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SERVING FOOD

India is a country with a lot of diversity in its Terrain, languages, religions, climate and therefore clothing and in food too. Food in our multicultural society has been known to bring together all religions and cultures. Food therefore finds an important place at almost all occasions be it a wedding, birthday, a religious occasion, pooja, at meetings, at restaurants, while travelling and actually even at an occasion of death. Food is offered to our family, friends and colleagues when we meet. We cook food differently in different cultures and according to the availability of ingredients available in that particular region.

Once the food is cooked it is brought to the persons who will consume it which we call 'Serving'.

How food is served in India differs from culture to culture and region to region. It is necessary to know how we can serve the food that is cooked to the guests. For example we know that in the southern and eastern states of India rice is the staple food while in northern India roti or chapati is the staple food, this is mainly because these regions have climate suitable for growing these food grains. Rice items will therefore be served very differently than serving a chapati. Foods of India are known for



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its spiciness. Throughout our country, spices are used generously in food that make it more palatable.

Cooked food may be served fresh or packed for carrying with the person who will consume it. In the past few years we have developed a culture of selling the food too in packaged forms. Food industry is one of the flourishing and profitable propositions for business today.

Traditionally food in India was eaten while seated either on the floor or on very low stools, durries or mattresses. Most often food was eaten with the hands using ones fingers.

Let us understand why serving food is important, how we can serve food keeping in with our Indian tradition and also study about the traditional utensils that are used to prepare or serve food.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

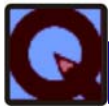
- explain the importance of serving food, different types of service, serving food at home and outside;
- identify various traditional utensils used for serving food; and
- serve food systematically.

10.1 SERVING FOOD

Serving of food is the stage between cooking and eating and involves important roles, mannerisms, and cultural forms depending upon the traditional practices of the community to which the people belong.

Different communities have different practices for example, we have seen that Indians emphasize on serving food with love and serving guests first, and offering second helpings too.

Serving of food may also depend upon where and how the food is had or offered, for example food may be had at home, restaurant, office, picnic, school etc.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1

1. Define Serving of Food.

2. Give an example of how food is served at your house.

10.2 TYPES OF SERVICE

Food may be packaged and sent to individuals from one place to another like our famous dabbawalas of Mumbai, it may be served to children in schools during the midday meal or may be served in front of the diners in a restaurant or may be served to the families at home.

Serving at a Restaurant/Hotel

Serving at a hotel may be from a Kitchen from where food is carried to a side table or a trolley. Food is served to the persons or the persons may serve themselves from the serving utensils containing food, from the Cooking utensils. In a restaurant the

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guests sit at a table with family and friends and are served food by the Waiters from the restaurant.



Fig. 10.1 Serving at a Restaurant/Hotel

In restaurants food may be served/ordered à la carte, that is, the diners may choose items from a menu or the food could be arranged in a Buffet and the guests could serve themselves from the food arranged on large common tables. When food is laid out on large common tables so that the guests can serve themselves is called a Buffet arrangement.

Buffet: Is a meal at which food is placed on a long table a people serve themselves.

Serving at Home

In some Indian households women have often been seen serving children and men first, sometimes serving differentiated portions of food to the males as compared to the females of the household.

Food at home may be served, like we mentioned above, at a table or to the people sitting on the floor in many households.

Nowadays, many Indian families use cutlery such as spoons or forks etc for eating but many also do not use any cutlery and use their hands to eat food. The type of cutlery used is chosen based on the type of food that we eat. Since Indian food comes in different shapes, sizes and textures, we often prefer to use all our fingers to eat food in order to enjoy the taste, smell, sight and touch of food.

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Fig. 10.2 Serving at Home

When the individual sits on the floor, the food may be served in the following ways, however with changing times food on leaves, Thalīs etc may also be served on a long table.

Serving/Cooking in Earthenware:

We are aware that our ancestors cooked food in earthenware because there would have been no plastic, steel or aluminium and also science has proven that cooking in Matkas or clay pots adds several minerals to food thereby making food healthy and free from contamination of undesirable metals. Clay pots are also alkaline in nature so they mix well with acidic food and balance

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its PH level. These utensils keep the liquids cool in warm areas. Small bowls may be used to make curd, kulfi and also serve in them. Earthen kullads which are environment friendly are also used to serve water or tea.

Leaves

Leaves are used for serving food which has been the practice from ancient times. Fresh leaves even today are used as a plate for eating. This is a common practice in many parts of our country such as in south and west India. A large number of people from southern states use Banana leaves as they are easily available, are inexhaustible, large and thick, and can easily serve as a plate.



Fig. 10.3 Pattal

In north India food or very often prasad may be served in donaas or pattals made of dried leaves. This is mainly because banana leaves are found in abundance in the southern India as compared with north. Nowadays however plates and bowls made from thermocol or plastic are used which are not safe for our environment as they are not biodegradable.

10.3 TRADITIONAL INDIAN COOKING SERVING UTENSILS

Chakli Belan is a round hard surface made of stone, marble, wood, plastic for rolling a chapati/roti. It is accompanied by Belan that is used to roll the dough into a flat chapati on the Chakli. A Belan is often made of wood and may come in different sized elongated shapes.



Fig. 10.6 Chakli Belan

Tava is a round shaped utensil that is used to make chapati. We have often seen them made from clay, aluminium, iron etc. We can also make paratha, chela or dosa on the tava. A tava is made from thick iron however we see a tava in different shapes, sizes and materials, for example tavas today can be seen made in non-stick so that the food does not stick to it.

Degchi is used mainly for boiling or cooking gravy food items. It is made of Aluminium or copper or brass. The shape of degchi helps to distribute the heat evenly.



Fig. 10.7 Degchi



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Jhanjri/Chhanta/Poni is a perforated spoon that allows the liquid/oil to retain in the utensil. Jhajri is often used for deep frying and may also be used for serving food. Jhanjiri may be made from steel, iron, aluminum or brass.



Fig. 10.8 Chhanta

Handi is a cooking utensil which is generally used for cooking rice or meat. Handi may be made with clay, Aluminum and sometimes steel or brass. Like Degchi the shape of Handi helps to cook food quickly. From the nutritional perspective to taste, clay pots are well-suited for all types of cooking. It is said that cooking in clay pots involves the slow cooking process that improves the quality and taste of food and also balances the nutrients.



Fig. 10.9 Handi

Khunti is a metal spoon in the shape of a spatula which is used only for frying. It is ideal for flipping food while frying etc and is often made of steel, iron, aluminium, brass, wood and now silicon to be used with non stick cookware.



Fig. 10.10 Khunti

Sarasi or Chimta or Sandasi are tongs that are used for taking hold of any object in the kitchen. For example it could be used for puffing up chapati on the flame or maybe a sturdier one could be used for holding a small utensil that does not have a handle and is too hot to lift.



Fig. 10.11 Chimta

Sil batta or Shil noda is a perfect stone grinder to grind masalas, chutneys and for making freshly ground pastes for curries.



Fig. 10.12 Sil Batta

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Boti, Dao, Da or Pirdai is a Bengali curved cutting blade that is fixed on a wooden platform and is used for chopping food.



Fig. 10.13 Pirdai

Karai or Wok is mainly used for frying. It is mostly prepared from Aluminium or Iron. These are often used for preparing vegetables without gravy and the vegetables can easily be tossed while cooking.



Fig. 10.14 Karai

Karchi or Hatha is a ladle used for serving or cooking liquid food like dal, curry etc. It has the shape of a large spoon which is



Fig. 10.15 Karchi



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deeper. Hathas are made from steel, iron, aluminium, brass, wood etc.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.2

1. What will you use a Sil Batta for?
2. List the uses of a Karai or a Wok.
3. Draw the utensils that you will use to make poori alu at home.



WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- The importance of serving food.
- Different types of service.
- Serving food at home and outside.
- Various traditional utensils used for serving food;
- Serving food systematically.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain Serving
2. Describe different types of serving food.



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3. List the difference between serving food at home and in a restaurant.
4. What are the different traditional utensils?
5. Describe and draw the different traditional utensils that you have seen being used even today?
6. Give reasons about why an earthen pot is ideal to store water.
7. Why is Handi used for cooking?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

10.1

1. Serving of food is the stage between cooking and eating and involves important roles, mannerisms, and cultural forms depending upon the traditional practices of the community to which the people belong.
2. Different types of serving food depends upon where food is served and what the food comprises. Food may be served in packaged form, at a restaurant or at home

10.2

1. To grind masala, chutney etc.
2. Use of Karai in frying.
3. Karai or Wok.