



‘Khu-ree’

A traditional Lepcha cuisine

Ingredients and recipe

The documentation of the traditional knowledge of the Lepcha community on use of various plant resources as traditional food is very essential. Such documentation is essential to conserve the knowledge as well as to transfer it to the new generation. With the rapid changing lifestyle including the food habit, the daily needs of the people have changed and the people are more dependent on the market goods. The initiatives taken by G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development, Sikkim Regional Centre (GBPNIHESD-SRC) under Khangchendzonga Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KLCDI), India programme with the support from Mutanchi Lom Aal Shezum (MLAS), a local organization of Dzongu for the documentation of this traditional knowledge to preserve the knowledge of the community and their future sustenance.



Traditional *Khu-ree* dish

Khu-ree is a traditional Lepcha cuisine, made from Millet or Buck wheat flour and leafy vegetables. The dish, which once used to be the staple food for the Lepcha is now only made during special occasions like Namsoong (Lepcha festival), during rituals, or seldom for the special guest. Mostly the dish is now an attraction for the tourists and served as a Lepcha cousin in the homestays and some restaurants. The taste of modernization has touched the flavor of *Khu-ree*, and the traditionally used vegetable species are often replaced by the commonly available green vegetables. Besides, the traditional procedure of grinding of the grains to flour and the collection of the local ingredients being tedious have made the dish less popular among the present busy generation.



Recipe of Khu-ree

There are two major parts of a Khu-ree viz. i) bread and ii) stuffed vegetables, and both of these are cooked separately.

i. Preparation of the bread

Millet or Buck wheat is dried in the sun for few days and then smashed to remove the husk, grinded to make its powder (Lepcha - Mongtee). Then the flour is mixed with a small quantity of wheat flour for consistency, in a bamboo container (Lepcha -Po puthyut) and mixed with water and stirred to make a slightly thick, consistent mixture. Then a flat pan is heated (earlier in the absence of utensils flat stones were used) in fire. When the pan is properly heated, a thin layer of mixed flour gently placed over it creating a round shape bread (nowadays butter is added to add flavor and texture). Both sides of the bread should be properly cooked in a low flame.



ii. Preparation of vegetable

Locally available fresh green vegetables especially the stalk less Gagletto is used. The vegetables are cooked along with the crushed Shiso seeds. Initially a pan is heated and then a tea spoon of oil is poured over it, after which the vegetable is added along with lightly crushed Shiso seeds and a pinch of turmeric powder and salt. The vegetable is to be cooked for about 15 minutes.

After the vegetable is properly cooked, it is wrapped in the cooked millet or buck wheat bread and is taken and served along with chutney. Nowadays Khu-ree is also prepared by vegetables based on one's own preference especially of leafy vegetables.



Table 1: Ingredients of *Khu-ree* cuisine

SN	Common Name	Lepcha name	Scientific name	Family
1.	Millet	Mong	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i> (L.) R.Br.	Poaceae
2.	Buck wheat	Kushru	<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i> Moench	Polygonaceae
3.	Wheat	Kukkyo	<i>Triticum</i> sp.	Poaceae
4.	Gagletto	Kanchel Bee, Kamchol Bee, Prongchyott Bee	<i>Elatostema</i> sp.	Urticaceae
5.	Shiso seeds	Nuhum	<i>Perilla</i> sp.	Lamiaceae
6.	Turmeric	Heing	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Zingiberaceae

KLCDI, India Programme

Guiding Agency: Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Govt. of India

Facilitating Agency: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal

Implementing Agency: GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development (GBPNIHESD), India

National partners: Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department, Govt. of Sikkim and Directorate of Forests, Govt. of West Bengal

KLCDI-India Research Team GBPNIHESD, Sikkim Regional Centre: Kailash S. Gaira (Investigator); Aseesh Pandey (Project Manager); Shiela Sinha (Senior Field Researcher); Nyindo Lepcha (Junior Field Researcher); Milan K. Rai (Secretariat/Field Assistant)

KLCDI-India Partner at Dzongu: MLAS, Dzongu Mr. U.P. Lepcha (Executive Director), Mr. P. Lepcha & Mr. T.T. Lepcha (Field Researchers)

Photo credit: A. Pandey and S. Sinha

Citation: Sinha S, Lepcha N, Pandey A, Gaira KS, Lepcha UP, Singh M, Joshi R, Rawal RS & Chettri N (2019) *Khu-ree*: a traditional Lepcha cuisine, its ingredients and recipe, GBPNIHESD, 2pp

For further information contact

At Head Quarters: Dr. R.S. Rawal, National Coordinator (KLCDI, India) & Director, GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development, Kosi-Katarmal-263643, Almora, Uttarakhand, India

Tel +91-5962-241015, 241041 ; Email: psdir@gbpihed.nic.in

At Sikkim Regional Centre: Dr. Rajesh Joshi, Nodal Scientist (KLCDI, India) & Scientist in-charge, GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development, Sikkim Regional Centre, Pangthang-Gangtok-737101, Sikkim, India.

Tel +91-3592-237328; Email: headskrc@gmail.com