

#TRIED & TASTED

Indulge in this unique rice dish today

Culturally, butterfly pea integrates into culinary traditions across Southeast Asia, not only adding colour but also potential health benefits to dishes and beverages



Do we all like to try different dishes every once in a while. So, how about indulging in a unique preparation today? Forget white, red, or black rice. Now is the time to try *blue rice*. Yes, that's the recipe we are going to share with you here. All thanks to blogger Pratima Pradhan, who shared the recipe for blue rice or *Butterfly Pea Ghee Rice* on Instagram.

But before we dive into the recipe, let's understand more about the key ingredient, butterfly pea, scientifically referred to as *Clitoria ternatea*, which holds a paramount position in the rich cultural and medicinal heritage of Southeast Asia, spanning nations such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Culturally, the butterfly pea integrates into culinary traditions across Southeast Asia, not only adding colour but also potential health benefits to dishes and beverages. In Thai cuisine, for instance, it is said that butterfly pea flowers are brewed into the visually captivating *'Nam Dok Anchan'* tea, believed to offer health benefits alongside its aesthetic allure.

Blue rice, coloured naturally by this flower, is healthier than rice flavoured with artificial colours, which can be harmful. Similarly, the naturally blue or purple rice from the Northeast or Thailand is an unpolished variety that retains a high fibre content, making it easy to digest and beneficial for metabolism.

Butterfly pea boasts a robust nutritional profile, with high levels of flavonoids like anthocyanins, contributing to its vibrant blue colour and potential health benefits. These antioxidants play a pivotal role in combating oxidative stress and inflammation, potentially mitigating the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer.

In addition to its nutritional prowess, butterfly pea's medicinal value is underscored by its anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, and antimicrobial properties, offering relief from conditions like arthritis and supporting overall immune health.

Furthermore, its purported cognitive-enhancing properties hold promise in enhancing memory and cognitive function, with emerging research suggesting neuroprotective effects.

Ghee, added in the recipe, is rich in vitamins A, E, and



D, which can aid in digestion and improve nutrient absorption. *Basmati rice* is famous for its aromatic scent and fluffy texture. It is a great source of energy, protein, and carbohydrates, adding that with cashews are a good source of protein and essential minerals, while raisins offer natural sweetness and are packed with iron, potassium, and antioxidants.

- Blue rice ingredients**
- 20 pieces - Butterfly pea flower
 - 2tbsp - Ghee
 - 1tbsp - Khada masala
 - 1tbsp - Salt
 - 1 cup - Basmati rice
 - 3 cups - Water
 - 10 - Cashews
 - 10 - Raisins
 - 1 cup - Chopped onions
 - 2 - Bay leaves
 - 2 - Chillies, chopped

- Preparation**
1. Wash the blue pea flowers.
 2. Take out the stalk.
 3. In a clay pot, add rice and wash it. Soak for 15 minutes.
 4. In a clay pot, add water and the flowers. Boil. Take out the flowers, which have released its colour. Add washed rice.
 5. Cover and cook the blue rice. Turn off the flame, once cooked.
 6. Add ghee.
 7. Add ghee, khada masala, bay leaves, cashews, raisins, onions, chillies, and asafoetida in a different clay pot. Now, add the prepared rice.
 8. Enjoy!



Of Poems, poet and life

PART:3

Malashri Lal's poems from her book *'Mandalas of Time'* are like a string of pearls. Each distinct and yet each one is a part of narrative that speaks of the experiences, perspectives and the emotions of the poet. Malashri says that when she writes, her poems flow on their own.



Shailaza Singh
Published author,
poet and a YouTuber

Malashri Lal's childhood was a riot of different cultures. Her experiences in Jaipur's *Parda clad world* were starkly different from those in *Shanti Niketan*, where music and art were made to flow freely for everybody. But such contrasting worlds have only helped shape and enhance her poems and her perspective. In this candid chat, she talks about her connection with Tagore and more.

What is your connection with Rabindranath Tagore?

My father's side of the family is from Shanti Niketan and somewhat linked to Tagore. My mother's side of the family is from Kolkata. They are very urban people. My father's uncle, Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee was a very well-known scholar. He was Tagore's disciple and official biographer. Much of the Mukherjee clan had settled in Shanti Niketan, right from the time Shanti Niketan had been set up. They had rows of plots in one particular area of Shanti Niketan. My uncle was very fond of

my father and had kept aside a plot for him. He wanted him to relocate to Shanti Niketan after retirement. However, my mother flatly refused as she was a total urbanite, who loved parties and beautiful clothes, jewellery, fun and games, travel. She certainly enjoyed the good life. My father, on the other hand, was this scholarly, serious man, who was nicknamed 'the walking encyclopaedia', who just knew everything.

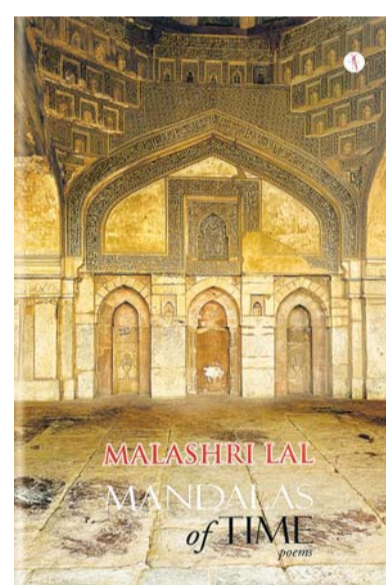
It is believed that children are a combination of their parents. How much of your father and mother are you?

I think I am a bit of both. Like my father, I was a good student and I continue to keep my reading and writing as my principal occupation. I have written about 21 books. I enjoy studying for the sake of studying and not because someone will give me something for studying. Like my mother, I thoroughly enjoy a good get-together and party.

What were your growing up beliefs?

We are *Bramho Samajis*, which is mostly a reformist *Hindu Samaj*. It believes in women's liberation, education, equality. So, we grew up with a very liberal environment at home, which was deeply rooted in culture but also had great respect for all other cultures, religions and places. I have a very homogeneous bunch of friends, who come from different backgrounds.

#BOOKS



Where do your poems come from?

A lot of my poems come from this fragmented identity that I have. At one time, I used to worry about it because if anyone asked me where was I from, I never had an answer. People would say, they are from *Rawari* or *Ajmer* or *Udaipur*, but I never had an answer because I couldn't honestly say that I was from Jaipur. I was in Jaipur because my father was in Jaipur. I couldn't say Kolkata or Shanti Niketan because I had never lived or studied there. So, I would say I am from India. But Delhi helped me a lot. It was in Delhi that I realized that every body was from somewhere else. I started feeling far more comfortable in Delhi because there no one would say the kind of things or answers that I would get in Jaipur. If someone would ask a person from Delhi about where they were from, they would reply without a qualm, that their grandfather was from Pakistan but then, they shifted to Amritsar and now, they are settled in Delhi. So, it was in Delhi that I developed a 'multiple identity' like the people there. But my poems are a lot about this 'fragmented identity', so, somewhere, I talked about the *'Poshak'* worn by *Rajasthanis* and the *'thaan'* worn by the *Bengali* widows.

When did you start writing poems?

I started writing poems from the age of 12. I used to write them in the back pages of my notebooks and never showed it to anyone. I wrote poetry for years and this is my 'first collection of poetry', which has come out just when I am 74 years old. I have learnt that it is never too late to begin. Slowly, I started showing some of my poetry to my friends, who were amazed with it

things that I had not seen in my own poetry. I chose 75 of those poems for publishing.

What made you write this poem 'Crushed'?

This was a very brief poem. I had written it for a friend in America, who is a painter and a writer. She was doing a digital exhibition and needed very short poems. So, I sent her this poem which was mostly about how young women are supposed to be.

Crushed

"Words crushed into silence
Lips sealed against utterance
Eyes hooded guardedly
Body cringing into wrinkled tightness
Is this what elders called
'Maidenly virtue?'"

You have also written another poem 'Escape' on similar lines.

We were the first generation of women, who actually started working outside home. Our mothers were homemakers, not that I look down upon the homemakers, but our generation was the first where women were going out of the house. So, there were assumptions that the women had to not only work outside the home but also attend to the kids and take care of the household, too. In our generation, there were two sides of a working woman's life. One was the excitement of earning your own money and doing whatever you wanted to do with it and the other side was also the challenge of doing a professional job with respect and dignity. So, in a way, it was an escape from domesticity and all the assumptions that went with it. At another level, it came with its own demands. So, I don't have an answer to why or when that kind of an attitude changed, but I do know that in our generation (I am talking of the generation that came into teaching in the '70s-'80s in Delhi University), there was a certain assumption that women can only do 'this much' and many of us were fighting that assumption at a cost to ourselves, no doubt. Whatever it was, it also meant educating men. Many of the men were perfectly unaware, nobody had bothered to explain these things to them. I think my stars that I was very lucky in this regard. I had an extremely supportive husband and very understanding parents and in-laws.

Escape

"The toxic air of a false home
Turns oppressive again and again
In about four weeks
Unseasonal yet so predictable
So much of a pattern.
She runs away, yet hardly moves.
Packs and leaves her home
The sorrow of neglect lodged
in a dark room
Struck dumb by the quiet
controlling powers.
Then she returns
Unlocks the suitcase while
shutting her heart
Sends clothes to the laundry
Lifts the empty case to the
upper shelf
Her soul secretly yearning
For the next great escape."

What made you write 'Bougainvillea'? Is this poem also about migrants?

No, 'Bougainvillea' is a metaphor for 'colonial control' over India. When I wrote it, I didn't imagine that it would get so much of attention. I wrote it because I used to see bougainvillea all over the place. Of course, I am interested in flowers and trees. When I looked more at the bougainvillea, I realised that it was an 'imported' plant. How did it spread so much? When I wrote the poem, I didn't consciously create it as a 'poem about colonialism' but that is what it became. It often happens with most poems. When I write a poem, I am not intending to write

ing it in a certain way, or suggest a certain thing but it just flows. The ending of the poem, "A traveller who landed, on our shores and conquered it with careless abundance," is not just true of the bougainvillea but is also true of the 'British'. The colonial rule suppressed a lot of our local culture, belief and practices.

Bougainvillea

"Bougainvillea cascades in parks, shops, homes, Metro, fences,
Clawing, creeping, clinging To surfaces
Crushing them under a weight of thorns.
Disguised as flowers
The Bougainvillea is a migrant tree, blossom and thorn
That took root in our land
And spread its deception Of beauty.
The barb is hidden
The leaves play with colour
Branches spread wantonly
Our land is host to this migrant
And its imperious authority,
The gentle chamei vine is shattered
The harsingar is pushed to the corner
I gape at the invincible Bougainvillea
A traveller who landed
On our shores and conquered it with careless abundance."
To be continued

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#HEALTH

Why you must never drink fruit juice on an empty stomach

The belief that *fruit juice* is a perfect morning health drink likely stems from its association with vitamins and antioxidants



Many people reach for *fruit juice* first thing in the morning, believing it's a healthy way to kick-start their day. However, drinking *fruit juice* on an empty stomach can have detrimental effects on health. Let's explore why skipping solid food and gulping down juice might have unintended consequences, and discover healthier alternatives.



The Downside of Empty-Stomach Juicing

Dental Erosion: Fruit juice's acidity can harm tooth enamel, increasing the risk of cavities. The acids present in fruit juices weaken the enamel of the teeth, making them more susceptible to damage.
Blood Sugar Roller coaster: The concentrated sugar in juice can cause a blood sugar spike followed by a crash, leaving you tired and hungry sooner.
Nutrient Imbalance: Juice lacks the fibre present in whole fruit, which helps regulate digestion and prevents blood sugar spikes. The belief that fruit juice is a perfect morning health drink likely stems from its association with vitamins and antioxidants. A better time to drink fruit juice may be alongside or after a meal.

Benefits of Drinking Juice at the Right Time

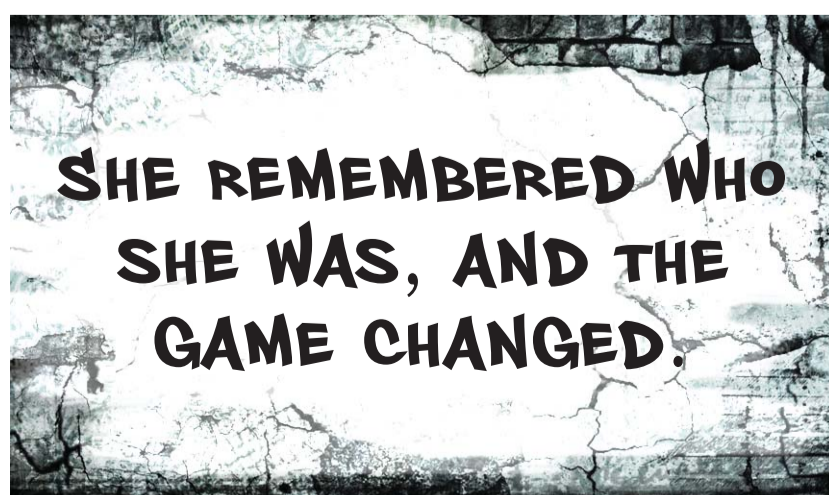
Enhanced Nutrition: Drinking fruit juice with a meal allows you to absorb its vitamins and minerals alongside other beneficial nutrients from your food.
Blood Sugar Management: Food can slow down sugar absorption from juice, potentially aiding blood sugar control, especially for diabetics.
Increased Satiety: Juice with a meal can add volume and flavour, promoting feelings of fullness and helping with weight management.
Dietary Diversity: Incorporating fruit juice into a balanced diet can boost your intake of essential nutrients.

Alternatives to Empty-Stomach Juicing

Smoothies: Blend whole fruits with yogurt or milk for a thicker, more satisfying drink with added protein or healthy fats.
Water with Lemon: A squeeze of lemon adds a refreshing touch without the concentrated sugar and acidity of pure juice. By being mindful of when you consume fruit juice and other beverages, you can maximise their benefits and minimise potential harm. Focus on a balanced breakfast, that includes whole foods, to provide sustained energy and essential nutrients for a healthy and productive day.

Alternatives in lieu of drinking a fruit juice first thing in the morning.
Whole Fruit: Enjoy a piece of whole fruit for fiber, vitamins, and long-lasting energy.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

