

# Recipes for Romance

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## Monsoon Recipes from a Model

by Falguni Kothari

I don't know about you, but monsoons stir an immense romantic torpor in me. You may ask *what doesn't*? And you would be right. I mean, I write romance novels for a living—I hardly need seasonal inspiration to be “in that mood.” But moods do play an important role in life. Who doesn't recall with smiling fondness, Kishore Kumar and Madhubala in *Ek Ladki Bheegi Bhaagi si* or the Big B and Smita Patil in *Aaj Rapat Jaayen (Namak Halaal)* or the Badshah of Romance and Kajol in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*? So, when it rains, other than breaking into a Bollywood-style song and dance in the backyard with my personal hero and his two left feet, I like nothing better than to curl up on a sofa and read or watch or daydream about romance, a hot mug of *masala tea* and a plate of crunchy somethings (at times unhealthily fried) within reach.

As would Beauty Mathur, the heroine of my just-released Mills and Boon romance *Bootie and the Beast*, with one exception:

she advocates munching on low-cal, healthy munchies. She's a supermodel, you see, and thus a bit neurotic about what she puts into her mouth.

After much debate, we have finally agreed on these quick (why waste a second more than necessary in the kitchen?) and healthy meals we'd recommend for many a lazy, rainy day:

### 1) The Classic Bhurji:

This is a low calorie, nutritious dish that can be eaten with *chapatis* or as a filling in sandwiches, wraps or samosas etc. (Use soya or *paneer* as per your discerning palate.)

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup soya granules (or diced *paneer*)
- 1 big onion
- 1 chilly
- Pinch of coriander
- 1 tsp oil
- ½ tsp garam masala
- Pinch of turmeric powder
- Pinch of salt



#### Method:

1. Wash soy granules and soak in water (or dice the *paneer* into little pieces.)
2. Put oil in a pan and heat.
3. Add chopped onion, chilly, garam masala and haldi.
4. Add soaked soy or *paneer*.
5. Add salt and mix well.

6. Cook until soy is soft.
7. Use as desired: in wraps, sandwiches, samosas or plain.

## 2) Samolina Pancakes:

A nutritious option to the sweet and calorie-heavy flour (maida) pancakes.

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup semolina (rawa or suji)
- ¼ cup crushed peanuts
- ¼ cup shredded cabbage
- ¼ cup tri-color peppers, chopped
- ¼ cup carrots, shredded
- ¼ cup bean sprouts (optional)
- ¼ cup spring onion, chopped
- ½ cup curds
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp Eno's fruit salt
- salt and pepper to taste
- Oil for cooking



### Method:

1. Wash and soak the semolina in curds and 2 tbl spns of water for a few minutes.
2. Add the crushed peanuts, salt and pepper and keep batter aside.
3. In a bowl, mix the cabbage, tri-color peppers, carrots, bean sprouts, spring onion, lemon juice and salt and pepper. Keep aside.

4. In  $\frac{1}{4}$  portion of the batter, put in  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp of fruit salt and mix lightly.
5. Take  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the topping mixture and mix it in.
6. Pour mixture on a greased and heated non-stick pan in a thick pancake and cook for some time.
7. Then turn pancake over and cook the other side.
8. Repeat with remaining batter and toppings to get 3 more pancakes.
9. Serve with mint (*pudina*) chutney.

### 3) Warm Corn Salad:

Last but not least, a monsoon menu cannot be complete without corn. This recipe makes for a great dip for nachos. It can also be eaten on its own and is a healthy alternative to the buttery, boiled corn in a cup sold in shopping malls.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 boiled corn of the cob
- 2 diced peppers (mix of red, yellow and green)
- 1 cup of cherry tomatoes (can also be replaced with diced regular tomatoes)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup diced raw mango (optional, if you're looking for a little tanginess)
- 1 cup chopped avocado
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped coriander
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Season with salt and pepper



**Method:**

1. Mix all the ingredients well and serve hot.

The great thing about cooking is that you can embellish the ingredients as to your own tastes and limitations. Hope you enjoy trying out these recipes this monsoon season.

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