

MAHARASHTRIAN CUISINE

Maharashtrian cuisine encompasses a variety of food preparations, from the coconut based coastal cuisine to an interior distinctive cuisine known as the *Varadi* cuisine. All of them share a lot of commonalities:

Grain Group

Examples of one serving size would be: 1 chapati, ½ cup of cooked rice, ½ cup of *pohe*. Rice and wheat are the main staple food grains in Maharashtra..A Maharashtrian meal cannot be complete without chapati or *bhakri* (jawar or bajra roti) with *toop* (clarified butter-ghee). Breakfast comprises of preparation like *pohe* (seasoned beaten rice).

Desserts or sweets like *sheera* (sweet semolina), *kheer*, *shankarpaali* (made out of refined flour and sugar) are common. And special occasions call for *puris* (deep fried) or one of the most liked Maharashtrian dish called *puranpoli* (chapati with a lentil and jaggery filling).

Vegetable Group

Example of a serving size would be ½ cup of cooked vegetables and 1 cup of raw vegetables, like spinach. There is an enormous variety of vegetables in the regular diet made in both the semi-solid with gravy style and the dry style. Curries like *bharlivangi*, *bharlibhendi* are made on special occasions. The vegetables are more or less steamed and lightly seasoned so as to retain their nutritional value. Deep frying and roasting is not a common practice. And few of the common dishes are *bharit* (lightly cooked or raw vegetables in yogurt), *paale bhaji* (leafy vegetables), *paatal bhaji* (spinach or fenugreek with lentil and peanuts), *zunka* (made with gram flour and vegetable).

Salad or *koshimbir* is a very important part of every meal. It is made out of a variety of raw vegetables like cucumber, tomatoes, onions, spinach. And this is garnished with coriander and peanut powder, and is lightly seasoned with *phodni* (hot oil with spices).

Fruits Group

Example of a serving size would be a tennis ball size of apple, a medium banana, ½ cup of *aam ras*. Fruits are consumed both whole and pureed. *Aam ras* (mango puree) and *shikran* (banana in milk) are commonly consumed. And in summer *pana* (raw mango juice) is relished.

(Pureed, sweetened fruits carry concentrated calories and adjustments have to be made accordingly to avoid a high sugar load at any one meal).

Milk/Yogurt Group

Example of a serving size would be 1 cup of milk, ½ cup of yogurt, 1 cup of butter milk. Milk is used in the preparation of tea and many of the sweet preparations like *kheer*.

Yogurt is a very vital ingredient in preparing *koshimbir*, *bhajis* (vegetables), *chutney* (spicy accompaniment made out of a variety of foods) and it is also used to make a famous Maharashtrian dessert, *shrikhand* (Curd whey with sugar). *Taak* (buttermilk) and yogurt is also eaten with rice. Buttermilk is also used to make *taaka chi kadi* (buttermilk with gram flour).

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry beans/Lentils, Eggs and Nuts Group

An example would be ½ a cup of *dal*, ½ cup of chicken or mutton curry. *Dal* (Toor dal) or *umpti*

(sweet and sour toor dal) are a must with rice for a Maharashtrian. A variety of lentils like masoor, chana, toor, mung are used in the preparation of *varan* (dal). *Mooga chi dal* (mung dal), *mooga chi usal*, *vatana chi usal* (dried peas) are also the delicacies. Sprouted mung dal is used widely and is prepared in many different ways. Peanuts are used in a lot of preparations like *chutney*, *chikki* (peanut and jaggery), and it is used as garnish for the *koshimbiri* and *bhaji*. The people in the coastal parts of Maharashtra enjoy a variety of fish like *bombil* (bombay duck), which is batter fried, *bangda* (mackerel) is curried with red chilies, ginger and *tirphal* (a spice). *Paaplet* (pomphret) is usually barbecued or shallow fried.

Lamb and chicken is mainly consumed in the interior part of Maharashtra.

Foods in this group are excellent sources of proteins, B vitamins, iron and zinc. Lentils/*dals* are also a good source of fiber.

Food preparations during *upaas* (fast)

Fasting time actually turns out like a feast, as Maharashtrians prepare numerous dishes garnished with peanuts. *Sabudana chi khichadi*, *sabudana wada* (a deep fried snack) *bagaar* (a type of rice), *batata cha khees* (grated potato-seasoned) are the hot favorites during fasting.

Jaggery, tamarind and *kala masala* (is a special blend of spices) is added in most of the vegetables and lentils which makes the foods piquant.

Although Maharashtrians usually tend to stick to the traditional cooking style, Maharashtrians in America have incorporated a tad of western cooking, making it a nice blend of both.

One Day Menu Plan for A Traditional Maharashtrian Client with Type II Diabetes

Meal	Typical	Modified
Breakfast 8.30 AM	1 cup <i>chaha</i> (tea) with whole milk and sugar. 1 bowl <i>pohe</i> . 1 banana	1 cup <i>chaha</i> made out of skimmed milk and non-caloric sweetener. 1 cup of <i>pohe</i> . 1 apple or ½ banana
Lunch: 12.30 PM	2 cups white rice 2 chapatis with oil or ghee 1 cup <i>umpti</i> (toor dal with jaggery and tamarind) ½ cup <i>batata chi bhaji</i> (Potato curry). ¼ cup cucumber <i>koshimbir</i> (salad) with peanut powder and <i>phodni</i> . 1 cup yogurt or buttermilk.	½ cup brown rice 2 phulkas without oil or ghee 1 cup <i>varan</i> (toor dal without jaggery). ½ cup string beans <i>bhaji</i> or 1 cup <i>methi chi bhaji</i> (fenugreek curry). ¼ cup cucumber <i>koshimbir</i> peanut powder or <i>phodni</i> . ½ cup non-fat yogurt or buttermilk.
Snack: 4.00 PM	1 cup <i>chaha</i> (tea) with whole milk and sugar.	1 cup <i>chaha</i> made out of skimmed milk and sweetener. 2 whole wheat crackers. ½ cup watermelon.

Meal	Typical	Modified
Dinner: 8.00 PM	1 cup white rice. 2 chapatis with oil or ghee. 1 cup <i>mooga chi usal</i> (mung dal) with fresh grated cocunut. 1 serving of fried fish. 1 cup <i>kokum kadi</i> (kokum fruit in coconut milk)	½ cup brown rice. 2 phulkas without oil or ghee. 1 cup <i>mooga chi usal</i> (mung dal) without cocunut. 3ozs barbecued fish (with very little oil). 1 cup kokum juice without coconut milk or ¼ cup <i>kokum kadi</i> with coconut milk.

Weekend and Party Planning

Weekends are usually spent with friends and relatives and food becomes a major part of the good times. Presentation of food has a lot of importance for Maharashtrians. Party favorites include a different type of rice preparation like *vaangi bhaat* (brinjal rice), *tondli bhaat* (tindora rice). Fried snacks like *chewda* (made out of beaten rice), *chakli* (deep fried, made out of gram flour) are often served. *Shrikhand* (curd whey and sugar), *aamrakhand*, or *kheer* are served as desserts.

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