

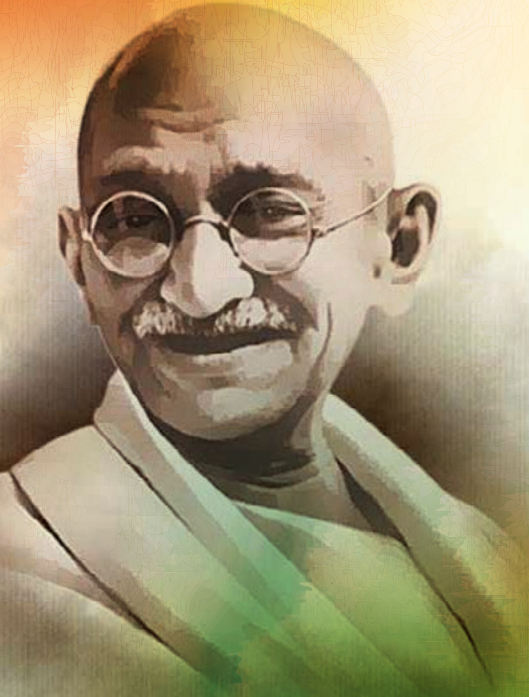


Indian Council for Cultural Relations  
Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre  
High Commission of India, Colombo

# Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre

OCTOBER 2021



“Ahimsa (Non-violence) is the highest duty.”

“An eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind.”

– M. K. Gandhi

75  
Azadi Ka  
Amrit Mahotsav

# PURE sweetness

From traditional winter treats to summer drinks - jaggery finds its place in a wide array of Indian recipes. This unadulterated sweetener comes with its own set of health and wellness benefits too



An apt substitute for refined sugar, jaggery adds flavour to sweet treats, promotes overall wellness and treats common ailments

Come winter and gur or jaggery comes into focus in Indian kitchens, finding its way into numerous recipes. Be it gur ki roti (jaggery-filled flatbread), gur ka halwa (semolina dessert cooked with jaggery), khatti meethi phaliyan (a Gujarati speciality

of stir fried beans tossed in tamarind, spicy coconut shavings and jaggery) or patishapta (a Bengali delicacy where thin crepes are stuffed with coconut and jaggery filling), jaggery-based delicacies become common in Indian households. High in iron

and vitamin C, jaggery is not only a healthier alternative to refined sugar but is also used in traditional home remedies for common ailments. Derived from the same source but vastly different in look and taste – both refined sugar and jaggery belong to the sugarcane family but while the former gets a glorified appearance, the latter is considered to be its unassuming cousin.

According to an article published in the October 2020 issue of Journal of the American Dietetic Association, added sugar is one of the major reasons for obesity and related

## Jaggery is loaded with antioxidants and such minerals as zinc and selenium, which boost resistance against infections

health disorders as it contains empty calories (ones devoid of vitamins or minerals) and plain sucrose. “Jaggery is packed with minerals and vitamins, and also contains iron, magnesium and potassium.

The easiest remedy for stomach disorders, constipation and cough, this unrefined sugar helps relieve gullet and lung contagions too,” says Pranati Bollapragada, head of nutrition and dietetics at Dharana at Shillim, a wellness retreat in Pune.



Prepared on festive occasions, South India's nei appams are rice-based sweet pancakes prepared using ghee (clarified butter)

### HEALTH BENEFITS

Jaggery has been traditionally used in the treatment of cold and flu-like symptoms since ages, and consuming it during colder months

helps in generating heat in the body. Jaggery contains approximately four calories per gm. And burning calories from food produces heat, which dilates the blood vessels and provides warmth to the body.



Modak, a Maharashtrian specialty, is prepared by steaming a rice flour pocket stuffed with a mixture of coconut shavings and jaggery





A favourite during winter, chikki is a sweet treat prepared with jaggery and a variety of dry fruits, including peanuts, almonds, cashew nuts and pistachios

A reason why jaggery becomes a quintessential kitchen ingredient during winter.

According to a study published in the International Journal of Current Research in 2018, jaggery works wonders for overall well-being too.

It not only aids in the secretion of endorphins or happy hormones but is also effective in providing relief from abdominal spasms. When taken

in moderation on a regular basis, jaggery also acts as a natural blood purifier and helps cleanse the liver by flushing out harmful toxins from the body.

Jaggery is loaded with antioxidants and such minerals as zinc and selenium, which boost resistance against infections. It also helps increase the blood's haemoglobin count. Iron and folate present in jaggery ensure that the normal level of red blood cells is maintained in the body, thereby preventing anaemia.

A rich source of potassium - a mineral that maintains electrolyte balance in the body, helps build muscles and boosts metabolism - jaggery is favoured by fitness enthusiasts and those aiming to lose weight.



Chikkis can also be prepared with amaranth or rajgira seeds. Amaranth, a superfood, is rich in fibre and helps lower blood glucose levels



Jaggery is also used to make the South Indian cooler panakam. According to ancient science, this drink was used as an oral rehydration solution (ORS) as jaggery, in its purest form, is loaded with electrolytes, which helps regulate the balance of fluids in the body

## Purity Check

1. Do taste a piece of jaggery. It should not taste even slightly salty. If it does, this may indicate a high concentration of mineral salts. The salty taste can also tell you if the gur is fresh - the older it is, the saltier it gets.

2. If there is any bitterness in the product, it means that it has gone through the process of caramelisation during the boiling process.

3. Check for any crystals on the jaggery. Presence of crystals indicates that the jaggery may have gone through other processes to make it sweeter.

4. The colour of the jaggery also plays an important role in identifying purity. Ideally, the colour of the jaggery should be dark brown. The yellowish colour in gur may indicate chemical treatment.

5. Prefer buying hard jaggery; this ensures that there are no additives added while boiling the sugarcane juice.

6. Most vendors add chalk powder in jaggery. In order to check for its presence, take a transparent bowl of water and dissolve a piece of jaggery in it. You will see the powder settling at the bottom.

7. Often, artificial colour is used to give jaggery the right hue. Take half a teaspoon of jaggery and add six ml of alcohol and mix well. Add 20 drops of concentrated hydrochloric acid. If the jaggery turns pink then it means artificial colours have been added.

Being a complex carbohydrate, jaggery keeps the body active for a longer period of time as compared to refined sugar, which is a simple carbohydrate and is absorbed immediately by the blood.

But just like any good thing, it should be consumed in moderation.

## MAKING OF JAGGERY

Sugarcane is a major source for jaggery, which can also be derived from date palm sap (called nolen

gur in liquid form and patali gur in solid form) and coconut sap as well. The non-industrial, natural method consists of the sap or juice being collected, boiled and cooled. The quality, however, depends on factors like the variety of sugarcane, the cultivation standards followed, the composts used, the stage of fruitage and the process of sap removal, among others. The

traditional and organic method is as meticulous as it is sustainable - sugarcane juice is extracted, poured into a large metal vessel and boiled while stirring continuously to avoid lump formation. The liquid is stirred till it forms a thick powdery element.



The end product is brown in colour, less salty and an ideal substitute for sugar.

## KNOW YOUR VARIETIES

Sugarcane jaggery is the most commonly consumed. The smooth-textured palm variety is sweeter and more nutritious as it is loaded with nutrients and fibre that not only stimulates digestion but also helps in providing relief to migraines and headaches. But the sweetest of all is the one with a crystallised texture made from unprocessed and fresh extracts of coconut sap. This sugar substitute is used in many traditional recipes of South India. "Jaggery is also consumed as a summer cooler. The palm sap is known for its cooling effects," informs Dinesh Mhatre, executive chef, Hilton Mumbai International Airport. Take the panakam for example. Called panaka in Kannada, it is a digestive beverage prepared with jaggery and ginger and is had as a refreshment. Sweet



*A speciality of east India, narkel naru (coconut balls) are prepared with jaggery. These bite-sized delicacies are also used as prashad (religious offerings) during pujas;*

treats like payasam (rice pudding), nei appam (a South Indian delicacy made with rice flour, jaggery and clarified butter), suhiyan (a popular evening snack in South India cooked with green gram, flour and jaggery) and modak (also called ukdiche modak, it is a Maharashtrian rice flour dumpling stuffed with coconut and jaggery) are prepared with different varieties of jaggery and savoured across India.



*Puran poli is a savoury Indian flatbread where wheat flour flatbreads or poli is stuffed with a mixture of chana dal or split Bengal gram and jaggery, and cooked in ghee*



← *The popular South Indian dessert payasam is traditionally cooked with split moong dal or green gram and jaggery, and garnished with dry fruits*

*A favourite snack in South India, especially Kerala, sukhiyan or suhiyan is prepared by deep-frying small balls made from a mixture of green gram, jaggery and grated coconut*

## MODERN VARIATIONS

With an increasing number of chefs across the country turning to seasonal produce for recipes, jaggery has found a new expression. Take for example Kolkata-based chef Joymalya Banerjee's contemporary nolen gurer madeleines (bite-sized sponge cakes coated with jaggery) and his prawn and crab meat dumplings that are stewed in spicy nolen gur reduction. New Delhi-based chef, Sabyasachi Gorai points out, "I have done away with refined sugar in my kitchen. Jaggery is my go-to sweetener for most of my recipes as it adds both flavour and nutrition to my dish."

Jaggery is more than just a natural sweetener. It is a superfood in the



true sense. Be it adding flavour to sweets, promoting wellness or treating ailments – its uses and benefits are unmatched. Snehal More, dietician at Mumbai's Bhatia Hospital, adds, "It protects vital body organs by insulating them and maintains warmth of the body. Date palm jaggery triggers digestive enzymes and improves gut health." As the country recuperates from the Covid-19 pandemic, this superfood can serve as a godsend in the winter months.



### GITA HARI

*An expert on indigenous Indian cuisine, Gita Hari curates healthy Sattvik cuisine for premium hotels. Her recipes have been featured in the health columns of leading newspapers. The recipient of Women Achievers' Awards, Hari has conceptualised, scripted and hosted shows on television and the digital platforms as well.*

Source : India Perspectives | Volume 34 | Issue 05 | 2020



# Sushruta and Sushruta Samhita



**T**he history of Medicines in India dates down to some thousands of years even before today's modern medicine system – allopathy even existed. The 'Charak Samhita' along with 'Sushruta Samhita' are considered to be the foundational texts of this field that have survived from ancient India. Both of these books talk in length on 'Ayurveda'.

Ayurveda is a comprehensive scientific system of medicine evolved in India. Initially it was developed through ancient wisdom, clinical experiences and experimentation in scientific manner. The term 'Ayurveda' meaning 'the knowledge of life' comprises of two Sanskrit words viz. 'Aayu' meaning 'Life' and 'Veda' meaning 'Knowledge' or 'Science'. Chikitsa is not only treating the disease, it also keeps health in healthy condition and treating the disease relating to physically, mentally and spiritually. Western medicine also known as Modern Medicine and Allopathic Medicine, Allopathic, this is the term originated from a Greek root where allopathic means

- which brings different effects not related with the pathology of the disease. This system which has made a 'conventional system of medicine', allopathic is a disease care system and its job is to manage the disease. There were 3 great authors in Ayurveda : 1) Charak, 2) Sushruta & 3) Vagbhata. All 3 authors and their work is of great importance as it is beyond the realms & caliber of a normal human being.

Talking about Sushruta in particular, Sushruta is the father of surgery. If the history of science is traced back to its origin, it probably starts from an unmarked era of ancient time. Although the science of medicine and surgery has advanced by leaps and bounds today, many techniques practiced today have still been derived from the practices of the ancient Indian scholars. Sushruta is believed to have treated numerous cases of Nasa Sandhan (rhino plasty), Oshtha Sandhan (lobuloplasty), Karna Sandhan (otoplasty). Even today, rhinoplasty described by Sushruta in 600 BC is referred to as

the Indian flap and he is known as the originator of plastic surgery.

Besides trauma involving general surgery, Sushruta gives an in-depth account and a description of the treatment of 12 varieties of fracture and six types of dislocation. This continues to spellbound orthopedic surgeons even today. He mentions the principles of traction, manipulation, apposition, stabilization, and postoperative physio-therapy.

He also prescribed measures to induce growth of lost hair and removal of unwanted hair. He implored surgeons to achieve perfect healing which is characterized by the absence of any elevation, induration, swelling mass, and the return of normal coloring.

Sushrutaa Samhita remained preserved for many centuries exclusively in the Sanskrit language. In the eight century

AD, Sushrutaa Samhita was translated into Arabic as "Kitab Shah Shun al -Hindi" and "Kitab - I - Susurud." The first European translation of Sushrutaa Samhita was published by Hessler in Latin and in German by Muller in the early 19th century; the complete English literature was done by Kaviraj Kunja Lal Bhishagratna in the three volumes in 1907 at Calcutta.

Sushruta considered surgery the first and foremost branch of medicine and stated that surgery has the superior advantage of producing instantaneous effects by means of surgical instruments and appliances and hence is the highest in value of all the medical tantras. It is the eternal source of infinite piety, imports fame, and opens the gates of heaven to its votaries. It prolongs the duration of human existence on earth and helps human in successfully completing their missions and wearing a decent competence in life.

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Saturday

**Gandhi Jayanti Celebration -**  
152<sup>nd</sup> Birth Anniversary Celebration of  
Mahatma Gandhi

**Monthly Lecture Series - 17**

Yoga and Ayurveda: Self healing and self realization  
by Shri Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga expert from India

9

Saturday  
7.30 pm

2

Saturday  
10.00 am

**Monthly Lecture Series - 14**  
Talk - "Mahatma Gandhi's Global pursuit of Truth,  
Nonviolence and Peace"  
by Dr.Shobhana Radhakrishna, Internationally  
acclaimed Speaker on Mahatma Gandhi

**Sanskriti Sandhya Series - 6**

Tabla Duet Performance  
by Lakpiya Abesinghe and Narendra Gunarathna,  
MPA and Vadya Nipun from Bhatkhande Sangit Sansthan  
(Deemed University) and Bhatkhande Vidyapeet,  
Lucknow respectively.

17

Sunday  
6.00 pm

3 to 31

Every Sundays  
4.00 pm

**Monthly Lecture Series -15, 18, 19, 21, 22**  
Online Yoga lecture / workshop sessions for Param  
Dhamma Chaitya Pirivena, Ratmanala  
by Shri Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga expert from India

**Poya Series - 15**

Vap Full Moon Poya Day Celebrations

20

Wednesday

3

Sunday  
6.00 pm

**Sanskriti Sandhya Series - 5**  
Sarod Recital  
by Ramal Helitha, MA Instrumental Music (Sarod),  
Indira Kala Sangeet Vishvavidyalaya, Khairagarh.

**Monthly Lecture Series - 20**

Online Yoga - Elements of Yoga in Ayurveda  
by Shri Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga expert from India

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Saturday  
7.30 pm

**Sanskriti Sandhya Series - 7**

Bharatha Natyam Performance  
by H.M.R. Dilka Nimini Herath, MPA Dance Bharatnatyam,  
Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda

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Friday  
6.00 pm

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Tuesday  
5.00 pm

**Monthly Lecture Series - 16**  
Online: Buddhist Perspective of Non-violence & Gandhi  
collaboration with Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Shramadana  
Movement  
by Dr.A.T.Ariyaratne, Founder and President of the  
Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka

**Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Celebration**  
(National Unity Day)

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Sunday

For details in regard to online classes on Bharatha Natyam, Kathak, Sitar, Violin, Tabla, Carnatic vocal, Yoga and Hindi  
please call on tell no. +94 77 672 6143 or email to [icccolombo2@gmail.com](mailto:icccolombo2@gmail.com).

For upcoming facebook live events, visit [www.facebook.com/ICCRSriLanka](https://www.facebook.com/ICCRSriLanka)

Free Events. All are cordially invited