

Millet Khichdi

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For me, the holidays are a time to slow down, to take a breath and reconnect with the things that bring comfort. Khichdi does just that. It reminds me of home and of sharing a meal that feels like an embrace. It reflects my belief that food should comfort, nourish, and connect us to our roots. Growing up, khichdi was a household staple... and across India, it's the ultimate comfort food. Traditionally made with rice, lentils, and spices, it symbolizes balance and togetherness... a bowl that soothes you after festive indulgence. My version reimagines the classic with slow-cooked millet in place of rice, adding a beautiful nuttiness and hearty texture while staying true to the dish's essence. I prepare it with fall vegetables like squash, carrots, green peas, and beans, gently simmered in turmeric and ghee. It's a simple dish, yet it carries generations of comfort and love. And to me, that's exactly what the holidays are about.

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SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

Khichdi

½ cup millet (Foxtail or Barnyard millet preferred), rinsed and soaked overnight
¼ cup yellow moong dal (split yellow lentils), dry roasted lightly
1 cup diced squash (butternut or pumpkin)
½ cup carrots, diced
½ cup green peas
½ cup green beans, chopped
1 tbsp grated ginger
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp cumin seeds
1 dry red chili
1 bay leaf

Crisps and Papad (Fried or Baked Options)

1 small, sweet potato
1 raw plantain
1 cassava root, peeled
Salt to season
Neutral oil (like sunflower or rice bran) for frying

Baby Radish Pickle

6-8 baby radishes, halved
2 tbsp oil
½ tsp nigella seeds (kalonji)
¼ tsp turmeric
½ tsp salt

Accompaniments

House-made sweet potato crisps
Crispy plantain chips
Cassava crisps
Rice and lentil papad
House made baby radish pickle

INSTRUCTIONS

01 For the Khichdi

1. In a heavy-bottomed pot, heat ghee. Add cumin seeds, bay leaf, and dry red chili. Let them crackle.
2. Add ginger, sauté lightly, then stir in moong dal. Toast for a minute.
3. Add millet, turmeric, and salt. Stir to coat.
4. Add hot water, squash, carrots, peas, and beans. Bring to a boil.
5. Lower heat, cover, and cook for 20 to 25 minutes until soft and creamy. Add more water if needed.
6. Drizzle extra ghee before serving.

02 Prepare crisps and papad

1. Thinly slice all veggies. Soak in cold water for 10 minutes, then pat dry.
2. Dusted with rice flour.
3. Heat oil in a deep pan (~350°F/175°C).
4. Fry crisps in batches until golden. Drain on paper towel.
5. Season with salt, cracked paper, chat masala, and chili powder.
6. Fry papads separately, or roast over an open flame.

03 Pickle baby radishes

1. Heat oil until just smoking, then cool slightly.
2. Add kalonji, turmeric, and chili. Stir for 30 sec.
3. Add baby radish and salt and sauté for 3 to 4 min on low heat until slightly tender.
4. Finish with a splash of lemon juice (optional). Cool and store until ready to use.

04 Plate

1. Spoon khichdi into a bowl or plate.
2. Arrange sweet potato, cassava, and plantain crisps around the edge.
3. Add a piece each of rice papad and lentil papad.
4. Garnish with a spoon of radish pickle and a drizzle of warm ghee.