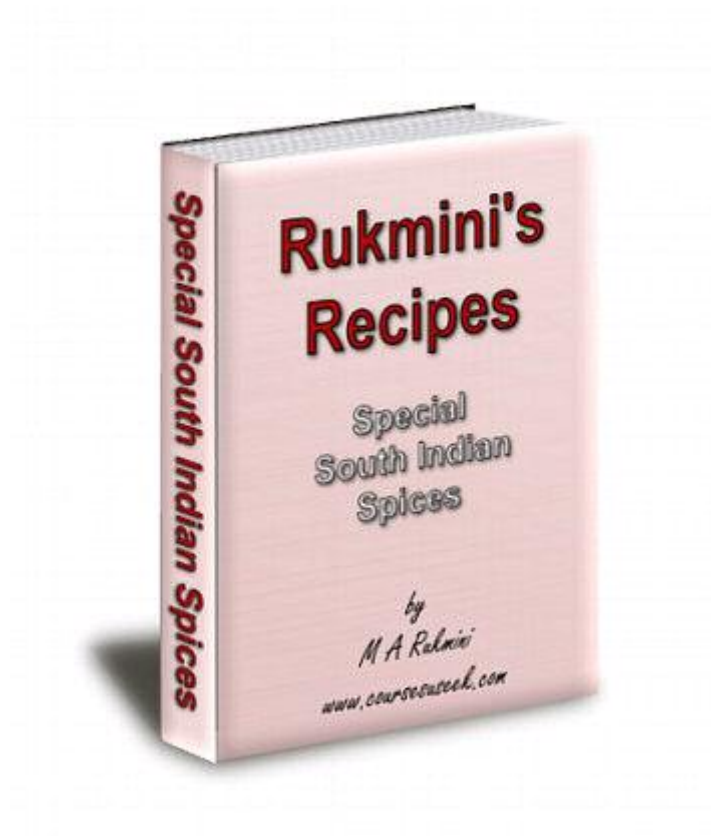


# Special South Indian Spices



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## About the Author



**M. A. Rukmini** has been experimenting with different recipes for nearly 60 years. As a mother and grandmother she has spent most of her life in the kitchen preparing innovative dishes for her family and friends with great enthusiasm. Her special powders which add a unique flavour to the items she prepares and her practical wisdom polished by years of experience has gained her popularity in the neighbourhood. She is often flooded with queries on improving dishes and creating new dishes. In this series of eBooks she has tried to share her secrets in such a way that even beginners can cook up mouth watering dishes just as she does. She can be contacted at [rukmini@want2learn.com](mailto:rukmini@want2learn.com)

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## Special Spices

In South India special powders are prepared and added to many of the South Indian Delicacies. Each powder is different though some of them have similar ingredients. The proportion of the mixture of all the ingredients is important as it brings about a difference in the flavour and taste. The Podi or powder is used for the nutritional value of the ingredients individually as well as in combination and the exotic aroma that adds a special flavour to the dish. The selection of the ingredients is such that it enhances the appetite and helps in digestion.

It is possible to prepare the powders with more or less chillies depending on individual preferences. Similarly, it is possible to leave out asafoetida if you do not like its smell. The asafoetida is usually added to all South Indian Spices and it is said to aid in digestion.

The powders can be kept for six months in airtight containers without refrigeration. They can last longer if kept in the fridge.

# 1

## Sāmbār Podi

### Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	250 gm
split bengal gram (chick pea)	100 gm
split black gram	100 gm
red Chillies (long)	8
cinnamon	5 gm
asafoetida	5 gm
oil	2 table spoons

Heat the oil in a pan and put in the asafoetida first. Then add all the other ingredients and roast till the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients turn golden brown. To roast all the ingredients evenly the flame should be medium high. Keep the roasted ingredients aside to cool. Then grind them to a fine powder in a mixer.

This powder can be added to a number of dishes. But the most important item that is made with this powder is 'Sāmbār'.

Sāmbār is made with dāl and vegetables. Any vegetable can be used for preparing Sāmbār. You can use just one vegetable or a combination of three, four or five vegetables.

### *Procedure for preparing Sāmbār*

1. Cook about 250 gm of split gram (pigeon pea) with a pinch of turmeric powder.
2. When the dāl is half cooked put in the vegetables. You can put in carrots, potatoes, brinjals, white pumpkin, etc. Alternatively, you can cook the dal and vegetables in the pressure cooker.
3. Grate half a coconut.
4. Take two tablespoons of Sāmbār powder and grind it along with the grated coconut and add it to the cooked dāl and vegetables. Alternatively, you can add the powder directly without grinding it to a paste with coconut.
5. Boil for 5 mts.
6. Add the required amount of salt and boil for 5 mts.
7. Add a teaspoon of tamarind paste. Or soak some tamarind in water and squeeze out its essence. Add a cup of tamarind essence.
8. Boil for 5 mts.
9. Season the Sāmbār. Roast a teaspoon of mustard and cumin seeds in a spoonful of oil and add. A pinch of asafoetida can also be added.
10. Add curry leaves and chopped green coriander for additional flavour.
11. You can add a teaspoon of ghee and keep the Sāmbār covered for 5 mts.

This powder is also used for preparing curry or dry vegetable preparations and for preparing spiced rice. For this Sāmbār powder, tamarind essence and salt are added to rice and it is seasoned. Usually in restaurants Sāmbār is served as a side dish with Dosā and Idli. In that Sāmbār only onion is added to dāl and this powder is put in directly.

Sāmbārs which have one or more vegetables, wherein the powder is ground with grated coconut and added is also called 'Koottu' Whenever this type of Sāmbār is prepared it should be boiled on medium heat till the powder and tamarind essence get cooked, blend well with the dāl and vegetables and exude a delicious smell.

## 2

## Mysore Rasappodi

## Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	500 gm
red Chillies (long)	100 gm
split bengal gram (chick pea)	100 gm
split black gram	100 gm
peppar	25 gm
cumin	15 gm
fenugreek	10 gm
cinnamon	5 gm
asafoetida	5 gm
oil	4 table spoons

Heat the oil in a pan and put in the asafoetida first. Then add all the other ingredients and roast till the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients turn golden brown. To roast all the ingredients evenly the flame should be medium high. Keep the roasted ingredients aside to cool. Then grind them to a fine powder in a mixer.

This powder can be added to a number of dishes. But the most important item that is made with this powder is 'Mysore Rasam'.

Mysore Rasam is similar to soup.

### *Procedure for preparing Mysore Rasam*

1. Cook about 250 gm of split gram (pigeon pea) with a pinch of turmeric powder.
2. Add this powder, tamarind paste and salt to the cooked dāl.
3. Boil for 10 mts.
4. Dilute the cooked split gram according to the preferred consistency by adding water. In South India it is prepared as a thin liquid which can be drunk from a glass.
5. Season the liquid. Roast a teaspoon of mustard seeds and cumin seeds in a spoonful of oil and add it to the Rasam. A pinch of asafoetida can also be added.
6. Add curry leaves and chopped green coriander for additional flavour.

Usually this item is eaten with rice in South India. But it is also drunk as soup. It is very useful to aid digestion and hence can be served as an appetizer.

## 3

## Madras Rasappodi

## Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	100 gm
split gram(pigeon pea)	50 gm
split bengal gram (chick pea)	10 gm
pepper	25 gm
cumin	10 gm
red chillies	10 gm

Dry all the ingredients in the sun and grind them to a powder. Store in an airtight container.

This powder is used for preparing Madras Rasam which is similar to soup.

### *Procedure for preparing Madras Rasam*

1. Cook split gram (pigeon pea) and take the diluted dal water. [You can cook the dal, take the dal water from the top for this Rasam and use the thick dal for Sāmbār.]
2. In a pan take tablespoon oil and roast a teaspoon of mustard and cumin. A pinch of asafoetida can also be added.
3. When the mustard and cumin pop up and crackle, add a few tomatoes cut into small pieces.
4. Add a pinch of turmeric powder, salt to taste, the Madras Rasam powder and roast for two to three minutes.
5. Add the dal water.
6. Boil for 5 mts.
7. Add curry leaves and chopped coriander leaves for additional flavour.

Usually this item is eaten with rice in South India. But it is also drunk as soup. It is very useful to aid digestion and hence can be served as an appetizer.

Rice and dāl are eaten every day in South India. Hence to bring in variety the South Indians prepare different types of dāl. Sometimes the dāl is prepared with tamarind, sometimes with tomatoes, sometimes with lemon and sometimes with a combination of one or two or all three of these. In addition the different powders that are prepared and stored add different flavours and thereby add to the variety.

## 4

## Seeragam Rasappodi

## Ingredients

cumin	50 gm
split gram (pigeon pea)	25 gm
peppar	15 gm
red Chillies (long)	4
asafoetida	a pinch

Powder all the ingredients together. There is no need to roast them. The powder can be preserved in an airtight container for 6 months.

This powder can be added to a number of dishes. But the most important item that is made with this powder is 'Seeragam Rasam'.

Seeragam Rasam is similar to soup.

### *Procedure for preparing Seeragam Rasam*

1. You can prepare this Rasam with or without dāl. To prepare this with dāl water, cook about 50 gm of split gram (pigeon pea) with a pinch of turmeric powder and take its diluted water. To prepare this without dāl just take a cup of water in a pan.
2. Soak tamarind in water and squeeze out its essence.
3. Add this powder, tamarind essence, salt to taste and a pinch of turmeric powder.
4. Boil for 10 mts.
5. Season the liquid. Roast a teaspoon of mustard seeds and cumin seeds in a spoonful of oil and add it to the Rasam. A pinch of asafoetida can also be added.
6. Add curry leaves and chopped green coriander for additional flavour.

Usually this item is eaten with rice in South India. But it is also drunk as soup. It is very useful to aid digestion and hence can be served as an appetizer.

In South India this Rasam is served as a very effective soup to people suffering from fever or cold.

## 5

## Milagu Rasappodi

## Ingredients

split bengal gram (chick pea)	50 gm
split black gram	50 gm
peppar	10 gm
red Chillies (long)	2
asafoetida	5 gm
ghee	1 table spoon

Roast all the ingredients in ghee on slow fire till the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients turn golden brown. To roast all the ingredients evenly the flame should be medium high. Keep the roasted ingredients aside to cool. Then grind them to a fine powder in a mixer.

This powder can be added to a number of dishes. But the most important item that is made with this powder is 'Milagu Rasam'.

Milagu Rasam is similar to soup.

### *Procedure for preparing Milagu Rasam*

1. Cook about 250 gm of split gram (pigeon pea) with a pinch of turmeric powder.
2. Add this powder and salt to the cooked dāl.
3. Boil for 10 mts.
4. Dilute the cooked split gram according to the preferred consistency by adding water. In South India it is prepared as a thin liquid which can be drunk from a glass.
5. Add curry leaves for additional flavour.
6. Add a teaspoon of lemon juice (optional).
7. Add a tablespoon of milk (optional).

You can choose whether to add milk or lemon juice or leave out both. The taste will differ in each case. Usually a lemon cut to pieces is served with this Rasam so that those who prefer to add it can do so.

Usually this Rasam is eaten with rice in South India. But it is also drunk as soup. It is very useful to aid digestion and hence can be served as an appetizer.

This powder can be ground to a paste with grated coconut and added to cooked split gram and vegetables. Then it is called 'Koottu'. Usually vegetables like snake gourd and white brinjals also called bangalore brinjals are prepared in this manner.

This powder can also be mixed with rice and eaten. Then it is called Milagu Sādam.

### *Procedure for preparing Milagu Sādam*

1. Take a cup of cooked rice.
2. Add this powder and salt when the rice is hot.
3. Add a teaspoon of ghee and mix well.
4. Add a teaspoon of lemon juice (optional).

Milagu Sādam has an exotic taste and the amount of ghee added can be varied according to individual preferences as to how spicy or bland the dish should be. Instead of adding the lemon juice to the rice, a lemon cut to pieces can be served along with the rice so that those who prefer to add it can do so.

## 6

## Chatni Podi

## Ingredients

split bengal gram (chick pea)	500 gm
red chillies	10 gm
asafoetida	a pinch
tamarind	100 gm
copra	150 gm
salt	to taste

Roast the black gram and red chillies in a pan without oil. They should be roasted dry till the black gram turns golden brown and the red chillies become crisp. After allowing time to cool, powder them in a mixer to a smooth consistency. Then add bits of tamarind and grind. Then add the salt and grind. Then add the copra and grind. Let all the ingredients be mixed well. Store in an airtight container.

This powder can be used to prepare 'chatni' an accompaniment to Dosā and Idli. To prepare chatni, this powder is ground to a paste with freshly grated coconut and chopped coriander leaves. A little extra salt may be added, if necessary. The chatni is seasoned with mustard and cumin roasted in oil.

Sandwiches can be prepared by applying this chatni on slices of bread. The powder can also be sprinkled on salads or added to vegetable preparations.

### *Procedure for preparing potato curry*

1. Peel and cut potatoes so that you have one-inch cubes.
2. Take a pressure pan or an ordinary pan and prepare for seasoning. Take two tablespoons of oil, put some mustard and cumin seeds. When they pop up and crackle add a teaspoon of split bengal gram (chick pea) and a teaspoon of split black gram.
3. When the bengal and black gram are roasted well add the pieces of potatoes. Roast for about 5mts.
4. Add this chatni powder, a pinch of turmeric and salt to taste. Mix well.
5. Add a little water, cover and cook. If it is cooked in the pressure pan it will get done in three whistles. If it is cooked in an ordinary pan, it needs to be stirred occasionally.
6. You can add chopped coriander leaves and curry leaves for additional flavour and for dressing.

Any other vegetable can be prepared in the same way.

## 7

## Idli Milagāi Podi

## Ingredients

split black gram	200 gm
red chillies	5
oil	2 teaspoon s
asafoetida	a pinch
salt	to taste

Roast the split black gram and red chillies in oil. When it is cool powder in a mixer. Add salt to taste and powder again. Store in an airtight container.

This powder is eaten along with Idli. It is mixed with a spoonful of oil mixed to form a paste. When Idli has to be stored and served later, this paste is applied as a paste on one Idli and another Idli is placed on top of it. Then the paste is applied on that Idli and the process continues. On a large vessel all the Idlis are kept together and they remain soft for a long time.

### *Procedure for preparing Idli*

1. Soak three cups of rice in water for about 8 hours.
2. Grind the rice in a mixer/grinder. The rice should be ground to a fine paste for dosā and to a coarse texture for idli. That is the rice should not be ground too much. When you take a bit of the paste in your hand it should give a rough feeling. Do not add too much water while grinding.
3. Soak one cup of split black gram for about half an hour. Just before grinding the rice, the black gram can be soaked. By the time the rice is done, the black gram will be ready for grinding.
4. Grind the split black gram to a fine paste. Do not add too much water for grinding. Sprinkle spoonfuls of water occasionally and grind. As you grind more and more, the content of the paste will increase. One cup of split black gram paste will almost be equal to three cups of rice.
5. Now mix both the rice paste and split black gram paste well. Add salt to taste and mix well. You can grind them together once more if you like, so that they are mixed well.
6. Leave it overnight for fermenting.
7. The next day you will see that the floor has come up and the content has increased.
8. There are special idli plates available in the market. You can also spread the floor on small plates with curved ends and steam cook them in a pressure cooker. Do not put the weight of the cooker. It will get done in about 20 mts. Alternatively, you can take a vessel with a tight lid, pour water at the bottom, place a stand, keep the plate on top and cover the vessel and cook on medium flame.
9. You can smear the idli plates or ordinary plates with a teaspoon of oil before putting in the floor. This will ensure that the idli doesn't get stuck to the plate.
10. Serve the idli with idli milgāi podi.

## 8

## Paruppu Podi

## Ingredients

split gram (pigeon pea)	50 gm
red chillies	5
curry leaves	20
asafoetida	a pinch

Roast all the ingredients in a pan without oil. Roast them dry till the split gram turns colour and the red chillies become crisp. Let it cool. Then grind it to a fine powder. Add salt and grind again. Store in an airtight container.

When mixed with a spoonful of ghee it can become an accompaniment to a number of dishes like Dosā, Idli, Roti and Puri. This powder can be added to vegetables when they are being cooked. It can be eaten with rice. It can also be added to dāl.

### *Procedure for preparing dāl*

1. Take a cup of split gram (pigeon pea) and cook it with a cup of water.
2. Take about four tomatoes and cut them into small pieces.
3. Take a pan and prepare for seasoning. Take a teaspoon of oil and roast some mustard and cumin seeds. When they pop up and crackle add a teaspoon of split bengal gram and split black gram.
4. Put the pieces of tomatoes and roast for 5 mts.
5. Add a pinch of turmeric powder, salt to taste and this powder.
6. Cut spinach into tiny pieces and add to this (optional). Cook for 2 mts.
7. Add the cooked dāl and boil for 2 mts.
8. Add curry leaves and chopped coriander.
9. Serve it with rice or as a soup.

You can also put the Sāmbār Powder in the dāl instead of the Paruppu podi.

## 9

## Puliyôdarai Podi

## Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	500 gm
red chillies	5 gm
bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
fenugreek	1 teaspoon
pepper	2 teaspoon
cinnamon	a one inch piece
asafoetida (hing)	a one inch piece

Roast all these ingredients in two spoons of oil. Roast in slow heat for about 10 minutes and grind to a fine powder. Keep it ready to add to Puliyôdarai, Tamarind Rice.

The procedure for preparation of [Puliyôdarai](#) is given in the ebook, 'Oharai: Special Rice Preparations'.

## 10 Bisi Bèla Podi

### Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	10 tablespoons
bengal gram (split)	1 tablespoon
black gram (split)	1 tablespoon
red chillies	8
cinnamon	1 inch piece
asafoetida	a pinch

Roast these in a spoonful of oil and then grind them to a fine powder. This is to be added to Bisi Bèla.

The procedure for preparation of Bisi Bèla is given in the ebook, 'Oharai: Special Rice Preparations'.

## 11

## Vāngi Bāth Podi

## Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	50 gm
split bengal gram ( chick pea)	2 tablespoons
split black gram	2 tablespoons
red chillies	8
cinnamon	1 inch piece
asafoetida	a pinch

Roast these in a spoonful of oil, powder and keep ready to mix with Vāngi Bāth.

The procedure for preparation of Vāngi Bāth is given in the ebook, 'Oharai: Special Rice Preparations'.

## 12

## Kadamba Podi

## Ingredients

coriander (seeds)	100 gm
split bengal gram (chick pea)	2 tablespoons
split black gram	2 tablespoons
pepper	1 tablespoon
fenugreek	1 tablespoon
red chillies	10
cinnamon	1 inch piece
asafoetida	a pinch

Roast these in a spoonful of oil, powder and keep ready to mix with Kadambam.

The procedure for preparation of Kadambam is given in the ebook, 'Oharai: Special Rice Preparations'.