

## Mini's Food Fundas

# Christmas flavours with an Indian touch

*Christmas is upon us and let's bear in mind that festive treats across India, need not only be Roast Turkey with trimmings and glazed ham, but regional local delicacies too*



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An independent food critic and columnist, will be acquainting readers with the latest food and beverage trends based on personal insights and experiences

A perfect Christmas feast may sound like one that offers - a Roast meat offering, glazed ham, Brussel sprouts, roasted veggies, et al, but not necessarily. Local treats in each part of India, make for a perfect Christmas meal too.

A tender, juicy slow-cooked duck with bottle masala, sugar, vinegar, occupies centre-stage in a Mumbai, East Indian home. Duck Moilee, is indeed another favourite for Christmas and is best enjoyed with a pulao or fugiyas.

Again, in Kerala it could be a Duck Mappas or Kalappam with Chicken Ishtu (stew), Nadan Muttu Roast (Kerala egg curry), for a Christmas lunch, while snacks served in most homes include, Achappam a la Goa's rose cookies, diamond cuts (deep-fried maida dough soaked in sugar syrup) and Avalose unda (powdered rice and



coconut balls with jaggery syrup).

Of course, in Goan homes, Sorpotel, Pulao, Chicken Cafreal, Vindaloo, are usually eaten, but menus differ from home to home, based on individual preferences. The kuswar with an array of sweets - marzipan, doce, dodol, perad, kulkuls, bebinca, milk cream, however, is almost a must in every home to share with friends, neighbours and family.

Indeed, given the diversity in India, every region celebrating Christmas, has its own special food, not necessarily popular global dishes, even though some dishes are inspired by global offerings.

A Christmas spread in a home in India, may include a Roast chicken or perhaps even a turkey, with trimmings and a

cranberry sauce, mulled wine and cake, but local favourites are always there. Christmas after all, is a feast about family and tradition, and people enjoy eating, what they hold close to their hearts.

The Anglo-Indian community in Bengal, enjoy a roast turkey or duck, marinated overnight, and then roasted with herbs and spices like thyme, rosemary, and bay leaves. The stuffing is usually - boiled vegetables and mashed potatoes and a cranberry sauce on the side with lamb chops or Railway cutlets, to match. Pork too is popular and a Pork Bhuni with steamed rice, Pork Vindaloo, is what many families enjoy. Some even make an Oxtail Vindaloo for Christmas. A soulful lamb stew is also sought after in many homes. Side dishes vary but a bacon quiche, pork chops,

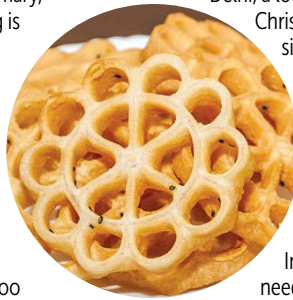
lamb meatballs, are typically served. Their array of snacks includes, mince puffs, chicken pinwheel samosas. Christmas pudding, Rose cookies, kulkuls, almond barfi are some of the regular sweets, although variations abound today, as taste buds evolve.

In the North East of India, especially, Nagaland, smoked pork, cooked on open fire is enjoyed as part of a Christmas meal, as is, Doh Jem in Meghalaya. Kauskwe, or chicken curry and rice noodles are usually eaten in Mizoram.

Contrary to popular belief, vegetarians too enjoy themselves on Christmas. Caramelised mushrooms make for a great beginning. A Vegetarian Roast with kebabs, served with a tangy yogurt and mustard sauce, makes for a perfect festive meal. A Vegetable or Peas pulao or a stew too is a popular choice. In Kerala, stir-fried veggies and thoran with veggies, are a regular feature.

Interestingly, in North India, especially, Delhi, a lot of the festival food for Christmas, mainly sweets, is similar to other festivals. So apart from Christmas cake and pudding, expect to relish gujiyas, gulab jamuns, barfis and even Zarda, made using saffron.

So, a wide range of dishes equals Christmas in India. The Christmas repast need not only be Western dishes, we associate with the UK or Europe, but also, regional favourites, boasting of India's rich culinary heritage.



# Mumbai features in top five cities in Taste Atlas' 2024-25 ranking of the 100 Best Food Cities in the World



Mumbai surpassed culinary heavyweights like Rome, Paris, and Osaka, securing its position just behind Italy's Naples, Milan, Bologna, and Florence for the Taste Atlas' 2024-25 ranking of the 100 Best Food Cities in the World.

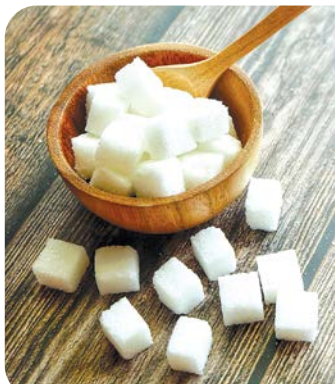
Other Indian cities that made the list are Amritsar (43rd), New Delhi (45th), Hyderabad (50th), Kolkata (71st), and Chennai (75th). This achievement is a delicious reminder of Mumbai's unmatched culinary charm. Taste Atlas' rankings were based on an impressive 477,287 food ratings,

evaluating the best regional and national dishes globally.

This global recognition highlights Mumbai's irresistible street food scene, including the spicy Bhelpuri, Pav bhaji, Vada pav, Modak, Ragda pattice. Iconic eateries like Ram Ashraya, Shree Thaker Bhojanalay, and

Cafe Madras were also commended for their authenticity.

Additionally, Indian cuisine has also secured the 12th spot in Taste Atlas's prestigious list of the 100 Best Cuisines in the World, 2024-25.



# Not consuming any sugar at all is more harmful than added sugar

Researchers published a new report titled 'Added sugar intake and its associations with incidence of seven different cardiovascular diseases' in the journal, Frontiers in Public Health surveying the participants' diet and lifestyle habits between 1997 and 2009, specifically tracking three classes of sugar: sugar toppings like honey, sweets like pastries, and sweetened beverages like soda. It also tracked participants' incidences of seven different cardiovascular diseases, including events like strokes and heart attacks, all to determine "the associations between intake of added sugar and various sugar-sweetened foods and beverages and risk of seven cardiovascular diseases," the study explained.

According to the researchers, there is a general association between added sugar intake and cardiovascular diseases; however, the outcomes vary by the source of added sugar. And the worst offender of all is added sugar in sweetened beverages. "There were statistically significant linear associations between total added sugar intake and ischemic stroke and abdominal

aortic aneurysm," the researchers noted in their results. "High intake of sweetened beverages was associated with higher risk for most of the studied outcomes, for which positive linear associations were found."

However, it's important to note the other end of the spectrum didn't fare much better. According to the findings, "a low intake of treats was associated with a higher risk of all the studied outcomes." Thus, those who consumed zero sweets had the highest risk of cardiovascular events, and consuming occasional treats was associated with better outcomes than no treats at all.

Suzanne Janzi, PhD candidate at Lund University and corresponding author of the article in Frontiers in Public Health, shared, "This surprising contrast highlights the importance of considering not just the amount of sugar consumed, but its source and context." Liquid sugars, those found in sodas and other added-sugar beverages, Janzi added, could lead people to overconsume the product. Try to keep sugar to under six to nine teaspoons of sugar per day, per the American Heart Association's recommendations.

# Raitas to keep you warm during winters

Raita is often considered a cooling dish, certain variations can be prepared using winter vegetables and warming spices, making them suitable for the colder months. Winter raitas are not just delicious but also packed with nutrients. Ingredients like beetroot, methi, spinach, and carrots are rich in vitamins and antioxidants that help boost immunity and keep the body warm.

## MIX VEGETABLE RAITA

This raita includes a variety of vegetables like carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, and boiled peas, all finely chopped and mixed with yoghurt. A seasoning of black salt, cumin powder, and fresh coriander brings everything together. This raita is a powerhouse of nutrients, providing vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants from the mix of vegetables. It's a versatile dish that can be served with any winter meal, adding both freshness and warmth to the table.

## METHI RAITA

Fenugreek leaves or Methi are packed with iron, calcium, and antioxidants, which help combat winter fatigue and boost overall health. The warm and slightly



spicy flavours of methi raita make it an excellent side dish for roti, parathas, or even khichdi during winter. Methi raita is prepared by sautéing chopped methi leaves with a little oil, garlic, and green chillies, and then mixing them with yoghurt. A dash of salt and cumin powder completes the dish.

## SPINACH RAITA

Spinach is high in iron, magnesium, and vitamins, making it a great immunity booster and energy provider during the cold months. Spinach, or palak, is another nutrient-rich winter green that works beautifully in a raita. To make spinach raita, blanch and finely chop spinach leaves before

mixing them with yoghurt. Add a touch of garlic, cumin powder, and salt for a savoury and wholesome dish. This raita pairs perfectly with rice dishes like pulao or biryani and adds a healthy twist to your winter diet.

## MOOLI RAITA

Mooli, or radish, is a popular winter root vegetable that gives raita a spicy and tangy kick. To prepare mooli raita, grated radish is combined with yoghurt and seasoned with green chillies, cumin powder, and a pinch of black salt. For added flavour, you can garnish it with chopped coriander leaves. Radish is known for its detoxifying properties and is high in vitamin C and fibre, making it ideal for maintaining gut health during winter. The spicy notes of mooli raita complement dishes like stuffed parathas, adding depth and warmth to the meal.

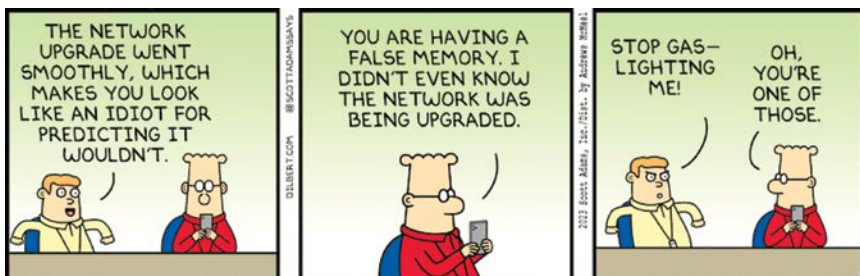
## CARROT RAITA

Carrots are loaded with beta-carotene, an antioxidant that converts into vitamin A, helping improve vision and skin health and are both refreshing and hearty. This raita is prepared by grating fresh carrots and mixing them with yoghurt, along with a sprinkle of roasted cumin powder, salt, and a pinch of red chilli powder for a spicy kick. This vibrant orange raita is not only visually appealing but also a rich source of energy and warmth for cold winter days.



# Herald Gaming Console

## Dilbert



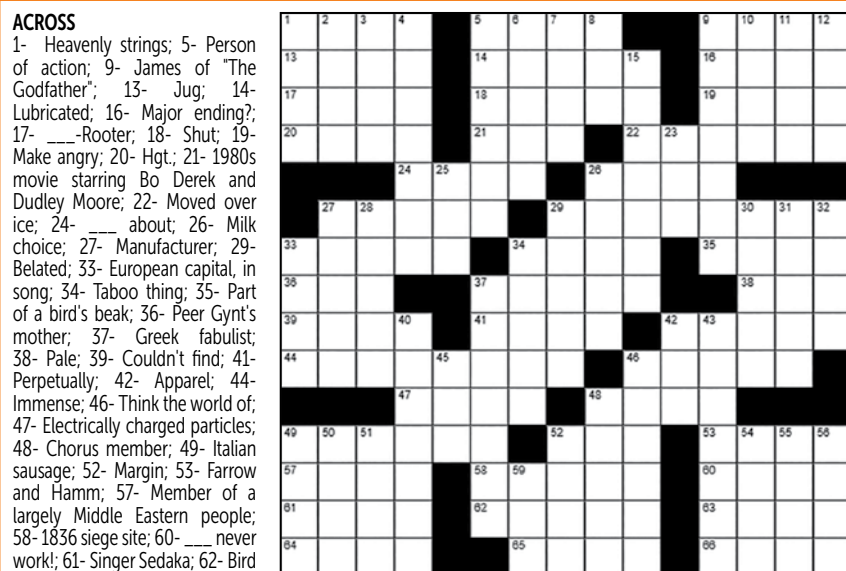
## Garfield



## Wizard of id



## crossword 4717

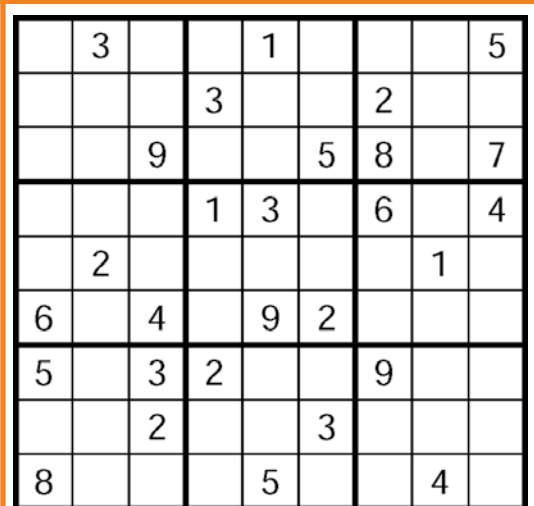


**ACROSS**  
1- Heavenly strings; 5- Person of action; 9- James of 'The Godfather'; 13- Jug; 14- Lubricated; 16- Major ending; 17- \_\_\_\_-Rooter; 18- Shut; 19- Make angry; 20- Hgt.; 21- 1980s movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 22- Moved over ice; 24- \_\_\_\_ about; 26- Milk choice; 27- Manufacturer; 29- Belated; 33- European capital, in song; 34- Taboo thing; 35- Part of a bird's beak; 36- Peer Gynt's mother; 37- Greek fabulist; 38- Pale; 39- Couldn't find; 41- Perpetually; 42- Apparel; 44- Immense; 46- Think the world of; 47- Electrically charged particles; 48- Chorus member; 49- Italian sausage; 52- Margin; 53- Farrow and Hamm; 57- Member of a largely Middle Eastern people; 58- 1836 siege site; 60- \_\_\_\_ never work; 61- Singer Sedaka; 62- Bird homes; 63- Blues singer James; 64- Challenge to complete a task; 65- Dick and Jane's dog; 66- Wander;

**DOWN**  
1- In this place; 2- Mil. truant; 3- Nerve network; 4- Exasperate; 5- Physician; 6- Former Houston footballer; 7- North Carolina university; 8- Hi- \_\_\_\_ monitor; 9- Clay products; 10- Busily working; 11- Salt tree; 12- Can't do without; 15- Writing space; 23- Korean auto; 25- Word used to precede a woman's maiden name; 26- Mexican mister; 27- Person who dresses stones; 28- You \_\_\_\_ right; 29- Medicine measures; 30- More current; 31- Rub out; 32- Bears' lairs; 33- Ashen; 34- Birthmark; 37- Eternal; 40- Subject to court proceedings; 42- Banned insecticide, for short; 43- More spacious; 45- Popular tattoo; 46- Nearly; 48- We please; 49- Hourglass filler; 50- Zone; 51- Lion's den; 52- Grating sound; 54- Sock \_\_\_\_ mel; 55- Neighbor of Sask; 56- Close with force; 59- \_\_\_\_ Miserables;



## sudoku 4717



## Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

## solution 4716

