

## Comparitive Cultures



## A Seasoned Traveller

By Kinjal Dagli-Shah

This spring, I found myself comparing the seasons here with the seasons of my homeland.

Back in those days, the month of May was not just alliterative with mangoes, it was synonymous with them. By those days, I mean the 20-something years I spent growing up in hot, sunny, humid Mumbai.

We actually had a mango season that started in April and lasted all the way into June, during which time we devoured mangoes of all types and sizes and in every form conceivable – from smoothies and freezies to plain bite-sized pieces and julienne strips. It made the heat more bearable, even something to look forward to, because of the association with the king of fruits.

Of course, as a self-absorbed teenager, I never realized that the season was specific to our region and country. Just as I thought the monsoon season meant every teenager across the

globe was sailing paper boats and arguing with their mother about why getting drenched in the rain was a sound way to get clean and save water.

It was only years later, as a nerdy student in Philadelphia, after a sudden downpour and a fit of ethnocentrism, that I announced to the class, "Back in Mumbai, we have a schedule for the rains. From June to August. It's called the monsoon season."

Well, I didn't really announce it as much as state it in the context of a topic we were studying, which I now fail to remember. But I do remember how amazed my classmates were. (I went to a predominantly white grad school, and I was the only, well, student of colour in my department).

I think I may have elevated the status of my country from one of snake charmers and elephants to a more organized nation, at least in the eyes of a few 20-somethings. No medal of honour for that one, but I'm still proud.

I never really got a chance to talk about my country's

mango season – I think by then my classmates had tired of my eager attempts to share information about 'that side of the world'. But secretly (not so secretly anymore), I think they were just getting upset with the constant restructuring they had to do in their minds of the odd, er, old ideas they held about the world outside theirs. Some of them, however, still remain my friends, and have forgiven my eccentricities.

I was taken back to my childhood by a box of slowly ripening, golden-coloured Alphonso mangoes in my kitchen. I rode on the sweet smell that wafted into my nostrils and transported me to the land of the mango season at its ripened height, just as now, when my thoughts turn to sailing boats and arguments with my mother during this, the monsoon season.

*Kinjal Dagli-Shah is a writer torn between two cities – Toronto and Mumbai. This column, therefore, will explore the many associations, often esoteric, that make her existence interesting.*



## On The Run

By Robin Steckley

Twenty or 30 years ago, my parents would sprinkle sugar over oatmeal or add fruit to make it more attractive to us kids and tell us it was good for us. Now I know they were right.

Oatmeal isn't just a hot cereal fed to children to get something warm into their stomachs before they go out into the cold. It has many benefits: it's an excellent source of calcium, especially if made with milk. It helps to build and maintain strong bones, teeth and hair, and it staves off osteoporosis.

It's both low fat and filling, so you can eat a large bowl and not have to worry about packing on the pounds, as long as you don't load it up with sugar. And those who eat oatmeal in the morning are less likely to fill up with snacks before lunch. This is because the soluble fibre in oatmeal absorbs a considerable amount of water while slowing down your digestive process. The result is that you'll feel full longer, eat less snacks and control your weight better.

Oatmeal contains high amounts of fibre, keeping you regular, and is a great source of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. It is also said to have cancer fighting properties. In addition it is an excellent source of protein. Our parents were much smarter than we realized.

The water soluble fibre in oatmeal helps to lower cholesterol and is especially good for diabetics, since they

won't experience a rise in insulin after eating it. More than 40 studies have shown that it may help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

According to recent studies, a diet that includes oatmeal may help reduce high blood pressure. The reduction is linked to the increase in soluble fibre provided by oatmeal. Oats contain more soluble fibre than whole wheat, rice or corn.

New research suggests that eating oatmeal may reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes. In fact, the American Diabetes Association already recommends that people with diabetes eat grains like oats. The soluble fibre in these foods helps to control blood glucose levels.

With the exception of certain flavoured varieties, the oats found in your grocery store are 100 per cent natural. If you look at the ingredients on a canister or bag of rolled oats, you will usually see only one ingredient: rolled oats.

Oatmeal is quick and convenient and can be prepared in a microwave oven. Even when cooked on the stovetop, both old-fashioned and quick oats can usually be made in less than 10 minutes. And what about instant oatmeal, a hot breakfast in under a minute? Incredible!

The benefits of oatmeal abound. If bad memories of a lumpy childhood breakfast have steered you clear of this wonderful food, you might want to give it another try. Chances are you won't be disappointed, and your heart and body will thank you.

## On The Menu

**THAI VILLA**  
TAKE IN OR DINE OUT

Thailand Singapore Malaysia Cuisine

**10% OFF ALL ORDERS**

of \$15 or more with

this coupon

DINE IN OR TAKE OUT

**10% OFF ALL ORDERS**

of \$15 or more with

this coupon

DINE IN OR TAKE OUT



Located in the Walmart Plaza

905-642-8298

and NOW a Second Location in Uxbridge!

307 Toronto Street South

905-852-8826

RR  
**REAL  
ROOFING**

SHINGLES • FLATS • REPAIRS • NEW

Offering **REAL** quality, **REAL** guarantees at  
**RECESSION RATES**

Gord Fisher • Over 25 Years Experience

FREE ESTIMATES - CALL • 905-642-8304

**STOUFFVILLE**  
GARAGE DOORS



Happy Canada  
Day & Enjoy  
the Strawberry  
Festival



THE BEST PHONE CALL YOU CAN MAKE

"Serving the Stouffville area for 22 years"

"We're proud of our product, price and workmanship"

call **905-642-3217**visit us on our new website [www.stouffvillegaragedoors.com](http://www.stouffvillegaragedoors.com)