

Dosa Avakaya (yellow cucumber/Melon cucumber pickle)

Sharmila Venkat

Veg, spicy, condiment, Andhra



Sharmila Venkat

I was born and brought up in a traditional Telugu Brahmin family in Tamilnadu. I did my Masters in IT, and am currently settled in USA. Cooking and entertaining are my passions. I want to share my recipes, so I have created <http://neivedyam.blogspot.com:80/>. Husband Venkat is a busy IT person and my best critic. I am a busy mom of two adorable kids, but do find time for my other hobbies: music, photography, travelling, gardening and cookbooks.



Nanamma standing behind her husband (with me on his lap) and his mother

My memories still wander around my Nanamma's (father's mother in Telugu) lovely home, where her kitchen opened into a beautiful wide backyard with Tulasi *madam* (place where Tulasi plant is worshiped), hibiscus plants, and coconut trees. In 1990's I spent most of my childhood at my grandmother's.

My Nanamma's home was always busy with guests and relatives. She never used to get tired cooking for a large crowd. She was filled with energy and her kitchen was a lovely place to sit and have long chats. I come from a Telugu Brahmin family settled in Tamilnadu, so my Nanamma was an expert in both Telugu and Tamilian cuisine. Being a very strict and principled person, my Nanamma never allowed anyone inside her kitchen without completing the morning rituals such as bathing, praying, etc. Early in the morning, my cousins and I used to wait for her famous filter coffee, which would mesmerize the whole house with its aroma.



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This recipe is a tribute to my Nanamma.

During family gatherings, 10-12 cousins used to sit in a big circle in the backyard. Nanamma used to mix rice and curry for all of us in one big bowl and make Annam Mudda (rice ball prepared by mixing any curry with hot steamed rice and ghee). It used to be a very

satisfying meal, which still lingers in my memory.

Serves: 10

Preparation time: 20 minute

Standing time: 24 hours



Dosakaya (melon cucumber) and Spice mix

Dosakaya (Yellow melon cucumber), a small, round light green to bright yellow coloured vegetable, with a crisp crunchy skin and a mild sweet-tartly taste, is used to prepare traditional Andhra delicacies like dosakaya pappu (Dal), dosakaya pachadi(chutney) and dosa avakai(pickle). Dosa Avakai is an old Andhra culinary tradition that is closely similar to the famous Andhra Avakai or

Mango Pickle. The main difference is that dosa avakai is ready to eat within 24 hours of preparing the pickle, while Andhra avakai takes one week.

Ingredients

- 1 cup melon cucumber (diced)
- 4 tbsps mustard seeds
- 4 tbsps red chilli powder (use 3 tbsps for less spice)
- 1 1/2 tbsp salt (if required more salt can be added later)
- 2 tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp asafoetida
- 4-5 tbsps sesame seed oil (nuvvulu nune in Telugu)

Preparation

Wash a medium sized dosakaya (melon Cucumber) well and wipe it with a dry cloth before cutting.

Cut it into two halves, de-seed and again cut them in to small pieces Approx 1" size, along with the skin.

Powder the mustard seed along with chilli powder and salt. (We powder mustard seeds with chilli powder and salt because if mustard is ground alone it might turn oily and sticky.)

The combination of all these dry ingredients is an aromatic spice mix called the **avalu pindi** in Telugu, which means mustard powder.

Mix these spices along with turmeric, asafoetida in a wide bowl.

To this, add dosakaya pieces and mix well.

Add oil and mix slowly and gently until all the pieces of cucumber are coated well.

Transfer the pickle into a clean airtight jar.

Leave it for 24 hours and next day gently toss the pickle with a ladle. The cucumber absorbs the spices and is ready to eat with rice and ghee.

Dosa avakai is best consumed within 2-3 weeks of preparation.

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