

Repat

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July 03, 2007

Tia, Fine Indian Sweets, and the Buffalo Milk Pastry!

It's time that I write a post about **TIA**, the incredible Cheese Force at **Casellula** restaurant! I feel as though there should be a photo of her dressed up as a super hero cheese woman with her many bags of interesting foods and of course CHEESES. She should have her own theme song as she enters my store, says "hello," and puts down her cheeses.

Tia comes into the shop almost every week to purchase cheeses for Casellula. She almost always brings me an intriguing snack, like dried Chinese olives. Like many of us "foodies," gourmands, gourmets, or whatever you want to call us, Tia is perpetually seeking out new and exciting foods. Living in Jackson Heights, Queens, Tia has access to a fascinating and delicious array of foods from all over the globe. A couple of weeks ago, she brought me an Indian buffalo milk pastry.



An Indian buffalo milk pastry. Well, the history dork that I am! A billion questions started racing through my mind before being able to take a bite into the pastry. But, I had to postpone those questions – stop the madness of my mind asking many different inquiries about the history and culture of this pastry. All that had to be put



aside, because Tia was standing in front of me waiting to see my response to its taste. My older sister Sasha told me that our response to taste is extremely visceral. In other words – you could tell if someone tastes something and is disgusted. Their face says it all! I couldn't agree any more.

My visceral response said – Yum! Yummy! Yum! Yum!
 The texture: gritty, crumbly, and creamy on the palate
 Taste: Sweet! An interesting "cakey" flavor, maybe like a marble cake

I think that my obsession with these pastries is based on the fact that it combines to elements to which I have already formed a serious addiction: MILK (anything DAIRY!) & SWEETS. Tia left me with a box of these pastries, and I've been snacking on it little by little each day.

But, now, I am wondering:
 Are there enough buffalos in India to produce pastries with their milk?
 What's Desi Ghee? The ingredients say – Buffalo Milk, Desi Ghee, Sugar.

Answers:



1 – Apparently (according to my limited **online research**), buffalo milk produces 45 million tons annually in the Asian-Pacific region. **Over 30 million tons are produced in India alone!! The photo on the left shows water buffalo in Varanasi, India.

2 – Desi Ghee – SCARY! When I googled "Desi Ghee," I was led to a **site** that mentioned that Desi Ghee is one of the most unhealthy butter oils used in conventional Indian cooking. The site reads:

Desi Ghee being rich in saturated fats has the tendency to

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increase total cholesterol including HDL (so called "good cholesterol") and LDL & VLDL (so called "bad cholesterol"). As such consumption of desi ghee coupled with fibre rich diet which reduces LDL bad cholesterol & physical activity which reduces VLDL bad cholesterol brings about a favourable lipid profile.

I am not sure what HDL, LDL, and VLDL mean....

Besides the ingredients of these pastries, I have to reveal the little story on the back of the box. It answers my many questions but also raises more regarding the cultural significance of these pastries –

Milk cake is traditional Indian Sweet originating from 'Vrindavan' in the Pre-historic era of Lord Krishna.

Our Special Milk Cake is made from pure Buffalo Milk from the plains of North India in the traditional artisan way involving the careful cooking of protein rich milk with sugar in small lots. The caramalization effect in the trade secret passed on from the generations.



Tia, From which shop in Jackson Heights did you purchase this box of pastries full of "Vrindavan – Pre-historic" Indian history?

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