

Sixth Traditional Food Festival - Satvik 2008

Sixth Annual Traditional Food Festival to celebrate culinary creativity along side the agro-biodiversity, that too maintained often without using chemical inputs, - Satvik 08 was organized by Honey Bee Network at IIM Ahmedabad Campus from 6th to 8th December. Aromas and smiles welcomed visitors to the confluence of consumers and farmers. With 57 stalls offering diverse cultures and tastes, people could not have asked for a bigger menu to tickle the taste buds and tinkle the brains. The festival was inaugurated by Prof B H Jajoo, the Acting Director of IIM Ahmedabad. Farmers from Kutch, Jasdaan, Surendranagar, Panchmahal and many other parts of the country attended the opening with grins and garnishings for the visitors. The winners of the SRISTI traditional recipe contest were also awarded on the occasion.

Esther David (Times of India columnist) personally welcomed the visitors to the Jewish stall, set up for the first time in Satvik. She told that the Jews have strict dietary norms that often make them use coconut milk as substitute to the dairy products. Some of their festive fares like *Kippur* (Day of Atonement, better known as *Yom Kippur*) *chi puri*, oil free *poha* with coconut, raisins and nuts, *badam chi pez*, date *sheera*, black currants *sherbet* and 'falafal' have been Indianised.

Tribal and Rural Fare

The farmers from the different villages in Gujarat put up 25 food stalls. Their mouth watering recipes like *Bajra no rotlo* (millet bread), *ringan no sag* (aubergine gravy), *chat* (spicy starters), seven grains *khichdi*, basil (*Ocimum americanum*) preparation, 'sheero' (Indian pudding) uniquely made of bamboo seeds acted as major drawers. The visitors enjoyed many additional recipes from the tribal areas of Gujarat like dumplings made from

local corn and *laddoo (bolus)* of *bavta* and *mahua* flowers, *bhaji* (gravy) of gram pulse leaves, etc.

The North East India was animated through the *Chutney* made of Bamboo, also called *Toko Toko Patta* and steamed rice in leaves at Arunachal Pradesh stall. Mushtaq, an apple cum walnut cultivator and also an innovator from Jammu and Kashmir was welcoming the visitors with 'Keheva', Kashmiri tea made from saffron. From Bagpat, UP, there were nutritious as well as tasty *palak and papita ki barfi* (sweet made from spinach and papaya).

The Prakriti Mahila Udyog, Ahmedabad drew countless visitors for its Natural Ice cream, sweetened with dry fruits only. James, a foreign national after tasting it, claimed that the Indian Ice cream was the best in the world. Sandhya Mandal, Honeybee collaborator from West Bengal had date jaggery as a variety. The stall of Centre for Environment and Education, Ahmedabad was selling *Nagli* (a grain) powder and 'papad' (fritters) of pumpkin.

Arrays of juices like *phindla* (prickly pear) juice (good for Asthma, Hepatitis B), pumpkin, mint-ginger and drumstick juice quenched the thirst and aroused the curiosity of the visitors. 'Adhar Charitable Trust' an NGO, had a stall run by the HIV positive people. The crowd gathered

at their stall to enjoy their tangy *chaats*. *Bhakhri* pizza, seven grains pizza and smoked *chaas* (buttermilk) were the Indian recipes refurbished in name and



presentation to attract the health-conscious and youngsters.

The visitors happily shared their feelings. Mr & Mrs K N Dhingra, 60 years, were simply delighted at the concept of Traditional Food Festival. Saloni and Margi Parikh, young students from Nirma Institute were totally awed by this different picture of India. Emile and Sam, UK nationals living in Ahmedabad for a year now, were the happiest visitors around, beaming with the joy of aromatic spices, bought from the 'haat'. James from England was carrying back five kg of rice home. He said that the Satvik Food Festival was an answer to the Genetically Modified food.

Consumer to Farmer: Khedut Haat - Farmers' Fair

The farmers, engaged in organic farming had the opportunity of selling their products directly to the urban





buyers. The visitors were delighted to find some uncommon grains from the tribal areas of Gujarat like old varieties of red rice, *Krishna-kumud* rice, local varieties of soyabean and minor millets like *bawto*, *bunti*, *nagli* and Black moong. Apart from the usual vegetables, the cocassia leaves and bulbs, drumstick, single-bulb garlic (good for heart), gooseberry, *suran*, *ratalu* were sold in good volume. The guava, cactus, *tulsisudha*, *khatti bhindi* and *takmaria* (basil plant seed) juices were prepared and sold by the farmers in the *haat* itself. Ramkrishna Hegde, a farmer from Karnataka brought cardamom, clover, nutmeg and also local coconut sweets for sale.

Some rare delicacies were only available at Satvik. They were *banni ka mawa* (a famous variety of *mawa* only made in deserts of Banni region in Kutchh, Gujarat), *nagli ni sukhdhi*, kothumbura (cucumber) waffers, *sharad saakar* (sugar especially prepared in the moonlight on the *Sharad Purnima*). The visitors enjoyed the fresh *chaas* (buttermilk) of cow milk. Some interesting items for sale in the *haat* were black soil and goats' droppings as fertilizer. Shilpa Mehta, a regular visitor for four years, remarked that she could never find things available here, in the outside markets. Swati Kachi wanted Food Festival to be extended by few more days.



Brain Teasers

NIF stall showcased various innovations like the amphibious bicycle, pedaled washing machine. Hiteshbhai Bhrambhatt and fellow teachers from Kheda Zilla Shikshan Samiti put up 47 puppet shows featuring the importance of education and environmental conservation. Ratilal Mandali, had on display 52 cards, umbrella, and snakes and ladders to teach Hindi, English and Maths.

Splashing the Creativity

The Satvik jostled with children's activities throughout the three days. SRISTI had distributed 1,50,000 free passes to students. The talent hunt competitions like drawing and painting on theme of Satvik,



innovative idea, dancing, singing, card-making, face painting and slogan writing contests kept the children engaged and entertained. Vinay Mahajan, an IIM alumnus and Charul Bharwada, an architect, from '*Loknaad*' touched everybody's heart with the recital of songs on the issues of communal harmony, non-violence and the concern for common people.

Traditional Recipes

1. *Theg nu Sheero* (Pudding)

Theg is a so called weed found mainly in the Nalsarovar area near Ahmedabad. Take 250g of *Theg*. Grind it coarse. Roast it in 100g *ghee*, till it turns brown. Then add 100g jaggery and cook for a while. Let it cool and then

garnish it with desiccated coconut and chopped almonds. Sprinkle cardamom powder.

SRISTI lab got the *theg* weed chemically analyzed and found it to be an extraordinary rich source of Calcium and many other nutrients. Market for *theg* will directly enhance income generating opportunities for some of the poorest people who collect this plant.

2. *Baans nu Sheero* (Bamboo Seeds Pudding)

Thresh the bamboo seeds mildly and let the skin come out. Grind the seeds coarsely. Roast 250g of bamboo seeds in 100g *ghee* till they turn brown and then add the jaggery. Let it cook for a while and then garnish it with the chopped almonds and cardamom powder.

3. *Mahua ke Phool ke Laddoo* Sweet Bolus made from *Madhuca longifolia* (J.Konig) J. F. Machr.

Mahua flowers are commonly found in the tribal areas in almost all the parts of the country. To make the laddoos take 500g of flowers and ground them till reduced to paste. Take 500g of wheat flour, add 75g of *ghee* and knead it hard. After making small balls



of it, either make *bhakri* (cooked on clay *tawa* or griddle) or *bati* (roasted in oven/*bhatthi*/*chulha*). After the *batis* or *bhakris* cool, grind them coarsely, sieve to get the powdered form. Now add the *mahua* paste and 125g of *ghee*. Mix them properly and make the *laddoo*. 