



MAYA PUWATH

Addendum to Maya Puwath Vol. 4 Issue 6

Unduval Recipe

(150 Medium size Unduwel)

1 cup Undu seeds

2 cups raw rice

1 cup-1 ½ cups OR 1 can of thick coconut milk

Treacle (Kitul palm syrup) OR brown sugar made into syrup

¼ tsp Salt

Coconut oil (3 cups)



Big handkerchief size cloth with a ¼ inch button hole in the middle (Cut a tiny hole and sew it. When you sew a small hole it gets bigger. So watch out.)

Day One:

Wash undu seeds well and soak with plenty of water in a bowl for two days.

Day Two:

Wash raw rice and soak in the same manner in a bowl for one day.

Day Three:

Drain off the water from rice and spread the rice on a dry towel for 1 hour.

Grind the rice in a electric grinder and sieve. Keep it ready.

Clean the skins off the Undu seeds and wash them well. Mix the seeds and 2/3 of coconut milk in a mixer/blender and blend until it becomes a fine paste. Even if you have tiny pieces of Undu in the mixture that is okay. Some blenders may not work efficiently.

Mix ground undu and rice flour. Bring the mixture into a sufficient thickness by adding small amounts of coconut milk if needed. The mixture should be somewhat like a stiff piping batter. By using your hand, mix the batter for about 10 minutes. If the consistency is too watery or too hard, the batter will not work for you. Be aware. Get it right by being mindful about adding the coconut milk. For your safety have little extra rice flour just in case you need it.

Cover it well and keep it in a warm place for about 6 hours.

After six hours:

Get ready to make your Unduwel.

If you have Kitul treacle that is the best. If you can't find treacle, you can use sugar syrup.

How to prepare the syrup with brown sugar:

3 lb of sugar

1 cup water

1/8 tsp. salt

Method:

Bring sugar and water to a boil stirring constantly. Soon when the sugar is dissolved completely take it off the burner and add salt and stir again. Do not keep the pan on the stove for too long and that can make the sugar too sticky. Sugar should not be watery either. Have the consistency as a good syrup. (You can see the consistency by dripping few hot drops into a dish and cooling it. Touch it and see if it gets too hard. That should not be too watery either. After taking it off of the stove let the syrup/treacle cool to a temperature that you can stick your finger in. Keep the syrup warm on a warm stove.

Get the batter mixture and add ½ tsp salt. (I always taste the batter to check the salt.) Lay the cloth in a bowl and add the mixture into the middle of it, and hold the ends together to make a piping bag.

Heat the coconut oil (around 375 degrees). If it is too hot it will burn the batter too soon. Get the right temperature. If the heat is too low, that will not work either. Please don't try with other oils such as olive oil, vegetable oil, corn oil, etc. Use only coconut oil. Other oils don't work even for Kevum. I learned that through experience.

Be attentive to what you do with oil. When the oil is heated up to the right temperature, carefully pipe the batter through the piping bag into deep fat in circular form at a steady speed. Undu wela will stick to the bottom for a little while. Don't worry. Let it cook and come up to the surface of the oil by itself. Then you turn it. When both sides are golden brown, pick it up with the spoon and a chopstick and drop it into the warm syrup that is ready to receive the Undu wela. Here comes the biggest trick not many people know of. That is, to have a second person ready to dip the fried hot Undu wela instantly in the syrup as it comes from the frying pan. (Like a diver in the pool ...J) No part should be visible above the syrup. Undu wela should be in the syrup only for 4-5 seconds. One can hear the soft "shshshsh" sound that says it absorbed the syrup well into it. Sometimes, you may not hear it, but syrup goes in. After 4-5 seconds it is ready to go to the "Ready-to-Eat container." Take it out from the syrup container and place it gently in the "Ready-to-Eat container."

Hints:

The syrup should be warm and not be too hot. The batter should not be too watery. You will never be able to pipe it though the button hole well if it is too watery. It should not be too hard either. To get the right consistency, add a bit of coconut milk at a time to the batter when you prepare the batter. That way, you have more control over the consistency.

You can pipe in 2-3 Unduwel at one time into the oil.

Send your children and husband to a movie or a park or something to have the time for yourself. You need to have one more person to dip the Unduwel in syrup.

You need to make undu wel more often to get more experienced. That helps you to improve the taste of your Undu wel.

Good luck!!! Any questions? Concerns? Call me @ 425-228-0988

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By Sujatha Werake

**** Cooking Tip sent by Dakshika Bandaranayaka:** I have successfully used canola oil for frying the unduval, and it has worked as good as coconut oil so far. But canola cannot do kevum, but mung kevum was ok with it.

My theory and thoughts about the History of Unduwel:

Unduwel is one of the authentic sweetmeats exclusively famous in Kandyan areas. Kandyan ladies have perfected the subtle art of making tasty Unduwel with full of treacle inside. When I was in college, my friends from Galle who tasted Unduwel that were made by my mother asked me if she used an eye-dropper to fill the inside with treacle. They were little confused about how it was done.

It is most likely that Unduwel was introduced to the Kandyan cuisine from South India during the Nayakkar Dynasty in the 18th century. Many South Indian families who were relatives of the Nayakkaras, the artisans, and many other South Indian groups came and settled down in the Kandyan Kingdom during that time. They may have brought the South Indian cookery, and other cultural aspects along with them.

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