A signature dish of Bihar: Litti and Chokha

The Background of Bihar

Bihar is a landlocked state lying in the eastern part of India. The word Bihar comes from the Sanskrit word Vihara meaning Buddhist Monasteries. Bihar is surrounded by the states of Uttar Pradesh in the West, Jharkhand in the South, West Bengal in the East and Nepal in the North. Bihar was known as Magadha during ancient times and was a centre of education, culture and tradition. One of the greatest empires in ancient India, The Mauryan Empire, rose from Magadha. Buddhism, which is one of the biggest religions in the world, originated in Bihar. Bihar is also home to the ancient Nalanda University, which was a centre of learning established during the 5th century. The ruins of Nalanda University can still be seen in Bihar. Apart from its historic importance, Bihar also played a significant role in India’s freedom struggle.

History of Litti Chokha: The importance of Litti Chokha to Bihar is similar to the importance of Rosogolla to West Bengal. Litti Chokha, a remarkable dish which comes from the state of Bihar, is not only popular in India today, but has also made a special mark globally. Litti and Chokha are absolutely delicious and is the rustic way of cooking.

Keywords: Magadha, Bihar, Litti, Chokha, Rustic cooking

Ingredients for Litti and Chokha

For the Litti dough
1. Atta (flour): 250 gm
2. Besan (gram flour): 100gm
3. Ajwain (carom/bishop’s weed): 5 gm
4. Salt: According to taste
5. Water

For the Chokha
1. Brinjal: 1 (whole)
2. Tomato: 2 (whole)
3. Potato: 2 pieces (whole)
4. Amchur powder: ½ tsp
5. Salt: according to your taste
6. Mustard oil: 1 tsp
7. Onion (finally chopped): 1 piece
8. Green chillies (finally chopped): 2

Rustic way of cooking Litti and Chokha

Goitha
Goithas are cow dung cakes which are used in many villages even today for cooking, this might sound tacky but it’s true. It’s just not Litti and Chokha which is cooked on these cakes, but people cook a variety of dishes. The taste of the food cooked in Goitha is heavenly good.

Wood Charcoal
This is another form of rustic cooking, we do this even today. Unlike Goithas, these are easier to handle and easily available. Cooking with wood charcoal is just like barbequing. Wood charcoal adds that earthiness to the food being cooked and that too taste delicious.

For the Litti filling
1. Satu (Roasted gram flour): 250 gm
2. Garlic clove (finally chopped): 1
3. Ginger (finally chopped): 50 gm
4. Green chillies (finally chopped): 5 pieces
5. Dhaniya (coriander): ½ a bunch
6. Thyme: ½ tsp
7. Mango or red chilli pickle: 1sp or as per your taste

For the Chokha filling
1. Brinjal: 1 (whole)
2. Tomato: 2 (whole)
3. Potato: 2 pieces (whole)
4. Amchur powder: ½ tsp
5. Salt: according to your taste
6. Mustard oil: 1 tsp
7. Onion (finally chopped): 1 piece
8. Green chillies (finally chopped): 2
Method of cooking Litti and Chokha

1. Sieve the flour in a big bowl and add salt, carom seeds, and oil.
2. Knead the dough properly with water.
3. Dough should be soft.
4. Cover with a wet cloth and keep aside. Dough is ready.
5. Now grind roasted gram to powder along with black pepper (if sattu is not available).
6. In a mixing bowl, add all the spices and grated ginger, green chillies, coriander, lemon juice, and mix well.
7. If it seems too dry, add a teaspoon of oil and few drops of water to it.
8. The texture should be crumbly, keep aside.
9. Now take medium-sized dough and make pedas from each one.
10. Simply roll it like a small chapati, but don’t apply any extra flour to it.
11. Place two teaspoons of filling on it, pinch it from all sides so that filling gets covered on all sides.
12. Pinch the extra dough from top, shape it round like a ball.
13. Litti is ready for baking.
14. Place all the balls on a baking dish and bake them for 30–40 minutes.
15. Flip the side half way through, you may have to do it 2–3 times in between to get the even cooking done.
16. Boil the potatoes and remove the skin and keep aside.
17. Roast brinjal and tomatoes in the oven or on the gas stove on medium flame on both the sides until it becomes soft.
18. Peel off the burnt skin of the brinjal.
19. Mash boiled potatoes, brinjal, along with garlic and tomatoes together.
20. Add finely chopped onion, coriander leaves, grated ginger salt, green chillies and mustard oil.
21. Mix all the ingredients with hands properly.
22. Chokha is ready.

Service of Litti and Chokha

Put Chokha in a bowl, dip hot Litti in melted Ghee and serve hot with green coriander chutney. Litti can also be broken through the centre and then ghee can be poured on top, this way it reaches the stuffing too. The aroma, the flavours are divine enough to captivate all your senses.

Conclusion

Litti Chokha is a traditional snack food found in India’s Bihar state. It basically consists of wheat and sattu. Litti Chokha of Bihar was originated centuries ago as a staple food in the court of Magadha. It is a remarkable dish which comes from the state of Bihar and is not only popular in India today, but has also made a special mark globally. Litti and Chokha are absolutely delicious and so is the rustic way of cooking. It’s the choice of all tourists too.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

References


Citation: Sharma SK. A signature dish of Bihar: Litti and Chokha. MOJ Food Process Technol. 2019;7(1):1–2. DOI: 10.15406/mojfpt.2019.07.00210