

ORNAMENTAL BENGALI CUISINE AS A STARTER IN BENGALI DISH: A SIGN OF ART**Prof. Dr. Dhrubo Jyoti Sen***

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Article Received on 21/12/2022

Article Revised on 11/01/2023

Article Accepted on 31/01/2023

ABSTRACT

Gohona bori or naksha bori are ornamented sun-dried dumplings made with soaked moth beans, a particular kind of lentils used for its viscosity. Originating in the villages of Tamluk of east Midnapur (West Bengal), Gohona bori, designed in the form of paisleys, ornaments, or flowers, constituted a staple of this specific region. But artists like Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose were so fascinated with the concept of Gohona bori that they popularized it throughout Bengal and also contributed to its design with other unconventional motifs. Gohona bori acquired the status of fine art when Rabindranath Tagore expressed his desire to preserve images of Gohona bori in the art department (Kala Bhavan) of Viswa Bharati University. Even though it is not a particularly easy thing to make, I wanted to blog about Gohona bori because it effectively dismantles the curry myth by showing that in the face of colonization and commercialization, Bengali cuisine has been able to retain its authenticity by keeping its regional identity intact.

KEYWORDS: Gohona bori, Naksha bori, Ornamental cuisine.**INTRODUCTION**

Gohona Bori is a dried dal dumpling. It is popular in Bengali cuisine. It is a well-known food item in Purba Medinipur. It is also known as Naksha Bori. It is made

with black lentil, Poppy seed and various spices. In 2016, IIT Kharagpur applied to get the geographical Indication for Gohona Bori.

**Figure-1: West Bengal districts.**

History: Gohona Bori can be stored in airtight containers and can be served after deep frying in oil along with Rice. This Bengali Daler Bori Combo pack consists of 5 types of Daler Boris namely Kalai Daler Bori (100 Grams), Moosur Daler Bori (100 Grams), Mooong Daler Bori (100 Grams) and Hing Bori (100 Grams) and Posto Bori (100 Grams). It is an age-old dish of Bengal. Before the arrival of the British in India, poppy seed was not used in Gohona Bori. After the Battle of Palashi, the British discovered a market of illegal opium in China. British forced the farmers of the Rarh region of Bengal to cultivate poppy and extorting large amounts of opium from them into China. Poppy

seeds were dropped after the opiate was extracted. In the past, poppy seeds became the cooking material of Bankura, Birbhum, Bardhaman and Midnapore districts. Thus the poppy seeds are used in Gohona Bori in Midnapore. In 1930, Seba Maiti, a student of Shantiniketan presented Gohona Bori to Rabindranath Tagore which was made by her mother, Hirnmayi Debi, and grandmother, Sheratakumari Debi. Tagore was so attracted to Bori that he wrote them a letter seeking permission to preserve the photographs of Gohona Bori at the Art Building of Shantiniketan. As a result, Gohona Bori gained popularity as a sign of art. Rabindranath Tagore considered it to be an art.



Figure-2: Gohona Bori.

So he considered the thought of baking it or eating it was considered an act of destruction. He noted a similarity with historical artwork and arranged an exhibition. Nandalal Bose described it as a jewel of the Bengali mother's jewellery box. He expressed his desire to publish a book on it. Gohona Bori were exhibited in the 59th session of Indian National Congress held in Kalyani in 1954. In 1990, the West Bengal government took part

in a food festival organized by the women of Tamluk's Gohona Bori maker. They prepared Gohona Bori in front of an audience of thousands in Kolkata. In 1995 a Gohona Bori marketing group was established in Tamluk. Gohona Bori can be stored in airtight containers and can be served after deep frying in oil along with Rice.



Figure-3: Gohona Bori with Bengali Dish [Shot from Agantuk movie of Satyajit Ray].

Preparation: Gohona Boris are being made Urad dal bori is a small sundried cones of paste made of urad dal. Bori or dried lentil dumplings or little pellets of lentil paste are added in various vegetarian dishes in Bengali cuisine. Prime ingredients used are Cowpea, Postodana

Poppyseed and various types of Spices with Postodana Poppy seeds as its base. It is so delicate & unique that Rabindranath Tagore got so attracted that he preserved photographs of Goyna Bori in the art building of Shantiniketan.

Each cook chooses their own design. Triangles, circles and squares are common along with other geometric designs such as shells, lotus, cats, cactus, peacock, owls, poultry and butterflies.

Equipment: Piping bag with thin tip.

Ingredients: 2 cups split black gram/urad/biuli dal, 2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 cup poppy seeds, canola or vegetable oil for deep frying

Instructions: Soak the lentils in water for at least 12 hours. Drain water from soaked dal and make a fine paste using little or no water. Beat the lentil paste and salt in a large bowl until the mixture is light and fluffy. To test if the mixture is ready, take a spoonful of the paste and drop it in a bowl of water. It is ready if it floats. Fill a piping bag with the paste. Sprinkle poppy seeds on a greased cookie sheet. Piping will be impossible if the lentil paste is runny. Make sure that the patterns are not too delicate and that the edges are thick enough so they don't break while frying.



Figure-4: Fried Gohona Bori.

CONCLUSION

Gohona Bori: One of Bengal's oldest traditions of edible art. Made primarily in the Purba Medinipur (East Midnapore) region, in areas like Tamluk, Mahishadal, Satahata and Panskura, these iterations of the humble bori are a work of art, piped out to look like ornaments. There are designs of necklaces, tairas, and earrings as well as paisley and floral motifs. While bori can be made from various lentils including masoor and matar dal, and even vegetables like ash gourd, cauliflower, bottle gourd and radish, they are usually made with a batter of biuli dal (black gram or urad dal) and spices. For gohona bori, the batter is then piped on a plate of poppy seeds or posto and dried under the winter sun. The journey of the gohona bori to a wider stage of appreciation is often attributed to the Tagore family. In 1930, Seba Maity, resident of Mahishadal in Medinipur and a student at Shantiniketan, presented to Rabindranath Tagore gohona bori made by her mother Hiranmayi Devi and grandmother Sharat Kumari Devi. Drawn in by the artwork, Tagore sought permission to preserve photographs of the condiment at Visva Bharati's fine arts department, Kala Bhavan. His nephew, Abanindranath also introduced animal motifs like deer, elephant, fish, and butterfly to the designs of naksha bori. In her book *Culinary Culture in Colonial India*, Utsa Ray remarks, "the way gohona bori was praised by Rabindranath Tagore, his nephew Abanindranath Tagore, and Abanindranath's disciple Nandalal Bose... speaks much about its transformation into a fine art." Nandalal Basu even described them as "jewel[s] found in the broken

box of mother Bengal." As Ray writes, "This fine art originated in Medinipur but it became a pride of all Bengal."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author **Prof. Dr. Dhrubo Jyoti Sen** is thankful to his BPharm third year student **Soumya Chakraborti** who has given idea to add caption of *Gohona Bori* shot from last film *Agantuk* [1991] by Satyajit Ray (2 May 1921 – 23 April 1992) who was an Indian director, screenwriter, documentary filmmaker, author, essayist, lyricist, magazine editor, illustrator, calligrapher and music composer. The great legend was Padma Shri (1958), Padma Bhushan (1965), Padma Vibhushan (1976), Commander of the Legion of Honour (1987) & Bharat Ratna (1992).

REFERENCE

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gohona_Bori