

SNACK

Easy to prepare chaat masala brightens flavor of fruits, vegetables

Satisfying, snackable meals that do not require cooking are wonderful to have around. This summer, fruit chaat has become my go-to snack.

Chaat, which means “to lick,” is a family of savory, crunchy and slightly sweet snacks that are served streetside from India to the Caribbean. They can range from a complex chaat with a dozen components — think lentil fritters or potato cakes with yogurt and herb chutneys — to the simplicity of a plate of fruit sprinkled with a few key spices.

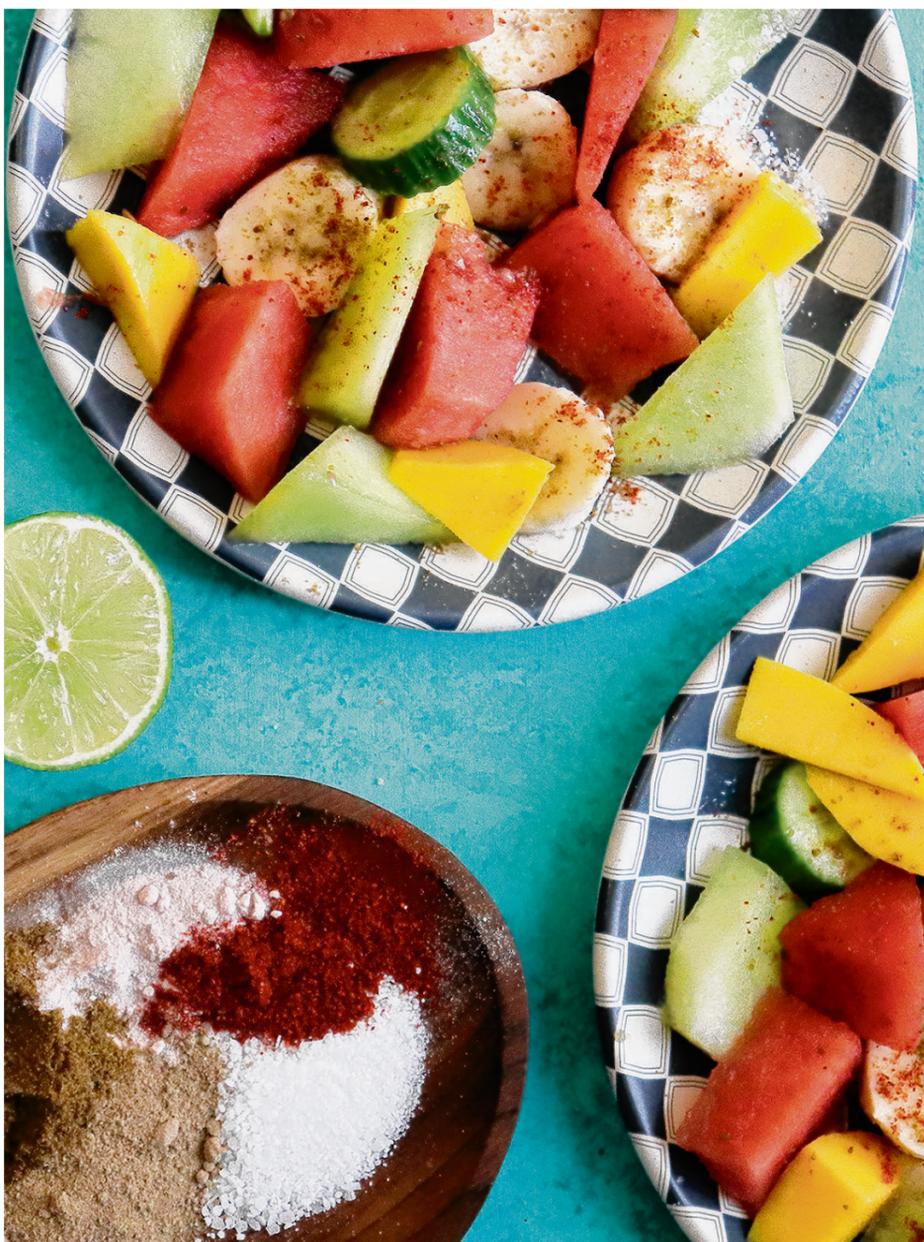
In New Delhi, a sweet fruit chaat vendor resides near the famous Janpath street market. Depending on the time of year, his choice of fruits and vegetables varies. He rides his bike every morning with a fresh load of fruits and vegetables, handing out fruit chaat all day until his stock is gone. Mango, melons, cucumber, papaya, pineapple, apples or bananas are cubed and laid out on a banana leaf plate and sprinkled with chaat masala. Sometimes, strawberries will show up in the mix. A squeeze of lime and he hands it to you with a smile.

If it can be eaten raw, any vegetable or fruit is fair game for fruit chaat. Usually, chaat masala is a combination of toasted ground cumin, chile powder, amchur (dried mango), salt and more. Black salt, a sulfurous rock salt native to India, is a common but not essential component of chaat masala. It's an explosion of flavors — give it a try this summer with the fruits and vegetables at hand.

Anita Jaisinghani is the chef-owner of Pondicheri restaurant in Houston. Her website is india948.com. Her first cookbook, “Masala” (Ten Speed Press), publishes this month. Email: anita@pondicheri.com.



Anita Jaisinghani
HOUSTON HARVEST



Ajna Jai / Contributor

DELHI FRUIT CHAAT

- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon black salt
- 2 teaspoons toasted ground cumin
- 1½ tablespoons amchur
- 2 teaspoons red chile powder
- 1 banana
- 1 small wedge of a seedless watermelon
- 1 small wedge honeydew melon
- 1 mango, peeled
- 2 Persian cucumbers
- 1 lime

Instructions: Toss the two salts, cumin, amchur and red chile powder together and store in an airtight container away from light. The chaat masala will keep for up to a year.

To make the chaat, cut all the fruits into wedges and arrange on a large platter or 4 small plates.

Sprinkle chaat masala generously on top, squeeze lime juice and serve immediately.

NOTES & VARIATIONS

• There are no standards for how to make chaat, or any masala, and most cooks in India have their own version of chaat masala or buy a pre-made one, which is available at most Southeast Asian grocers.

• Dried pomegranate powder or sumac are also sour powders and can replace amchur in chaat masala. If you do not have black salt, simply replace with sea salt.

• It is best to chill all the fruits before cutting them.

Serves 4

From Anita Jaisinghani

SAVORY

Chilies and turmeric boost 20-minute shrimp stir-fry

By Christopher Kimball

MILK STREET

Weeknight ease married to plump texture and briny sweetness. It's why shrimp is one of our staple go-to dinner solutions. Simply stir-fry a few aromatics and spices until fragrant, toss in the shrimp, and dinner is on the table in 20 minutes.

We had that in mind for a “dry” but intensely flavored stir-fry recipe. Drawing on the flavors of Malaysia and Indonesia, cuisines that blend Indian, Chinese and Southeast Asian influences, this stir-fry features earthy turmeric, fresh chilies and curry leaves.

Curry leaves have an inimitable flavor that's citrusy yet also savory. Include them if you can (they're sold in most Indian grocery stores), but if not available, the stir-fry is still great without. You also could substitute dill for a different but still delicious flavor. For those with timid palates, use the smaller amount of chili and be sure to seed them.

A single tablespoon of fish sauce is the only liquid, but it ties the dish together with a savory hit of umami. We like sprinkling the finished dish with chopped cilantro if it's on hand, and serving it with steamed rice.



Milk Street via Associated Press

STIR-FRIED TURMERIC SHRIMP WITH SHALLOTS AND CHILIES

Time: 20 minutes

- 1½ pounds extra-large (21/25 per pound) shrimp, peeled, deveined and patted dry
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons neutral oil
- 8 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 3 large shallots, sliced into thin rings (about 2 cups)
- 8 to 10 curry leaves (optional)
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2 to 4 Fresno or serrano chilies, stemmed, seeded and chopped or Thai bird chilies, stemmed but kept whole or dried arbol chilies, broken in half
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce

Instructions: Season the shrimp with salt and pepper. In a 12-inch skillet over medi-

um, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the garlic, shallots and curry leaves (if using); cook, stirring, until slightly softened and lightly browned. Add the turmeric and cook, stirring, just until fragrant and the oil takes on a yellowish hue. Increase to high and add the shrimp. Cook, stirring often, until lightly browned but not fully cooked. Add the chilies, fish sauce and ¼ cup water. Cook, stirring often, until the shrimp are lightly sauced and opaque throughout. If desired and if used, remove and discard the curry leaves and whole chilies. Season with salt and pepper.

Optional garnish: Fresh cilantro or sliced scallions or lime wedges or chopped roasted cashews or a combination

Serves 4

From Christopher Kimball's Milk Street

BITES BY GREG MORAGO

The Annie gets new chef

Brian Sutton, former executive sous chef at Calistoga Ranch, an Auberge Resort in Napa Valley, Calif., has been named executive chef at the Annie, taking over for James Beard Award-winning



Robert Del Grande, who announced his semiretirement in May. Sutton, whose résumé also includes executive chef posts at Lake Placid Lodge and the Point Resort in New York, has updated the menu at the Uptown restaurant with dishes such as octopus, duck leg confit, lobster salad, burrata salad and crab cake Benedict.



Hopdoddy

Hopdoddy opens in The Woodlands

Hopdoddy Burger Bar has opened in The Woodlands at 2417 Research Forest, in the former Grub Burger space (Grub Burger was acquired by Hopdoddy in January). The 4,023-square-foot restaurant has been redesigned; the menu will be Hopdoddy's full lineup of burgers (made with ethically raised proteins), hand-cut fries, craft beer and spirits.

Tito's in a Can launches

Tito's Handmade Vodka has created a reusable, limited-edition can designed to keep your cocktails cold. The 16-ounce double-steel-walled insulated can is sold empty; you fill it with your favorite spirits and mixers. The can sells for \$20, with all net proceeds going to nonprofits. It's available online at titosinacan.com.



Tito's



Tasting Room

Tasting Room to close

Two years after shuttering its Uptown Park location, the Tasting Room has announced it will close its last remaining restaurant and wine bar at CityCentre, 818 Town and Country Blvd., on Aug. 27. Owner Lasco Enterprises said that its landlord is not renewing its lease at CityCentre, spelling the end of the brand that was a playground for wine lovers for 20 years.

Got food news? Email food@chron.com.