a Goan response to a European idea. Its arrival is tied to the early twentieth century, when Western cookbooks entered Goa through ship crews and captains. Goan women read, adapted, and folded these recipes into local practice.

Later, in Lisbon, Goan families served apa de camarão at dinner tables. The taste of rice and prawn carried memories of home; the form of a pie eased life in a new place. It remains a dish shaped by movement—it belongs as much to the Goan kitchen as it does to the journeys that carried it.



A group of Goans gathered around a shared meal in Lisbon.

Source: Personal archives of Arminio Ribeiro – Date unknown.

Apa de Camarão

Ingredients

FOR THE PRAWN FILLING:

400 G PRAWNS, CLEANED AND DEVEINED

2 ONIONS, FINELY CHOPPED

2 TBSP OIL

1 CUP VINEGAR (FOR GRINDING AND

SEASONING)

1 TSP SUGAR

SALT, TO TASTE

GRIND TO A PASTE WITH VINEGAR:

8 DRIED KASHMIRI RED CHILLIES

6 BEDGI CHILLIES

8 BLACK PEPPERCORNS

2 CINNAMON STICKS (2 IN EACH)

6 CLOVES

8 LARGE GARLIC CLOVES

1 TSP CUMIN SEEDS

FOR THE BATTER

3 CUPS PARBOILED RICE (RED OR LIGHT
YELLOW)

1 CUP FRESH COCONUT, GRATED

4 LARGE EGGS

2 TBSP + 1 TSP SUGAR

1 TBSP LUKEWARM WATER

1½ TSP ACTIVE DRY YEAST

½ TSP SALT

Method

Wash, drain, and salt the prawns. Heat oil and fry onions until brown, without burning. Add the ground paste, stir, then add prawns. Season with sugar and adjust vinegar and salt. Cook until dry and just done, about 3–4 minutes. Set aside.

Soak the rice overnight. Grind with coconut, sugar, salt, and minimal water. Transfer to a deep bowl. Beat eggs and mix into the batter. Activate yeast with lukewarm water and sugar until frothy. Add to batter, mix, cover, and leave in a warm place to double, about 4 hours. Do not add extra water.

Heat the steamer and grease a 10-inch pan. Preheat the oven to 180°C / 350°F. Steam half the batter for 10 minutes. Spread the prawn filling evenly, top with remaining batter, and steam for another 10 minutes. Bake for 45 minutes until browned and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool, unmould, cut into wedges, and serve.





Arroz Refugado

Rice, never served plain

Arroz refugado is a rice dish cooked first in oil and aromatics, then simmered—its name meaning “twice cooked.” Found most often in Luso-Goan and Catholic Goan homes, it is made with onions, vegetables, sausages, prawns, or sometimes nothing more than seasoning. What defines it is not the ingredient list, but the principle behind it: rice is rarely eaten plain.

In many Catholic Goan households shaped by Portuguese domestic traditions, boiled rice on its own feels unfinished. It must be cooked with something, coaxed into flavour. Refugado follows this instinct. It is not quite a pulao, but it shares the same refusal of neutrality, allowing rice to absorb whatever the kitchen offers.

Through the 1970s and '80s, arroz refugado anchored Luso-Goan gatherings abroad. Diaspora dinner tables in Europe and Africa often paired it with *apa de camarão*, the prawn pie that shared its history of adaptation. Together, they spoke of kitchens negotiating distance and inheritance.

Even Goans without Portuguese lineage absorbed this habit. The Sunday chicken pulao found across Goa carries its imprint—the belief that rice should arrive already seasoned. What unifies Goan kitchens most is not protein but seasoning, particularly the use of stock cubes.

Introduced by the Portuguese in the early twentieth century, stock cubes entered Goan cooking decades before they appeared elsewhere in India. Older Goans recall red tins lined with foil, holding small yellow cubes. Even today, Goans return from abroad carrying new flavours of stock—destined for rice that, in these kitchens, has never been plain.



A studio portrait of a Goan family in Lisbon.

Source: Personal archives of Arminio Ribeiro – Date unknown.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some of Lisbon's most popular bar snacks—like chamusas—entered Portuguese food culture through Goans returning from Africa, not directly from India.

Arroz Refugado

Ingredients

3 CUPS BASMATI RICE
¼ CUP GHEE OR OIL
2 LARGE OR 4 MEDIUM ONIONS, SLICED
2 MEDIUM TOMATOES
1 MEDIUM ONION, PEELED AND LEFT WHOLE
½ TSP TURMERIC POWDER
15 CLOVES
3 CHICKEN STOCK CUBES
5½ CUPS CHICKEN STOCK
SALT, TO TASTE

FOR THE CHICKEN STOCK:

1 CHICKEN BACKBONE
1 ONION, CHOPPED
1 CELERY STALK, CHOPPED
1 BAY LEAF
1 CARROT, CHOPPED
10 WHOLE BLACK PEPPERCORNS
6 CUPS WATER

Method

Wash and soak the rice in water for 30 minutes. Remove the skin from the chicken backbone, trim off excess fat, and rinse well. In a pan, combine the backbone with 6 cups water, chopped onion, bay leaf, carrot, celery, and peppercorns. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 30 minutes. Strain the stock, measure out 5½ cups, and dissolve the stock cubes in it.

Pierce the whole onion with the cloves and set aside. Heat ghee or oil in a large wide-bottomed pan. Add the onions and sauté until light brown. Add the tomatoes and cook until soft and pulpy. Stir in the turmeric powder and drained rice. Fry gently until the grains are coated in fat and there is no surface moisture.

Pour in the prepared stock and add salt to taste. Stir once gently, then place the clove-studded onion in the centre of the pan. Cover and cook on medium heat.

When small holes appear on the surface of the rice and very little liquid remains at the bottom, turn off the heat. Gently fluff once, cover tightly, and leave undisturbed for 15 minutes. Uncover, lightly fluff the top grains with a fork, and serve hot with sorpotel, vindalho, or sausage meat.

*This recipe is adaptable to a microwave or steam oven.





Pastéis de Fígada

A Portuguese pastry with a surprise Goan edge

Pastéis are among Portugal's most enduring snacks, shaped in towns like Alcobaça, where monasteries and ports worked in tandem. Close to the Cistercian abbey and the port of São Martinho do Porto, the town became a centre for convent sweets—pastries developed by nuns using egg yolks, sugar, and dough, turning excess into craft.

From the 15th century onward, Portugal's ports brought in sugar, almonds, and spices from Asia and the Atlantic world. Egg whites were used to starch habits; yolks became fillings. A whole repertoire emerged—barrigas de freira, papo de anjo, beijos de freira—many relying on pastry shells filled with custard or jam. These techniques travelled outward, from convents to ports, and from ports to colonies.

One of the most famous among them, pastéis de nata, was born in the Jerónimos Monastery in Belém. When monasteries were shut down in the 19th century, the recipe moved into a bakery closeby that still stands today. Belém itself was a crucial port, receiving spices from Asia and sugar flowing through Portugal's trade routes—ingredients that made such sweets possible.

Goa encountered nata much later. What settled more quietly, and more convincingly, was pastéis de fígada. Banana plantations were widespread in Goa long before custard entered local kitchens. The pastry form remained Portuguese; the filling became local. In this substitution lay a deeper logic allowing a European technique to root itself in Goan soil.

Today, pastéis de fígada survives quietly in Margao, passed through Luso-Goan households and small bakeries. Less famous than nata, it tells a more intimate story: of a form adapted through fruit, memory, and habit.



Oil painting depicting the Jerónimos Monastery and Belém Tower in Lisbon, attributed to Dutch artist Dirck Stoop.

Source: Mauristhuis Museum – c. 1660.

Pastéis de Fígada

Ingredients

2 RIPE BANANAS
1 TBSP UNSALTED BUTTER
1/3 CUP FRESH COCONUT SCRAPINGS
3/4 CUP CASHEW NUTS
1 TBSP GRANULATED SUGAR
4-5 GREEN CARDAMOM PODS
1/8 TSP SALT

FOR THE PASTRY*:

1 CUP SELF-RAISING FLOUR
1/8 TSP SALT
2 TBSP UNSALTED BUTTER, COLD
3-4 TBSP ICE-COLD WATER
1 TSP UNSALTED BUTTER, TO GREASE TRAY
3-4 TBSP MILK

*We have used puff pastry for a flaky texture

Method

Chop cashew nuts finely and toast on medium flame, stirring gently until golden. Grind the cardamom seeds with sugar.

Melt butter in a wide non-stick pan. Add coconut scrapings, sauté on medium heat, until lightly browned and fragrant. Chop bananas into small pieces and add to the pan. Cook on low heat until the mixture dries out and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Add toasted cashews, cardamom sugar, and salt. Cook for 2 minutes, remove from heat and allow the filling to cool.

In a bowl, mix the flour and salt. Rub the cold butter into the flour using fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the ice-cold water gradually and bring the dough together without overworking. Cover with a moist cloth and rest for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 170°C (190°C for puff pastry). Grease a foil-lined baking tray with butter. Divide the dough into 12 balls. Roll each into a 4-inch circle. Place a tablespoon of filling on one half, moisten edges with water, fold into a crescent, and seal well. Cover shaped pastéis with a moist cloth while working.

Brush with milk and bake for about 30 minutes (18 minutes for puff pastry) until crisp and golden. The pastéis should lift easily and sound hollow when tapped. Serve warm or cold. Store refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

*This recipe is adaptable to a steam oven.





Foogath

A Goan vegetable stir-fry that carries the memory of movement

Foogath is a simple Goan vegetable stir-fry—lightly sautéed, finished with grated coconut—and though it often sits at the edge of the plate, it is never absent. At lunch, it matters most. What goes into a foogath, however, can quietly reveal where a family has been.

In North Goa, foogath almost always carries tiny prawns, lending sweetness and depth. In the South, it remains vegetarian, coconut-forward and restrained. These distinctions are now well known. Less spoken about is a third variation—foogath finished with crushed peanuts. This version belongs to Goan Catholic families whose histories include migration to Maharashtra's Sangli district, particularly Miraj.

Invited by local Maharajas in the late colonial period, Goans arrived as contractors, building European-style structures without abandoning local forms. Miraj developed a small but thriving Goan Catholic community, complete with churches and schools. Marriages, however, continued to draw them back to Goa.

That back-and-forth left its mark on the kitchen. Peanuts—common in Maharashtrian cooking—found their way into Goan vegetable dishes. Foogath, in this way, becomes more than a side: it is a quiet record of internal migration, where geography, labour, and home subtly season what ends up on the plate.



Studio portrait of Maharashtrian dancer, Rukmini Devi Arundale in a kunbi saree.

Source: MODA Goa Museum & Reserch Centre; Photographed by Souza & Paul – Early 20th century.

Foogath

Ingredients

1 CABBAGE, FINELY SHREDDED
250 G PRAWNS, CLEANED AND DEVEINED
1/2 CUP ONIONS, CHOPPED
1 TBSP GARLIC, SLICED
1-INCH GINGER, SLICED
4 CURRY LEAVES
2 TBSP COOKING OIL
3 GREEN CHILLIES, SLIT
1/2 TSP CUMIN POWDER
1 TSP CORIANDER POWDER
1/2 TSP TURMERIC POWDER
1/2 CUP FRESH COCONUT, GRATED
1/2 TSP SALT
1/2 TSP BLACK PEPPER

Method

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large sauté pan. Lightly fry the prawns for about 2 minutes, season with salt and pepper, remove from the pan, and set aside.

In the same pan, add the remaining oil. Sauté the onions, ginger, garlic, green chillies, and curry leaves until the onions turn translucent. Add the cumin, coriander, and turmeric powders and sauté for a minute. Add the cabbage, season with salt and pepper, and cook for 8–10 minutes until tender.

Return the prawns to the pan, add the grated coconut, and cook for another 2 minutes until the prawns are just done. Adjust seasoning and avoid overcooking.

Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and serve.

*This recipe is adaptable to a microwave oven.





Chacuti

A Goan curry that became Mozambican

Chacuti is a Goan curry made with roasted whole spices and coconut - aromatic, dry-bodied, and deeply satisfying. In most Goan homes, it comes second only to xit, the everyday rice-and-curry meal, and is reserved for Sundays, feasts, and gatherings.

Fishers became the most deeply rooted Goan community in Mozambique. In Catembe, near Maputo, Goan-heritage fishing families settled along the coast, working the sea much as they did back home. They continue to celebrate the feast of St. Pedro, the patron saint of fishers, in the Goan way, sailing out to sea for prayers, observing mass, remembering the dead, and returning to shore for a communal feast. Chacuti, sannas, rissois, and recheado share the table with local dishes, and invitations extend to neighbours, civic officials, and politicians. Through these public rituals and shared meals, chacuti quietly moved beyond Goan kitchens.

For Goans who migrated to Mozambique in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the dish took on a larger role. Mozambique's coastline, climate, and produce closely resemble Goa's. Fish, coconut, tamarind, and spices were readily available, making the curry, locally known as caril, easy to cook regularly. Over time, it entered the broader food culture and is today regarded as one of Mozambique's favourite dishes.

Back in Goa, chacuti has long been a unifier, cooked across faiths and communities. That inclusiveness travelled with migration. Under Portuguese expansion, Goans were recruited to Mozambique, particularly fishers, tailors, and cooks, supported by the prazos system of land grants. Despite distance, Goans remained tethered to home, sending remittances and returning by sea with coconuts, mangoes, vinegar, kokum, and tamarind. This longing echoes in Goa's dulpod songs, many about food, the most direct invocation of home.



Pithagoras Graca Lobo (second from left), great-grandfather of Arminio Ribeiro, with his brother (extreme right). In the late 1800s, many Portuguese settlers in Mozambique were Goans like this family, who were granted land holdings known as *prazos* by the Portuguese administration.

Source: Personal archives of Arminio Ribeiro – Date unknown.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 19th-century Zanzibar, the Sultan's royal band was almost entirely Goan. One Goan bandmaster even composed Zanzibar's national anthem, reshaping the country's soundscape.

Chacuti

Ingredients

500 G CHICKEN
1 TSP TURMERIC POWDER
1-2 TSP SALT
2 TBSP GINGER-GARLIC PASTE

FOR THE MASALA PASTE:

1/2 MEDIUM COCONUT, GRATED OR CHOPPED
4 DRIED KASHMIRI RED CHILLIES
2 TBSP CORIANDER SEEDS
1 1/2 TSP TURMERIC POWDER
1 TSP POPPY SEEDS
2 SMALL CINNAMON STICKS
10 CLOVES
10 BLACK PEPPERCORNS
5 CARDAMOM PODS
1/2 NUTMEG
1 ONION, CHOPPED
2 GREEN CHILLIES

FOR THE CURRY:

1 ONION, CHOPPED
1 TOMATO, CHOPPED
1-2 TSP SALT
1 TSP RED CHILLI POWDER
EXTRA CHOPPED ONION AND
CORIANDER, FOR GARNISH

Method

Dry-roast the spices and coconut until aromatic and lightly toasted. Remove and cool. In the same pan, add a little oil and sauté the chopped onion and green chillies until the onions turn golden and the chillies blister. Cool this as well.

Marinate the chicken with salt, turmeric, and ginger-garlic paste.

Once cooled, grind the roasted spices, coconut, onion, and chillies with some water and 2 teaspoons turmeric into a smooth paste, scraping the sides as needed.

Heat oil in a pot and sauté the chopped onion until golden. Add the tomato and cook until it breaks down. Add the marinated chicken, mix well, and cook for 2 minutes. Add 1-2 cups water, cover, and cook for 5-6 minutes.

Add the ground masala paste with another 1-2 cups water, mix well, season with salt and red chilli powder, cover, and cook for 20 minutes more. The curry should cook for about 30 minutes total until the chicken is tender and the masala thickens slightly.

If the gravy is too thin, cook uncovered for a few minutes. It should be neither too thick nor too runny. Garnish with chopped onion and coriander and serve.

*This recipe is adaptable to a microwave oven.





Xit, Kodi, Nustem

A weekday meal that travelled from Goa to Bombay

Xit, kodi, and nustem—rice, curry, and fish—form the axis around which most Goan identities turn. Wherever there is a sea, people fish; wherever there is a sunlit riverbank, rice follows. Goa's Mandovi and Zuari rivers, the Arabian Sea, and its hills and valleys together naturalised this as the region's core taste: simple, nourishing and complete.

In Bombay, this everyday Goan longing found an unlikely home in kudds—co-operative living spaces run by working-class Goans. What began as home cooking soon became an informal canteen. Whatever the residents cooked for themselves was sold at modest prices to Goan students from Portuguese Goa studying in British India. Most lived on tight budgets, and kudds offered them something more valuable than affordability - familiarity.

The arrangement worked both ways. Working-class bachelors who lived in the kudds cooked; students devoured. Meals were served only on weekdays, at lunchtime. Weekends were off—no one cooked then. The food was straightforward: rice, thin curry, and small fish such as mandeli (anchovies), clams, and bombil.

For many homesick students, this was the closest taste of home they had access to. There are stories that some did not mind missing lectures to make it in time for lunch. This history remains little known outside Goan quarters, yet it tells of a larger culture—of migration sustained not by grand feasts, but by an ordinary plate of xit, kodi, nustem, quietly keeping Goa alive in the heart of Bombay.



House of Er. Jaime Ribeiro, chief engineer of the Bombay Municipality. Western Railways enabled a mass movement of Goans to Bombay since the early 1900s.

Source: Personal archives of Arminio Ribeiro – 1925.

DID YOU KNOW?

During Bombay's Prohibition era in the 1960s, many Goan families ran underground "aunty bars" from their homes. These spaces centred on the discreet circulation of feni, with minimal accompaniments such as boiled or pickled eggs. A bicycle selling eggs outside a house often signalled an aunty bar operating within!

Kodi

Ingredients

6 KASHMIRI RED CHILLIES
1/2 COCONUT, SCRAPED
1 SMALL PIECE GINGER
3 GARLIC CLOVES
5-6 BLACK PEPPERCORNS
1 TSP CORIANDER SEEDS
A PINCH OF FENUGREEK (METHI) SEEDS
1 SMALL BALL TAMARIND OR 1 RAW MANGO
1/2 TSP TURMERIC POWDER
1/2 TSP CUMIN SEEDS
1 GREEN CHILLI
SALT, TO TASTE
1 MEDIUM POMFRET, HALWA, KINGFISH, OR
SMALL FISH SUCH AS MANDELI (ANCHOVIES),
CLEANED

Method

Grind all the ingredients except the fish and raw mango into a fine paste using very little water. Transfer the paste to the cooking vessel, rinsing the mixer jar with a little water and adding it to the pot. Coconut milk may be used instead of water for a richer curry. Season with salt and add slit green chilli.

Place the pot on heat and bring to a boil. Add the cleaned and sliced fish pieces. If using small fish such as mandeli, add them whole. Add the raw mango for extra tang, if using.

Cook gently until the fish is just cooked through.

*This recipe is adaptable to a microwave oven.





Sweet and Sour

A pork dish shaped by Goan cooks in Calcutta kitchens

Sweet and sour, in the Goan repertoire, is a pork belly preparation—sticky, sharp, and lightly spiced—closer to chilli pork than to anything recognisably Chinese. It belongs to a discreet sub-cuisine known as Goan Chinese, a style that appears almost exclusively on wedding and celebration menus in Goa's inner villages, rarely in restaurants.

Its origins lie not in China, but in Calcutta. During the colonial period, Goan cooks migrated East in large numbers to work under the British and in Bengali households, where they were prized for their training in Anglican fare—roasts, cutlets, cakes, puddings, and baked goods. Calcutta, however, was also home to Tiretta Bazaar and Bow Barracks, where Chinese migrants were adapting their food to local tastes, giving birth to what would later be called Indo-Chinese.

Goan cooks absorbed these techniques at close quarters: the use of soy sauce, vinegar, pre-made sauces, quick stir-frying, and sweet-sour balances. When they returned to Goa, they carried this knowledge back—not as restaurant food, but as celebratory fare. Pork, already central to Goan Catholic cooking, became the preferred meat. Sweet and sour pork entered wedding menus, taught through apprenticeship by specialised caterers rather than written recipes.

Indo-Chinese travelled west from Calcutta to Bombay and then across India. Goan Chinese followed a different route—Bombay to Calcutta and back to Goa—moving with cooks rather than commerce. That distinction matters. When food travels through trade, influence is one-way. When cooks travel, it loops. In dishes like sweet and sour, the result is not imitation but convergence, where it becomes impossible to say who taught whom—only that Calcutta made it possible.



Francis Braganza, Joseph Braganza, and Thomas Braganza, founders of Braganza & Co., Kolkata, a family-run music store established in 1939 that played a central role in supplying instruments, training musicians, and sustaining Western classical music traditions in the city for nearly a century. Braganza & Co. continues to thrive in Calcutta till this day.

Source: Braganza Musicals – Date unknown.

Sweet and Sour

Ingredients

250 G PORK BELLY, BOILED AND CUBED
15-20 GARLIC CLOVES
4-5 GREEN CHILLIES, SLIT
1 TBSP SUGAR
3 MEDIUM ONIONS, CUT INTO CUBES
2 TOMATOES, CUT INTO LARGE PIECES
2-3 SPRING ONIONS
1 STAR ANISE
2 TBSP WHITE WINE VINEGAR
2 TBSP SOY SAUCE
2 TBSP COOKING OIL
SALT, TO TASTE

Method

Heat the oil in a pan and lightly roast the star anise until aromatic. Remove and set aside.

In the same pan, add the sugar and let it melt and caramelize lightly. Add the boiled pork cubes and allow them to brown slightly.

Lightly crush the garlic and add it to the pan, stirring well. Add the slit green chillies and spring onions together and mix.

After a couple of minutes, add the white wine vinegar, followed by a little salt and the soy sauce. Stir well.

Add the cubed onions and cook until they soften and turn translucent. After about 5 minutes, add the tomatoes and the reserved star anise. Cook until the tomatoes soften and break down.

Remove from heat and serve hot.

*This recipe is adaptable to a microwave oven.





Bebinca de Batata

A Goan dessert that travelled across the Indian Ocean

Bebinca de batata is a dense, unlayered version of Goa's most storied sweet - the bebinca, made with sweet potatoes, coconut milk, eggs, and sugar. Less ornate than its many-layered counterpart, bebinca de batata brings the dessert closer to the Goan kitchen than the feast table.

The legend of bebinca is familiar. It is said to have been created by the nuns of the Santa Monica convent in Old Goa, using surplus egg yolks left after egg whites were used to starch convent garments. Popular retellings credit Sister Bibiana with refining the dish, eventually setting it at seven layers to symbolise the seven hills of Lisbon and Goa. The name, too, is said to follow from her.

What is less discussed is how this Goan dessert travelled. Through Portuguese trade routes, bebinca moved across the Indian Ocean to Southeast Asia, where it became bingka in Malaysia. The connection is direct. Goans and Malays met through shared ports and colonial circuits, and the recipe adapted itself to new kitchens while retaining its form.

Bebinca belongs to the larger Portuguese tradition of convent sweets, where egg yolks, sugar, and technique turned excess into indulgence. Yet it has no true Portuguese twin. Coconut milk makes it unmistakably Goan. Alongside the layered versions—bebinca de leite, bebinca de favos de mel, and bebinca de claras—bebinca de batata stands apart as the simplest, and perhaps the most travelled.



Photograph of the Santa Monica Church and Convent in Goa Velha, later known as the Royal Monastery.
Source: Virtual Meseum of Images and Sounds — c. 1606

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite its Portuguese name, serradura isn't from Portugal at all—it was born in Macau, sailed to Goa with Goan soldiers and clerks, and quietly became Goan by the time it reached the table.

Bebinca de Batata

Ingredients

SERVES 8

2-3 LARGE SWEET POTATOES
85 G UNSALTED BUTTER, MELTED
6 LARGE EGGS
600 G JAGGERY, GRATED
60 ML MAPLE SYRUP
FRESHLY GRATED NUTMEG, TO TASTE
1/2 TSP GROUND TURMERIC
1/4 TSP SEA SALT
400 ML COCONUT MILK (FIRST EXTRACT)
1 CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR

Method

Heat the oven to 200°C. Wash the sweet potatoes, pat dry, and pierce them in several places with a fork. Place on a foil-lined baking tray and roast until completely tender, 35–45 minutes. Cool completely, then peel and discard the skins. Purée the flesh and measure out 400 g, reserving the rest.

Reduce the oven temperature to 180°C. Line the base of a 9-inch round pan with parchment paper and lightly grease with butter. Place the pan on a baking sheet.

In a large bowl, whisk together the sweet potato purée, melted butter, eggs, jaggery, maple syrup, nutmeg, turmeric, and salt until smooth. Add the coconut milk and flour and whisk until fully combined and lump-free.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 55–60 minutes, rotating the tray halfway through, until the centre is firm and the edges are lightly golden. Remove and cool completely in the pan. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.

To unmould, run a knife around the edges, invert onto a parchment-lined tray, and gently release. Peel off the parchment, invert onto a serving plate, and slice into wedges. Store refrigerated in an airtight container for up to one week.

*This recipe is adaptable to a microwave oven.





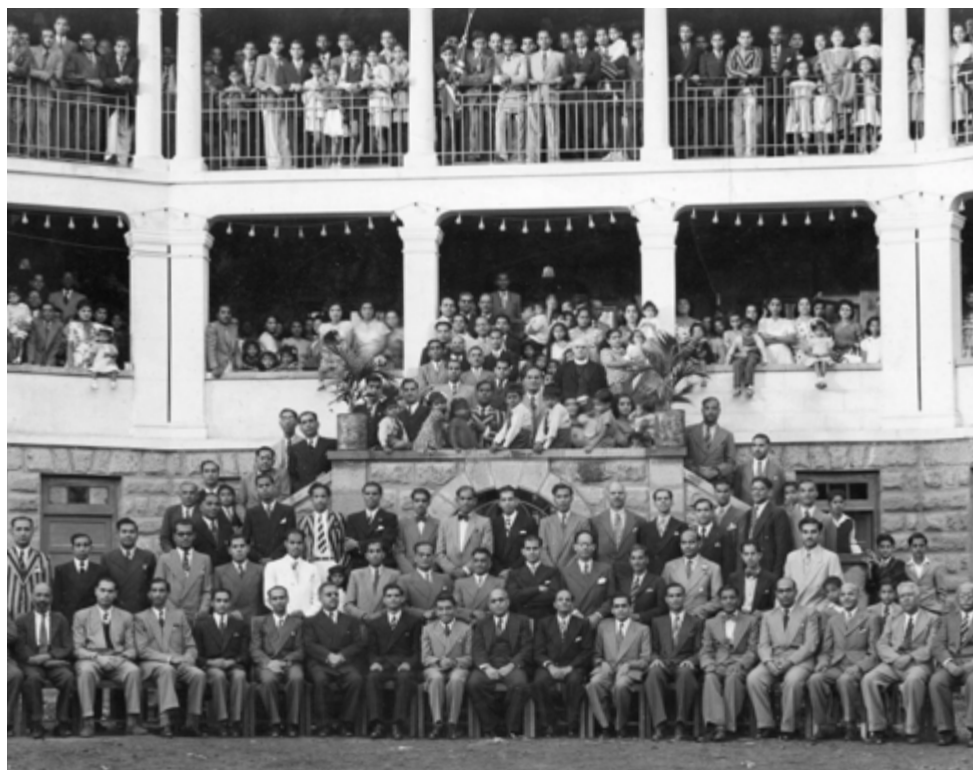


Margarida e Barendo
 enviam um saudoso
 abraço pelo Natal e An-
 no Novo a seus filhos
 das primas Guiomar
 e Armindo Ribeiro
 desejando muitas fe-
 licidades e longa vida

Nairobi 6-1-909

This image is featured in the book "Goa, Nairobi, London" (sometimes titled as "Nairobi, London, Goa") by Cyprian Fernandes, published around 2016. The photograph depicts a Goan couple, Margarida and Barendo Ribeiro, in Nairobi. The handwritten Portuguese note on the right is a Christmas and New Year's greeting sent to their cousins, Egidinha and Armindo Ribeiro.

Source: Personal archives of Arminio Ribeiro – 1909.



The Goan Gymkhana, Nairobi.

Source: Joao Roque Literary Journal – c. 1940.



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