



Photo: Mary

The **magic** *of* **mango**

THE PIQUANT TASTE OF RAW MANGO STIMULATES OUR TASTE BUDS

AND PROTECTS US FROM THE HARSH SUMMER HEAT

by **Naini Setalvad**

Every summer, year after year, we eagerly await the saffron-coloured king of fruits – the mango. Greedily we gobble it down. Do we ever think that there is a law of nature which the body's instinct follows? The universe has its wisdom, and that is why each fruit grows during a specific season, and human beings automatically crave that particular produce.

As the temperature soars, the streets are filled with pedlars selling raw mango sprinkled with salt and chilli powder. From childhood, I have watched my grandmother,

mom, aunts, and neighbours head towards the market to choose different kinds of raw mangoes. All the kitchens got busy cutting the raw mango, marinating it to make pickles. For immediate gratification while the pickle is marinating, chopped pieces of mango sprinkled with yummy Gujarati methi masala or just simple red chilli powder would appear on the table. We rolled them in our rotis, in bread, and mixed them with our rice and ghee. Our pockets had pieces of the sweetened sour aam papad or sun-dried mango marinated with salt. We mer-



RAW MANGO PANHA (SIX GLASSES)

Made with fresh raw mangoes, abundant in the summer months, kayree (raw mango) panha is from the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat in Western India. It is a sweet-sour-spicy drink! This recipe makes six tall glasses.

Ingredients:

4 medium-sized raw green mangoes
 200 gm jaggery powder
 2 cups water
 1 tbsp coarsely ground black rock salt
 1 tsp freshly ground pepper
 2 tbsp aniseed/fennel seeds ground coarsely
 2 tbsp cumin seeds roasted and ground coarsely
 chilled water
 crushed ice

sprigs of mint to garnish

Method:

Wash, peel and grate the raw mangoes. Mix the mangoes, jaggery and water in a deep saucepan and boil till the mangoes are soft.

Put this mixture into a food processor and blend till smooth.

Put the blended mixture back into the saucepan and keep on a medium flame.

Add the remaining ingredients and cook for another 20 minutes.

Take off from the fire and allow to cool completely.

Pour into glasses, dilute with a little chilled water if needed, mix well and add crushed ice.

rily sucked on these all day. The summer dry winds and the scorching sun never bothered us. After roaming all day, a glass of panha or kerī bafla soothed our dry throats and quenched our thirst.

We often regret the fact that mangoes are available only in the summer. But we never seem to realise why it is so. Do we ever wonder why the heat did not get to us? The reason – the raw mango and its amazing nutritive qualities, which helps to protect us from sunstrokes. The high vitamin C content is the best antidote for nausea and dizziness during summer. Salt and sugar goes low due to excessive sweating and an imbalance of electrolytes occurs. The mango panha, made with a combination of raw mango, cumin powder, rock salt and jaggery is a delicious

way to restore the electrolyte balance. These simple day-to-day drinks and foods should be treated like heirlooms, preserved and passed down from generation to generation. The high vitamin C content increases immunity, protects against anaemia, cholera and TB. Vitamin C aids in absorption of iron, and helps in the metabolism of fat.

Aamchur powder sprinkled on our chats, salads and fruit is naturally high in vitamin C. It's simply raw mango, sun dried and pounded. Not a thought given to its value. Compare it to gold dust in summer months.

Ever thanked God for the magical mango? ☺

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