

About Kolhapur and Kolhapuries....

Kolhapur (also known as Karveer) is situated on banks of the sacred river Panchganga flowing in southwest part of Maharashtra, India. Famous as the residence of the mother goddess 'Mahalaxmi alias Ambabai', this commercial and educational city has temples and palaces which still has archaeological importance. Kolhapur is situated 225 kms south of Pune. Kolhapur has become a major industrial centre with more than 100 foundries and numerous Machine Shops. The population size of the city is 7, 00,000. Kolhapur is situated at an altitude of 563 m. Kolhapur is heaven for connoisseurs of good food. Some of the popular dishes of the region include Misal, Kolhapuri Mutton Dry, Tambda (Dark Red) and Pandhara (White) Rassa and Kakavi.

An important centre of Marathi film industry which gave the industry stalwarts like V.Shantaram, Chandrakant and Surykant Mandare. Kolhapur possesses historical as well as mythological importance. It is known as Dakshin kashi on account of its deity Mahalakshmi or Ambabai. The Ambabai temple was built by the Chalukya King Karnadeve in 634 AD. The Irwin Agricultural Museum of Kolhapur has some old Andhra coins. Bahubali, Jain Pilgrim centre, lies at a distance of 38 km from Kolhapur.

Navratri, festival of Nine Nights is celebrated by Kolhapuri people during September - October in honour of goddess Mahalakshmi. Goddess Mahalakshmi's main shaktipith (the place where goddess Mahalakshmi emerged) is in Kolhapur.

The proud Maratha community, feed exceedingly well on pulses, vegetables, bhakris made of various grains, rice and meat. The meat used today has shown a definite shift towards white meat, primarily chicken, but it is mutton that the Kolhapuris relish the most. This region was famous for hunting because of the thick jungle engulfing the area. Common game animals were sassa (rabbit) and hiran (deer). Game birds were normally brought home but barbecued on site. Hunting has been a popular sport in this region.

Mutton is still rated as the menu for celebration and Kolhapuris are very particular about the source of meat. Pandarpur and Baarshi are two places that feed the market of Kolhapur with mutton carcasses. In villages, a full animal is slaughtered and distributed (wata) amongst a number of families. Kolhapuris pay great heed to the quality of mutton they use for their dishes. To say that one particular cut of mutton is more popular than the other would not be correct. One thing that is common is the fact most Kolhapuris like to buy mutton themselves and would rarely ever delegate this job to others. Each family has their family butcher, like a family doctor, the butcher would know exactly what is preferred by his regular customers. Most butchers distribute the carcass with such ease and finesse that each customer feels that he or she is the closest to the butcher and is getting the best value for money. This in no way undervalues the knowledge of an average meat-eating Kolhapuri. Their knowledge about different cuts of meat is much more than the average meat-eating Indian. So much about meat and not a word for our vegetarian readers! People of Kolhapur like to show their hospitality by serving non-vegetarian dishes. However their meal is not complete if it is not accompanied by Dahi Kandha and Kharda -- a true vegetarian chilli treat!

Chill out!