



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

Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre

DECEMBER 2021



Merry
Christmas
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

CUISINE 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



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), khali meethi phaliyan (a Gujarati specialty 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 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



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

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.

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. 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 hemoglobin 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 boost metabolism – jaggery is favoured by fitness enthusiasts and those aiming to lose weight. 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

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



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 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.

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.



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

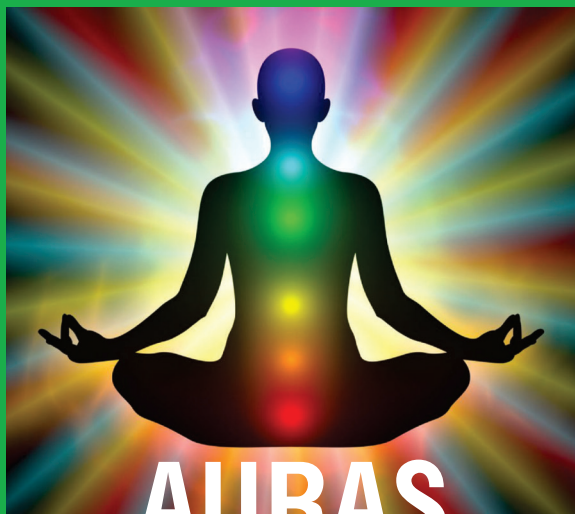


GITA HARI

Gita Hari curates healthy Sa'vik 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 | Issue 05 | 2021

INDIAN DIASPORA IN SRI LANKA



AND HOW TO SEE THEM

Archana Law How many of you have heard that “everything has an energy”?!! Maybe you experienced it yourself when you got a ‘bad’ vibe from somebody, or felt anxious and uncomfortable in a group? It may also be that you know who to go to for an instant sense of comfort and calm, when you are troubled. Either way, it’s all about the energy we’re emitting. This energy is what is referred to as an “Aura”.

An aura is an electromagnetic energy field that encompasses all living things and even some inanimate objects. To those who can see auras it appears as a ball of energy that surrounds the entire body and exudes a distinct color that both reflects and affects our emotions, behaviors and health. Amazingly, it contains your story, your history, and all the different aspects that make you, you. You can think of the aura as the exterior, while your chakra system is the interior.

What does the Aura do? Primarily, your aura acts as a buffer between you and all the other energies around you. Just like you interact with people throughout the day, your aura is interacting with other auras. When this happens, on a subconscious level, you’re gaining a small understanding of their energy and experiences. We’re energetic beings, so when you think about it, it makes sense that your aura is interacting with every

energy field that it comes into contact with.

Most of the time, these interactions are minor and you’re largely unaware. If emotions rise, the interactions can be more impactful and parts of other energy fields get entangled with yours. Your mood and physical health might be affected.

You may even see colour!

Aura colors and what do they mean?

1. **Red:** A red aura means you’re confident, strong, practical and aggressive.
2. **Orange:** Considerate, systematic, sensitive, like harmony and energetic.
3. **Yellow:** Optimistic, intelligent,

creative, playful and free.

4. **Green:** Love nature, caring, nurturing and reflective.
5. **Blue:** Caring, empathetic, peaceful and inclined towards larger philosophical, spiritual matters.
6. **Violet/Purple:** Wise, artistic, intuitive, spiritual and artistic,
7. **Earth tones:** Grounded, hands on style and focused on immediate events/happenings.

Practice to see your Aura :

1. Magic Eye puzzles. They train your brain to look for something, that at first glance doesn’t appear to be there. Once you’re able to successfully see the hidden pictures within an image, your brain remembers how to do this, and realizes that there is often more than meets the eye at first glance.

Practice shifting the image in and out of focus. Try to view it from a bit further away, or try looking around at the picture within the image without losing it. Pay attention to how you’re able to get the inner picture to reveal itself, and make a mental note of this, as it’s similar to how you can learn to see your aura.

2. View the energy field around your hands : Find a white or cream background (an empty wall or curtain will work great) and a place to sit in front of it. Hold your hands out before you, with your fingertips lightly pressed together (almost like you’re praying). Gaze at your hands, as if you’re able to look through them... As you continue to stare at your fingertips before you, gently and slowly begin to pull your finger tips apart. Look into the space between your fingers - upon the area where your fingers were previously touching and you will begin to see a light, or a color in between.

3. Practice In The Mirror : Find a mirror with a solid, light colored wall facing it, and stand or sit before it. Look at yourself in

the mirror, and then shift your focus to a point just beyond your body, above your right shoulder. Gaze into this space and relax your focus. At first you may simply see a white energy outline around you, this is great! Hold your focus, and see the white energy expand and fill with color.

4. Aura Photos : Scientists have proven the existence of the aura with Kirlian photography. Named after Semyon Davidovich Kirlian and his wife Valentina who are credited with inventing the first photographs of auras in Krasnodar, Russia in 1939; while working on repairs to an electrotherapy machine, Semyon saw an aura emitted between an electrode and a patient’s skin. In order to photograph it, Semyon and Valentina invented a high-frequency electrical field camera that produced the first photos of plant and animal auras.

5. Raise Your Vibration : When it comes to developing any psychic skill or spiritual gift, an uplifted vibration is key. Doubt and fear will block your ability to see auras, and so will many filters made up of thoughts, and limiting beliefs. Lifting your vibration is the process of releasing negativity, filters, and limiting beliefs from your life, and integrating new levels of joy, love and light. Quiet your mind, meditate, laugh and enjoy...

What’s The Significance? The significance of this information is for us to wake up, and realize that we are all energy, radiating our own unique energy signature. Feelings, thoughts and emotions play a vital role – so if all of us are in a peaceful loving state inside, it will no doubt impact the external world around us, and influence how others feel as well. As Nikola Tesla said “If you want to know the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration.”

By

Archana Law



Sanskriti Sandhya Series- 9, 10, 11

Margazhi Utsav

In collaboration with Aru Sri Art Theatre

An online dance production

Produced and Directed by:

Deshanethru Dr Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan.

Monthly Lecture Series -30, 32, 33, 35

Online Yoga lecture / workshop sessions for
Param Dhamma Chaitya Pirivena, Ratmanala
by Shri Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga expert from India

5 to 26

**Every Sundays
4.00 pm**

1

**Wednesday
6.00 pm**

The Festival of Dance.

Monthly Lecture Series-31

Online Yoga – Yoga for HIV/Aids;
Rebuild immune system
by Shri Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga expert from India

11

**Saturday
7.30 pm**

2

**Thursday
6.00 pm**

Glimpses of the Jairam Dance Drama

Sanskriti Sandhya Series - 12

Shaam-e-Mosiki
An evening of Hindustani Semiclassical and
Light Vocal Music by Shasthrapathi B.R Lakme
Dassanayake

15

**Wednesday
6.00 pm**

3

**Friday
6.00 pm**

Glimpses of the Mekala Dance Drama

Poya day celebration -17
Event to mark Uduwap Full Moon
Poya Day

18

Saturday

Monthly Lecture Series-34

Online Yoga – Yoga with Gayatri Mantra
(Universal Prayer)
by Shri Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga expert from India

25

**Saturday
7.30 pm**

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 iccrcolombo2@gmail.com.

For upcoming facebook live events, visit www.facebook.com/ICCRSriLanka

Free Events. All are cordially invited