

# Herald Cafe

## Keep it cool, keep it kokum

Sipping it as a cooling sherbet or stirring it into traditional dishes, kokum brings both flavour and wellness to the table. In this scorching summer, let kokum be your first choice to stay refreshed, healthy, and hydrated

Elsa Angel Rose

**K**okum is a true staple of the Konkani region and has long been cherished for its tangy, fruity flavour and is enjoyed in many forms. For those who grew up in the Konkani region, kokum is more than just a fruit—it's an emotion, a nostalgic taste of home. "Kokum is an inevitable ingredient of the Goan diet," said Assavri Kulkarni, a heritage food chef and commercial photographer.

### How to pick the best kokum and store it right

Chef Girish Desai said, "Generally, a good kokum is dark red or close to purple in colour and is soft to handle though dry and has a peculiar sour smell and also emits a deep red colour when soaked in water." There are many easy ways to store these ripe delights. He noted, "Traditionally, kokum skins are sun-dried, then juice is extracted from the pulp of the same fruit and mixed with sea salt. They are then stored in airtight jars. Another method is to dry the kokum and grind it into a powder. Kokum is also stored in liquid form, known as Agal, which is a thick concentrate syrup available commercially in both sweetened and unsweetened versions."

### Other souring agents in Indian cuisine

- Lemon
- Tamarind
- Vinegar
- Curd
- Green Mangoes
- Amla (Indian Gooseberry)
- Bimbli (Averrhoa bilimbi)

### Kokum drives fusion

Chef Avinash Martins said, "Kokum is used in their beverage program and food as well. We make Cocktail Tambde Rosa (from our Konkani song). We muddle urrak with kokum and mint with jalapeno and lime, then top it with sparkling water. We use kokum in our sauce for our tender coconut carpaccio as a sol curry. Kokum is also used in our curries like ambotik and kalchi kodi."

*I would say it's part of everyday cooking in Goan Hindu houses as one of the dishes is Solkadi which forms an integral part of any Goan lunch or dinner. It's known for its medicinal properties of having a cooling effect on the body at the same time for weight management too. We use it as a natural souring agent in our foods*

— Chef Girish Desai



### Health benefits of kokum

Not mere hydration; kokum has a lot more to offer. It has many soothing, anti-inflammatory properties. Dr Joline Fernandes, a nutritional therapist, said, "Kokum is traditionally believed to relieve indigestion, hyperacidity, bloating, and even flatulence. It's naturally cooling for the body and helps prevent dehydration. The fruit helps regulate body temperature, making it an ideal choice for summer heat. It also has antioxidant properties. This will reduce any inflammation in the body. It helps improve the levels of your satiety hormones, which can help you avoid overeating and ultimately aid in weight management." Shubra Shanwalkar, a home chef, noted, "We use Kokum water on Suranachi and madichi fodi, so there is no itchiness."



### Did you know this about kokum?

- Kokum is scientifically known as Garcinia Indica.
- Kokum trees are native to India and are found abundantly in the Western Ghats region as well as in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Kokum is known as 'Vrikshamlā' in Ayurvedic medicine.
- Kokum's antioxidant properties are also used in skincare products.

### THIS SUMMER, RELISH THESE YUMMY TREATS

#### Kokum Sharbat

When you slice the kokum into two, there'll be the outer cover and the soft pulp inside with the seeds. Make sure to discard the seeds, then blend the pulp and chopped outer cover and strain the mixture. Cool and add it to a thick sugar/jaggery syrup. You can spice this Kokum Sharbat with some cumin and cardamom if needed.

#### Bhirnel

Bhirnel is an oil/butter bar made from Kokum seeds. You can rub this oil on hot pans, bhakri, or chapatis, and with the heat, it melts and adds an amazing flavor to the dishes.

#### Solkadi

Soak kokum and extract the pulp. In a pan, add oil, mustard seeds, jeera, chopped garlic, and curry leaves. Add kokum pulp and sufficient quantity of water and allow it to boil for 3-5 minutes. Add fresh coconut milk and salt. Boil for 15 minutes. Garnish with coriander.

#### Kokum Rasam

Wash and boil kokum with an adequate quantity of water needed for rasam. Filter it and use the water. To this add, jaggery and slit green chilli and boil well. Make seasoning with oil, jeera, and cut red chili and curry leaves. Add this seasoning to the boiling rasam, add salt, and boil for another 5 minutes, and serve with rice.



A NOSTALGIC GLIMPSE INTO LIFE IN BELGAUM



ST XAVIER'S COLLEGE, MAPUSA HOSTS ART AURORA

### SWIPE RIGHT

#### DDLJ statue to be unveiled at Leicester Square



After a five-year planning process, Bollywood icons **Shah Rukh Khan** and **Kajol** will finally be immortalized in bronze as their classic film 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' (DDLJ) becomes the first Indian film to be honoured at London's 'Scenes in the Square' movie trail. The statue, depicting the two megastars in an iconic pose from the beloved Yash Raj Films 1995 romantic comedy – which follows two non-resident Indians and their romance across Europe and India – will mark the beginning of the film's 30th anniversary celebrations. It will be positioned on the eastern terrace outside the Odeon cinema – a fitting location as the Leicester Square setting features prominently in the film when the characters first cross paths.

#### Ed Sheeran teams up with Arijit Singh for new album



**E**d Sheeran revealed that he will be collaborating with none other than Arijit Singh. Ed Sheeran was asked about collaborations in his latest album. The British singer replied, "I worked a lot with his Indian singer, Arijit Singh, who is really good and really wonderful. He basically lives in the middle of nowhere in India. It is like a 3-hour flight and 5 and half-hour drive. I was in India with my dad. He (Arijit) was like, if you want the vocals you would have to come to me."



Barbie recently announced **LeBron James** as the first athlete with Ken doll.

## Goan diaspora celebrates its recognition in the UK

The Goan diaspora in the UK rejoiced as for the first time ever 'Recognition of the UK Goan Diaspora' was celebrated at Westminster Palace in the presence of 60 members of the diaspora

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**T**he Goan diaspora was officially recognized at the House of Commons in the UK as Will Stone MP and Heidi Alexander MP recently hosted the 'Recognition of the UK Goan Diaspora,' co-hosted by Councillors Imtiyaz and Adorabelle Shaikh. The event welcomed 60 key guests to the event, with individuals representing academia and teaching, engineering, armed forces, corporate law, business and entrepreneurship, spiritual leaders, logistics and management and so many more community champions. The day was marked with prayers by Fr Feroz Fernandes followed by a performance by Tommy Afonso (Jr Nelson) and Andre Pedro de Souza (Bab Andrew) on the essence of the Goan diaspora. British Labour Party politician Will Stone is a Member of Parliament for



Swindon North. "I am delighted to host the first Swindon Goan event in Westminster. This event is a testament to the fantastic connections between the Goan community and its elected officials. I would also like to extend my thanks to both Councillor Imtiyaz and Adorabelle Shaikh for their support in making this happen," said Will Stone, at the event. Originally from Vasco, Imtiyaz Shaikh, became the first Goan-Indian origin to be appointed as the Mayor of Swindon for 2024 while his wife, Adorabelle Amaral Shaikh

became the first Goan-Indian origin to be appointed Borough Councillor and Cabinet Member for Education in Swindon.

Heidi Alexander, Secretary of State for transport and MP for Swindon South said, "I'm very honoured to be able to host the Goan community from Swindon and beyond in Parliament, alongside my Parliamentary colleague, Will Stone MP. As the Member of Parliament

for Swindon South, I know what a vital contribution the Goan diaspora play to our country's economic and cultural life. We are so proud in Swindon to have brilliant councillors of Goan heritage and to have one of them, Imtiyaz Shaikh serve as the town's Mayor this year. Alongside his brilliant wife Adorabelle, they really are a political force of nature and I am proud to call them my friends. I'd like to thank everyone involved in making this special evening happening and look forward to sharing many more special moments with the community in the coming years."

Imtiyaz Shaikh was happy to see Goans gathered from all over England for their contributions to the United Kingdom. He said, "History has been made by welcoming and recognising the contributions made of all our Goan UK diaspora at The Palace of

Westminster on April 8. I am so proud of our journey to UK shores, it has been one filled with a desire to better ourselves. It has been the highlight of my Mayoral year as Mayor of Swindon to be able to see our community being recognised by our wonderful MPs."

Adorabelle Shaikh said, "It was a matter of pride for me to host the event and our wonderful MPs spoke very highly of the contributions made by our Goan community. Andrew Bab and Tommy Bab sang a wonderful heartfelt tribute to the audience gathered, no other composers have performed at the Westminster Palace. The medals of recognition were presented as a gesture of gratitude highlighting the need to continue remaining united and strong as one global Goan community."



Imtiyaz Shaikh



Adorabelle Shaikh