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This summer, ensure you eat enough curd

Ismat Tahseen,TNN | Apr 9, 2014, 12.00 AM IST

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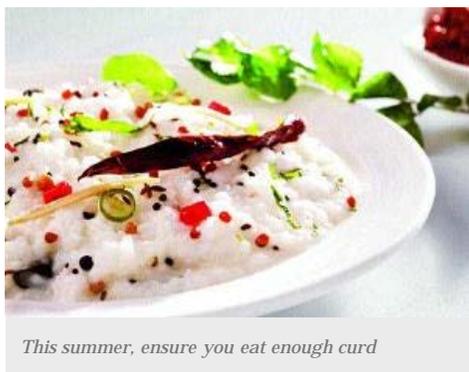
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This summer, ensure you eat enough curd

Had plain or in savoury dishes and desserts, dahi can be a healthy, cooling antidote to the season...

Indian food certainly cannot do without yoghurt or dahi. From spiking up buttermilk, to taking the form of a raita, or as a dipping with garlic and herbs, dahi makes for a versatile addition. And in the hot season, it can also cool down the body faster than any other food.

Curry it up

"Curd is always present in our meals. Did you know there are many curries which are made using curd as the base?" says Mumbai-based food blogger Purabhi Naha, adding, "For instance, the authentic Bengali Doi Maach. There are many ways of making it and the summer version of the dish uses less oil, is easy on the stomach and tastes great too. Use freshly ground garam masala powder, called bhajamoshla, a common ingredient in Bengali households. You roast a tablespoon of cumin seeds, one-inch cinnamon stick, four green cardamoms and six cloves, until fragrant. Powder and store this. Another good idea is the Beetroot Yoghurt Curry — a colourful dish, which is simple to make, pleasing to the eyes and is a burst of healthy flavours in your mouth."

'It's like a super food'

Not many know this, but curd is considered to be a super food, just like berries, flaxseeds, green tea and cooking oils with high antioxidant power. A study from Taiwan even found that curd is helpful in curing H. Pylori infections, the most common type of stomach infection. Says nutritionist Niti Desai, "It's a nutrient dense and one of the richest sources of calcium (boosts bone health) and a good source of protein of high biological value. It also has vitamin B12 (maintains red blood cells), plus vitamin D. Curd is also the best source of probiotics (useful

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bacteria that are extremely important for the health of our digestive system). Besides, curd has a cooling effect and even people who are lactose intolerant are able to have it."

Quantity and nutrient value:

You can have a full bowl of curd either with breakfast, lunch, or with your evening snack everyday. Curd has almost the same calorific value as the milk it has been made from — besides the additional welcome dose of probiotic bacteria.

Ways to have it

While a bowl of plain curd is the best, there are other ways to enjoy it. Curd rice, kalan and moru curry — the dahi-based dishes from Kerala — are popular. Also have it as buttermilk or lassi or with museli or fruits as a fruit smoothie. Include it with lunch in a raita or as a dessert — as mishti doi or with chopped fruit.

Who should avoid

No one needs to avoid curd, except for severely and clinically tested lactose intolerant individuals, says Desai. In summer, make sure that you don't eat curd which has not been refrigerated or has been at room temperature for a long time as it can be the breeding ground for harmful bacteria in hot and humid conditions.

Put this on the 'cooling' menu

This time, avoid aerated drinks and sherbets and try chilled lassi or buttermilk, which can leave you feeling hydrated. Or try serving it as a sour dip with veggies at your party.

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