

Nuvvulu Podi (Sesame Seed Powder)

Veg, side dish, spicy, Andhra



**Pratibha Jain and
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Jigyasa Giri and Pratibha Jain are the authors and publishers of "Cooking at Home with Pedatha" which won the Gourmand award for "Best Vegetarian Book in the World 2006". Jigyasa is a Kathak dancer, choreographer, and teacher. Pratibha Jain holds a Doctorate in Philosophy of Language from the University of Madras. Their website is www.prietya.com, and their email address is communicate@prietya.com.

We have grown up believing that cooking is all about being quick, clever, and creative. Readymade powders, instant purees, and our freezers are now our salvation. We learnt something different from Pedatha, (short for Peddha Atthayya, which means eldest aunt (*bhua* – *father's sister*) in Telugu) – Mrs. Subhadra Krishna Rau Parigi, the eldest daughter of the former President of India, Dr. V.V. Giri. She is the protagonist of our book *Cooking at home with Pedatha*.

As we interacted with the then 82-year-young Pedatha in 2002, we realized that although ease has been gained in the kitchen, a certain unhurriedness as a way of life has been lost. For us, our time with her was a peek into another time, another world, a unique kind of 'patience'.



We never asked Pedatha was how much time any recipe would take. We already knew her answer: "As long as it takes for a good dish to be ready." "Don't look at the time, look at the pan," she once remarked. For this reason, though we have given approximate timings during the various steps of the recipe, we have not stated the overall preparation and cooking time.

This dish is popular in Andhra Pradesh.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp Oil
- Salt to taste

To be roasted without oil

- 200 grams (7 ozs) sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp Split black gram (husked)
- 1 tbsp Bengal gram
- 1 tbsp Coriander seeds
- 1 tsp Asafoetida powder

To be roasted in oil

- 1 cup Red chillies, stalks removed

- 0.25 cup Curry leaves

Method

Dry roast the sesame, grams and coriander seeds, each separately on a low flame, to deep brown.

Dry roast the asafoetida powder for a few seconds.

Heat the oil and roast the chillies on a low flame until crisp and bright red, but not brown. Remove the chillies from the oil and set aside. Now, roast the curry leaves until crisp and dark green. Remove from oil and set aside.

Grind all these ingredients along with salt into a powder, neither too fine nor too coarse. Cool and store in an airtight container.

Serve with idlis, dosais or mix into steamed rice with a dollop of ghee or sesame oil. You can also enhance the flavour of vegetables like broad beans, raw banana or cluster beans by adding this powder as a seasoning.

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