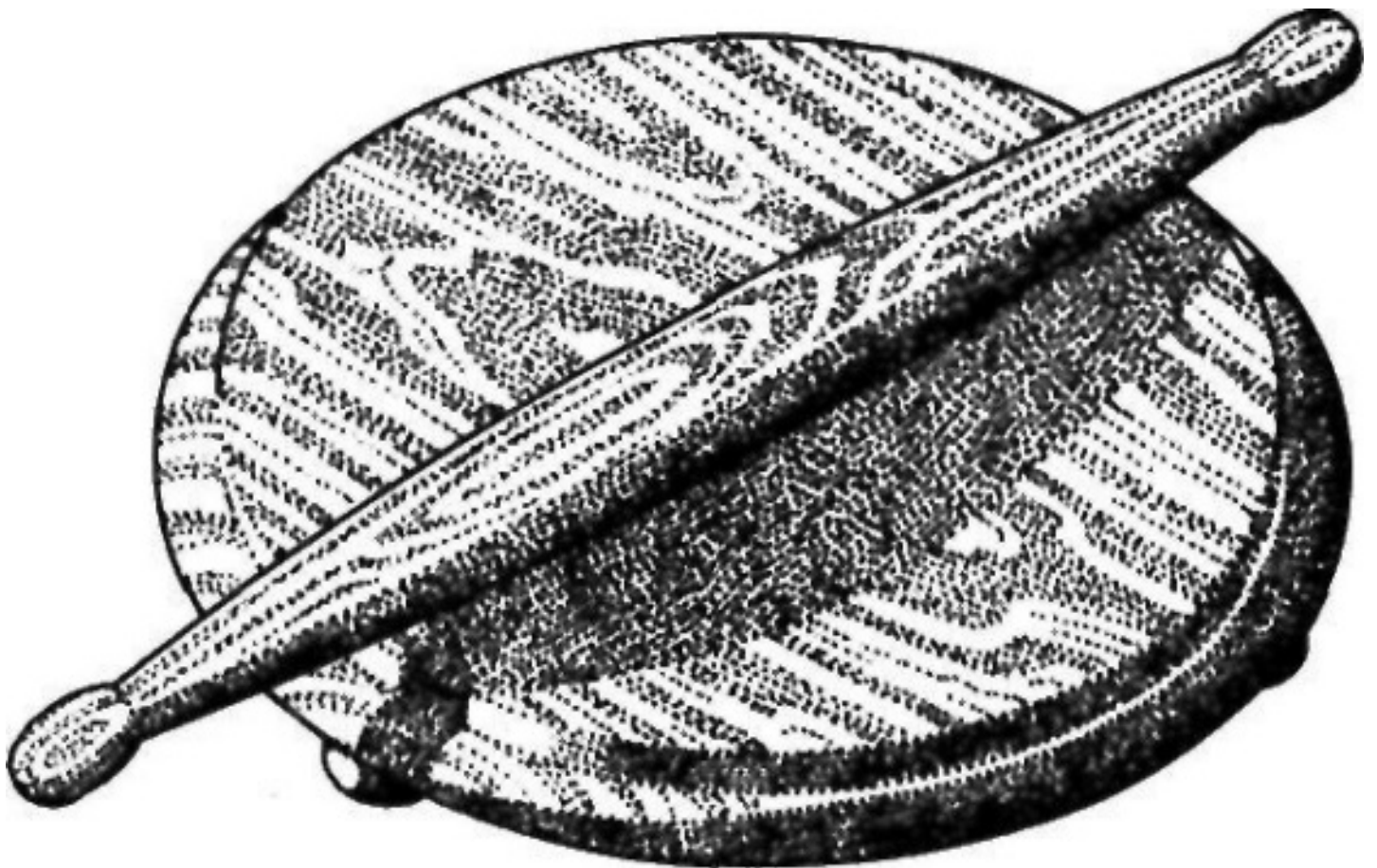


plenty of time or an extra pair of helping hands, and use several griddles. Though nothing beats piping-hot *parathas*, they are fine kept warm or even served at room temperature. Srila Prabhupada knew the nooks and crannies of Old Delhi, having lived there before coming to the United States in 1965. Many areas are so congested that foot travel is the only feasible transportation. I first found myself in "*Paratha Gully*" while heading for a famous *sari* shop in the Red Fort district—a compact, confined area with wall-to-wall shops, famous for its outdoor *paratha* stands. Family-trained specialists, young and old, sit hour after hour preparing fresh *parathas* for residents and tourists. After studying what I considered the best of them, I was ready the next time Srila Prabhupada requested a stuffed *paratha*. While the bread was still hot, with only a few bites gone, he asked where I had learned to make the variation. After hearing my story, he commented that he too had seen them making *parathas*, one after another. "An observant cook can learn simply by watching and hearing. As a child, I learned to cook by watching my mother, my maternal aunt and the street vendors." Everyone in Delhi has a favorite variation. This has always been one of mine.

For a real summer lunch-box treat, try potato *parathas* accompanied by *Mixed Vegetable Salad* and a thermos of cool *Minty Lemon-Lime Refresher*. When the weather turns nippy, *parathas* with fruit compote and a hot beverage makes a warm, satisfying breakfast. For a light brunch or lunch, try these *parathas* with *Shredded Cucumbers in Smooth Mint-Flavored Yogurt*.



Preparation time (after assembling ingredients): 15–30 minutes

Dough resting time: ½ hour–3 hours

Cooking time: 40 minutes

Makes: 10 stuffed *parathas*

For the Bread:

4 cups (520 g) sieved *chapati* flour, or 2²/₃ cups (335 g) sieved whole wheat flour mixed with 1¹/₃ cups (155 g) unbleached white flour

½ tablespoon (7 ml) salt

⅓ cup (80 ml) melted unsalted butter or *ghee*

1¹/₃ cups (320 ml) warm water (about 100°F/38°C), or as needed

chapati or sieved wheat flour for dusting

For the Filling:

2 tablespoons (30 ml) *ghee* or vegetable oil

½ tablespoon (7 ml) scraped, minced fresh ginger root

½ tablespoon (7 ml) minced seeded hot green chili

½ tablespoon (7 ml) cumin seeds

2½ cups (600 ml) warm mashed potatoes

½ tablespoon (7 ml) ground coriander

¼ teaspoon (1 ml) paprika or cayenne pepper scant ½ teaspoon (2 ml) turmeric

½ tablespoon (7 ml) salt

1 tablespoon (15 ml) lemon juice

2 teaspoons (10 ml) *jaggery* or brown sugar

3 tablespoons (45 ml) chopped fresh coriander, dill or parsley

chapati or sieved wheat flour for dusting

⅔ cup (160 ml) melted *ghee* or vegetable oil for cooking

1. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Drizzle in the melted butter or *ghee* and rub it in with your fingertips until the mixture has the consistency of coarse oatmeal. Add the water, pouring fast at first, to moisten the flour until it adheres into a rough mass, then more slowly, in dribbles, until it forms a medium-stiff dough. (The amount of water may vary, depending on the flour.) Knead the dough, dusting occasionally with flour to keep it from sticking to the work surface, until silky smooth and pliable, about 10 minutes. You can also make the dough in a food processor (see [page 100](#)). Shape it into a ball, rub it with *ghee* or oil, cover with an inverted bowl and let it rest for ½ hour–3 hours. If you want to leave it longer, you can refrigerate it, well covered, for up to 24 hours; let it come to room temperature before you start to roll out the breads.

2. To make the filling, heat the *ghee* or oil in a large frying pan over moderate heat. Add the ginger root, chili and cumin seeds, and fry until the seeds brown. Stir in the mashed potatoes, ground coriander, paprika or cayenne, turmeric, salt, lemon juice, sweetener and herb. Stir-fry for a minute or so, and set aside to cool. (The filling can be made ahead of time and refrigerated. Let it come to room temperature before assembling the breads.) Divide into 10 portions on a plate.

3. Gather the items needed for rolling out and cooking—a rolling pin, dusting flour in a

shallow plate or pie dish, a basket lined with clean tea towels, and a bowl of melted *ghee* or oil and a pastry brush and a teaspoon. Knead the dough briefly, divide in half, roll each piece into a rope and cut into 10 portions. Roll them into smooth balls, put them on a plate without letting them touch, and cover with a damp cloth.

4. To roll out the breads, flatten a ball into a 2-inch (5 cm) patty and dip both sides in the dusting flour. Roll it out as evenly as you can into a round about 6 inches (15 cm) in diameter, dipping it in the dusting flour from time to time, just enough to keep it from sticking to the work surface (excess flour will make the *paratha* brittle and will burn in the hot *ghee* or oil). Roll with even, gentle pressure, easing the dough into a round rather than stretching it. (Experienced cooks rotate the breads as they flatten them, using a slightly clockwise back-and-forth motion.) Repeat the process with another ball of dough. Dip a pastry brush in water and paint a border around the edges.

5. To assemble, spread a portion of filling evenly over one round, leaving a ½-inch (1.5 cm) border around the edges. Carefully pick up the other round and lay it on top. Gently smooth the surface, easing out air bubbles, and press around the edges to seal in the filling. If you have rolled even, round breads, they will not need trimming, but if there is too much overlap on top or bottom, simply cut off the excess with a sharp knife. As you assemble the breads, put them on waxed-paper-lined cookie sheets without letting them touch, or they will be impossible to separate.

6. Preheat a griddle over moderate heat for 2–3 minutes (about 375°F/190°C on an electric griddle) and brush with a little *ghee* or oil. Check the temperature by sprinkling a few drops of water on the surface; if the drops bounce and sputter, the griddle is ready. Carefully lay a stuffed bread on the griddle and cook for about 1½ minutes, then drizzle 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of *ghee* or oil around the edges and on top of the bread. When it has cooked for a total of 2–3 minutes and the bottom has reddish-brown spots, turn it over with a spatula, drizzle another teaspoon (5 ml) of *ghee* or oil on the surface and cook for up to 2 minutes more. When both sides of the bread puff in places, become crisp and show reddish-brown spots, it is done. You can encourage the bread to puff by gently rubbing the surface with the bottom of a spoon. Turn it over once again if it needs to brown a little more. Slip it into the basket and fold a tea towel over the top. Repeat the process for the remaining breads.

Griddle-Fried Cauliflower-Stuffed Whole Wheat Bread

GOBHI PARATHA

All of the stuffed *paratha* recipes in this chapter call for similar shaping and cooking; the main difference is in the filling. Each features a special ingredient—mashed potatoes, grated radish or cauliflower, mashed peas, jam or raw sugar—and most of them are pleasantly hot or spicy. In the previous recipe, sugar and lemon juice gave the potato filling a piquant sweet-and-sour twist; here, the cauliflower is complemented by the nippy heat of fresh ginger root and the spice blend *garam masala*. They are delicious beyond words.