

A Primer On The Types Of Indian Breads

Indian Breads have been around for over 4000 years. There is more variety and culture embedded in them than perhaps most other food in this world. This article looks at the ones that have thrived the test of time and are still eaten almost every day by every Indian family. There is more to Indian Breads than the Naan and the next time you visit an Indian Restaurant, this article will help you choose the right bread for your meal.

Bread is integral to the dining culture of India. It is generally referred to as roti in the local language. The growth of a wide range of cereals and grains in the country has led to the preparation of different types of breads. Each differs from the other in the ingredients used, in the shape, size, and the taste. The cooking method too differs widely from one part of the country to another. The Indian bread is generally composed of flour made of wheat, rice, corn or lentils. It is known differently in the different parts of the country. It is named variously as phulka, chapati, paranthas, rumali, naan, puri , phefras, do-patris and bhatia.

A majority of the Indian bread is made of wheat and can be broadly divided into three kinds: bread that is roasted on a griddle, bread that is fried and bread that is baked. The most popular form of the Indian bread is the roasted form, known as chapati. This kind of bread is unleavened and is made of only flour and water. The Dough is prepared and the bread is rolled out of it. At times the bread is puffed out by dropping the bread on hot coals for a few minutes. This type of bread is called phulka. At times the bread is kneaded with milk and water and is very thin. In western India these are known as khakras. Another variant of the roasted bread is the rumali which is made by stretching the dough with hand and tossing it several times in the air before roasting it.

Fried breads are also widely popular in India. These refer to the breads which are shallow fried in fat after being rolled out into a triangular or a square shaped size. At times there are seasonal vegetables, potatoes or fenugreek seeds that are added to the dough. These breads are generally termed paranthas. Another type of fried bread is the puri. These are round, puffy and are deep fried in oil. At times poppy seeds or lentils are added to the dough to bring a different flavor to the puris. These are generally served during festive occasions. A hugely popular south Indian specialty is the dosa that is made by spreading a batter of rice and urad bean on an oiled pan.

tandoor. One of the very popular types of baked bread is the naan. The dough for the naan is leavened before being baked in the tandoor. Sometimes nigella seeds or saffron water is added to Some types of Indian bread are baked in modern electric ovens or the Indian styled ovens called give it a distinct flavor. At times garlic paste, dates, cottage cheese (paneer) or almonds are also added to the dough to give it a different taste.

Indian breads are always served to the accompaniment of vegetables, sweet dishes and curries. Bread is a staple food of a majority of the Indians. Most of the Indian households consume bread for all the three meals of the day. Indian breads comprise complex carbohydrates as well as a good amount of dietary fiber and make for a nutritious and wholesome meal.