

Food contest

On the 5th of January 2008 Inner Wheel Club of North Calcutta organized a cooking contest and we were asked to participate in this contest with just one days of notice.

This contest was based on special Bengali dishes known as “**Pitha**” which are prepared during the month of December only. Like Christmas cake is made only during Christmas and throughout the year. Like wise this dish is also made only during December because if you look at it from the scientific angle it helps keep the body warm and new jaggery is made at this time of the year. This contest was held at Ganabhaban Community Hall, which is a stone throw distance from our project building.

When this news was given to everyone we were all very excited and we all came to GS to ask if we could take part as this was completely a new venture for us. Seeing our excitement and enthusiasm GS also became very happy and he asked us to go ahead. Our GS financed the whole thing if it wasn't for him this would not have been possible.

Immediately everyone put their heads together and started ringing up their mothers to give us different types of recipes out of which we selected the best and we decided on what to make as all the ladies of SBDCH are very good cooks but we had one exception and that was a male. Eventually it was decided that these dishes would be prepared by Bikas Basu, Moumi Chakraborty, Sonali Basak Mukherjee, Ruby Basu, and Gitali Roy Mitra and helped by other members of SBDCH.

We all are grateful and thankful to Sunipa Chattopadhyay for offering us her kitchen for two consecutive days for several hours. Without her co-operation and support it would not have been possible for us.

“It is often said that the tradition of pitha is under threat with the burgeoning popularity of fast food. But the abundance of pitha at this cooking contest assures us that we haven't forgotten our heritage yet,” “Nothing can compare with the taste of date juice cakes in chilly winter morning.

We prepared three sweet dishes and two salted dishes. The three sweet dishes were actually the part of the contest. We prepared the other two dishes just for a change of taste. Tea was also sold by our stall only. Our General Secretary with the help of his driver sold some dry snacks made out of puffed rice, pea nuts, and sesame seeds all these items were made with jaggery.

Ingredients and Nutritional value of each item were in display,

খীর মুগপুলী	Kheer Mugpuli – Thickened milk and pulse cake
মালাই মিঠাই	Malai Methai – Thickened milk sweet
চানা মশালা	Chana Masala – Spicy Bengal gram
শাহী পনীর্	Shahi Paneer - Kingly casein curry

These are only the few dishes we had prepared but there were many more on display by the other contestants in all their mouth-watering glory.

The judges for this contest were Mr. Pratap Roy, chief editor of one our leading Bengali News Paper and as you know he is the Vice President of SBDCH, Dr. Mrs. Bhabani Dhar, District Chairman of Inner Wheel Club and Mr. Joydeep Arya, General Manager KFC

The competition started at 3.00 p.m all the participants had to serve each judge with a helping of what they had made along with the recipes Each contest tried to display their item to the best of their ability. After they had completed the tasting they discussed among themselves about each dish. They took quite a while for taking a decision. Finally they came to a decision and declared the winners of the contest. SBDCH was declared as the second runners up, there was a tie between the first runners up, and the winner for the evening was Mrs. Ajanta De the President of Inner Wheel Club. Bikas was awarded a consolation prize because of him being the only male contestant and making Phal Madhuri – Fruit Delicacy

Our stall was one of the first to get sold out as the dishes we had prepared were so delicious. So even though we came third, we feel that we were the actually winners.

We were lucky that all our items were sold and we could return the entire money taken from our GS. Even though it was a completely new venture for us but finally we were happy to make a profit. And this money has been kept as a reserve fund for future use.

Here are the ingredients of all the dishes:

ফল মাধুরী (Phal Madhuri)

Ingredients:

Apple, Grapes, Papaya, Orange, Tomatoes, Raisins, Sugar, Beaten rice, Flour, White oil Ghee

Nutrition value: 1 piece

Protein : 1gm
Fat : 13gms
Carbohydrate : 16gms
Energy : 185Kcal

খীর মুগপুলী (Kheer Mugpuli)Ingredients

Mug dal, sugar, carrot, khir, peas, white oil

Nutrition value: 1 piece

Protein : 5gms
Fat : 31gms
Carbohydrate : 12gms
Energy : 423Kcal

মালাই মিঠাই (Malai Methai),Ingredients:

Semolina, Khir, Milk, Sugar, Coconut and Jaggery

Nutrition value:

1 cup : 100gms
Protein : 4 gms
Carbohydrate : 21 gms
Energy : 163 Kcal

চানা মশালা (Chana Masala)Ingredients:

Chana : 1kg Soaked over night.
Turmeric powder : 1 tbsp
Chillie powder : 2 tbsp
Chana masala : 2 pkts
Tomatoes : 5 chopped
Coriander leaves : 2 bunches
Ginger : 50gms (ground to a paste)
Salt : to taste
Sugar : to taste

Lime : 2
Oil : 200gms
Garam masala : cardamom 6, cinnamon 1” pc., cloves 5 crushed
Bay leaves : 2

शाही पनीर (Shahi Paneer)

Ingredients:

Paneer : 1kg cut into cubes
Sour curd : 300gms
Groundnuts ground : 250gms ground to a fine paste
Tomato : Puree 100gms
Curry leave : few
Rai : 1 tsp
Capsicum : 6 chopped
White oil : 250gms
Salt : to taste
Garam masala : cardamom, cinnamon, cloves
Green chillie 6