

NEPALI CUISINE

Nepali cuisine is mostly influenced by cooking practices in North India and Tibet. But, there are many dishes that are derived from the Newari ethnic group who are native to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. This article has been written, keeping in mind, the people of Nepalese origin living or having lived in the plains where the resources are not as limited as in the higher mountainous regions.

In general, Nepali meals include one or more of the following in varied forms:

- Rice, wheat and maize are not as popular as rice. Even less popular are millet, barley and buckwheat
- Dals or legumes of various kinds. Most common *dals* are toor, urad, gram and mung. The two staples, namely rice and different *dals* are used in a variety of ways such as pounded, ground, fermented, boiled, sautéed and so on.
- Most commonly used animal protein foods are, chicken, mutton and eggs for non-vegetarians
- Green vegetables are stir-fried, while most other vegetables are seasoned with light spices and prepared in curry form.
- Fruits are usually consumed fresh or as juices
- Commonly consumed sweets are: *Kheer*, *Gulaab Jaamun*, *Halwa*, *Mahi* (by product of milk after the butter had been churned out, often sweetened before consumption), *Rasogolla*, *Rasmalai*, *Laddoos* etc.
- Tea is most popular drink for all seasons. It is served with milk and sugar.
- Ghee or clarified butter is often served with rice and flavor enhancer. Mustard oil is mostly used for cooking.
- Water served with meals
- The most commonly used spices are coriander, cumin seeds, fenugreek, ginger, pepper (red, green, and black), turmeric, and other various combinations of these used as curry powders

Meal Pattern for the Traditional Nepali Client with Type 2 Diabetes

Time	Typical	Modified
Breakfast (7:00 AM)	1 cup tea with whole milk and sugar 2 slice bread 1 egg	1 cup tea with skim milk (or 1% fat milk) and with no sugar (preferable). 2 slices of whole-wheat bread/ toast. 2 tsp margarine
Snack/Lunch ¹ (9:30 AM)		1 fruit, 3 graham crackers
Lunch/Snack (1:00 PM)	3 cups of rice 2 oz of meat/chicken 1 cup of <i>dal</i> 1 cup of stir-fried vegetables 2 table spoon of tomato/coriander chutney Ghee, pickles	1 cup of brown rice ½ cup of <i>dal</i> 1 cup of vegetable curry 1 cup of stir-fried vegetables 2 oz of Chicken (skinless) or meat (white, lean) 1 cup low fat yogurt 2 table spoon of tomato or coriander chutney (fresh)
Afternoon tea and	1 cup of Chiura	½ cup Chiura or

¹ Nepalese following traditional meal time eat Lunch at about 9:00 AM and snack at 1:00 PM

snacks (4:00 PM)	(beaten rice) 1 cup fried vegetable 1 cup tea	3 saltine-type crackers or 10 unsalted roasted peanuts and 1 cup tea with low fat milk without sugar.
Dinner (7:00 PM)	3 cups of rice 1 cup of <i>dal</i> 3 oz of meat or Chicken 1 cup of stir-fried vegetables 1 cup of curry (mixed vegetable and chickpeas). Pickles	1 cup brown rice 1 cup stir-fried vegetables ½ cup mixed vegetables with chickpeas. 1 cup dhal or 3 oz of chicken or Fish ½ cup salad
Snack (9:00 PM)		1 fresh fruit 1 cup of skim milk

Tips for changes

1. Encourage brown rice instead of white rice.
2. Instead of using only rice, select from a variety of grains, such as cracked wheat, oats, and barley.
3. Avoid washing rice several times before cooking or cooking in excess water and draining. Doing this may lose valuable vitamins and enriched iron.
4. Keep in mind that the recommended portions are for the cooked product where applicable
5. Try to cook with minimum amount of oil. Preferably olive oil or canola oil which are high in monounsaturated fats.
6. While using potato, or other starchy vegetables, remember to cut down on the amount of rice eaten. Smarter thing to do is selecting a green vegetable more often than starchy ones.
7. Use green vegetables more freely and learn to cook them in a small amount of oil. Salads are good with any meal. Simple lemon or vinegar dressings may be freely used.
8. Switch over to skim or 1% low fat milk instead of whole milk. This will reduce the saturated fat content in the diet.
9. Avoid frying of snack foods; learn to look for recipes, requiring dry roasting, baking etc. Remember people with diabetes are more susceptible to *high cholesterol* in their blood and heart disease. Practice low fat cooking methods, using non-stick pans.
10. Use only lean cuts of animal proteins and practice correct portion sizes. Avoid using more than 3 whole eggs/week. Egg whites are okay.
11. *Pickles, chutneys* etc. are very high in sodium. *People with hypertension* must take note that table salt, baking powder, and baking soda are sources of sodium and therefore must be used carefully.
12. Desserts must be restricted to fresh fruits; artificially sweetened low fat desserts made from allowed foods may be used occasionally.
13. Drink plenty of water, at least 6 to 8 cups a day.

Some examples of heart-healthy and not so heart-healthy foods

Food Groups	Heart-healthy	Not so heart healthy/use less often
Starches	Plain rice, plain <i>roti</i>	Fried rice, fried potato
Meat and Meat Alternatives	<i>Dal</i> , skinless chicken	Fried <i>Dal</i> , chicken with skin
Dairy	Skim milk, low fat yogurt	Regular milk, yogurt with extra cream
Vegetables	All vegetables with no more than one teaspoon of oil per ½ cup cooked vegetable	Fried vegetables, creamed vegetables
Fat/oils	Margarine, canola oil	Butter, coconut oil

Weekend and Party Planning

Food plays a major role during the weekends and the social gatherings. Nepalese tend to live in an extended family environment. As a result, members of the family constantly get in and out of the house at different times. Thus, food is constantly being prepared to ensure that nobody remains hungry including the guests who come unannounced, which is a common event. Most Nepalese prefer to eat the home cooked meal. It is quite common for the family members and guests to consume high caloric foods. High caloric fried snacks and desserts are commonly offered to guests. Refer to the Summary section on how to eat healthy .

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