



Pav bhaji was invented as soul food for Mumbai's cotton



Falooda: the perfect meal-finisher for anyone with a sweet tooth

Dadar station. Other top spots for the snack include Ashok Vada Pav, on Kashinath Dhuru Marg in Dadar, and Aaram Vada Pav right opposite CST station.

Some like it hot

Made from fried pulses, onions, chutney and spicy masalas, chana jor garam is a spicy-tart snack that translates from colloquial Hindi as 'super hot chickpeas'. Always refreshing, this portable palate teaser comes in numerous variations and is freshly-prepared for each serving, making it one of the safest street foods to eat. To best experience this tangy treat, head to one of the city's water-facing promenades. You'll find school students and college crowds queuing for their share at many Mumbai hotspots, including Marine Drive, the Gateway of India and Shivaji Park.

The American connection

Perhaps the most popular street snack in the city, pav bhaji arrived in Mumbai thanks to America. Food historians trace its history back to the 1840s, when Mumbai merchants trading in cotton made fortunes due to the global shortage caused by the American Civil War. These mercantile Mumbaikers started work early and finished late, so local hawkers created a fastfood snack of curried vegetables and mashed potatoes, mopped up with a buttery bread roll, for traders to munch when they knocked off at midnight.

Today, the dish can be found throughout the day, at dozens of stalls and moving kiosks across the city. For a satiating portion, visit Sardar Refreshments, opposite the Tardeo Bus Station or Cannon Pav Bhaji opposite the CST subway. Alternatively, for pav bhaji on the go, choose from the many Zunka Bhakar Kendras stands dispersed around Nariman Point.

Anytime is bhajee time

Bhajis and pakodas are Mumbai's favourite fritters - delicious packages of onion, potato, spinach, aubergine, green chillies and other fillings, deep-fried in gram-flour batter. Particularly popular in the rainy season, these quick snacks are served fresh from the pan with green chutney, tomato sauce or piping hot tea. Pick your favourite filling from the many variants on offer at Soam, near Girgaum Chowpaty, or the khau galli food alley at Nariman Point. For an adventurous twist, seek out the innovative 'ice cream bhaji' at Monika Ice Cream at Mahavir Nagar in the western suburb of Kandivali, or Chinese-style pakodas served with a soy sauce dip at Parleshwar Vada Pav Samrat on Nehru Rd in Vile Parle.

Once you have tried all the above, conclude your Mumbai street food trail with a plate of watermelon, pineapple, oranges and Mahabaleshwar strawberries at an outdoor kiosk, surrounded by vendors clinking cold drink bottles. If you're in the mood for something sweeter, order a falooda, a tall glass of vermicelli noodles, dried fruits and nuts, doused with rose syrup and topped with sabza (sweet basil seeds), at the Haji Ali Juice Centre at Breach Candy or Swati Snacks at Tardeo. (www.lonelyplanet.com).



Vada pav - Mumbai's answer to the veggie burger



Presentation is everything at a stall selling chana jor garam