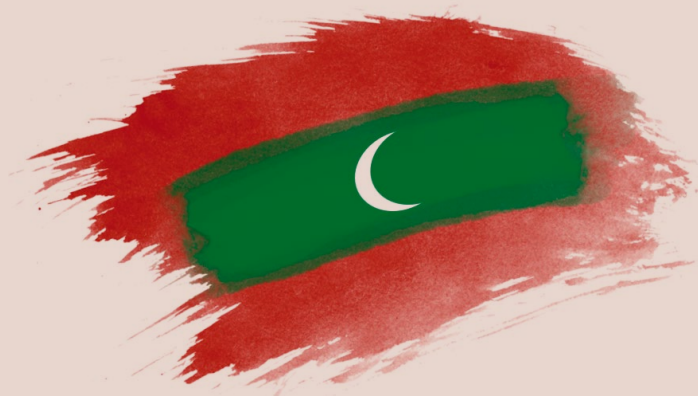


A TOUR AROUND THE WORLD'S GASTRONOMY



MALDIVES

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Special thanks to Chef Jeehan Saleem who shared the tasty photos that served as inspiration for the design of the illustrations.

A TASTE OF MALDIVES GASTRONOMY



A NATION'S GASTRONOMY IS ITS BEST AMBASSADOR

Maldives has a rich food culture which evolved into its own unique form through the influence from several sources.

It is a delectable fusion derived from its neighboring countries like India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan as well as from the Mediterranean and South East Asian countries. It has been evolving with changing global trends and exposure to the world. As an island nation surrounded by sea, the traditional cuisine comprises of three main ingredients; fish, coconut and rice.

Fish (mainly tuna) is the hallmark staple of the Maldivian diet. Whether curried, steamed or fried, smoked or dried, fish meals always come out luscious and filling. The main fish that we use include skipjack

tuna, little tuna, yellowfin tuna, frigate tuna, big eye scad, wahoo and mahi-mahi.

Coconuts, palms are one of the characteristics of the tropical island nation and contribute a number of ingredients in Maldivian dishes. Coconut is used grated, as milk or as coconut oil, which is used to deep fry foods. It is a major element in Maldivian traditional cuisine, which adds a milky flavor to dishes, particularly to curries.

Rice, while an essential part of a local meal, it is not home grown. Like in most Asian countries, rice – together with side dishes made up of lime, chilies, and onions – completes a Maldivian meal.

TAKE YOUR PALATE ON A TOUR

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE WITH PRODUCTS FROM MALDIVES



COCONUT

It is one of the main ingredients in Maldivian cuisine, used in many forms. It is grated and squeezed to obtain coconut milk (*Kaashi kiru*) which is an essential ingredient in many Maldivian curries and other dishes.



CHILIES (Dried and raw chilies)

It is an ingredient you will find in almost all Maldivian cuisine. Be it curries or the famous hedhika served for tea. The most famous chilies used are the Scotch Bonnet locally known as *Githeyo Mirus*.



CUMIN

It gives an earthy, smoky and slightly nutty flavor to many of the Maldivian curries such as the famous *Kandu Kukulbu*. It is a dried seed from a plant belonging to the parsley family.



KASHIKEYO (Screw pine)

Found in the tropics, it is a local fruit. *Kashikeyo* is used to make porridge, cake and other sweets and desserts. Most authentic is the sweet drink that accompanies many traditional feasts especially during ramadan.



FISH

Dried, smoked can be found in short eats, curries, salads, accompaniments and a host of other dishes. It gives a special taste and flavor to many Maldivian dishes.

WANT TO BRING SOME BACK HOME?

Most of these ingredients can be found in the local travellers market and produce market in the most bustling market area of Male', the capital city.

There are special stalls for fish and fish products and for spices.

TOP 5 LOCAL BITES TO SAMPLE



MASHUNI

Completes all Maldivian breakfasts.

It is made by mixing boiled, canned or smoked tuna with shredded coconut, sliced onions, lime and chillies. *Mashuni* can be also mixed with local vegetables like pumpkin, gourd, aubergines and greens for added nutritional value. It is best enjoyed with roshi (flat bread) and a hot cup of strong black tea.

BONDIBAIY

Type of rice pudding, made with a number of key ingredients.

Classic *Bondibaiy* is made with white rice, coconut milk and sugar – cooked together until the rice soaks up the milk and thickens. This is typically eaten with kulhimas on special occasions like Eid or naming of a new-born. Other types include *Bondibaiy* made with breadfruit and Godhan.



GULHA

Golden dough ball filled with a tuna-coconut mix but usually flavoured with turmeric.

It is a favorite accompaniment with a cup of tea on all occasions.

FONI FAAROSHI

Simple yet really delicious sweet delight made by combining ground rusks with bananas, sugar and grated coconut.

It is a favourite during *Maahefun*, which is a traditional feast held before Ramadan.



NAARUHFALIDA OR LADO

Sweet made with breadfruit and coconut syrup.

This local bite is a specialty from the southern islands of the Maldives. It is a popular delicacy which can be stored up to a month.

DID YOU KNOW?

Maldives is located in a very important crossroad in the Indian Ocean. Our food is a rich melting pot of various influences – but it is unique and stands out. It mainly has its roots and is influenced by Indian, Sri Lankan, South Asian and Mediterranean cuisine. Our food and its culture has evolved from the influence visitors over centuries who ply the trade routes travelling through Maldives to reach to other parts of the World.

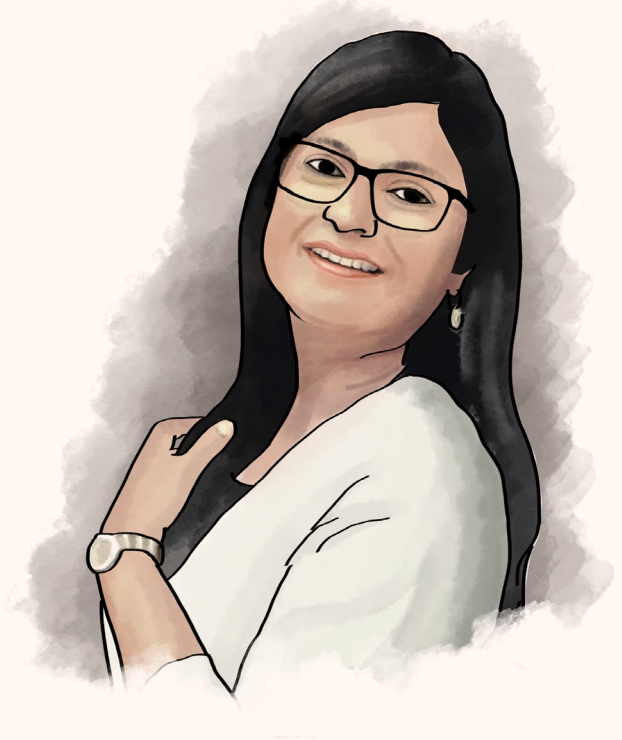
JEEHAN SALEEM

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Jeehan Saleem grew up in a household where cooking and preparing food was a key element of daily life. She learned and mastered her culinary skills from her mother. A laboratory scientist and public health professional, she has taken a keen interest in promoting and preserving Maldivian traditional cuisine. She was awarded a Gold Medal at the annual Yi Yin Cup Culinary Challenge held in Beijing in 2017.

In her quest to preserve the rich cuisine of Maldives, Jeehan opened The Maldivian Kitchen in 2022. It is a restaurant serving local Maldivian dishes, prepared and presented as one would do in their homes.

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“I have a strong **passion** for local cuisine. A passion that also drives my work to sustain and preserve the authenticity of dishes. Maldivian cuisine is a rich mix of food, which needs more appreciation. My aim is to create awareness about Maldives food and its rich food culture locally and abroad.”

I grew up in an ordinary family of five sisters and one brother. Born and brought up in Maldives, my earliest memory of our home is of food and the smell of freshly prepared meals.

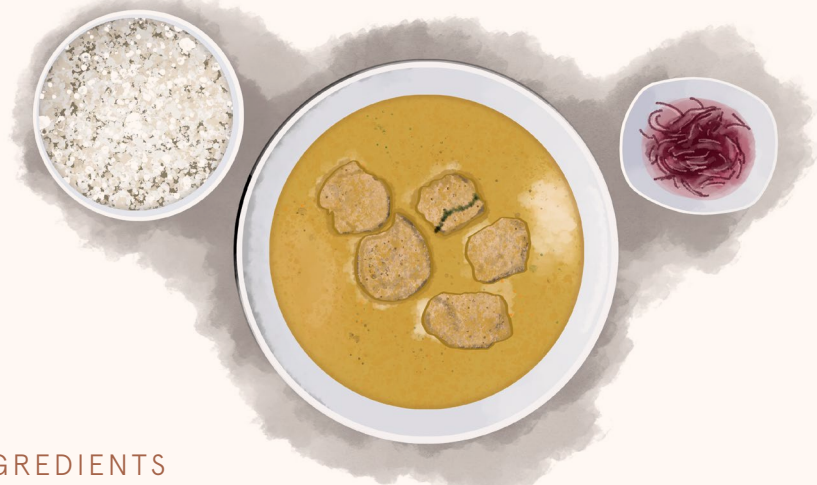
Having spent an enormous amount of time in the kitchen as a helper from a very young age, I have basically grown up cooking and tasting good food. The most popular of all is the teatime snacks “*bedhika*”, without which our daily lives will be empty.

My mother is my inspiration. She started cooking in her adolescent years and is a natural at cooking. Her passion has always been perfecting and sustaining the true Maldivian food and its culture, for which she won the National Service Award in 2012.

The food that I cook is authentic and I always try to keep it as close to the tastes passed on by my mother to sustain the taste of Maldives.

KANDU KUKULHU

Tuna wrapped in Maldivian spices



INGREDIENTS

Kandukukulhu spice mix

- 1/2 coconut scraped
- 5 dried red chilli
- 5 cloves of garlic
- 1 inch ginger
- 1 medium onion
- 2 tbsp cumin

Kandukukulhu curry

- 1 fillet tuna
- Medium sized onion
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 inch ginger
- 1/2 cup coconut milk/cream
- 5 tbsp vegetable oil

STEP BY STEP

1

Method to make spice mix

1. Mix the above ingredients except the fillet of tuna.
2. Put the mixed ingredients in a blender or grinder with a little bit of water.
3. Grind all the ingredients till it forms a smooth paste of the spices.

2

Preparation of Tuna

1. Slice the tuna in very thin layers (5 inches length, 1 inch wide, about 2mm in thickness) as shown in illustration.
2. Spread the slice of tuna over your hand and take 1 teaspoon of the spice mix, and spread the spice mix evenly on the tuna slice.
3. Roll the tuna slice tightly and clip with a toothpick (optional) and keep aside. Roll the remaining tuna as above.

3

Method for Kandu kukulhu

1. Sautee the onion, ginger and garlic in the vegetable oil in medium to low heat for about 5 mins. Onions should be light brown and mellow.
2. Put the rolled tuna over the sautéed onions carefully one by one and continue cooking covered for another 5 mins.
3. Put about 3 tbsp of the spice mix over the tuna and very gently shake the tuna and mix the spices with tuna. Be careful not to break the tuna rolls.
4. Add in the coconut milk or cream and continue cooking for another 5 mins.
5. Add salt to taste and continue cooking for 3 mins.
6. By now the kandukukulhu will have a thick gravy and the fish should be perfectly cooked. Serve hot with rice.

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