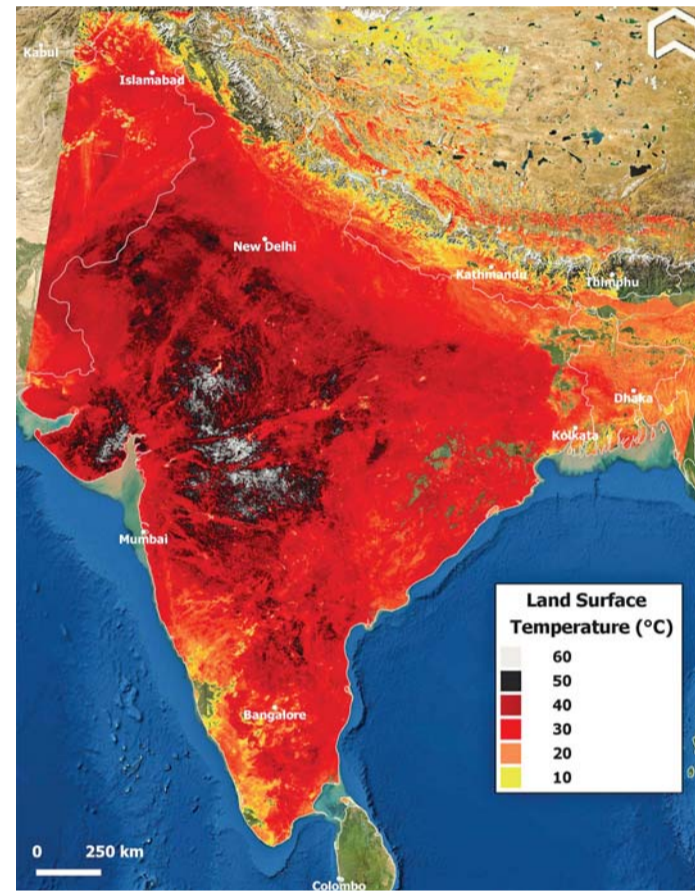


#WEATHER

India Braces for Intense Heatwave

Dry winds sweeping across the subcontinent are contributing to the rapid rise in temperatures. These winds reduce moisture in the air, making conditions harsher



India is currently facing an intense and early heatwave, with temperatures soaring across large parts of the country and expected to remain extremely high over the next two weeks. In many regions, daytime temperatures have already crossed 40-43°C, and forecasts suggest that some areas could see further increases, reaching as high as 45-48°C in the coming days.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the unusual spike in temperature is being driven by multiple factors. One of the primary reasons is the absence of western disturbances, weather systems that typically bring clouds, rainfall, and cooler conditions to northern India during this time of year. Without these disturbances, skies have remained largely clear, allowing direct solar radiation to heat the land more intensely.

In addition, dry winds sweeping across the subcontinent are contributing to the rapid rise in temperatures. These winds reduce moisture in the air, making conditions harsher and accelerating heat buildup during the daytime. As a result, several regions are recording temperatures that are 4-8°C above normal for this period. The impact is being felt most severely in states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and parts of South India. Cities in these regions have already reported temperatures exceeding 42-43°C, prompting authorities to issue heatwave alerts and advisories. These alerts warn residents of the potential health risks associated with prolonged exposure to extreme heat, including dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

Experts suggest that this pattern is an early indication of a hotter-than-normal summer ahead. Climate trends in recent years have shown an increase in both the frequency and intensity of heatwaves across India, and current conditions appear to align with those projections. The combination of rising baseline temperatures and persistent dry weather is expected to result in more frequent heatwave episodes in the weeks to come. Authorities are urging people to take precautions, such as staying hydrated, avoiding outdoor activities during peak afternoon hours, and checking on vulnerable populations like the elderly and children. As the heatwave continues to intensify, preparedness and awareness will be key to minimizing its impact. Overall, the current situation highlights the growing challenge of extreme weather in India, with rising temperatures posing serious risks to public health, agriculture, and daily life.

She Stuck It Out And Bore The Kings Of England



John Beaufort became Earl of Somerset.



Henry Beaufort became a cardinal.



Thomas Beaufort became Duke of Exeter.

Medieval England could tolerate noblemen having mistresses, that was practically expected. But the way John and Katherine conducted their relationship was different. He didn't hide her. He brought her to court. He acknowledged their children, four of them, born between 1373 and 1379, all given the surname Beaufort after one of John's castles in France. Their names: John, Henry, Thomas, and Joan Beaufort. All illegitimate. All openly acknowledged by one of England's most powerful nobles. John Beaufort became Earl of Somerset. Henry Beaufort became a cardinal and one of the most powerful churchmen in England. Thomas Beaufort became Duke of Exeter. Joan Beaufort married into Scottish royalty. John Beaufort's granddaughter was Margaret Beaufort. In 1457, at age thirteen, Margaret gave birth to a son: Henry Tudor.

● Bulbul Joshi

She was his mistress for 25 years while he was married to someone else, bore him four illegitimate children, and then he married her anyway, making her a duchess and her children descendants of the Tudor dynasty.

England, 1396. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the richest and most powerful nobleman in England, uncle to the king, stood before witnesses and married his mistress. Not a young mistress. Not a strategic alliance. His longtime lover, a woman he'd been sleeping with for over two decades while married to someone else.

Katherine Swynford was about 46 years old. She'd been John's mistress since her twenties. She'd borne him four children. She'd been publicly denounced, called a witch and a whore, blamed for corrupting one of England's most powerful men.

And now he was making her his wife. His duchess. One of the highest-ranking noblewomen in England.

It was one of the most scandalous marriages in medieval English history. Katherine came to England as a child, probably around 1369, when her father Paon de Roet, a herald and minor knight from Hainault, followed Queen Philippa to the English court.

Katherine and her sister Philippa (who would later marry the poet Geoffrey Chaucer) were brought up in the queen's household. Good education for girls from knightly families, but nothing remarkable. They were expected to make decent marriages to minor nobles and live quiet, respectable lives. Katherine did exactly that. Around 1366, she married Hugh Swynford, a knight in the service of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. John of Gaunt was King Edward

III's third surviving son, one of the most powerful men in England. He'd married Blanche of Lancaster in 1359, becoming Duke of Lancaster through that marriage. Blanche was lovely, well-born, wealthy. By all accounts, John loved her.

Katherine entered John's household as governess to his and Blanche's daughters. She was just one of many servants and attendants. Hugh was often away on military campaigns. Katherine managed the children, taught them, lived a quiet life in John's vast household.

Then, in 1368, Blanche died, probably of plague. John was devastated. Katherine was there. Grieving with him. Caring for his children who'd just lost their mother.

And something shifted. By 1371, it was clear: Katherine Swynford and John of Gaunt were lovers.

But here's the complication: In 1371, John married again. His second marriage was pure politics. Constance of Castile, daughter of the deposed King of Castile. The marriage gave John a claim to the Castilian throne, a claim he'd spend years and fortunes trying to pursue.

He married Constance for power. But he didn't stop sleeping with Katherine. Katherine's husband Hugh died around 1372. She was now a widow with children to support. John set her up with income, estates, a comfortable life. But she wasn't his wife, she was his mistress. Openly. Everyone knew.

And everyone was scandalized. Medieval England could tolerate noblemen having mistresses, that was practically expected. But the way John and Katherine conducted their relationship was different.

He didn't hide her. He brought her to court. He acknowledged their children, four of them, born between 1373 and 1379, all given the surname Beaufort after one of John's castles in France.

Their names: John, Henry, Thomas, and Joan Beaufort.

#HISTORY



Margaret Beaufort.



Henry Tudor.

All illegitimate. All openly acknowledged by one of England's most powerful nobles while he was married to someone else.

The church was furious. Moralists condemned them. Political enemies used the affair as ammunition, accusing John of being controlled by his mistress, calling Katherine a witch who'd enchanted him.

In 1381, during the Peasants' Revolt, rebels specifically targeted John of Gaunt's properties, and they called for Katherine Swynford to be burned as a witch and whore.

The political pressure became too intense. In 1381, John ended the affair. He sent Katherine away for thirteen years, they stayed apart.

During that time, John pursued his claim to Castile, traveling to Spain with his wife Constance, fighting campaigns, playing politics.

But he never forgot Katherine. In 1394, Constance of Castile died. John was finally free. Within two years, he married Katherine. Think about what that meant in 1396. John of Gaunt could have married anyone. He was 56 years old, immensely wealthy, uncle to King Richard II, one of the most powerful men in Europe.

He could have made a strategic alliance with a foreign princess. He could have married a young noblewoman and tried for more legitimate heirs. Instead, he married his 46-year-old former mistress. A

woman with no great family connections. A woman who'd been publicly denounced as a whore. A woman who'd already given him four illegitimate children.

He married her because he loved her. Because after 25 years, on and off, she was the person he wanted to spend the rest of his life with.

The marriage was shocking. But it was legal. And it transformed Katherine's life completely.

Overnight, Katherine Swynford went from scandal to respectability. From mistress to Duchess of Lancaster. One of the highest ranking women in England. Her four Beaufort children were still illegitimate, but John petitioned King Richard II to



John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford.

legitimize them. In 1397, Richard issued letters patent declaring the Beaufort children legitimate, with all rights of inheritance. Suddenly, John and Katherine's illegitimate children were legally noble. They could inherit. They could marry into aristocracy. They had status. There was one caveat: the legitimization specifically excluded them from the line of royal succession. They were legitimate, but they couldn't claim the throne. That restriction would become important later. John of Gaunt died in 1399. He'd been married to Katherine for only three years. But those three years changed everything. Katherine lived as Duchess of Lancaster until her death in 1403. She was buried in Lincoln Cathedral, not in scandal, but in honour.

Her children, the Beauforts, became major players in English politics. John Beaufort became Earl of Somerset. Henry Beaufort became a cardinal and one of the most powerful churchmen in England. Thomas Beaufort became Duke of Exeter. Joan Beaufort married into Scottish royalty.

And here's where it gets really interesting: John Beaufort's granddaughter was Margaret Beaufort. In 1457, at age thirteen, Margaret gave birth to a son: Henry Tudor.

That baby, descended from Katherine Swynford and John of Gaunt's illegitimate affair, would eventually become King Henry VII, founder of the Tudor dynasty.

Every English and British monarch from 1485 to 1603 was Katherine Swynford's descendant. Elizabeth I, Henry VIII. All of them traced their royal lineage through the Beaufort line, through the legitimized children of a medieval mistress.

Think about how wild that is. Katherine Swynford started as a governess. Became a scandalous mistress. Was denounced as a whore and a witch. Bore four illegitimate children. And ended up as

the ancestress of the Tudor dynasty. If John of Gaunt hadn't married her, the Beauforts wouldn't have been legitimized. If the Beauforts hadn't been legitimized, Margaret Beaufort wouldn't have had any claim to pass to her son. If Henry Tudor didn't have that Beaufort claim (however tenuous), he likely wouldn't have won support to challenge Richard III.

The entire Tudor dynasty, arguably England's most famous royal house, traces back to a medieval affair that scandalized England for decades. Katherine lived long enough to see her children established, respected, powerful. She died in 1403, buried with honours as Duchess of Lancaster. Not everyone gets a happy ending. Katherine did.

After 25 years as a mistress, enduring public condemnation, political attacks, accusations of witchcraft, she spent her final years as a respected duchess with legitimized children. Her story is remarkable not because it was typical (it absolutely wasn't), but because it shows how love, persistence, and sheer determination could occasionally crack open the rigid structures of medieval society. John of Gaunt had every political reason to abandon Katherine. He didn't. When he finally could marry her, he did, immediately.

Katherine had every reason to accept her position as mistress quietly. She didn't. She bore his children openly. She endured the scandal. And when he finally married her, she claimed her position as duchess without apology.

The next time you see a portrait of Henry VIII or Elizabeth I, remember: they existed because a medieval duke loved his mistress enough to marry her, and because that mistress was strong enough to endure decades of scandal without backing down.

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National Garlic Day!



Observed on April 19, National Garlic Day honours one of the world's oldest and most versatile ingredients, often called the 'stinking rose'. A member of the lily family, garlic has been used for over 7,000 years across global cuisines. Beyond its strong flavour, it's valued for medicinal benefits, including boosting immunity, reducing blood pressure, and offering antibiotic properties. Steeped in folklore, garlic was once believed to ward off evil spirits and bring courage. Today, the day is best marked by cooking garlic-rich dishes, sharing recipes, or even planting it, celebrating both its culinary charm and health benefits.

#INNOVATION

Kedali Transformed Idli

Idlis From Dal-Based Origins to Protein-Packed South Indian Staple



Idli, the soft, fluffy steamed cake that is a breakfast favorite across South India, is often thought of as a simple rice-based dish. However, the origins of idli are far older and more surprising, they were originally made from lentils (dal), not rice. Tracing its journey from early Southeast Asia to India reveals a fascinating story of culinary evolution, nutrition, and cultural exchange.

Early Origins: Dal-Based Idlis in Indonesia

Historical accounts suggest that idli-like preparations existed in Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia long before rice became the dominant ingredient in South India. In these early versions, a batter made of fermented chickpeas, black gram, or other lentils was steamed to create a soft, protein-rich cake. In Indonesia, a similar dish called 'kedali' or 'kedelai' (meaning soybean or legume-based cake) was common among local communities. The fermentation process not only improved digestibility but also added a mild tang and

preserved the dish for longer periods. The use of dal as the primary ingredient made these cakes nutritionally dense, especially in protein, which was vital for communities relying on vegetarian diets. The dish was portable, easy to cook over steam, and provided sustained energy for daily labourers and traders.

Introduction to India: The Chola Influence

It is believed that the Cholas, one of the great dynasties of South India (circa 9th-13th centuries), encountered these dal-based steamed cakes during their trade and military expeditions in Southeast Asia. They brought the idea back to the Indian subcontinent, where local ingredients and tastes began to influence the recipe.

Over time, rice was incorporated alongside dal to create a more balanced and voluminous batter. This adaptation made idlis lighter, fluffier, and easier to ferment. The combination of rice and lentils became standard in South Indian cuisine, and the classic idli, as we know it today, was born.

The Role of Soy and Lentils in Nutrition

Traditional idli batters use split black gram (urad dal) alongside rice. Some modern variations have experimented with soybeans, moong dal, or other legumes to further increase the protein content. Using more dal in the batter not only enhances nutrition but also improves fermentation, resulting in a slightly tangy flavour and soft, spongy texture. By adjusting the rice-to-dal ratio, contemporary cooks have created high-protein idlis suitable for vegetarians, athletes, and anyone seeking a nutritious, low-fat breakfast. The dal contributes essential amino acids, iron, and B vitamins, making the dish more than just comfort food, it becomes a balanced source of energy.

Cultural and Culinary Significance

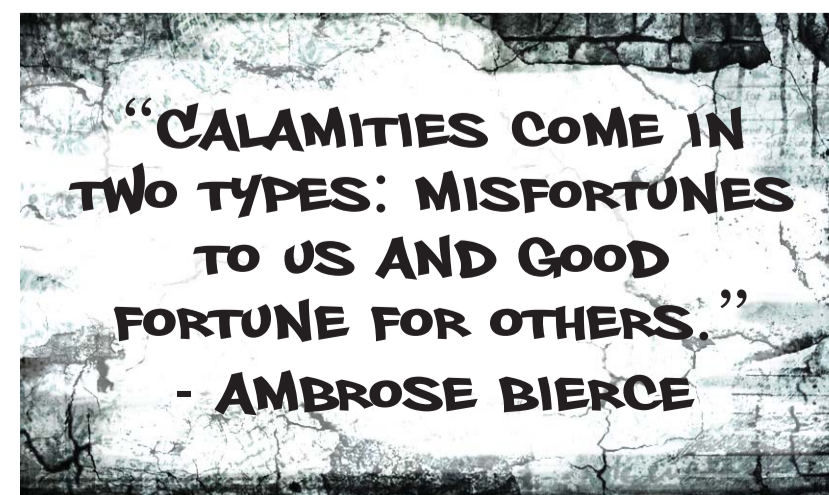
Idlis are more than a breakfast dish; they are a reflection of historical trade, cross-cultural exchange, and agricultural adaptation. From dal-based cakes in Southeast Asia to rice-lentil blends in South India, the evolution of idli mirrors how cuisines adapt and innovate over time while preserving nutritional value. Steamed idlis also demonstrate an early understanding of fermentation, which improves digestibility, enhances flavours, and preserves food without refrigeration, a technique common across Southeast Asia and India.

Modern Innovation

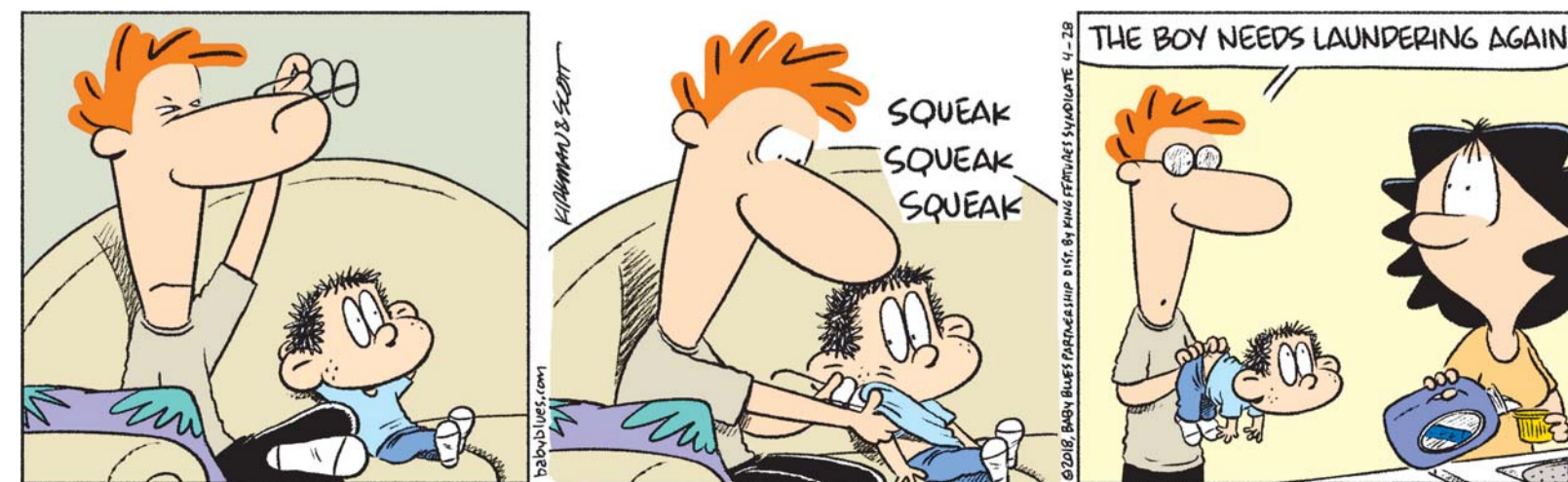
Today, chefs and home cooks continue to experiment with dal-heavy idlis, incorporating soy, chickpeas, and moong dal to create protein-rich, gluten-free variants. Some even use millets along with dal to make healthy fusion idlis, retaining the traditional softness while boosting nutritional benefits.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

