



TASTE & TRAILS

Potato Cutlet



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From Childhood to Kitchen: Pooja's Classic Potato Cutlet Recipe

On the auspicious day of 15th August, our beloved food blogger, Prishika, embarks on a special visit to her dear friend Pooja's house. The occasion is not just about the celebration of Independence Day but also a journey back in time to relive cherished childhood memories through food. Pooja, who shares a deep bond with Prishika, invites her over to recreate a dish that has been close to her heart since her school days—a dish her mother used to make for her every 15th August. This dish, a simple yet flavorful Potato Cutlet, is not just a recipe but a symbol of love, tradition, and the joy of reliving the past.

The Significance of 15th August in Pooja's Childhood

For Pooja, 15th August has always been more than just a national holiday. It's a day filled with nostalgia, memories of school celebrations, and most importantly, the special dish her mother would prepare to welcome her back home. After attending the school function, where the national anthem echoed through the corridors and patriotic songs filled the air, Pooja would eagerly return home, knowing that her mother would have something delicious waiting for her. That dish, the Potato Cutlet, became synonymous with 15th August for Pooja—a tradition she holds dear to this day.

The Story Behind the Dish: Potato Cutlets

As Prishika and Pooja settle down in the kitchen, ready to recreate the magic of this special dish, Pooja begins to share the story behind the Potato Cutlets. She explains how her mother would meticulously prepare the dish every year, infusing it with love and care. The recipe, though simple, carried with it the warmth of her mother's affection and the joy of the Independence Day celebrations. Even today, Pooja finds solace in preparing this dish, as it brings back the memories of her carefree childhood days.

Ingredients: The Essentials for the Perfect Potato Cutlet

Before diving into the cooking process, Pooja lists the ingredients required

to make the perfect Potato Cutlet:

- 4 medium-sized raw potatoes
- A pinch of turmeric powder
- 2 teaspoons of coriander powder
- 2 teaspoons of garam masala
- Red chili flakes to taste
- Salt to taste
- 2 tablespoons of rice flour (or corn flour as an alternative)
- Ganesh Marka mustard cooking oil (as used by Pooja's mother)

Each ingredient carries its significance. The turmeric adds a beautiful golden hue, while the garam masala and red chili flakes bring in the warmth and spice that make this dish comforting yet exciting. The rice flour helps bind the mixture together, giving the cutlets a crispy texture. Pooja insists on using Ganesh Marka mustard cooking oil, just as her mother did, as it has retained its quality, flavor, and fragrance over the years.

Step 1: Preparing the Potatoes

Pooja begins the cooking process by preparing the potatoes. She takes four medium-sized potatoes, peels them, and then grates them finely. She explains the importance of grating the potatoes just right—medium-sized gratings ensure that the potato shreds are visible and give the cutlets their characteristic texture.

Once the potatoes are grated, Pooja soaks them in water to remove the excess starch. This step is crucial as it helps in achieving the perfect crispiness in the final dish. The grated potatoes are left in water for about five minutes, after which they are drained and rinsed thoroughly to remove all the starch.

Step 2: Adding the Spices

With the potatoes ready, it's time to add the spices. Pooja begins by sprinkling a pinch of turmeric over the grated potatoes. The turmeric not only adds a lovely color but also has anti-inflammatory properties, making it a healthy addition to the dish.

Next, she adds the coriander powder and garam masala, which bring in a depth of flavor, making the cutlets aromatic and rich. The red chili flakes are added according to taste—Pooja suggests adjusting the quantity based on one's preference for spiciness. Finally, salt is added to taste, ensuring that the seasoning is just right.

Step 3: Binding the Mixture

To bind the mixture, Pooja uses rice flour. She explains that her mother

always used rice flour instead of corn flour because it was a traditional choice that gave the cutlets a unique texture. The rice flour helps in holding the mixture together, making it easier to shape the cutlets.

Pooja adds two tablespoons of rice flour to the spiced potato mixture and mixes everything thoroughly. The mixture should be well-combined, with the spices evenly distributed, and should hold together when shaped into cutlets.

Step 4: Shaping the Cutlets

Now that the mixture is ready, Pooja moves on to shaping the cutlets. To make the process easier and to get a uniform shape, Pooja uses a small bowl. She first greases the inside of the bowl with a little Ganesh Marka mustard cooking oil, which prevents the mixture from sticking. Then, she takes a small portion of the potato mixture and places it into the greased bowl. Pooja presses the mixture down gently and then flips the bowl over onto her hand, letting the perfectly shaped cutlet slide out.

This technique, passed down from her mother, ensures that each cutlet has a consistent shape and size. The cutlets are then placed on a plate, ready to be fried.

Step 5: Frying the Cutlets

The final step is frying the cutlets to a perfect golden-brown. Pooja heats Ganesh Marka mustard cooking oil in a pan over medium flame. She emphasizes the importance of getting the oil temperature just right—too hot and the cutlets will burn, too cold and they'll soak up too much oil.

Once the oil is hot enough, Pooja carefully places the cutlets in the pan. She advises frying them in batches to avoid overcrowding the pan, which ensures even cooking. The cutlets are fried until they turn a beautiful brownish-red color, crispy on the outside and soft on the inside.

Step 6: Serving the Potato Cutlets

As the cutlets are done frying, Pooja places them on a plate lined with paper towels to drain any excess oil. She then arranges the cutlets on a serving plate, ready for Prishika to taste.

When Prishika takes her first bite, she is instantly transported to a world of flavors—a crispy exterior giving way to a soft, spicy, and flavorful interior. The combination of spices is perfectly balanced, and the cutlets have just the right amount of crunch. Prishika, delighted by the taste, expresses how much she enjoyed the dish.

Conclusion: A Culinary Connection to the Past

Through this simple yet heartwarming dish, Pooja and Prishika share not just a meal but a connection to the past. The Potato Cutlet, though modest in its ingredients and preparation, carries with it the essence of family traditions,

childhood memories, and the joy of Independence Day celebrations. For Pooja, it's a way to honor her mother and the love she infused into every dish she made.

As Prishika leaves Pooja's house, she carries with her not just the taste of the delicious Potato Cutlets but also a deeper understanding of the significance of food in preserving memories and traditions. The day ends on a sweet note, with both friends reminiscing about the past and looking forward to creating more such memories in the future. On this 15th August, as the nation celebrates its freedom, Pooja and Prishika celebrate the simple joys of life—friendship, food, and the beautiful memories that make every bite special.



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