

## D. COOKING OF SHIKĀR (HUNTED GAME BIRDS AND ANIMALS)

'Shikār' includes many hunted Game Birds and Animals found in Kashmīr, such as Mallard, Geese, Plover, Snipe, Rail, Teal, Quail, Pintail, Wigeon, Grouse, Partridge, Pheasant, Spotted Deer, 'Hāṅgal', Antelope, Wild Goat etc.,

Kashmīrī Pandīṭs, some years ago did not eat Fowl, Chicken or even Domesticated Duck or Geese. Even Eggs of these birds were not eaten. Eggs of wild birds were eaten occasionally. Now Chicken is included sometimes in Domestic Meals by most of the Non-Vegetarians. It is also served in small Lunches, Dinner parties and Picnics etc., but is not served in Feasts and Big Dinners of Pandīṭs.

'Shikār', is not cooked immediately after hunting. It is left to hang for 2 to 3 days, sometimes for a longer period in very cold weather. Thereby the meat fibres soften somewhat, and when cooked the meat turns non-fibrous with a soft texture. It also acquires a special appetizing aroma of 'Shikār', which is a delicacy of Kashmīrī Cuisine. Mostly the 'Shikār' meat is cooked alone, somewhat like 'Rōgan Jōsh' of Mutton. Lotus Roots cooked with 'Shikār' of Wild Birds, is also a favourite Dish of Kashmīrīs. The smaller Birds, when dressed, may weigh as little as 100 to 150 gm, and others from one kg. to 5 kg. or more. The Meat of bigger hunted animals, such as Deer or Antelope, is dressed like Mutton.

### RECIPE NO. 68.

1. 'Shikār Rōgan Jōsh'. (E-'Rōgan Jōsh of hunted Game Birds and Animals) (H-'Jāṅglī Paṅchhaṅ aur Jānvarṅ ke Gōshṭ kā Rōgan Jōsh').

#### Ingredients :-

1. Dressed 'Shikār' Meat, - 1 kg.

2. Mustard oil, - 1 cup.
3. Curd, - 1 cup.
4. Cloves, - 3 nos.
5. Asafoetida, - a pinch.
6. Cumin Seeds, - a tsp.
7. Red Chili Powder, - 2 tsps.
8. Turmeric, - 1 tsp.
9. Ginger Powder, - 1 tsp.
10. Aniseed Powder, - 2 tsps.
11. 'Garam Masālā', - 1 tsp.  
or 'Varī Masālā', - 10 gm.
12. Salt to taste, - 1 to 2 tsps.
13. Sugar, - 1/2 tsp.

#### Preparation :-

1. If the Bird or Animal is freshly hunted, hang it for a day or two, according to exterior temperature. More time is needed for this in cold weather. In case of 'Shikār' of Birds (K-'Pachhin' etc.) pluck all the feathers of the Bird or Birds, after scalding i.e., dipping the Bird, for a minute or two, in boiling water, after which the feathers can be plucked easily.
2. On an open sootless flame burn the leftover hairs etc. The Bird gets a bit roasted also in this way, and that adds to its flavour when finally cooked. In 'Shikār' of Birds, do not remove the skin, as is sometimes done in case of Chicken. By removing skin, we lose most of the Meat, Fat and also the Gelatine etc.
3. Cut open the belly lengthwise in the middle, and take out the Giblets and keep these aside, in a bowl.

4. Cut off the beak and the shanks along with the webs.
5. Disjoint, with a sharp knife, the Bird into pieces. Generally, as in the case of a Chicken, we get two legs (thigh pieces), head, neck, two shoulder pieces, two wing pieces, 4 breast pieces, a tail rump, and 4 to 6 pieces out of the ribs and back. Small Birds are cut into lesser portions.
6. Wash the pieces thoroughly in water. Keep aside in a plate.
7. Clean the Giblets, first by cutting open the Gizzard, removing sand etc. inside it, and washing it. Then squeeze out the food etc., from the intestines and cut these into small lengths and wash. Cut open the Heart and wash along with the Liver. These Giblets are fried separately, and sprinkled with a mixture of Red Chili Powder and Salt, and served as a nice side dish, or enjoyed at Breakfast and also at Cocktail Parties. Sometimes the Gizzard, Liver and Heart are also cooked along with the Bird's Meat.
8. In case of hunted Animals, the skins are removed as in the case of sheep and goat, and the Meat is dressed likewise, as also the Innards. Hunted Animals are rarely eaten in Kashmir.

#### Method of Cooking :-

1. In a steel or tinned copper or brass 'Pañāla', of about 2 litres capacity, heat the Mustard oil, till foam disappears. Add Cumin Seeds, Cloves and the Asafoetida. Stir, and immediately add the prepared 'Shikār' pieces, Salt, Sugar and well beaten Curd. Go on turning the Meat with a steel ladle till the water evaporates, and then it begins to get fried evenly to a golden brown colour, and also the oil starts to separate.
2. Add Turmeric, Red Chilies, Aniseed and Ginger Powders, along with half a cup of water. Turn frequently with the ladle, and cook till the Meat takes colour of the Chilies and Turmeric.
3. Now, add enough water to immerse the Meat pieces fully in it. Cook on medium heat, now and then stirring the contents.
4. When gravy thickens, add 'Garam Masālā', or 'Crushed 'Varī Masālā''. Stir and serve with

Plain Cooked Rice, 'Chapāñīs', 'Nān' or 'Parāñthā'.

Note :- The Meat of hunted animals, i.e., Venison etc., is also cooked in the above manner. Remember that the Meat cuts of freshly hunted Animals should also be kept hanging for a day or two before cooking.

#### RECIPE NO. 69.

### 2. 'Shikār Ṭá Naḍeir', (E-Meat of Game Birds cooked with Lotus Roots) (H-'Jaṅgī Panchhiñ kā Gōshṭ aur Bhēñ-Kamal kī Jadh').

#### Ingredients :-

Same as in Recipe no. 68, with the addition of half kg. of Lotus Roots (K-'Naḍeir') of about 1" diameter.

#### Preparation :-

1. Dress and prepare the 'Shikār' as in the RECIPE No. 68.
2. Scrape the Lotus Roots with a knife and cut off root heads and bad ends. Chop horizontally into about 2" pieces. Split each piece lengthwise into two halves. Wash thoroughly so that no mud remains in holes.

#### Method of Cooking :-

It is same as in the case of cooking 'Shikār Rōgan Jōsh', RECIPE NO. 68, except that the dressed and cut Lotus Root pieces are first fried to some extent in oil, and taken out of it, after draining all oil and kept aside. Afterwards these are added when 'Shikār' pieces get fried to a golden brown colour. After this, the method of cooking is same. The Lotus Roots pieces, when cooked with the Shikār Meat, taste wonderful, and it is therefore considered a very good combination, which is cherished by Kashmirīs.