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This fast food's also fatty

Eateries Offer Fried Delicacies To People Fasting For Navratra

Avoid calorie-rich diet, don't overeat



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TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In Navratra, a thin line separates fasting from binging, for nutritionists say that the special delicacies available during the nine-day festival in restaurants are actually high-calorie food.

With almost all sweet shops in the city adding a special Navratra thali in their menu, the temptation is hard to resist. As a result, we end up "insulting our body" and many suffer from problems such as acidity, indigestion, constipation and low blood pressure.

"These days with so many options available, people end up feasting on high calorie food after fasting the entire day. A lot of people have just one meal in a day and they tend to overeat. What they don't understand is that it will not give them more energy," said Ishi Khosla, a well-known nutritionist in Delhi.

It is believed that one needs more energy during this period as there is no consumption of cereals, vegetables and pulses. In an attempt to make up for the loss, people include fried food in their diet. But experts say that fried food should be a complete no-no. "The whole idea about fasting is to detox-

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It's that time of the year when any type of indulgence, especially those involving taste buds, is a strict no-no for devout Hindus observing nine-day Navratra festival. But over the years, feasting has overtaken fasting, prompting restaurants to cash in on the changing food habits of Delhiites and the gradual dilution of the concept of abstinence during the festival.

Popular restaurant Nirula's, for example, is offering a special selection of thalis for each of the nine auspicious days. "The thalis offer a combination of old favourites such as paneer makhani, aloo raita, samak rice kheer and many new mouth watering inclusions such as the singara atta poori, aloo and paneer bhurji, kashiphal masala, malai kofta, and sabudana kheer," said a manager in one of the outlets. Other popular restaurants like Haldiram's and Bikanerwala have been serving special Navratra thalis for several years now. "The demand for Navratra thali is huge every year. We get special orders," said a manager in Bikanerwala.

Even the lesser known restaurants are innovating for the windfall. At many places, the demand for Navratra thalis is higher than that for normal food items. Most restaurants of

fering these special thalis serve a wide range, keeping in mind that for most people this would be their single meal of the day. A vrat thali traditionally consists of items like aloo sabudane ki tikki, palak paneer, sookhi arbi, dahi pudine wale aloo, makhane ki sabzi, shakarkandi ki chaat, pudina raita, aloo papad, sago papad, sawank ke chawal, kuttu ki poori among others.

Some restaurants say that the booming Navratra business has caught the attention of foreign nationals also. "A group of French tourists came in the restaurant and inquired about the special servings we are offering. When we explained to them about the Navratra thali, they wanted to have the same," said Amit Singh, a worker at a popular Indian restaurant in Connaught Place. Different restaurants have different Navratra offerings.

Many people who are fasting, however, don't believe in eating out. They bank on the pure home-cooked food. "Navratra thalis are becoming too commercialised now. A few years ago, only a few places served these thalis but now they are everywhere," said Ananya Srivastava, a resident of Lajpat Nagar. In Rajouri Garden, a group of housewives all get together on evenings to make Navratra delicacies.



Feasting Time?

Fasting during Navratras can lead to intake of high-calorie food if caution is not exercised. Nutritionists advise devotees to watch out

Navratra special		
Dish	Servings	Calories
Puri made from kuttu flour	3-4	400-500
Pakoda made from kuttu flour	2-3	600-700
Samak ke kheer	100gm	275-300
Paneer pakoda	2 pieces	400
Sabudana ki khichdi	200gm	500-600
Fried aloo chat	100gm	300-400
Barfi	1 piece	350-400

What nutritionists prescribe

Roti made from kuttu flour	150 cal in 2 rotis
Potato and curd (Dahi aloo)	200 cal in 200gm
Milk shakes	250-300 cal in 1 glass
Almond and walnut	High calorie but increase good cholesterol
Fruit chat	--
Boiled aloo chat	250 cal in 100 gm
Curd, lassi, milk	--
Paneer with vegetables	150-200 cal in 100 gm

Dos & Don'ts

Eat at regular intervals to avoid acidity	Drink juices, shakes to keep maintain electrolyte balance	Don't eat too much at one go
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ify your body but the purpose is defeated if you binge on fried food. One should eat fruits, potato, milk and milk products. Fruits help in weight loss and are a rich source of antioxidants. Potato is an essential part of Navratra food and it also makes up for rice and wheat, which is not eaten during this time. Our body makes up for its daily protein requirement from milk and milk products," said Ritika Samaddar, chief dietitian, Max Healthcare.

Doctors say that constipation, indigestion, acidity, low blood pressure etc are common during this season. "If you stay hungry throughout the day and eat heavy food at night and then it will result in acidity. Constipation is a common problem as there is inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables. Many people faint due to electrolyte imbalance. One should drink juice and other fluids at regular intervals to maintain the electrolyte balance," said Dr MP Sharma, HoD, gastroenterology, Rockland Hospital.

Experts suggest alterations in the old preparations just to keep the taste alive without compromising on health. Instead of puris or pakodas made of Kuttu flour, try Kuttu ki roti, replace fried aloo chat with boiled aloo chat and kheer with mixed-fruit curd. "It is about fasting, so one should ensure that the diet is in control. One should have probiotic curd as it helps in digestion. Almonds and walnuts are the best source of energy," said Parmeet Kaur, chief nutritionist, AIIMS.