

Modak Amti (*Tilache Vaange*)

Sushma Dhanesh Nagarkar

Vegetarian, snack, spicy, Maharashtrian



Sushma Nagarkar

Sushma Nagarkar got her M.Sc. Maths, Honours School from Panjab University. She lives with her husband Dhanesh in Nagpur. Her daughter is an ophthalmologist, and her son is a mechanical engineer.

I got married in 1979 and came to my in-laws' place at Nagpur. My husband has two brothers and two sisters, three of whom live in Nagpur.

We are a religious family, and celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi and Mahalaxmi Puja in *Bhadrapada* (Hindu lunar calendar month, usually in August-September).

The preparation starts about a fortnight before the Puja day as about 100 people dine on the Puja day.



Gangabai Nagarkar

Every day, the women gather at my husband's older brother's home, where my late mother-in-law, Shrimati Gangabai Nagarkar, lived.

Sweet modaks are made on the first day. These are sweets and Prasad for Ganpati.

We make lots of sweets and snacks, such as *laddu, shev, karanji, chakli, and anarse*. Nobody – not even small children – are allowed to eat them until the Puja is over.

On the Puja day, we make a traditional Maharashtrian meal comprising of *Varan Bhat, Kaddi, Bhaje, Vade, Chutney, Koshimbir, and Puran Poli*. On top of it, sixteen vegetables are cooked separately.

After eating sweets for many days, everybody wants something spicy. Therefore, my mother-in-law used to make this spicy modak curry.

It has been made in my family for several generations.

Serves 4-6 people

Ingredients

For Modak

- Besan (Chana flour) 2 cups
- Wheat flour 2 tbsp
- Oil 2 tbsp
- Onions 2 big (finely chopped)
- Ginger 1 inch
- Garlic 5 to 6 cloves
- Poppy seeds (Khus-khus) 1 tsp
- Coconut (dry) grated 3 tsp
- Sesame seeds 1 tsp
- Groundnut (peanut) roasted 1 tsp
- Red Chilli powder 1 tsp
- Salt to taste

- Turmeric powder 1 tsp
- Asafoetida (hing) 1 pinch
- Cumin seeds 0.5 tsp
- Mustard seeds 0.5 tsp

For Curry

- Onions 3 big sliced long
- Garlic 1 whole
- Green chillies 3
- Ginger 1 inch
- Coriander leaves,
- Cumin (jeera) seeds 0.5 tsp
- Mustard seeds 0.5 tsp
- Cloves 5 or 6
- Cinnamon 1 inch
- Cardamom 6
- Dry coconut grated 3 tsp
- Poppy seeds (Khus khus) 2 tsp
- Coriander seeds 3 tsp
- Bay leaves 2

Method

Modak (filling)

Roast the sesame seeds and groundnuts and then grind them together.

Roast coconut and khus khus.

Take some oil in a *kadhai*. Once the oil is hot, add cumin seeds, mustard seeds, and asafoetida to it.

Add ginger, garlic, and onions to the *kadhai* and fry till the mix turns brown.

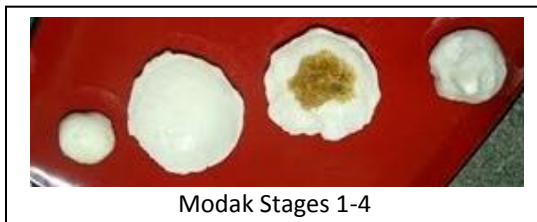
Add spices, coconut, khus khus, groundnuts, and sesame powder.

Mix all the ingredients in the *kadhai* thoroughly.

Remove from *kadhai* and keep aside.

Modak (shell)

Mix besan, wheat flour, salt (according to taste), chilli powder, and a 1 tsp oil in a plate or any other working surface.



Knead the mixture until it becomes a stiff dough. Make 18-20 balls of the dough. Roll each ball into a 2.5 inch diameter circle.

Place about 1 tsp filling in the

centre, and close the edges to form a modak, as shown in the picture (stages 1-4).

Curry

Roast cloves, cinnamon, dry coconut, khus-khus, cardamom, coriander seeds, bay leaves till they become brown and keep aside.

Fry onions in a *kadhai* in 1 tsp oil till it turns brown.

Grind onion, garlic, ginger, green chillies, coriander and the roasted ingredients along with turmeric, red chilli powder and salt to a fine paste.

Heat oil in a big *kadhai*. Add cumin seeds and mustard seeds when the oil gets hot. Add paste and fry until it turns brown.

Add warm water and let it boil for few minutes. The curry should be quite thin.

Final dish

Add the prepared modaks to the curry.

Let the curry boil until the upper cover of the modaks is cooked, but not overcooked, as they tend to break on overcooking.

The curry becomes thicker after some time.

Serve hot. It is a good idea to keep a bit of curry aside and add it at the time of serving.

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