



Paach Phron or Panch Foron (Bengali 5 Spice)

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

- Jeera (Cumin): 2 tsp.
- Kalojeera (Nigella): 1/2 tsp.
- Methi (Fenugreek): 1 tsp.
- Radhuni* (Ajwain): 2 tsp.
- Sorshe (Mustard seeds): 1 tsp.
- [Most popular and typically use Mouri (Fennel seed)]

Instructions

This mix of 5 spice is a MUST HAVE for a Bengali kitchen! Its a flavor explosion when added to any dish at the end of the cooking process or to fry veggies and fish with. When these are tempered, it will fill you with a strong earthy and spicy aroma thats just beautiful. What exactly is in this fantastic spice mix?

It is a mix of 5 whole spices, usually consisting of the following. Substitutions are sometimes made based on region.

Most recipes say to use equal portions of all but, this recipe of proportions is from the Bengali cookbook Khado, Ranna and Pusti by Siddiqua Kabir first published in 1978. So, thats what I am going by. The use of mustard seed in place of fennel is my personal choice, the book and typical Panch Phoron uses fennel. I don't really like the taste of fennel seeds in different foods so I use mustard instead.

I was working this post I wondered, that there must be some ancient wisdom at work as to why these particular 5 spices are put together. Whether medicinal value or religious or otherwise...so I have been asking around and doing some research online. So far, people around me don't seem to have the vaguest idea except to point out the

traditional spices, perhaps I am just asking the wrong persons. I have found different medicinal uses for each spice, perhaps that's all there was to it!

Well, I am going to continue with the research of these very ancient of spices and its uses in Bengali cooking. The posts will be individual and a link back from this one. I am excited to do this research and bring to you a somewhat comprehensive understanding of the histories and uses of each of the spices.

For now, enjoy cooking with Paanch Phoron. It remains in whole form and tempered or Tadka.

***Heat a tsp. or 2 of oil (most typically mustard oil) and add a tsp. of Paanch Phoron. Gently roast it - be careful because it will splutter! About 30 seconds is enough to release the aromas and oils. This can be added in the end of cooking a daal or just throw in some potatoes with onions and stir fry.*