

The Rich Flavors of Awadhi Cuisine

By

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Abstract

Awadhi cuisine is an indigenous part of the city of Nawabs, Lucknow. The dishes and cooking style of this city are inspired and influenced by the Mughals. The cuisine includes both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian dishes prepared with exotic spices, herbs and garnished with dry fruits.

Keywords

Awadhi, Nawabs, Lucknow, Mughals, Oudh

Introduction

Awadhi cuisine is indigenous to the land of Awadh or Oudh, which is a part of present-day Uttar Pradesh. The rich flavors of Awadhi food are inspired partly by Mughlai, Kashmiri, and Hyderabadi cuisine. Awadhi cuisine can be credited with popularising a lot of cooking styles that require technique and precision like 'dum pukth', in which meat or vegetables are cooked over a low-flame, generally in dough-sealed containers with few spices. The Bawarchis and Rakabdars (gourmet cooks) invested a lot of time to perfect every recipe that was served to the Nawabs.

Associated with royal food, the Awadhi cuisine holds strong roots in Lucknow, the city of Nawabs. Although Lucknow is equally renowned for its architectural heritage, most people travel to the city for their love of the local foods. The cooking patterns of Lucknow are similar to those of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Northern India with the cuisine

comprising both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. So let's dive into some lip-smacking dishes of awadhi cuisine that one just cannot miss-

Tunday Kebabs: It's the most famous dish of the city of Nawabs. The minced meat is mixed with spices and baked on a tava. The aroma and taste of the spices are mesmerizing. The specialty of this dish is that it will melt down as soon as you keep it in your mouth. The original tunday kebabi is in the heart of Lucknow's Aminabad market. Tunday kebabs were made earlier for a nawab of Awadh who had lost his teeth and couldn't chew but still loved his kebabs so his cooks made these delightful kebabs that melted in the mouth.



Image 1: Tunday Kebabs

Sheermaal: It is a flatbread with a tinge of sweetness. It is so flaky, fluffy, and crisp that one can't help go for second and third helpings. 'Sheer' means milk, and 'mal' means to rub. It contains no more than flour, salt, milk, and ghee and this milk bread is commonly sold in the outdoor bazaars of Lucknow.



Image 2: Sheermaal

Biryani: This delicious rice dish is made with a combination of meat, spices, and rice. Awadhi Biryani or Lucknawi biryani is pakki biryani. In other words, meat and rice are cooked separately; they are layered together and cooked dum-style. The meat is marinated in yogurt too and is allowed to rest for a while. This well-marinated meat then becomes the treasure of flavors in this delicious biryani.



Image 3: Biriyani

Kebab Parantha: It was considered as a royal dish in past years, and is now a famous street-food from Lucknow. You can spot the vendors selling it on every street. It is a favorite evening time snack of the youths living here. The veg or non-veg kebabs are being rolled in a parantha with green chutney and sliced onion.



Image 4: Kebab Parantha

Tehri: A yellow rice dish from Awadhi cuisine, it holds a special place in the hearts of vegetarians of Uttar Pradesh. Made with rice, spices and vegetables like carrots, peas, potatoes, this dish is delicious, hearty and comforting.



Image 5: Tehri

Fara: Fara is a very healthy and delicious dish made of rice flour stuffed with moong or urad dal. It can be steamed or can also be fried and served with green chutney. Fara is served as a snack or a main meal too.



Image 6: Fara

Aloo Chaat: Another famous street-food, it is prepared by frying potatoes in oil and adding spices and chutney. It can also be prepared with unfried boiled potatoes and also adding fruits along with spices, lime juice and chutney. Lucknowi Basket Chaat is a crispy and flavorful dish that one cannot afford to miss while visiting the city of Nawabs.



Image 7: Basket Chaat

Dum Aloo Lakhnavi: This dish is a common one in this area. The crispy fried potatoes are soaked in thick gravy, and is made out of various spices. If you are a big fan of spicy food, then it is a treat for your taste buds.



Image 8: Dum Aloo

Kulfi: It is often described as "traditional Indian ice cream." Kulfi is made with thickened milk, sugar, saffron and pistachios. And it is served on a stick or in slices in a plate.



Image 9: Kulfi

Shahi Tukda: ShahiTukda is a famous sweet dish of the Oudh region. It is a type of bread pudding made up of bread, milk, saffron, cashew, green cardamom, and sugar. It is a very delicious dish to eat.



Image 10: Shahi Tukda

Conclusion

All these are the most exquisite and flavourful dishes of Awadhi cuisine, which attract food enthusiasts and food bloggers from all over the globe to have lip-smacking dishes. I hope whenever you visit Lucknow, you will definitely try the above-mentioned famous food of the Awadhi region.

About the Author

Dr. Gitika Verma is an erudite writer whose poems and articles have been published in many anthologies. She has done her BDS and MDS (Endodontics) from King George's Medical University, Lucknow. She is currently working as a Dental consultant in a Govt. District Hospital.

