

Thanjai

Masala Vada & Medhu Vada

It's a rainy Sunday afternoon, you're inside and cozied up in your comfiest loungewear, with a warm cup of tea on your bedside table. You're ready to watch one of your favorite TV shows, spend time with a loved one, or read.

All that's missing in this idyllic state? A snack. But, instead of sticking to your typical biscuits or chips, you decide to spice things up a bit (literally) and try two South Indian specialities - Masala Vada and Medu Vada.



But first, what is a Vada? What does Vada mean?

Vada is a group of savory fried snacks in India and goes by several different names such as wada, vade, vadai, and bara. Vadas come in various forms from dumplings to fritters, and doughnuts to cutlets. There are several dozen types of vadas out there, each with their own unique twist and taste. Masala Vada and Medu Vada are just two types of these savory fried snacks, that specifically come in the form of a fritter. These vadas are arguably the most popular in India, and in Montreal for that matter. Head to any South Indian restaurant in the Montreal area and you are sure to find Masala Vada and Medu Vada on the menu. Now, let's dive a bit deeper into each of these snacks.

Medu Vada

The term 'medu' is a Kannada word that directly translates to 'soft'. This plush snack is made from black lentils or urad dal batter and then fried in oil. Despite the deep fry, and being known as the 'Indian donut', Medu Vada has a ton of health benefits.

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Overall, South Indians absolutely love medu vada - it is a breakfast and evening snack norm for many Indian households. So even when chefs like Gordon Ramsay criticize he beloved Medu Vada on Twitter, people felt extremely angry because this dish is undeserving of Ramsay's notorious ruthless sarcasm. A rally of responses from Indians located all over the world tweeted in rightful defense of the unique dish, though some considered it just another harsh joke that Ramsay is known for.

What do you think of Ramsay's tweet about Medu Vada? Did he cross a line or did you think it was just harmless sarcasm? Let us know in the comments below.

Masala Vada

Soft on the inside and crunchy on the outside, Masala Vada, also known as Chana Dal Vada, is a customary street food in India that is often served in tiffin centers as an evening snack. This dish is made out of a countless spices including a combination of fennel seeds, mango powder, black pepper, asafoetida, ginger paste, green chillies, and cilantro. Meaning, like any other Indian dish, Masala Vada bursts with flavor.

After these spices are added to the dough, that is made out of bengal gram, coarsely grounded chana dal is mixed inside as well. This grounded dal gives the Masala Vada a more chewy and crispy texture to it, unlike the soft Medu Vada.

Different parts of South India create different variations of the snack, by changing the types of spices or masala combination they choose. For example, some parts of Karnataka use dill leaves, and in Tamil Nadu people may add Keerai (spinach leaves) to make the Vadas even more flavorful.

Just like Medu Vada, Masala Vada is often paired with a sauce on the side such as coconut chutney or even ketchup. Paired with a warm cup of masala chai, your rainy afternoon indoors is now perfect!

