

# CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN HIMACHAL PRADESH EMPHASIZING LOCAL CUISINES AND THEIR PROMOTION - A REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

*Present research work is an attempt to highlight the importance of local cuisines in development of cultural tourism in hilly state of India i.e., Himachal Pradesh. Cuisines represent a broad menu of local food items and recipes of any destination. Himachal Pradesh state of India exhibits diversity in its geography as well as in its culture including local and ethnic food. Thus, the exploration of local food items and recipes becomes important. During the research both primary data (personal observation & tasting) as well as secondary information (Books, journals, magazines and online sources) were utilized. After comprehensive analysis and interpretation of data and available information, it was found that there are numerous cuisines which are available across different parts of the state. Popular cuisines are namely Siddu, Guchhi-mutter, Sepu-vadi, Kaddu ka khatta, Chana-madra, Sepu-bari Madra, Alu-chana madra, Patande, Bhaturu, Babru, Beduan, Mithdoo, Seera, Lasurae ki sabji, Bhruni ki sabji and Patrode etc. There is strong requirement of efforts by Department of Tourism-Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, restaurant owners, Dhaba (Local catering centres) owners, hotels, home stays and even local residents to conserve & promote local food items and their unique recipes.*

**Keywords:** Cuisine, Culinary, Tourism, Dhaba, Conservation & Promotion

## INTRODUCTION

Present review of research paper describes about different cuisines that are commonly prepared across different parts of Himachal Pradesh (India) including their ingredients and prospective promotional strategies for cuisines that must be adopted by the state and its people at large. Culture of a tourist destination represents a hybrid of different aspects namely belief, art, morals, dialect, music, dances and cuisines etc (Cultural Tourism). Altogether, culture represents the way people live at a particular place and different aspects associated with their day-to-day life. Among all aspects, local cuisines remain essential cultural aspect that each tourist loves to experience during his / her tour to any destination. Himachal Pradesh has numerous cuisines, which are least served to tourists due to lack of promotional efforts as well as on account of negligence of local restaurants, hotels and dhaba

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(Local catering centre) owners. The present research work was focused upon exploration of selective cuisines of Himachal Pradesh and promotional initiatives to be adopted as an integral part of cultural tourism development in Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, suggestions have also been made to excel the conservation and development of these local cuisines in entire state of Himachal Pradesh (Actions that people can utilise to promote local food).

## REVIEW

The study utilized both primary data (personal observation & tasting) as well as secondary information (Books, journals, magazines and online sources). During the research work, it was revealed that there are numerous cuisines, which are available across different parts of the state. Popular cuisines are Siddu, Guchhi-mutter, Sepu-vadi, Kaddu ka khatta, Chana-madra, Sepu-bari Madra, Alu-chana madra, Patande, Bhaturu, Babru, Beduan, Mithdoo, Seera, Lasurae ki sabji, Bhruni ki sabji and Patrode (Hofstede, 1997). The description of recipes of selective cuisines of Himachal Pradesh is as follows:

**Siddu:** It is made up of fermented wheat flour with stuffing of crushed pulse-mash (*Vigna munga*) through steaming in specialized containers. These after cooking are cut into pieces and served with coconut sauce & ghee. It is commonly prepared in high reaches of the state namely Shimla, Sirmaur, Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti, Kullu, Mandi, Kangra, Solan and Chamba districts.

**Guchhi mutter:** It is made up of Guchhi (Wild Mushroom) botanically known as *Morchella esculanta* and fresh peas through roasting in oil, tomato, onion and spices. It can be consumed with bread and rice depending upon the texture of preparation. It is commonly prepared in Chamba, Kangra, Mandi, Kullu, Shimla, Sirmaur & Solan districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Kaddu ka khatta:** It is prepared pumpkin after removing its skin, cutting into small pieces, boiling and roasting with oil, onion, spices and small quantity of mango powder. It is commonly prepared in almost all the 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Patande:** These are prepared of batter of rice flour on segmented pan through baking with use of fraction of pre-boiled mustard oil for oiling the surface of the segmented pan. These can be consumed with pulses, milk, ghee or jiggery (Sakkar). These are commonly prepared in Mandi, Kangra, Una, Chamba, Bilaspur, Solan, Sirmaur and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Bhaturu/baturu:** It is basically made up of fermented wheat flour dough, which is shaped like chapatti/bread and fried in hot boiling mustard oil. It is a common staple food in Mandi, Hamirpur and Bilaspur.

**Beduan:** It is made up of fermented wheat flour dough with stuffing of powdered blackgram or soyabean modelled into paratha and deep fried in mustard oil. It is a festive food prepared in Mandi, Hamirpur and Bilaspur districts of Himachal Pradesh (Richards, 1996).

**Babroo:** It is basically made up of fermented wheat / rice flour dough with addition of sweet fennel for flavour, which is cut into small circular shapes and shallow fried in hot boiling mustard oil. It is a common staple food in Kangra, Mandi, Hamirpur and Bilaspur.

**Chilru / chareli:** It is made up of rice flour well mixed in water and shallow fried in ghee on baking pan / griddle. It is one of the popular festive foods in Mandi and Hamirpur districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Seera:** It is made up of wheat soaked in water and meshed out to bring out the inner white wheat portion. The white portion of wheat is then mixed with proportionately less water and then cooked in pan with addition of adequate amount of ghee. It is then stirred till it gets cooked and dried well. It is a ceremonial snack food prepared in Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Mandi districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Madra:** It is one of the popular ceremonial cuisines (Especially on marriages), which is prepared with fried cakes of crushed pulse-mash (*Vigna munga*) after boiling with chickpea, red kidney beans, yoghurt and spices. It is native to Mandi, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Badi:** It is made up of pulses especially black gram and spices through fermentation followed by sun drying. It is common cuisine of Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Mandi and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Sepu badi:** It is made up of pulses especially black gram and spices through steaming followed by deep frying. It is prepared on special occasions in Mandi, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Jhol:** It is made up of buttermilk and tender maize kernels through boiling on low flame for 1 hour at least. It is commonly prepared in Mandi, Hamirpur and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Bicchu buti ka saag:** It is made up of stinging nettle (*Bicchu buti* leaves) through boiling and frying with oil and spices. It is popular seasonal cuisine of Shimla and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Lingdu ki sabji:** This cuisine is made up of fiddle head fern-fern stems (*Lingdu*) with curd and spices through roasting. Fiddle head fern-fern stems are commonly found in hilly districts of Himachal Pradesh. This cuisine is commonly prepared in Mandi, Kullu, Shimla, Kangra, Chamba and Sirmour districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Bharuni ki sabji:** It is made up of Bharuni (*Ficus Carica* Leaves) through boiling and roasting with green chillies. It is one of the seasonal vegetables of state. This cuisine is commonly prepared in Mandi, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Kangra, Shimla, Solan and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Ambua:** It is made up of semi ripened and fully ripened mangoes through roasting with spices and oil. It is popular seasonal fruit dish commonly prepared in Mandi, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Shimla and Solan districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Chachha:** It is made up of raw mangoes meshed with onion and spices. It is a seasonal fruit dish prepared commonly in Mandi, Bilaspur, Hamirpur and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Mahni:** It is made up of raw mangoes through boiling with onion, salt and chillies or may be roasted with oil also. It is a complimentary cuisine to main course / food. It is commonly prepared in Mandi, Hamirpur and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh (Sharma, & Singh, 2012).

**Patrode:** These are leaf dumplings made up of layers of leaves of *Kachalu* (*Colocasia esculanta* leaves) stuffed with gram flour and spiced leaves. These layered leaves are wrapped into small bundles and cooked through steam in large containers with maintaining gap at bottom with the layered bundles. After cooking

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through steam, these bundles are cut into small pieces and fried in mustard oil. Patrode are prepared as snack food in Mandi, Bilaspur, Hamirpur and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Bhangolu ki kadhi:** It is made up of Bhang (Cannabis sativa seeds), spices curd and galgal juice (Citrus) through tadka / tempering in mustard oil. It is popular vegetable curry prepared in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.

**Kachnaar ki sabji:** It is made up of flowers and flower buds of Kachnaar (Bauhinia variegata) through boiling and tempering in mustard oil and finally mixed with proportionate curd to give it a sour taste. It is a medicinal and seasonal vegetable prepared in approximately whole Himachal Pradesh except Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur districts.

**Lasuarae ki sabji:** It is made up of lasura fruit (Cordia myxa) after boiling, removing its seeds and roasting in oil with spices, ginger and onion. It is commonly prepared in Mandi, Kangra, Solan, Bilaspur, Sirmaur and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh.

**Chana madra:** It is made up of white gram or chickpea through boiling and roasting with mustard oil and curd. It is a ceremonial cuisine commonly prepared in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. It is now also prepared in various culinary centres at Shimla-The capital of Himachal Pradesh (Culture of Himachal Pradesh).

### **SUGGESTIONS OF MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED FOR PROMOTION OF LOCAL CUISINES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH**

There are certain measures that must be adopted by Dept. of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh, local hotel and restaurant owners and management committees of different fairs, festivals and public gathering enumerated as follows:

Promotion of local cuisines by Department of Tourism through both print (Newspapers, magazines, hoardings, pamphlets & brochures etc.) as well as electronic media (Websites, social sites like facebook, twitter, television, FM radio and digital displays etc.) must be ensured.

Inclusion of local cuisines in menu of different hotels, resorts and restaurants running under Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation must be done on priority.

Inclusion of local cuisines in menu of different private hotels, resorts and local restaurants & Dhabas running across the state registered under Dept. of Tourism and allied departments of Himachal Pradesh must be enforced.

Establishment of local culinary centres in each district and tehsil of the state must be ensured.

Establishment of Himachali culinary centres in popular cities across different states of India must be ensured.

Inclusion of visits to local culinary centres by local as well as national travel agents in various tour packages offered by them must be ensured.

Organization of local food festivals in almost each district at least twice in a year by Dept. of Tourism through outsourcing skilled man-power from distant villages to provide the traditional taste must be ensured.

Awareness campaigns by Department of Tourism for motivating local dhaba, restaurant and hotel owners to include cuisines in their menu must be organized on regular basis.

Local restaurant owners must ensure marketing of local cuisines through installation of notice boards, hoardings, inclusion of cuisines as part of their menu and provision of local food on demand.

Local culinary entrepreneurs must not only provide cuisines through packaged services at their outlets but also cater to telephonic / online orders.

Recipes of local cuisines should be conserved through print and electronic media by Dept. of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh and such leaflets must be made available at local restaurants for effective information to tourists also.

### **CONCLUSION**

From above review, it is quite clear that Himachal Pradesh has numerous cuisines, which are unique in themselves. Cuisines are integral part of Himachali culture and must be included in menu of different catering centres across the state and abroad also. The Dept. of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh must play an active role in promotion of local cuisines not only for cultural tourism development but also for conservation of ancestral recipes of different cuisines of Himachal Pradesh. Similar responsibilities should be exhibited by local hotel owners, restaurant owners, travel agents and local residents themselves.

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