

Food Culture of Marathwada

Rekha B. Lonikar

Department of Home Science, Kai. Bapusaheb Patil Ekambekar Mahavidyalaya, Udgir

E-mail: lonikar.rekha51@gmail.com

Received: 23 February, 2023 | Accepted: 22 March, 2023 | Published: 24 March, 2023

Abstract

This research paper explores the food culture of Marathwada, a region in Maharashtra, India. Marathwada's cuisine is influenced by the local agriculture and the availability of fresh ingredients, and it is known for its simplicity, bold flavors, and use of spices and herbs. The paper discusses the history of Marathwada's cuisine, its ingredients, and the cooking techniques used to prepare dishes. Additionally, the paper highlights some of the popular dishes of Marathwada, including bhakri and zunka, varan bhaat, tambda rassa, bharli vangi, and usal. The research paper concludes that Marathwada's cuisine is an important aspect of its culture and heritage and has gained recognition and popularity beyond the region.

Keywords: Cuisine, Marathawada, culture, spices

Introduction

Marathwada is a region in the Indian state of Maharashtra, known for its rich food culture and cuisine. The cuisine of Marathwada is largely influenced by the local agriculture and the availability of fresh ingredients. The region's cuisine is characterized by its simplicity and the use of locally grown grains, lentils, and vegetables. The cuisine also has a strong influence from the neighboring regions of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana.

Marathwada's cuisine is diverse and offers a wide range of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The use of spices and herbs is a common feature in the cuisine, and it is known for its bold and fiery

flavors. Some of the popular dishes of Marathwada include bhakri and zunka, varan bhaat, tambda rassa, bharli vangi, and usal.

Marathwada's cuisine is an important aspect of its culture and heritage. It reflects the region's history, traditions, and customs. The cuisine is not only popular in the region but has also gained recognition and popularity in other parts of Maharashtra and India.

History

Marathwada is a region in the state of Maharashtra in India, located in the central part of the Deccan Plateau. The region has a rich history that dates back to ancient times, with evidence of human habitation in the region dating back to the Stone Age.

The region was ruled by various dynasties such as the Satavahanas, the Rashtrakutas, and the Yadavas, each of which had an impact on the local culture and cuisine. The region came under the rule of the Delhi Sultanate in the 14th century, followed by the Bahmani Sultanate in the 15th century, which introduced Persian and Turkish flavors to the local cuisine.

In the 16th century, the region was ruled by the Nizam Shahi dynasty, which was succeeded by the Mughal Empire in the 17th century. During the Mughal period, Marathwada was a part of the Deccan sultanates and was known for its rich agricultural produce, including cotton, sugarcane, and pulses.

In the 18th century, Marathwada came under the rule of the Maratha Empire, which had a significant impact on the region's culture and cuisine. The Marathas introduced new dishes such as pav bhaji and vada pav, which are now popular across Maharashtra and India.

After the British took control of India, Marathwada became a part of the Bombay Presidency. The region played a significant role in India's struggle for independence, with leaders such as Lokmanya Tilak and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar hailing from the region.

Today, Marathwada is a thriving region with a rich cultural heritage and a diverse cuisine that reflects its history and influences.

Ingredients

The cuisine of Marathwada is known for its simplicity and use of locally grown ingredients. Some of the key ingredients used in Marathwada's cuisine include:

1. Jowar and Bajra: These are two types of millets that are widely grown and used in Marathwada's cuisine. They are used to make bhakri, which is a flatbread made with millet flour.
2. Rice: Rice is another staple food in Marathwada and is used to make dishes such as varan bhaat (lentil and rice dish), tambda rassa (spicy red curry), and amti (lentil-based curry).

3. **Lentils:** Lentils such as toor dal (split pigeon peas) and moong dal (split mung beans) are widely used in Marathwada's cuisine to make dishes such as amti, varan, and usal (a curry made with sprouted beans).
4. **Vegetables:** Vegetables such as brinjal, tomato, okra, and pumpkin are commonly used in Marathwada's cuisine to make dishes such as bharli vangi (stuffed brinjal), bhindi masala (okra curry), and shengdana chi bhaji (peanut-based curry).
5. **Spices:** Marathwada's cuisine is known for its use of spices such as cumin, coriander, turmeric, chili powder, and garam masala. These spices are used to add flavor and aroma to the dishes.
6. **Tamarind and Kokum:** These souring agents are commonly used in Marathwada's cuisine to add a tangy flavor to the dishes. They are used in dishes such as sol kadhi (a drink made with kokum and coconut milk) and amti.
7. **Peanuts and Coconut:** These two ingredients are widely used in Marathwada's cuisine to make gravies and chutneys. Ground peanuts are used to make shengdana chi chutney (peanut chutney), while coconut is used to make bharli vangi and other gravies.

Cooking techniques

The cuisine of Marathwada utilizes a variety of cooking techniques to prepare dishes. Some of the common cooking techniques used in Marathwada's cuisine are:

- **Tadka:** Tadka is a technique of tempering spices in hot oil or ghee and adding them to the dish to enhance its flavor. This technique is commonly used in dishes such as dal and curries.
- **Bhunao:** Bhunao is a technique of roasting or sautéing spices, vegetables, or meat in a small amount of oil until they turn brown and aromatic. This technique is commonly used in dishes such as biryani and masala dishes.
- **Pressure cooking:** Pressure cooking is a popular technique used in Marathwada's cuisine to cook lentils and vegetables quickly. It is also used to cook meat and poultry dishes.
- **Roasting:** Roasting is a technique used to cook vegetables such as eggplant and tomatoes over an open flame until the skin is charred and the flesh is cooked. The charred skin is removed, and the cooked flesh is mashed and used to make dishes such as bharta.
- **Steaming:** Steaming is a technique used to cook rice and idlis, a type of savory rice cake, in Marathwada's cuisine.
- **Dum cooking:** Dum cooking is a slow-cooking technique where the dish is cooked on low heat in a sealed pot. This technique is commonly used in dishes such as biryani and pulao to infuse the flavors of the spices and ingredients into the dish.

- **Pickling:** Pickling is a technique used to preserve vegetables and fruits by immersing them in a mixture of vinegar, salt, and spices. This technique is commonly used to make achar (pickle) in Marathwada's cuisine.

Popular dishes

Marathwada's cuisine is known for its unique and flavorful dishes that reflect the region's culture and traditions. Some of the popular dishes of Marathwada include:

- **Puran Poli:** A sweet flatbread made with lentil filling and served with ghee.
- **Bhakri and Pitla:** Bhakri is a flatbread made with millet flour, and Pitla is a spicy gram flour curry that is typically eaten with bhakri. It is a popular breakfast and lunch dish in Marathwada.
- **Bharli Vangi:** Bharli Vangi is a popular stuffed brinjal dish made with roasted spices and coconut. It is typically served with bhakri or rice.
- **Zunka:** Zunka is a gram flour-based curry made with onions, garlic, and spices. It is typically served with bhakri and is a popular street food in Marathwada.
- **Tambda Rassa:** Tambda Rassa is a spicy red curry made with mutton, onions, tomatoes, and a blend of spices. It is typically served with bhakri or rice.
- **Varan Bhaat:** Varan Bhaat is a lentil and rice dish that is typically eaten for lunch or dinner. It is made with toor dal and served with steamed rice.
- **Amti:** Amti is a lentil-based curry that is typically served with rice. It is made with toor dal and flavored with tamarind, jaggery, and a blend of spices.
- **Sol Kadhi:** Sol Kadhi is a refreshing drink made with kokum, coconut milk, and spices. It is typically served as a palate cleanser after a meal.
- **Kande Pohe:** Kande Pohe is a popular breakfast dish made with flattened rice (poha), onions, peanuts, and spices. It is typically served with tea or coffee.
- **Thalipeeth:** Thalipeeth is a multigrain flatbread made with a blend of flours such as jowar, bajra, and rice flour.
- **Shengdana Chi Chutney:** A spicy peanut chutney that is made with roasted peanuts, spices, and tamarind.
- **Dal Khichdi:** A simple and comforting dish made with rice, lentils, and spices, often served with ghee, pickle, and papad.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Marathwada's cuisine is a unique blend of local ingredients, flavors, and cooking techniques. The cuisine is characterized by its simplicity, use of millets, lentils, and vegetables, and the bold flavors of spices and herbs. Marathwada's cuisine offers a range of vegetarian and non-vegetarian

dishes that are loved by the locals and tourists alike. The cuisine reflects the region's history, traditions, and customs, and it is an important aspect of Marathwada's culture and heritage. The popularity of Marathwada's cuisine has spread beyond the region, and it has gained recognition and appreciation in other parts of Maharashtra and India.

References

1. Tiwale, Sachin (2010). "Foodgrain vs Liquor: Maharashtra under Crisis"
2. Sen, Colleen Taylor (2014). Food culture in India.
3. Singh, K.S. (2004). Maharashtra (first ed.). Mumbai: Popular Prakashan`
4. Chapman, Pat (2007). India–food & cooking : the ultimate book on Indian cuisine
5. Barve, Mangala; Translator: Datar, Snehalata. Annapurna.
6. Ganapathi, M. (2018). Traditional food habits in Marathwada Region, Maharashtra. *International Journal of Home Science*, 4(1), 157-162.
7. Bapat, A., & Joshi, R. (2015). A study of traditional food practices and dietary patterns of Marathwada Region. *Indian Journal of Nutrition*, 2(1), 21-27.
8. Deshpande, P. S., & Karnik, P. S. (2016). Food culture of Maharashtra with special reference to Marathwada. In R. K. Mishra (Ed.), *Traditional knowledge on the food culture of India* (pp. 171-181). New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
9. Khader, V., & Shewale, S. (2018). Food culture and culinary practices of Marathwada Region, Maharashtra. *Journal of Food Research*, 7(6), 1-13.