TRADITIONAL SWEETS OF SOUTH INDIA

A regional recipe collection from Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu

Traditional methods • Shared heritage • Festival kitchens

Introduction

South India's sweets tell stories of harvests, temples, family kitchens, monsoon afternoons, weddings and festivals. Rice, lentils, coconut, jaggery, sesame, bananas and slowly reduced milk recur across the region, yet each place has shaped these ingredients into its own textures and traditions. A payasam may be delicate and milk-based in one kitchen, dark with jaggery and coconut milk in another; a rice-and-jaggery disc may share a broad ancestry while remaining recognisably Adhirasam, Ariselu or Kajjaya.

This book follows the sweets by category rather than by state. Where a family of sweets shares a dependable base method, the recipe explains the common technique and calls out the differences that matter. Where a sweet has a distinctive process or regional identity, it has its own page. The aim is not to declare one household's version the only authentic one: recipes naturally vary by district, community, season and family.

The recipes are written for a broad audience, from first-time sweet makers to experienced cooks. Quantities are practical home-kitchen starting points, and the instructions emphasise observable cues—how a syrup behaves in cool water, when milk has reduced, how dough should feel, and what a properly cooked sweet looks like. They have not been physically kitchen-tested for this edition; ingredient brands, humidity, pan size and heat source can change results, so use the troubleshooting notes and make a small test batch when working with critical syrup stages.

How to use this book

- Each recipe begins on a new page. Shared recipe families use one main method plus regional notes so that related traditions remain connected without erasing their differences.
- Measurements are given in grams and millilitres where practical. Approximate conversions: 1 cup = 240 ml; 1 tablespoon = 15 ml; 1 teaspoon = 5 ml. A cup of flour or grated coconut varies by how it is packed, so weigh ingredients when possible.
- Jaggery varies in moisture, colour and sweetness. Melt and strain it when gritty, and adjust sweetness to taste without changing syrup stages casually.
- Use food-grade ingredients only. Edible camphor, where mentioned, must be food-grade and is entirely optional.
- Cool sweets completely before packing. Moist milk, coconut-milk and fruit sweets need refrigeration; dry brittle and fried snacks need an airtight container and protection from humidity.

The four regional pantries

Karnataka: jaggery, ragi and rice flours, lentils, ghee, seasonal avarekalu, poppy seeds, milk solids and regional sweet-shop traditions. Kerala: nendran banana, coconut oil, fresh and reduced coconut milk, rice flour, jaggery and banana leaves. Andhra Pradesh: rice, sesame, jaggery, chana dal, urad dal, peanuts and finely layered rice sweets. Tamil Nadu: raw rice, jaggery, sesame, milk, ghee, lentils and temple- and festival-linked preparations.

Essential technique notes

- Jaggery syrup: strain melted jaggery to remove grit. For syrup-stage sweets, test a drop in cool water rather than relying only on colour.
- Milk reduction: use a broad, heavy pan over low heat; stir and scrape the sides frequently. The slow reduction develops flavour without scorching.
- Rice flour: for traditional rice sweets, freshly ground soaked rice may behave differently from commercial flour. Drain well and grind fine; adjust liquid in small amounts.
- Frying: use a thermometer if available, but also watch how quickly a test piece colours. Dense sweets need moderate heat so the centre cooks before the outside darkens.
- Hand-stretched holige: a well-rested, soft dough is easier to stretch. Keep hands and work surface lightly oiled, and avoid forcing the dough.

Recipe chapters

- Payasams & Pradhamans
- Halwas
- Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets
- Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs
- Stuffed Flatbreads / Holige Family
- Steamed Sweets
- Sweet Snacks & Candies

Note: this edition groups several named sweets into shared base recipes where the method is closely related. A complete index of names and regional variations is included at the end.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Palada Payasam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 60–90 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 litre full-fat milk
- 75 g ada (rice flakes for payasam)
- 100–130 g sugar, to taste
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 10 cashews and 1 tbsp raisins (optional)
- 2–3 cardamom pods (optional)

Method

- Rinse ada quickly; cook in boiling water until just tender, then drain and rinse to remove excess starch.
- Bring milk to a gentle simmer in a heavy pan. Add ada and cook slowly, stirring frequently, until the milk thickens and turns pale pink-beige.
- Add sugar and simmer for 8–12 minutes, stirring so the bottom does not catch. Fry optional cashews and raisins in ghee and add.
- Rest 10 minutes before serving; the payasam thickens as it cools.

Cultural note

An Onam-sadya classic and a favourite at weddings and temple feasts. Traditional versions often rely on slow milk reduction rather than heavy spice.

Storage

Refrigerate promptly in a covered container for 2–3 days; loosen with a little hot milk when reheating.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use a heavy pan and low heat. Do not add sugar before the ada is tender. Commercial ada varies, so follow its packet timing as a starting point.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Ada Pradhaman

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 60–75 minutes



Ingredients

- 75 g ada
- 200 g jaggery, grated
- 400 ml thin coconut milk
- 200 ml thick coconut milk
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp coconut slivers
- 1 tbsp cashews
- 1 tsp dry ginger powder or ½ tsp cardamom (optional)

Method

- Cook ada until tender; drain well.
- Melt jaggery with 100 ml water and strain. Simmer the syrup until glossy, then add ada and ghee; stir gently for 5 minutes.
- Add thin coconut milk and simmer for 8–10 minutes. Turn the heat low, stir in thick coconut milk and warm without boiling.

- Fry coconut slivers and cashews in ghee; garnish. Add a small pinch of dry ginger if desired.

Cultural note

A signature Onam and Vishu pradhaman. Jaggery and coconut milk give it a deep caramel flavour distinct from milk-based palada.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 2 days. Warm gently; coconut milk may separate if boiled hard.

Technique & troubleshooting

Strain jaggery to remove grit. Add thick coconut milk last and avoid a rolling boil.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Paal Payasam / Semiya Payasam

Region: Kerala & Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 35–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 litre milk
- 50 g vermicelli (semiya) or 60 g raw rice for rice payasam
- 80–120 g sugar
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 8 cashews
- 1 tbsp raisins

- 2 cardamom pods, optional

Method

- For semiya, roast it in ghee until lightly golden. For rice payasam, rinse rice and use a heavy pan.
- Add milk and simmer, stirring regularly, until the semiya is soft or rice is tender. Rice-based paal payasam benefits from longer, slower reduction.
- Add sugar and cardamom; simmer for another 5 minutes.
- Fry cashews and raisins in a little ghee and garnish, if using.

Cultural note

Served at home, temple gatherings and celebrations. Kerala paal payasam is often simpler and more reduced; Tamil semiya payasam is a common festival and wedding sweet.

Storage

Refrigerate 2–3 days. It thickens in the fridge; thin with milk while warming.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not leave milk unattended. Keep the heat low enough to prevent scorching.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Elaneer Payasam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 4–6 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 20 minutes plus chilling



Ingredients

- 500 ml tender coconut water
- 300 ml tender coconut flesh, finely chopped or blended
- 250 ml chilled milk or 200 ml coconut milk
- 2–3 tbsp condensed milk or sugar, to taste
- Pinch of cardamom, optional

Method

- Chill all ingredients thoroughly. Reserve some tender coconut pieces for texture.
- Blend half the coconut flesh with coconut water until just smooth; do not over-blend into a fibrous paste.
- Stir in milk or coconut milk and sweeten lightly. Fold in remaining tender coconut pieces.
- Serve immediately, or chill briefly. Do not cook.

Cultural note

A contemporary Kerala celebratory dessert that showcases tender coconut; popular for festive meals and warm-weather occasions.

Storage

Best the day it is made; refrigerate and consume within 24 hours.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use young, soft coconut flesh. Avoid heating, which dulls the fresh flavour and can split the dairy.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Gasagase Payasa

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 5–6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35–45 minutes



Ingredients

- 3 tbsp poppy seeds (gasagase)
- 2 tbsp raw rice
- 30 g fresh coconut
- 100–130 g jaggery
- 500 ml milk or thin coconut milk
- 2 cardamom pods

- 1 tbsp ghee and 8 cashews, optional

Method

- Dry-roast poppy seeds on low heat until aromatic without browning; rinse rice and soak for 15 minutes.
- Grind poppy seeds, rice and coconut with a little water to a fine paste.
- Melt jaggery with a splash of water and strain. Add the ground paste and cook, stirring, for 5–7 minutes.
- Add milk or coconut milk and simmer gently until lightly thickened. Finish with cardamom and optional ghee-fried cashews.

Cultural note

An old-fashioned Karnataka festive payasa associated with family celebrations and auspicious meals.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 2 days. Stir well when reheating.

Technique & troubleshooting

Grind poppy seeds very finely for a smooth texture. Keep the heat low after adding milk.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Parippu Pradhaman

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45–55 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g split yellow moong dal or chana dal
- 200 g jaggery
- 400 ml thin coconut milk
- 200 ml thick coconut milk
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp coconut slivers
- 1 tbsp cashews
- ¼ tsp dry ginger or cardamom

Method

- Dry-roast dal lightly, then rinse. Pressure-cook with water until soft but not completely watery.
- Melt jaggery in a little water and strain. Mash the dal coarsely and combine with the syrup; simmer for 5 minutes.
- Add thin coconut milk and simmer until cohesive. Turn heat low and stir in thick coconut milk.
- Fry coconut slivers and cashews in ghee; add with spice of choice.

Cultural note

A traditional Onam-sadya dessert. Families differ on the dal used and whether the texture is smooth or deliberately rustic.

Storage

Refrigerate for 2 days. Reheat gently with a splash of water or thin coconut milk.

Technique & troubleshooting

Cook dal until soft, not dry. Thick coconut milk should not be boiled vigorously.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Paramannam / Bellam Paramannam

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 45–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 100 g raw rice
- 750 ml milk and/or water
- 150–200 g grated jaggery
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 8 cashews
- 1 tbsp raisins

- 2 cardamom pods

Method

- Rinse rice and cook slowly in milk and water until very soft, stirring frequently.
- Melt jaggery separately with a little water and strain. Allow the rice mixture to cool slightly before adding the syrup.
- Simmer gently until combined and creamy; do not boil hard after adding jaggery to milk.
- Add cardamom and ghee-fried cashews and raisins.

Cultural note

Paramannam is a ritual rice offering in Andhra households, especially for festivals, house blessings and Sankranti. Bellam versions use jaggery.

Storage

Refrigerate within 2 hours and use within 2 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Jaggery can curdle hot milk in some conditions; temper by cooling the rice slightly before mixing.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Akkaravadisal

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 60 minutes



Ingredients

- 100 g raw rice
- 25 g split moong dal
- 900 ml milk
- 150 g jaggery or 120 g sugar (temple-style versions vary)
- 3 tbsp ghee
- 10 cashews

- 1 tbsp raisins
- 2 cardamom pods
- Tiny pinch edible camphor, optional and only food-grade

Method

- Rinse rice and dal. Cook with milk and a little water until very soft and porridge-like, stirring often.
- Melt jaggery separately and strain. Stir into the cooked rice mixture over low heat.
- Add ghee gradually until glossy; add cardamom and fried cashews and raisins.
- If using edible camphor, use only a minuscule food-grade amount.

Cultural note

A rich Srivaishnava temple-associated preparation, often offered during Margazhi and special pujas.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 2 days; warm gently with milk.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep the texture looser than a firm pongal. Edible camphor is optional and must never be substituted with household camphor.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Sakkarai Pongal

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 40–50 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g raw rice
- 30 g moong dal
- 150–200 g jaggery
- 700 ml water, plus as needed

- 3 tbsp ghee
- 10 cashews
- 1 tbsp raisins
- 3 cardamom pods
- 1 tbsp grated coconut, optional

Method

- Dry-roast moong dal lightly. Rinse rice and cook both in water until very soft.
- Melt jaggery in a little water and strain. Add to the cooked rice-dal mixture.
- Simmer while stirring until thick and cohesive. Add ghee in stages, then cardamom.
- Fry cashews and raisins in ghee and fold through. Serve soft and warm.

Cultural note

Prepared for Thai Pongal, the Tamil harvest festival, often in a new pot as an expression of abundance.

Storage

Refrigerate for 2 days. Add hot water when reheating if it firms up.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not aim for separate rice grains; the texture should be soft and unified. Strain jaggery.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Mathanga Payasam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 5 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 400 g ripe pumpkin, peeled and cubed
- 150 g jaggery
- 300 ml thin coconut milk
- 200 ml thick coconut milk
- 1 tbsp ghee
- ½ tsp cardamom

- 2 tbsp coconut slivers

Method

- Steam or simmer pumpkin until tender, then mash or blend coarsely.
- Melt and strain jaggery. Combine with pumpkin and cook until thickened.
- Add thin coconut milk and simmer for 5 minutes. Turn heat low and add thick coconut milk.
- Fry coconut slivers in ghee and garnish; add cardamom.

Cultural note

A seasonal home-style payasam is often served during harvest and festive meals; recipes vary by Kerala region and household.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 2 days; warm gently.

Technique & troubleshooting

Choose sweet, ripe pumpkin and adjust jaggery to taste. Avoid boiling after adding thick coconut milk.

1. Payasams & Pradhamans

Kesari Bath / Kesari

Region: Karnataka & Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 4–5 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 20–25 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g fine semolina (rava/sooji)
- 450 ml water
- 120–150 g sugar
- 3 tbsp ghee
- 8 cashews
- 1 tbsp raisins

- Pinch saffron or 1–2 drops food colour, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Fry cashews and raisins in a little ghee; set aside. Roast rava in the remaining ghee until aromatic, not brown.
- Bring water to a boil and add rava in a steady stream, whisking to prevent lumps.
- When rava absorbs the water and softens, add sugar gradually; it will loosen before thickening again.
- Stir in cardamom, saffron and fried nuts. Serve warm.

Cultural note

A breakfast sweet and celebratory dish in Karnataka, often served with khara bath as chow chow bath; Tamil versions are commonly called kesari.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate 1–2 days and reheat with a little water.

Technique & troubleshooting

Add rava to boiling water slowly. Sugar should go in after the rava has cooked, or it may remain grainy.

2. Halwas

Mysore Pak

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 16–20 pieces **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 35–45 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g besan
- 250 g sugar
- 180–220 g ghee
- 100 ml water

Method

- Grease a tray. Sift besan and keep warm in a dry pan for 2 minutes; do not brown.
- Cook sugar and water to a one-string syrup (a thin thread between fingers after cooling a drop).
- Heat ghee separately. Add besan to syrup in batches, whisking smooth; add hot ghee gradually while stirring.

- When the mixture foams, leaves the sides and looks porous, pour into the tray. Cut while warm.

Cultural note

Created in the Mysore royal kitchens, this iconic sweet is associated with celebrations and gifting.

Storage

Store airtight at cool room temperature for about 7–10 days in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Hot ghee and syrup can splatter. The mixture changes quickly near the end; prepare the tray before starting.

2. Halwas

Tirunelveli Halwa

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 10–12 portions **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: Several hours plus soaking



Ingredients

- 200 g whole wheat or wheat berries
- 350–450 g sugar
- 150–200 g ghee
- A pinch of cardamom, optional

Method

- Soak wheat berries overnight, grind with water, and strain through cloth to collect the milky extract. Let it settle, then carefully decant excess water.
- Cook the wheat extract with sugar in a heavy pan, stirring continuously, until glossy and elastic.
- Add ghee in small additions, allowing each addition to absorb before adding more.
- Cook until the halwa is translucent, stretchy and releases ghee at the edges; transfer to a greased tray.

Cultural note

Tirunelveli's celebrated wheat halwa is a well-known pilgrimage-town specialty and a popular travel gift.

Storage

Usually keeps 5–7 days in a clean airtight container at cool room temperature.

Technique & troubleshooting

Patience and continuous stirring matter. The wheat extract must be settled and concentrated; watery extract greatly lengthens cooking.

2. Halwas

Kozhikode Halwa

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 12 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g rice flour
- 250 g jaggery or sugar
- 500 ml water
- 2 tbsp coconut oil or ghee
- 2 tbsp chopped coconut or cashews
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Whisk rice flour with part of the water until smooth. Melt jaggery with the remaining water and strain.
- Combine and cook in a heavy pan, stirring continuously, until thick and translucent.
- Add oil or ghee in small additions; continue until the mass is glossy and pulls away from the pan.
- Add cardamom and nuts, then spread in a greased tray and cool before cutting.

Cultural note

Kozhikode's colourful halwa shops are part of the city's food identity; coconut oil is used in some traditional styles.

Storage

Store airtight for 5–7 days, depending on humidity and ingredients.

Technique & troubleshooting

Stir constantly to prevent lumps. Texture varies by shop style; this home version is a practical rice-flour adaptation.

2. Halwas

Ashoka Halwa

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35–45 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g moong dal
- 150–180 g sugar
- 80–100 g ghee
- 2 tbsp wheat flour
- 8 cashews
- ¼ tsp cardamom

- Pinch saffron, optional

Method

- Cook moong dal until very soft and mash or blend smooth.
- Heat a little ghee; cook wheat flour briefly until its raw smell fades. Add mashed dal and sugar.
- Stir over low-medium heat, adding ghee gradually until the mixture thickens and turns glossy.
- Finish with cardamom and fried cashews. Serve warm or set in a tray.

Cultural note

Associated especially with Thiruvaiyaru in the Cauvery delta and served at weddings and festive gatherings.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 4 days; warm gently before serving.

Technique & troubleshooting

Cook dal thoroughly and keep stirring once sugar melts. The halwa should be soft, not dry or crumbly.

2. Halwas

Kerala Banana Halwa

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 12–16 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 500 g ripe nendran banana flesh
- 180 g jaggery or sugar
- 2–3 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 1 tbsp coconut slivers, optional

Method

- Steam or boil ripe nendran bananas until soft; remove seeds if needed and mash to a smooth pulp.
- Melt jaggery with a little water and strain. Combine with banana pulp in a heavy pan.
- Cook over low-medium heat, stirring continuously and adding ghee little by little, until the mass is dark, glossy and pulls away from the pan.
- Add cardamom and optional fried coconut slivers. Spread in a greased tray and cool.

Cultural note

Nendran banana is a signature Kerala ingredient; banana halwa is made for festivals, gifting and special occasions.

Storage

Store airtight for 5–7 days in cool weather; refrigerate in hot, humid conditions.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use ripe, flavourful nendran bananas. Stir carefully as the thick pulp can bubble and splatter.

2. Halwas

Khasi Halwa

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35–45 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g ash gourd (winter melon), grated and squeezed lightly
- 180 g sugar
- 60 g ghee

- 2 tbsp cashews
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Pinch saffron, optional

Method

- Cook grated ash gourd in a heavy pan until its raw smell fades and most moisture evaporates.
- Add sugar and cook as the mixture releases liquid and then begins to thicken again.
- Add ghee in stages and stir until glossy and cohesive. Add cardamom and saffron.
- Garnish with ghee-fried cashews; serve soft or spread in a tray to set.

Cultural note

Regional home recipes vary; ash-gourd halwa is served at festive meals and family functions in parts of southern India.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Evaporate excess water before adding sugar to reduce cooking time. Keep stirring to avoid sticking.

2. Halwas

Avarebele Halwa

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 5–6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- 250 g avarekalu (hyacinth beans), shelled
- 150 g sugar or jaggery
- 3 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp fresh coconut, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 8 cashews

Method

- If using fresh avarekalu, blanch and peel the outer skins where customary. Cook beans until tender and drain well.
- Grind to a coarse-smooth paste with minimal water.
- Cook the paste in a heavy pan until moisture reduces; add sugar or jaggery and stir as it loosens.
- Add ghee gradually and cook until glossy and thick. Finish with cardamom and fried cashews.

Cultural note

Avarekalu is a beloved seasonal Karnataka ingredient, especially during winter avarekalu season; halwa is a less-common festive variation.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 3 days and reheat gently.

Technique & troubleshooting

Drain beans thoroughly and reduce their moisture before adding sweetener; otherwise the halwa takes much longer to set.

2. Halwas

Badam Halwa

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35–45 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g almonds
- 150–180 g sugar
- 100 g ghee
- 150 ml milk or water
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Pinch saffron, optional

Method

- Soak almonds in hot water, peel and grind with milk or water to a smooth paste.
- Combine paste and sugar in a heavy pan and cook on low-medium heat, stirring constantly.
- Add ghee in small additions as the paste thickens; continue until glossy and the mixture leaves the sides.
- Add cardamom and saffron. Serve soft or spread thinly to cool.

Cultural note

A rich festive sweet often prepared for Diwali, weddings and special guests.

Storage

Refrigerate up to 5 days; bring to room temperature or warm gently before serving.

Technique & troubleshooting

Fine grinding is essential. The paste thickens suddenly, so use a long-handled spatula and steady heat.

2. Halwas

Bhatkal Halwa / Cycle Khova Style

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 10 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 500 ml full-fat milk
- 100 g sugar
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp milk powder, optional for a home shortcut
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- For the traditional milk-reduction style, simmer milk in a broad heavy pan, scraping down the sides and stirring often until very thick.
- Add sugar and continue cooking as the mixture loosens and thickens again.
- Add ghee and cardamom; stir until the mass becomes dense and leaves the pan. Spread in a greased tray.
- Cool fully before cutting. Milk powder may speed the process but changes the traditional texture.

Cultural note

Coastal Karnataka sweet-making includes distinctive milk-rich halwas and khova confections; recipes and naming can vary by shop and family.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 4 days because of the high dairy content.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not rush milk reduction with high heat; scorched milk gives a bitter taste.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Bandar Laddu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 14–16 laddus **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 40 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g besan
- 180 g sugar
- 120 ml water
- 2 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 2 tbsp cashews, optional

Method

- Sift besan and roast lightly until fragrant. Make a sugar syrup to one-string consistency.
- Add besan gradually, stirring to avoid lumps; cook until the mixture thickens and begins to leave the pan.
- Add ghee and cardamom. When warm enough to handle, shape into laddus; garnish if desired.

Cultural note

Machilipatnam's Bandar laddu is a famous Andhra sweet associated with gifting and celebrations.

Storage

Store airtight for 5–7 days in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep syrup at one-string stage; too thin a syrup gives loose laddus, too thick can make them hard.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Sunnundalu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 12 laddus **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 25 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g whole urad dal
- 150 g powdered jaggery or sugar
- 80–100 g ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom, optional

Method

- Dry-roast urad dal on low heat until aromatic and evenly pale-golden. Cool completely.
- Grind to a fine powder and sieve for a smooth texture.
- Mix with powdered jaggery or sugar and cardamom. Add warm melted ghee gradually until the mixture holds together.
- Shape into firm balls while slightly warm.

Cultural note

A well-known Sankranti and festive sweet; urad dal is valued in traditional foodways and sunnundalu are often made for family gatherings.

Storage

Store airtight for 7–10 days if all ingredients are dry.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not burn the dal. Add ghee gradually; too much makes laddus greasy and too little makes them crumble.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Besan Ladoo

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 12 laddus **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 30–40 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g besan
- 100 g ghee
- 130 g powdered sugar

- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 2 tbsp chopped nuts, optional

Method

- Roast besan in ghee over low heat, stirring constantly, until aromatic and a shade darker; this may take 15–20 minutes.
- Cool until warm, not hot. Mix in sifted powdered sugar, cardamom and nuts.
- Shape into balls, pressing firmly. Allow to set.

Cultural note

A pan-Indian festive sweet made in Karnataka homes for Diwali and family celebrations.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks in cool, dry conditions.

Technique & troubleshooting

Undercooked besan tastes raw; overheated besan becomes bitter. Add sugar only after the mixture cools somewhat.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Rava Unde / Rava Laddoo

Region: Karnataka & Kerala **Yield:** 12 laddus **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 25 minutes



Ingredients

- 180 g fine rava
- 100 g sugar, powdered
- 70 g ghee
- 50 g grated coconut, lightly toasted, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 2 tbsp cashews and raisins
- 2–4 tbsp warm milk only if needed

Method

- Roast rava on low heat until fragrant. If using coconut, toast separately until dry.
- Cool slightly and mix with powdered sugar and cardamom.
- Fry cashews and raisins in ghee, pour over the rava mixture and mix. Add remaining ghee gradually.
- Shape while warm. If the mixture will not bind, add milk by the teaspoon and refrigerate; milk-shortened shelf-life applies.

Cultural note

Common in festival sweet boxes; Kerala and Karnataka homes vary in coconut use and whether the rava is ground finer.

Storage

Without milk, airtight for 7–10 days. With milk, refrigerate and use within 3 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not brown the rava too much. Add liquid sparingly or the laddus may become dense.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Kova Laddu / Pala Kova

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 10–12 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 40–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 litre full-fat milk (or 400 g unsweetened khoya for a shortcut)
- 120–160 g sugar
- 1 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 2 tbsp chopped nuts, optional

Method

- For the milk method, simmer milk in a wide heavy pan, stirring and scraping sides until reduced to a thick khoya-like mass.

- Add sugar and cook, stirring, until the mixture thickens again and leaves the sides.
- Add ghee and cardamom. Cool until warm and shape into balls or flatten into peda-like rounds.
- If starting with khoya, crumble and cook with sugar and a splash of milk until cohesive.

Cultural note

Milk sweets such as pala kova are popular for festivals, offerings and gifting; regional shop styles vary in softness and caramelisation.

Storage

Refrigerate and use within 4–5 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Slow reduction gives better flavour. Keep heat low and scrape the pan base continuously.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Ellu Urundai / Nuvvula Undalu

Region: Tamil Nadu & Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 12 balls **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 20 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g sesame seeds
- 150 g jaggery
- 2–3 tbsp water
- Pinch cardamom, optional

Method

- Dry-roast sesame until aromatic and a few seeds begin to pop; cool slightly.
- Melt jaggery with water and cook to a firm-ball stage: a drop in cold water should form a pliable ball.
- Mix sesame into syrup quickly. When cool enough to handle, grease palms lightly and shape balls.

Cultural note

Sesame-jaggery sweets are especially associated with Sankranti and seasonal harvest observances; names vary by language and region.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Jaggery syrup stage determines texture. Work quickly before the syrup hardens; avoid touching hot syrup.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Dharwad Peda

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 14–16 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 500 g khoya/mawa
- 120 g sugar, adjusted to taste
- 1 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Crumble khoya and cook in a heavy pan over low heat, stirring until it dries slightly and turns pale golden.
- Add sugar and continue stirring as it melts and the mixture thickens.
- Cook until the mass is non-sticky and lightly caramelised. Add cardamom and cool until shapeable.
- Pinch portions, shape into thick discs and press gently into a little powdered sugar if desired.

Cultural note

Dharwad peda is a celebrated Karnataka GI-associated sweet known for its caramelised milk flavour.

Storage

Refrigerate up to 5 days; allow to come to room temperature before serving.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use steady low heat. The characteristic flavour comes from controlled browning, not scorching.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Arcot Makkan Peda

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 12 pieces **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 60 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g maida
- 2 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 120–150 ml curd or milk, as needed
- 150 g sugar
- 150 ml water
- 12 small pieces of chopped nuts and raisins for filling
- Oil or ghee for frying
- Cardamom and rose water, optional

Method

- Rub ghee into flour with baking soda. Add curd or milk gradually to make a soft dough; rest 20 minutes.
- Prepare a light sugar syrup with water and sugar; keep warm. Mix nuts and raisins for filling.
- Pinch dough portions, flatten, add a little filling and seal carefully. Shape into smooth discs.

- Fry over low-medium heat until evenly deep golden and cooked through. Drain and soak briefly in warm syrup.

Cultural note

Arcot's rich, stuffed makkan peda is associated with North Arcot's confectionery tradition and festive gifting.

Storage

Refrigerate up to 4 days; serve at room temperature.

Technique & troubleshooting

Seal filling completely to prevent leaks. Fry slowly so the centre cooks before the crust darkens.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Srivilliputtur Palkova

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 8 portions **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 60–90 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 litres full-fat milk
- 150–200 g sugar, to taste

Method

- Bring milk to a simmer in a wide heavy pan. Reduce the heat and stir frequently, scraping the sides back into the milk.
- Continue reducing until thick curds form and the mixture becomes grainy but moist.
- Add sugar near the end and cook until it dissolves and the palkova is thick yet soft.
- Cool in a shallow container; avoid cooking until dry.

Cultural note

Srivilliputtur palkova is a famous milk sweet and a much-loved temple-town specialty.

Storage

Refrigerate up to 5 days in a clean container.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use full-fat milk and a wide pan. Constant scraping prevents burnt milk solids and gives the characteristic grainy texture.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Belgaum Kunda

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 8 portions **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 60–75 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 litre full-fat milk
- 200 g sugar
- 1 tbsp curd or lemon juice diluted in water (use sparingly)
- 1 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Bring milk to a boil, then simmer until reduced by about one-third.
- Add a few drops of diluted curd or lemon juice, stirring gently to create fine milk granules; stop as soon as the texture turns grainy.
- Add sugar and continue cooking until the mixture thickens and caramelises lightly.
- Stir in ghee and cardamom; cool in a tray or serve warm.

Cultural note

Belgaum Kunda is a distinctive Karnataka milk sweet known for its grainy, caramelised texture and confectionery heritage.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 4 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Acid is only a texture aid in this home method; add very little to avoid making large paneer-like curds.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Karadantu

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 12 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35–45 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g edible gum (gond), if available
- 100 g ghee
- 100 g chopped almonds, cashews and peanuts
- 50 g raisins
- 150 g jaggery
- 2 tbsp water
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 50 g dry coconut slivers

Method

- Heat ghee and fry edible gum in small batches until puffed; drain and crush lightly. If unavailable, omit rather than substituting non-food gum.
- Toast nuts, raisins and coconut separately.
- Cook jaggery with water to a sticky, soft-ball stage. Stir in gum, nuts, coconut and cardamom quickly.
- Press into a greased tray or shape into discs while warm; cool completely.

Cultural note

A traditional North Karnataka energy-rich sweet, often made in winter and for postpartum or family nourishment traditions; customs vary by household.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Fry gum in small batches because it expands rapidly. Keep jaggery syrup pliable enough to bind the nuts.

3. Ladoos, Unde, Pedas & Milk Sweets

Coconut Barfi

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 16 squares **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 25–35 minutes



Ingredients

- 250 g fresh grated coconut
- 200 g sugar
- 80 ml water
- 1 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Grease a small tray. Cook sugar and water until dissolved and lightly syrupy.
- Add coconut and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and begins to leave the pan.
- Add ghee and cardamom. Transfer to a tray and flatten evenly.
- Cut into squares while warm; cool before separating.

Cultural note

A familiar festival and wedding sweet, commonly prepared for Diwali and family celebrations.

Storage

Store airtight for 3–4 days; refrigerate in hot weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Fresh coconut contains moisture; cook enough to bind but stop before the mixture becomes dry and crumbly.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Rice–Jaggery Fried Disc Family: Adhirasam, Ariselu, Kajjaya

Region: Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka **Yield:** 12–16 discs **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: Soaking plus 45–60 minutes



Ingredients

- 250 g raw rice
- 200–250 g jaggery
- 50–100 ml water, as needed
- ¼ tsp cardamom, optional
- 1–2 tsp sesame seeds for some Andhra/Karnataka styles
- Oil or ghee-oil blend for frying

Method

- Rinse rice, soak 2–3 hours, drain thoroughly and spread briefly until surface moisture is gone but rice remains slightly damp. Grind to a fine flour; do not dry it completely.
- Melt jaggery with water and strain. Cook to a soft-ball / pliable syrup stage; a drop in cool water should gather into a soft ball, not brittle candy.

- Mix hot syrup into rice flour gradually to make a soft, slightly tacky dough. Rest covered; some traditional doughs ferment overnight.
- Shape into discs on an oiled leaf or parchment. Fry in medium-warm oil until puffed and deep brown; press gently between ladles to release excess oil.

Cultural note

Adhirasam is linked with Tamil festivals such as Deepavali; Ariselu is prominent for Sankranti and weddings in Andhra; Kajjaya is a Karnataka festival sweet. The family shares rice and jaggery but differs by dough handling and finish.

Storage

Cool fully before storing airtight. Depending on moisture and handling, 5–10 days; refrigerate longer-stored batches.

Technique & troubleshooting

Jaggery syrup stage is the critical variable. If syrup is undercooked, discs may drink oil; if overcooked, they crack. Fry one test disc before shaping the batch.

Regional variations

- Adhirasam (Tamil Nadu): commonly shaped thicker, with a deeply caramelised exterior; dough may be rested or fermented, and the exact syrup stage is closely guarded by family practice.
- Ariselu / Nethi Ariselu / Nuvvula Arisalu (Andhra Pradesh): sesame may be added to or pressed onto the discs; nethi versions emphasise ghee, and texture ranges from tender to crisp.
- Kajjaya (Karnataka): recipes may use a slightly different rice flour moisture and jaggery proportion; family versions vary in thickness and spice. Test one disc before frying the full batch.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Jangari

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 20–24 pieces **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 45 minutes plus soaking



Ingredients

- 200 g whole urad dal
- 1–2 tbsp rice flour, only if needed
- 250 g sugar
- 200 ml water
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Oil for frying
- A pinch of saffron or food colour, optional

Method

- Soak urad dal 2–3 hours. Grind with very little water to a thick, fluffy batter.
- Cook sugar and water to a sticky one-string syrup; add cardamom and keep warm.
- Pipe batter through a cloth or squeeze bottle into small concentric loops in medium-hot oil. Fry until cooked but not deeply browned.
- Dip briefly in warm syrup and drain.

Cultural note

Jangari is a familiar festive and wedding sweet in Tamil Nadu, closely related to imarti-style sweets.

Storage

Best within 1–2 days; store covered at room temperature.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep batter thick and aerated. Practise piping one small spiral first; oil should be hot enough to set the shape but not brown it instantly.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Badusha

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 12 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- 250 g maida
- 60 g ghee
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 100–130 ml curd, as needed
- 250 g sugar
- 150 ml water
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Oil for frying

Method

- Rub ghee into flour and baking soda. Add curd gradually to make a soft, slightly flaky dough; do not knead hard. Rest 15 minutes.
- Make a one-string syrup with sugar and water; add cardamom.
- Shape into balls, flatten and press a shallow thumb indentation in the centre.
- Fry slowly over low-medium heat until deep golden throughout. Dip in warm syrup for 2–3 minutes and drain.

Cultural note

Badusha is a popular Andhra and South Indian festive sweet, especially in Diwali sweet boxes.

Storage

Store airtight 4–5 days in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Hard kneading makes badusha dense. Fry gently; a dark outside with a raw centre indicates oil is too hot.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Kajjikayalu / Karjikai

Region: Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka **Yield:** 12–14 pastries **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g maida or fine wheat flour
- 2 tbsp ghee
- Water as needed
- 100 g dry coconut
- 75 g powdered sugar or jaggery powder
- 2 tbsp roasted chana dal powder or semolina, optional

- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Oil for frying

Method

- Rub ghee into flour and add water to make a firm dough; rest covered for 20 minutes.
- Mix coconut, sweetener, cardamom and optional roasted chana dal powder for the filling.
- Roll small discs, place filling on one half, fold, seal edges firmly and crimp or use a mould.
- Fry over medium-low heat until crisp and golden; cool fully before storing.

Cultural note

Made for festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi and Diwali. Andhra kajjikayalu and Karnataka karjikai vary in shape and filling proportions.

Storage

Store airtight for 7–10 days when completely cool and dry.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not overfill. Seal with a little water and press out air pockets to prevent bursting.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Chirote

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 12–16 pieces **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 60 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g maida
- 2 tbsp ghee
- Water as needed
- 3 tbsp ghee mixed with 2 tbsp rice flour for layering
- Oil for frying
- 150 g powdered sugar and cardamom for coating

Method

- Make a firm dough with flour, ghee and water; rest 20 minutes. Divide into 4 portions and roll very thin.

- Brush each sheet with ghee-rice-flour paste, stack sheets, roll tightly into a log and slice into rounds.
- Roll each round gently into a disc without flattening the layers. Fry over medium-low heat until crisp and layered.
- Drain and dust with powdered sugar and cardamom while warm.

Cultural note

A festive Karnataka and Deccan pastry often made for weddings and Diwali; regional versions may be soaked in syrup or dusted with sugar.

Storage

Store airtight for 5–7 days in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Thin rolling and even layering create flakes. Avoid high heat, which browns the outside before the layers crisp.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Achappam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 25–30 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 30 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g rice flour
- 100 ml coconut milk
- ¼ tsp sesame seeds
- Pinch salt
- Coconut oil for frying
- Achappam mould

Method

- Whisk rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, and salt into a smooth batter similar to thin pancake batter. Rest 15 minutes.
- Heat oil with the achappam mould immersed until very hot. Lift and dip the mould into batter, stopping just below its rim.
- Return mould to oil; after the batter sets, gently shake the cookie free and fry until crisp and pale gold.
- Drain and cool completely before storing.

Cultural note

A Kerala festive cookie especially associated with Christmas and family celebrations; mould shape and batter differ by household.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks if fully crisp.

Technique & troubleshooting

Heat the mould thoroughly, but do not let batter cover its top edge or the cookie may not release.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Kuzhalappam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 20 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g roasted rice flour
- 50 g grated coconut
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- ½ tsp cumin
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- Warm water as needed
- Salt to taste
- Coconut oil for frying

Method

- Mix rice flour, coconut, sesame, cumin, salt and oil. Add warm water little by little to make a pliable dough.
- Roll small portions into thin ropes and wrap around a clean metal tube or shape into short hollow cylinders.
- Seal the seam with damp fingers and slide off the mould carefully.
- Fry over medium heat until crisp and pale golden; cool completely.

Cultural note

A traditional Kerala Christian snack, often prepared for Christmas and family feasts.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks once completely cool.

Technique & troubleshooting

Dough that is too dry cracks; too wet will cling to the mould. Keep pieces similar in thickness for even frying.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Unni Appam / Neyyappam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 18–20 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 30 minutes plus soaking



Ingredients

- 200 g raw rice or rice flour
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 150 g jaggery
- 2 tbsp grated coconut
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- ¼ tsp cardamom

- 1 tbsp ghee
- Ghee or coconut oil for cooking

Method

- If using raw rice, soak 2–3 hours, drain and grind to a thick batter. Melt and strain jaggery.
- Mix rice batter, jaggery syrup, banana, coconut, sesame and cardamom. Rest 30 minutes.
- Grease an appachatti or paniyaram pan. Pour batter into wells and cook over low-medium heat, turning to brown both sides.
- Cook through to the centre; drain briefly.

Cultural note

Unni appam is a familiar Kerala temple offering and home sweet; neyyappam highlights ghee-rich batter and is often linked with offerings and festivals.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate up to 2 days and reheat in a pan.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep the batter thick but pourable. Low heat is essential for a cooked centre and caramelised outside.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Pazham Pori

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 10 fritters **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 20 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 ripe but firm nendran bananas
- 100 g maida
- 1 tbsp rice flour, optional for crispness
- ¼ tsp turmeric, optional
- 1 tbsp sugar, optional
- Pinch salt

- 120–150 ml water
- Coconut oil or neutral oil for frying

Method

- Peel bananas and slice lengthwise into 3–4 long pieces each.
- Whisk flour, rice flour, salt, optional turmeric and sugar with water into a smooth coating batter.
- Dip banana slices and fry in medium-hot oil until the coating is crisp and golden, turning once.
- Drain and serve warm

Cultural note

A beloved Kerala tea-time snack, often sold in thattukadas and made at home when nendran bananas are plentiful.

Storage

Best eaten immediately; can be held at room temperature for a few hours but softens.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use ripe but firm nendran bananas. Batter should cling in a thin layer, not form a heavy shell.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Sukiyan / Sukhiyan

Region: Kerala & Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 12 balls **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g green gram (mung beans)
- 100 g jaggery
- 50 g grated coconut
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 100 g maida
- Pinch salt

- Water as needed
- Oil for frying

Method

- Cook mung beans until tender but not mushy; drain thoroughly.
- Melt jaggery with a little water, strain and cook with coconut until thick. Stir in beans and cardamom; cool and shape into balls.
- Make a smooth, medium-thick maida batter with salt and water.
- Dip balls in batter and fry over medium heat until golden and crisp.

Cultural note

A Kerala tea-shop favourite and festive snack; Tamil and neighbouring versions may vary in bean-to-coconut ratio and coating.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate filling separately for up to 2 days if preparing ahead.

Technique & troubleshooting

Drain beans well. Wet filling can break through the coating during frying.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Undampori

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 10–12 pieces **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 30 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 150 g wheat flour or maida
- 75 g jaggery or sugar
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Pinch baking soda, optional
- Water as needed

- Oil for frying

Method

- Mix mashed banana with jaggery or sugar and cardamom.
- Add flour and a pinch of baking soda if desired; add only enough water for a thick, scoopable batter.
- Rest 10 minutes. Drop spoonfuls into medium-hot oil and fry, turning, until deep golden and cooked through.
- Drain and cool slightly before serving.

Cultural note

A traditional Kerala tea-time fritter, especially associated with home cooking and local tea shops.

Storage

Best the day it is made; refrigerate leftovers up to 2 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep the batter thick so the fritters hold their shape. Fry at moderate heat to avoid a raw centre.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Gunta Ponganalu (Sweet version)

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 16 small cakes **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 25 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g idli/dosa batter
- 2 tbsp jaggery syrup or sugar
- 1 ripe banana, mashed, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Ghee for greasing

Method

- Mix batter with jaggery, cardamom and optional banana. The batter should remain thick.
- Grease a ponganalu pan generously and heat over medium-low flame.

- Fill wells three-quarters full. Cover and cook until edges set; turn each cake to brown the other side.
- Cook through and serve warm.

Cultural note

A sweet variation on Andhra's paniyaram-like pan-cooked snack; families use leftover batter for quick festival or teatime treats.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate up to 1 day.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not over-sweeten fermented batter or it can brown too quickly. Keep the pan covered to cook the centre.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Gavvalu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 30–35 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 40 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g maida
- 2 tbsp ghee
- Pinch salt
- Water as needed
- Oil for frying
- 150 g sugar and 75 ml water, or 150 g jaggery syrup

Method

- Rub ghee into flour and salt; add water to make a firm dough. Rest 15 minutes.
- Pinch small pieces and roll over a gavvalu board or fork to make ridged shells.
- Fry over medium-low heat until crisp and pale golden. Drain.
- For sweet gavvalu, coat with a thick sugar syrup or jaggery syrup and stir until the coating crystallises lightly.

Cultural note

A classic Andhra festive snack, especially for Diwali and family sweet-making days.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks if fully crisp and dry.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep dough firm and pieces small. Fry slowly so the ridges crisp throughout.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Kakinada Kaja / Tapeswaram Madatha Kaja

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 12 pieces **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 60 minutes



Ingredients

- 250 g maida
- 2 tbsp ghee
- Water as needed
- 2 tbsp ghee mixed with 2 tbsp rice flour for layering
- Oil for frying
- 250 g sugar

- 150 ml water
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Make a firm dough with flour, ghee and water; rest 20 minutes. Roll thin, brush with ghee-rice-flour paste and fold or roll into layered strips.
- Cut into short pieces and gently press each piece to create layers; keep covered to prevent drying.
- Fry on low-medium heat until crisp and evenly golden.
- Prepare a one-string sugar syrup with cardamom; dip fried kajas briefly and drain on a rack.

Cultural note

Kakinada kaja and Tapeswaram madatha kaja are celebrated Andhra sweet-shop specialties; the latter is known for its folded, flaky layers.

Storage

Store airtight 5–7 days in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Low-temperature frying is key for layered crispness. Syrup should coat rather than soak the pastry.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Boorelu / Poornalu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 12 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 50 minutes plus soaking



Ingredients

- 150 g chana dal
- 150 g jaggery
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 150 g raw rice
- 50 g urad dal
- Pinch salt

- Oil for frying

Method

- Soak rice and urad dal 3 hours, then grind to a thick coating batter and season lightly with salt.
- Cook chana dal until soft but not watery; drain and mash. Cook with jaggery until thick, add cardamom and cool.
- Shape filling into balls. Dip each in batter, coat completely and deep-fry until crisp and golden.
- Drain and serve warm.

Cultural note

Poornalu are a classic Andhra festival and wedding sweet, commonly prepared for Sankranti and other auspicious occasions.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate up to 2 days and reheat in an oven or air fryer.

Technique & troubleshooting

Filling must be dry enough to shape. A thin batter coating may split during frying.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Pootharekulu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 8–10 rolls **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- Fine rice flour, about 100 g
- Water to make a very thin slurry
- Ghee, 3–4 tbsp
- Powdered sugar or fine jaggery powder, 100 g
- Crushed nuts, optional

Method

- Make a very thin, smooth rice-flour slurry. Heat an inverted rounded metal pot or suitable non-stick surface until evenly hot.
- Using a soft cloth or brush, wipe a nearly transparent layer of slurry across the hot surface; it should set almost immediately.
- Lift the delicate rice sheet carefully. Brush with ghee, sprinkle sugar or jaggery powder and optional nuts.
- Layer several sheets if desired, fold edges inward and roll gently into a thin parcel.

Cultural note

Pootharekulu, the 'paper sweet' of coastal Andhra, is a distinctive craft requiring skill and a dedicated hot surface.

Storage

Store airtight and dry; best within 5–7 days as humidity softens the sheets.

Technique & troubleshooting

The slurry must be lump-free and the surface evenly heated. Work gently; the sheets tear easily.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Palathalikalu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 5 servings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g rice flour
- 200 g jaggery
- 500 ml milk or thin coconut milk
- 500 ml water
- 1 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom

- 2 tbsp grated coconut, optional

Method

- Bring water to a boil with a little ghee. Stir in rice flour to form a soft dough; cover and rest until manageable.
- Roll dough into thin ropes and cut into short strands.
- Bring milk/water to a gentle boil and add strands gradually, stirring carefully. Cook until the strands are tender.
- Add strained jaggery syrup and simmer gently until thickened. Finish with cardamom and coconut.

Cultural note

A traditional Andhra sweet prepared for festivals and auspicious family occasions; the strands are the defining feature.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 2 days; reheat with a splash of milk or water.

Technique & troubleshooting

Roll strands evenly and avoid overcrowding the pot. Add jaggery after the rice strands cook to prevent toughening.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Chalimidi

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 10 portions **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 20 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g rice flour, preferably freshly ground and fine
- 150 g jaggery
- 2–4 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp grated coconut, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Melt jaggery with just enough water to make a thick syrup; strain and cool until warm.

- Stir rice flour into syrup gradually until a soft, mouldable mass forms.
- Mix in ghee, cardamom and optional coconut. Shape into small discs or serve as a soft sweet.
- For a drier, longer-keeping version, cook the mixture briefly over low heat; family traditions vary.

Cultural note

Chalimidi is associated with Andhra ritual offerings, weddings and auspicious ceremonies.

Storage

Fresh soft chalimidi: refrigerate and use within 2 days. Drier cooked versions keep longer if moisture is low.

Technique & troubleshooting

Add flour gradually; too much makes it dry and crumbly. Rice flour fineness changes absorption.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Pakundalu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 18 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 30 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g rice flour
- 100 g jaggery
- 1 ripe banana, mashed, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Water as needed
- Oil for frying

Method

- Melt jaggery with a little water and strain. Mix with rice flour, cardamom and optional banana to form a thick batter.
- Rest 10–15 minutes so the rice flour hydrates.
- Drop small spoonfuls into medium-hot oil and fry, turning until deep golden and cooked through.
- Drain and cool slightly before serving.

Cultural note

A regional Andhra home-style sweet whose exact form and name can vary by locality; it is included here as a practical rice-jaggery fritter base.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate leftovers up to 2 days.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep the batter thick and fry a test piece first. If it disperses, add a little rice flour.

4. Fried Sweets, Pastries & Discs

Bellam Jeedilu

Region: Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 20–25 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g rice flour
- 150 g jaggery
- 100–130 ml water

- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Oil for frying

Method

- Cook rice flour with boiling water and a pinch of salt into a smooth, firm dough; cool until safe to handle.
- Roll into thin ropes and cut into short lengths or small twisted shapes.
- Fry over medium heat until crisp and pale golden; drain.
- Melt jaggery with a little water to a thick syrup, strain, add fried pieces and stir until coated and lightly crystallised.

Cultural note

A home-style Andhra jaggery-coated rice snack often made for festive snack tins; shapes differ among families.

Storage

Store airtight up to 1 week if completely dry.

Technique & troubleshooting

Ensure the rice dough is smooth to avoid cracks. Syrup should be thick enough to coat without making the pieces soggy.

5. Stuffed Flatbreads / Holige Family

Obbattu / Holige / Boli-Poli / Bobbatlu-Bakshalu

Region: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu & Andhra Pradesh **Yield:** 8–10 flatbreads **Difficulty:** Advanced

Approximate time: 75 minutes



Ingredients

- Dough: 200 g maida or wheat flour, 2 tbsp oil/ghee, pinch turmeric, water as needed
- Filling A: 200 g chana dal, 150 g jaggery, cardamom
- Filling B: 150 g grated coconut, 120 g jaggery, cardamom
- Ghee for cooking and serving

Method

- Make a soft, elastic dough with flour, oil and water; coat with oil and rest at least 30–60 minutes. Traditional dough is very soft and extensible.
- For chana filling, cook dal until tender, drain thoroughly, then cook with jaggery until thick. Cool and grind or mash smooth with cardamom. For coconut filling, cook coconut and jaggery until cohesive.
- Divide dough and filling into equal balls. Oil hands or a sheet, flatten dough, enclose filling and seal.
- Gently hand-stretch or roll between oiled sheets into thin rounds. Cook on a hot tawa with a little ghee until golden spots appear on both sides.

Cultural note

Obbattu/holige is associated with Ugadi and other festivals in Karnataka; boli is common in Tamil Nadu, while bobbatlu or bakshalu are familiar Andhra names. They are related, but flour, filling and thickness vary.

Storage

Best fresh. Refrigerate for up to 3 days; stack with parchment and reheat on a tawa.

Technique & troubleshooting

Rest the dough generously and keep it soft. A dry filling leaks less; seal completely and stretch gently rather than forcing the dough.

Regional variations

- Karnataka Obbattu / Holige: commonly chana-dal-and-jaggery filling; dough may use maida or wheat flour and is rested in oil for extensibility.
- Tamil Nadu Boli / Poli: often thinner and sometimes made with a sweetened lentil filling or coconut; served with ghee, and in some settings alongside payasam.
- Andhra Bobbatlu / Bakshalu: commonly chana dal and jaggery, with local versions using wheat flour or maida; often served warm with ghee.

6. Steamed Sweets

Kozhukatta / Kozhukkattai

Region: Kerala & Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 12 dumplings **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g fine rice flour
- 250 ml water, approximately
- 1 tsp oil or ghee
- Pinch salt
- Filling: 100 g grated coconut, 80 g jaggery, ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Cook coconut and jaggery together until the filling is moist but not wet; add cardamom and cool.

- Bring water, oil and salt to a boil. Lower heat and stir in rice flour to make a dough; cover 5 minutes, then knead while warm.
- Grease hands and shape portions into cups or rounds. Add filling, seal and smooth cracks with damp fingers.
- Steam 8–12 minutes until the surface looks slightly glossy and the dough is cooked.

Cultural note

Tamil kozhukattai is strongly associated with Vinayaka Chaturthi; Kerala kozhukatta versions may be served for Christian feasts and home snacks with regional fillings.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate up to 2 days and steam again to soften.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use fine rice flour and keep dough covered while shaping. Cracks let filling escape.

6. Steamed Sweets

Ela Ada

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 8 parcels **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g rice flour

- 180 ml hot water, approximately
- 1 tsp coconut oil
- Pinch salt
- 150 g grated coconut
- 120 g jaggery
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Banana leaves, softened

Method

- Cook coconut and jaggery until the mixture is thick and moist; add cardamom and cool.
- Mix rice flour and salt; add hot water and coconut oil gradually to make a soft dough.
- Spread a thin layer of dough over a softened banana leaf. Place filling on one half, fold leaf over and seal edges.
- Steam 10–15 minutes until the rice layer is set. Rest briefly before opening.

Cultural note

A classic Kerala banana-leaf sweet associated with monsoon cooking, Onam and home teatime; the leaf adds fragrance.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate up to 2 days and steam to reheat.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not overfill. Soften banana leaves briefly over a flame so they fold without tearing.

6. Steamed Sweets

Sweet Kuzhi Paniyaram

Region: Tamil Nadu & South India **Yield:** 16 pieces **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 25 minutes



Ingredients

- 250 g fermented idli/dosa batter
- 2–3 tbsp jaggery syrup or sugar
- 1 ripe banana, mashed, optional
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- 1 tbsp grated coconut, optional
- Ghee for the pan

Method

- Stir sweetener, cardamom and optional banana or coconut into the batter. Keep it thick.

- Grease a paniyaram pan and heat over medium-low flame.
- Fill each well three-quarters full. Cover and cook until the sides set, then turn carefully.
- Cook until both sides are golden and the centre is no longer wet.

Cultural note

A practical home sweet that uses fermented batter; served for snacks and sometimes made during festival cooking.

Storage

Best fresh; refrigerate up to 1 day.

Technique & troubleshooting

Fermentation and sweetener affect browning. Cook on low heat to avoid dark outsides and raw centres.

6. Steamed Sweets

Vattayappam

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 1 medium cake, 8 portions **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 45 minutes plus fermentation



Ingredients

- 200 g raw rice or rice flour
- 100 g cooked rice
- 150 ml coconut milk
- 100 g sugar
- ½ tsp instant yeast
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Raisins and cashews, optional

Method

- If using raw rice, soak 3–4 hours and grind with cooked rice and coconut milk to a smooth batter. If using rice flour, blend with cooked rice and coconut milk.
- Mix sugar and yeast; leave the batter covered in a warm place until bubbly, about 1–2 hours depending on temperature.
- Stir in cardamom. Pour into a greased cake tin or shallow vessel and garnish with raisins or cashews.
- Steam 20–30 minutes until set and a skewer comes out clean.

Cultural note

A Kerala Christian festive rice cake often served at Christmas, Easter and family gatherings; texture is soft, airy and mildly sweet.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 2 days; steam briefly to restore softness.

Technique & troubleshooting

Do not over-ferment to a sour taste. Ensure the steamer has steady water and a gentle, even boil.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Sarkara Varatti

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 6–8 portions **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 raw plantains / nendran bananas, peeled

- 200 g jaggery
- ¼ tsp dry ginger powder
- ¼ tsp cumin powder, optional
- Pinch cardamom
- Oil for frying

Method

- Slice plantains into thick batons and fry slowly until crisp and cooked through; drain completely.
- Melt jaggery with a little water and strain. Cook to a thick, sticky syrup.
- Add fried plantain pieces and toss until coated. Sprinkle dry ginger and optional cumin or cardamom.
- Spread apart and cool fully so the coating dries.

Cultural note

A classic Onam-sadya side sweet and festive banana preserve, balancing sweet, spice and crispness.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks if fully dry; humidity softens the coating.

Technique & troubleshooting

Plantain pieces must be crisp and dry before coating. Syrup that is too thin leaves a sticky finish.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Pazham Varattiyathu / Nendran Banana Preserve

Region: Kerala **Yield:** 1 jar, about 500 g **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 45 minutes



Ingredients

- 500 g ripe nendran banana flesh
- 150 g jaggery
- 1–2 tbsp ghee
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- Pinch dry ginger, optional

Method

- Steam bananas until soft, then peel and mash smoothly.
- Melt jaggery with a little water and strain. Combine with banana pulp in a heavy pan.
- Cook over low heat, stirring and adding ghee gradually, until very thick, dark and glossy.
- Add cardamom and optional dry ginger. Cool and store in a clean jar.

Cultural note

Banana preserve is a traditional Kerala way to use ripe nendran bananas; related preparations are served at home and during festive seasons.

Storage

Refrigerate up to 2 weeks in a clean, dry jar.

Technique & troubleshooting

Cook until moisture is substantially reduced. Use a long-handled spoon as the thick mixture can splutter.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Kovilpatti Kadalai Mittai

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 12–16 brittle pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 20 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g roasted peanuts, skins removed
- 180 g jaggery
- 2 tbsp water
- Pinch cardamom, optional
- A little ghee for greasing

Method

- Grease a tray or parchment and keep a rolling pin ready.
- Melt jaggery with water and cook to a hard-crack stage: a drop in cold water becomes brittle and snaps.
- Stir in peanuts quickly, pour onto the tray and press thin while hot using greased parchment or a rolling pin.
- Cool completely and break into pieces.

Cultural note

Kovilpatti in southern Tamil Nadu is famous for peanut-jaggery brittle, a popular travel sweet and snack.

Storage

Store airtight in a cool, dry place for 2–3 weeks.

Technique & troubleshooting

Jaggery must reach a hard-crack stage for a crisp brittle. Hot syrup causes severe burns; never taste it hot.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Porulangai

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 12–16 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 30 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g roasted gram or peanuts, depending on family style
- 100 g jaggery
- 2 tbsp water
- ¼ tsp cardamom, optional

Method

- Crush roasted gram or peanuts coarsely, keeping some texture.
- Cook jaggery and water to a firm, sticky syrup that binds when dropped into cool water.
- Stir in the roasted ingredient and cardamom quickly; shape into small elongated rolls or compact pieces while warm.
- Cool fully before storing.

Cultural note

Porulangai is a traditional Tamil sweet-snack name with local and family variations in shape and nut or pulse base; confirm preferred community style when documenting a family recipe.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Use dry roasted ingredients and work quickly before the jaggery hardens.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Inji Mittai

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 20–25 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 100 g fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 200 g sugar or 170 g jaggery
- 100 ml water
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- A little rice flour or powdered sugar for dusting

Method

- Simmer ginger with water for 8–10 minutes until less raw; strain if you prefer a smoother candy, retaining some pulp for a stronger flavour.
- Cook sugar or jaggery with the ginger liquid to a thick syrup. Add ginger pulp and lemon juice.
- Continue stirring until the mixture becomes a thick, glossy mass and begins to leave the pan.
- Spread on a greased plate, cool until pliable, cut into small pieces and dust lightly to prevent sticking.

Cultural note

A sharp-sweet traditional ginger candy associated with home remedies, travel snacks and old-fashioned sweet shops; this is a culinary recipe, not medical treatment.

Storage

Store airtight for 1–2 weeks in a cool, dry place.

Technique & troubleshooting

Fresh ginger strength varies. Cook until thick enough to cut; excess moisture makes candy sticky.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Kamarkattu

Region: Tamil Nadu **Yield:** 12–16 candies **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 25 minutes



Ingredients

- 150 g grated coconut
- 180 g jaggery
- 2–3 tbsp water
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Dry-roast grated coconut lightly to remove surface moisture without browning deeply.
- Melt jaggery with water and strain; cook to a firm-ball stage.
- Add coconut and cardamom and stir quickly until the mixture thickens and clumps.
- When warm enough to handle, shape into small balls. Cool completely.

Cultural note

A nostalgic Tamil coconut-jaggery candy often sold in traditional shops and made as a home snack.

Storage

Store airtight for 4–7 days; refrigeration helps in humid weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Too much moisture makes kamarkattu sticky. Cook coconut dry and reach the correct syrup stage.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Hayagreeva

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 6 servings **Difficulty:** Easy

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g chana dal
- 180 g jaggery
- 2 tbsp grated coconut

- 2 tbsp ghee
- 8 cashews
- 1 tbsp raisins
- ¼ tsp cardamom

Method

- Cook chana dal until tender but still holding shape; drain well.
- Melt jaggery with a little water and strain. Simmer with dal until the syrup coats the lentils.
- Add coconut and cardamom. Fry cashews and raisins in ghee and fold through.
- Serve warm, moist and spoonable.

Cultural note

Hayagreeva is a Udupi-region temple-associated sweet offered to Lord Hayagriva; it is especially known in Madhwa households and on auspicious days.

Storage

Refrigerate for up to 3 days; reheat with a spoonful of water.

Technique & troubleshooting

Drain dal thoroughly so the sweet does not become watery. Avoid mashing it completely.

7. Sweet Snacks & Candies

Manohara

Region: Karnataka **Yield:** 20–25 pieces **Difficulty:** Moderate

Approximate time: 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 200 g besan
- 150 g sugar
- 100 ml water
- 1 tbsp ghee
- Pinch cardamom
- Oil for frying

Method

- Make a thick besan batter with water and a little ghee. Pipe or press small boondi-like drops into medium-hot oil and fry until crisp but not dark.
- Cook sugar and water to a sticky syrup; add cardamom.
- Add fried drops and stir until coated. Allow syrup to begin crystallising, then gather into small clusters or compact pieces.
- Cool fully before storing.

Cultural note

Manohara is a traditional Karnataka sweet associated with festive and temple sweet traditions; regional preparations can vary in shape and coating.

Storage

Store airtight up to 1 week in dry weather.

Technique & troubleshooting

Keep fried drops small and evenly sized. Syrup should coat and bind without leaving a wet sticky mass.

Festival and occasion index

- Onam and Vishu: Palada Payasam, Ada Pradhaman, Parippu Pradhaman, Kerala banana sweets, Ela Ada and Sarkara Varatti.
- Sankranti / Pongal: Sakkarai Pongal, Paramannam, Sunnundalu, Ariselu and sesame-jaggery sweets.
- Ugadi and regional New Year celebrations: Obbattu / Holige / Bobbatlu and other auspicious sweets.
- Diwali / Deepavali: Mysore Pak, Adhirasam, Jaangari, Badusha, kajjikayalu/karjikai, laddus and chirote.
- Temple and ritual offerings: Hayagreeva, Akkaravadisal, Paramannam, Kozhukattai and other family-specific prasadam.
- Christmas and Christian festive tables in Kerala: Achappam, Kuzhalappam and Vattayappam.

Glossary of useful terms

Ada — Rice flakes or rice pieces made for payasam; product thickness varies.

Avarekalu — Fresh hyacinth beans, a seasonal Karnataka ingredient.

Bellam — Jaggery in Telugu.

Gasagase — Poppy seeds in Kannada.

Ghee / neyyi / nei — Clarified butter; regional names vary.

Holige / obbattu / bobbatlu / poli / boli — Related stuffed sweet flatbreads with regional differences.

Kova / palkova — Reduced milk solids or a soft milk sweet.

Nendran — A Kerala plantain variety commonly used for banana sweets.

Pradhaman — A Kerala-style payasam, often sweetened with jaggery and made with coconut milk.

Rava / semiya — Semolina / vermicelli.

Unde / urundai / undalu — Ball-shaped sweets; names vary by language.

Conclusion

Traditional sweets are more than a list of ingredients: they carry the memory of harvests, temple kitchens, family skills and the everyday ingenuity of cooks who learned by watching, tasting and adjusting. The sweets in these pages show how four neighbouring regions share rice, jaggery, coconut, lentils and milk while expressing them in unmistakably local ways.

Use these recipes as a careful starting point, and let local knowledge refine them. Ask elders about the texture they remember, note the jaggery and rice flour available in your area, and record changes that make a recipe work in your own kitchen. Preserving a food tradition does not mean freezing it; it means understanding the technique and context well enough to pass it on with respect.

May these recipes bring the warmth of festival kitchens, the fragrance of ghee and coconut, and the pleasure of sharing something handmade to your table.