

#TRIED&TASTED

Delicious Dairy-free Desserts

Indian sweets are usually milk-based and laden with ghee or clarified butter. But with some nifty tricks it's not at all difficult to make just as delicious vegan versions without the dairy.

Indian sweets are built on a trinity of full-fat milk, ghee and mawa. But for those of you who have a sweet tooth and are vegan or intolerant to dairy, dessert prospects are usually dim. If you don't want to be the one sipping on fruit juice for dessert at your next festive dinner party, try making any of these traditional sweet treats that are organically free of milk products.

Cashew Halwa



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw cashews
- 6-7 Medjool dates
- 1 1/2 cups oat milk
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil. Or any unflavoured vegetable oil, definitely not olive.
- 1 1/2 cups oat milk
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/4 cup ground almonds or almond flour
- 1/2 cup sweetened coconut flakes
- A pinch of saffron strands

Nuts and dry fruits for garnish

Preparation

1. Place the cashews and dates (pitted) in a blender. Add the non-dairy milk and blend into a very smooth paste. If your blender is not powerful you will need to soak the cashews with the milk for at least 30 minutes.
2. Heat the coconut oil in a kadhai or wok or large skillet, preferably non-stick. Add the pureest cashews and dates to it and let it cook over medium-low heat. Mix frequently and don't leave the stove unattended and be attentive as nuts can burn easily.
3. When the mixture thickens, add to it the cardamom powder and almond flour or powdered almonds. Mix well and continue cooking until the mixture starts leaving the sides of the wok and gets darker.
4. Add shredded coconut, if using, and mix it in.
5. Continue to cook until the liquid has evaporated and the halwa becomes slick. You'll see some oil coating the bottom of the kadhai.
6. At this point stir in the saffron, if using, and turn off the heat.
7. Garnish with nuts and dry fruits, if desired, and more sweetened coconut flakes. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Mishti Doi

Ingredients

- Sugar
- Raw cashews
- Vegan yogurt
- Superfine almond flour or powder
- Pure vanilla extract

Preparation

1. Blend the cashews with the 2 cups of distilled or filtered water into a very smooth milk/cream. Set aside.
2. Place the sugar in a heavy saucepan with 2 tablespoons water. Let the sugar melt and then caramelize. The sugar will clump before it melts and then loosen up, so don't worry if it takes a little while. Keep stirring the sugar frequently so it doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan and burn.
3. Let the sugar turn a rich caramel colour; then turn the heat down to the lowest point or turn it off. Pour in the cashew milk gently. Take care and stand back as the milk can bubble when it hits the hot caramel.
4. Turn the heat back on to medium high and let the milk come to a boil. Stir frequently. The milk will begin to thicken in a few minutes. Once it has thickened, stir in the almond flour and mix well.
5. Add the vanilla extract, if using, and turn off the heat. Let the cashew cream sit for a few minutes until it's lukewarm to the touch, around 110 degrees.
6. Add yogurt. Immediately



pour it into four ramekins or a single large heat-safe bowl. Make sure first that they will fit inside the Instant Pot liner, if you are using an IP.

7. Place the ramekins or the bowl inside the Instant Pot liner. Close the IP lid and set it to the "yogurt" function for 8-10 hours. Eight hours will yield a less tangy mishtidoi, if that's what you prefer. If you don't have an Instant Pot, leave the mishtidoi out in a warm spot for 24-36 hours, like a cold oven with the light turned on. My oven light is on the Fritz so I left a ramekin on the countertop in my September kitchen, with daytime temps in the 70s, and it took around 36 hours to set.
8. Once the mishtidoi has set, garnish it with nuts and saffron, if you wish. Chill for a couple of hours at least before serving.



Dr. Shri Gopal Kabra
Veteran Doctor & Voracious writer on medical affairs

These days, I don't see children playing satolia or gillidanda. What are these, you may ask, and I don't blame you. These were familiar to me as a child because, in my native village of Losal in Rajasthan eighty years ago, these games were all we had.

At that time, Losal was a sethna – sethna ka thikana or the abode of rich merchants. Our joint family lived in a mansion or haveli which had a large sand-filled front courtyard. This constituted the playground for the children of the haveli and, indeed, for all the children of the neighbourhood. We played gend dart (literally, "bat ball"), kabaddi and satolia, the last being especially popular. In satolia, there would be two teams. Seven flat stone pieces would be stacked in a single tower. A member of one of the teams, the "balling team" if you like, would stand ten steps away and attempt to dislodge the stack with a direct hit with the ball. If he missed and the ball was caught by a member of the other team, he would be declared



Bhisti

Thatolia!

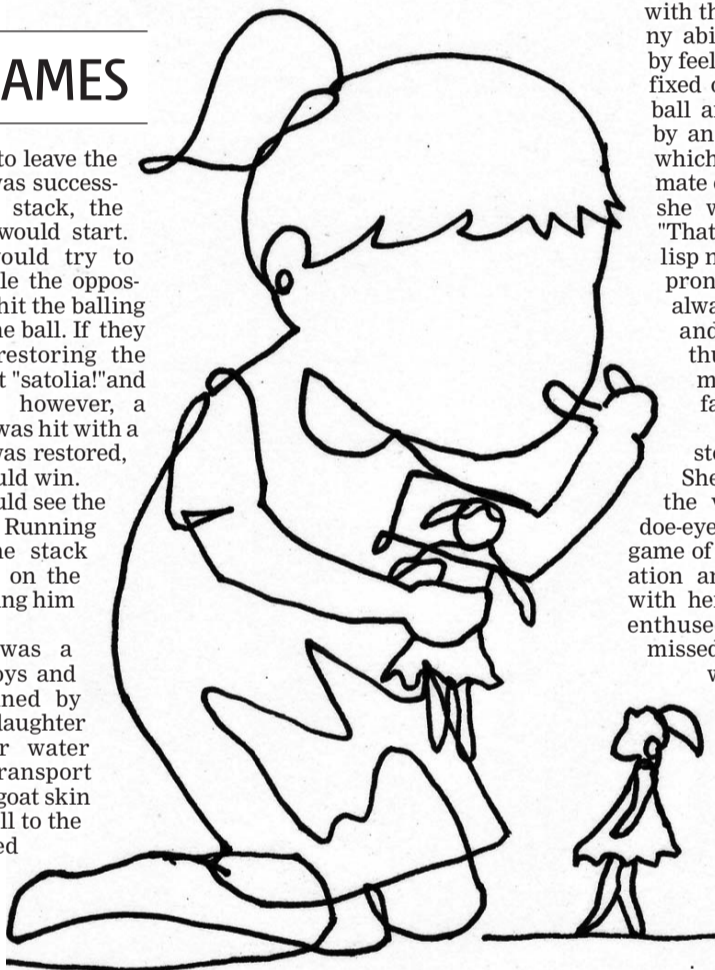
#LITTLE GAMES

"out" and would have to leave the field. If, however, he was successful in scattering the stack, the chasing - and fun - would start. The balling team would try to rebuild the stack while the opposing team would try to hit the balling team members with the ball. If they were successful in restoring the stack they would shout "satolia!" and win that round. If, however, a balling team member was hit with a ball before the stack was restored, the opposing team would win.

The next round would see the teams changing sides. Running swiftly to restore the stack while keeping an eye on the ball thrower and dodging him was the fun part.

Whenever there was a match between the boys and the girls, it was joined by Minni, the 8-year-old daughter of Bhisti Kaka, our water porter. He would transport water in a masak or a goat skin water bag from the well to the haveli. Minni started coming to the haveli with Bhisti Kaka after Kaka's wife died since there was no one else in the family to look after Minni. She was a doe-eyed, sweet, shy and meek girl, constantly sucking her thumb. She would come and sit in the verandah behind a pillar and play pebbles with her free hand.

When she first noticed her, my grandmother called her into the haveli and gave her something to eat. Soon thereafter, she would run



the odd errand for my grandmother who cajoled the haveli girls to include her in their play.

When playing with dolls with the other girls, Minni would often be given the role of a maid-in-attendance. She spoke with lisp and a stutter that frequently morphed into a barely understandable babble. The girls bossed over her and laughed at her lisping and stuttering dialogues but Minni seemed not to care. Once, while playing a game make-believe, she was assigned the role of a crazy queen. The queen's crazy orders to other girls, elicited such loud laughter that grandmas had to caution them: "not so loud!" It was only while playing with the girls that Minni's thumb would leave her mouth. While not playing, she would stand behind a verandah pillar and watch us boys play. Whenever her favorite player performed well, she was seen to suck her thumb rapidly and slap the pillar with her free hand as if to clap and cheer.

Withdrawn and timid as she was, she never joined the boys' games herself. However, when there was a

satolia match between the girls and the boys, Minni was a valuable member of the girls' team, because she was extremely agile and fast-moving. She would race to rebuild a scattered stack while keeping an eye open for anyone trying to hit her with the ball. She had this uncanny ability to assemble the stack by feel alone, while her eyes were fixed on the whereabouts of the ball and any impending assault by an opposing team member - which she dodged with consummate ease. Completing the stack, she would triumphantly shout "Thatolia!" because her natural lisp not allowing her the correct pronunciation. This would always raise a peal of laughter and, in response, Minni's thumb would be back in her mouth to be sucked hard and fast.

Quite suddenly, Minni stopped coming to the haveli. She no longer stood behind the verandah pillar with her doe-eyes darting as she watched a game of satolia. Her mute appreciation and slapping of the pillar with her cheering free hand that enthused players was sorely missed. Word got around that she was to be married. Little Minni, the girls' crazy queen and the boys' perceived umpire and

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Thumb sucking

cheer girl was actually getting married! The mystery cleared one day. Bhisti Kaka brought little Minni, dressed in a bright red bridal finery, and the boy groom, dressed in a sherwani, to my grandmother. My grandmother blessed little Minni and gave her and her young groom silver coins. On learning that Minni had arrived, the haveli girls rushed to look at her beard or bridegroom. Much giggling and teasing followed.

When she was leaving, the boys in the courtyard stopped playing and gazed at her. Shyly, Minni covered her thumb with her scarf with obvious effort, while holding on her father with her other hand, furtively looking at the boys and trying to hide between her groom and her father. Unaccustomed to footwear of any kind, she walked clumsily in her new, raw leather mojaris. When she neared the haveli gate a boy shouted "thatolia!" If I had looked hard enough, I might have discerned the tell-tale movement of furious thumb sucking under the folds of Minni's bridal vestment. That was the last we saw of her.

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International Vegan Cuisine Month

Vegans are conscientious eaters who pay careful attention to their diets-and often to the clothes they wear and other products they buy as well. They remove all animal products from their lives for a variety of reasons. For those who are vegan or have friends and family members who are vegans, this is a great time to check out International Vegan Cuisine Month. This month is dedicated to all things vegan, and particularly learning what can be done to make those favourite foods vegan and cruelty-free!

#WELL-BEING

Pregnancy Health



Phthalates may disrupt a hormone called pCRH that's needed for a healthy pregnancy, research suggests.

The study examines the impact phthalates have on pCRH, or placental corticotropin releasing hormone, which plays an important role in labor.

Phthalates are a group of chemicals found in everything from plastics to personal care products to electronics.

The study, which appears in the journal Environment International, was among the first to examine the impact that phthalates, added to plastics to increase flexibility, have on pCRH, which the placenta produces and that increases throughout the course of pregnancy. The hormone plays an important role in promoting the onset of labor, but when levels are high or rise rapidly earlier in pregnancy, it may contribute to preterm birth and fetal growth problems as well as high blood pressure, diabetes, and postpartum depression.

"We are all exposed to phthalates in our environment across the course of pregnancy. We know very little about how women with pregnancy complications are affected by environmental exposures. This study sets the stage for future research in that area," Barrett says.

pCRH produced by the placenta is identical in structure to corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) produced by the brain when responding to stress. While this study did not find that women who had experienced childhood traumas were any more vulnerable to the hormone-disrupting effects of phthalates, earlier research found that pCRH levels were higher in women who have experienced childhood trauma, suggesting that traumatic events may impact pregnancy decades later.



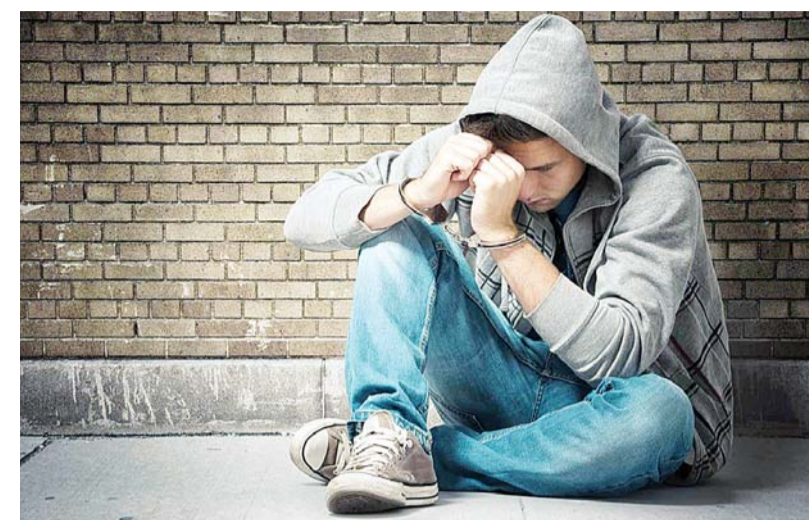
pregnancy, but lower pCRH later in pregnancy. These levels were strongest in women who developed pregnancy complications like gestational diabetes and high blood pressure, suggesting that women who develop complications may be particularly vulnerable to this hormonal disruption. It's the largest study so far to examine how these chemicals and the connection with pCRH disrupt the function of the endocrine system, which is especially delicate during pregnancy.

"Associations between phthalates and pCRH among women with pregnancy complications grew stronger across the course of pregnancy. We know very little about how women with pregnancy complications are affected by environmental exposures. This study sets the stage for future research in that area," Barrett says.

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#LAY-OFF

Researchers say that employers need to reconsider how they view the risks posed by applicants with criminal records.



Jobless Youth & Criminal Records

More than half of unemployed American men in their 30s have a history of being arrested or convicted of a crime, a stigma that poses a barrier to them participating in the nation's labour force, according to a new RAND Corporation study.

By age 35, 64% of unemployed men were arrested or convicted of a crime, with the rates varying only slightly by race and ethnicity. Researchers say the findings, published by the Journal Science Advances, suggest that employment services should focus more on the special challenges facing the unemployed who have criminal history records.

For the study, being unemployed was defined as being without a job for four weeks or more during the past year. Researchers examined arrests, convictions (including guilty pleas) and incarceration that occurred after age 18, excluding traffic-related offenses.

The study found that men between the ages of 30-38 who were unemployed in 2017 had substantial levels of involvement with the criminal justice system. The majority had been arrested at least once, almost 40% had been convicted at least once, and more than 20% had been incarcerated at least once. The results were very similar when researchers included recently discouraged workers and those who were working fewer hours than they wanted.

Among those studied, the arrest prevalence for all Black men (both employed and unemployed) was roughly 33% higher than it was for white men at every age from 18 to 35, with some evidence that the gap widens further during their 30s. Hispanic men generally have higher rates of arrest, conviction and incarceration than white men, although the differences were not statistically significant.

While there has been much research documenting unemployment among those who have been incarcerated, the RAND study is the first to estimate the incidence of criminal histories among American men who are unemployed.

It's estimated that as many as one in three American adults have been arrested at some point in their life, a product of the nation's aggressive law enforcement practices over the past several decades. Men are more likely than women to have a criminal history record, making it more difficult for them to secure employment. In addition, there are disproportionately high rates of criminal justice involvement for Black people, combined with persistent racism and discrimination, which may make it particu-

larly difficult for Black job seekers to secure employment.

RAND researchers estimated the number of unemployed young men with criminal histories by using information from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997), which follows a nationally representative group of Americans over the course of their lives. Researchers examined responses from a group of about 9,000 participants who initially were recruited in 1997, and were born during the years 1980 through 1984.

The study examined the involvement of men with the criminal justice system through 2017. For the study, being unemployed was defined as being without a job for four weeks or more during the past year. Researchers examined arrests, convictions (including guilty pleas) and incarceration that occurred after age 18, excluding traffic-related offenses.

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ence similar rates of involvement with the criminal justice system throughout most of the lifecycle studied.

Researchers say the main lesson from the study is that unemployment services need to do more to help people cope with their criminal histories.

"Most government programs focus on providing the unemployed with new skills in order to get them into the workforce," said Bushway, who also is a professor at the State University of New York at Albany. "But if you only focus on skills development, you are missing a big part of the problem. The unemployment system almost never looks at the role that criminal history plays in keeping people out of the workforce."

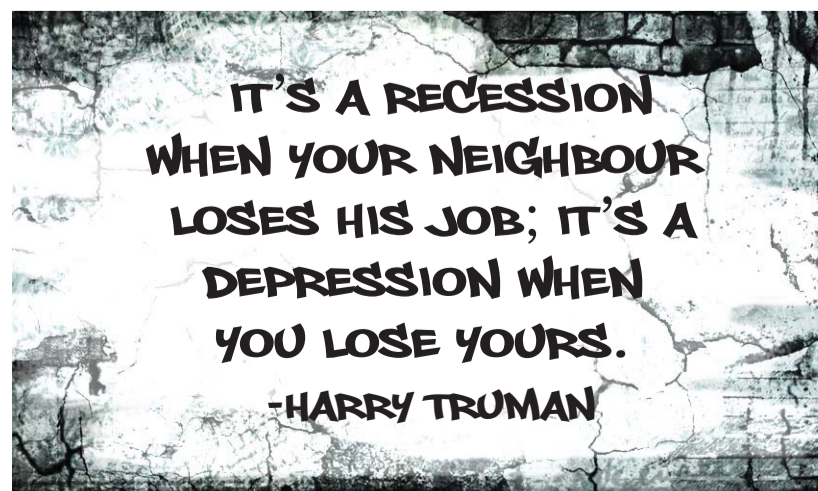
Researchers say that efforts to bar employers from asking about criminal histories on job applications (so called "Ban-the-Box" laws) are unlikely to have a major impact on helping unemployed men with criminal records.

Employers have easy access to applicants' criminal records through commercial databases and routinely review those records as a part of background checks done before new employees are hired, even if the question is left off job applications.

Researchers say that employers need to reconsider how they view the risks posed by applicants with criminal records. New, sophisticated prediction models that seek to understand the risk of recidivism among people who apply for jobs could go a long way toward demonstrating the true relative risk of job applicants who have criminal records.

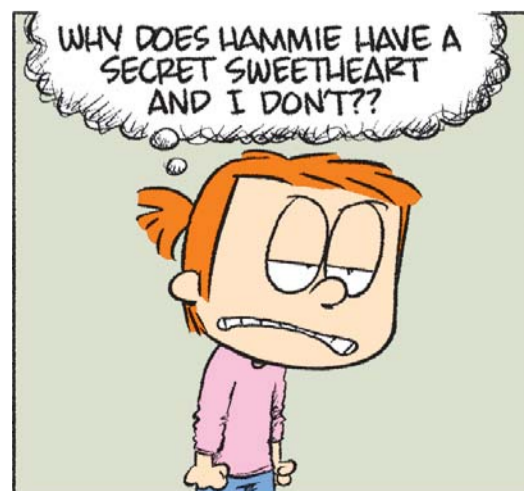
Most employers believe that most people with criminal histories will commit offenses again," Bushway said. "But that is not the case. And the risk of reoffending drops dramatically as people spend more time free in the community without a new conviction. Employers need to adopt a more-nuanced approach to the issue."

THE WALL



IT'S A RECESSION WHEN YOUR NEIGHBOUR LOSES HIS JOB; IT'S A DEPRESSION WHEN YOU LOSE YOURS.
-HARRY TRUMAN

BABY BLUES



WHY DOES HAMMIE HAVE A SECRET SWEETHEART AND I DON'T??

ARRRRRRGH!



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



I'M THE CHARMING ONE!!

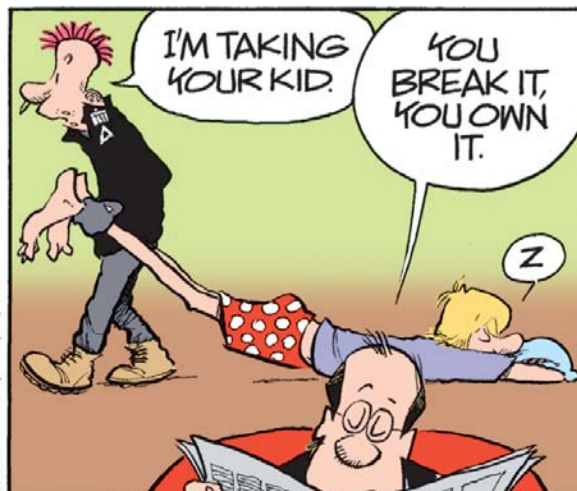
ZITS



DUDE! SNOW DAY! GET UP!



NO CAN DO, MY FRIEND. WE HAVE PLANS!



I'M TAKING YOUR KID.

YOU BREAK IT, YOU OWN IT.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman