

A Sweet Experience

☒ Traditionally, sweets would follow an event that may take too long a time to wait around for, which is why in Sri Lanka certain sweets are an everyday delectable that people enjoy all year round.

By Sonali Kadurugamuwa | Photography by Hiranya Malwatta

In Sri Lanka sweets are time-honoured and because of their revered entrenchment throughout the country's history, these tasty treats are placed in decorated handkerchiefs and bowls and presented to friends and neighbours during the time of festivals. Nevertheless, they are also available in about any supermarket or roadside shop. This makes them an easy snack whenever and wherever one feels like sweetening the taste buds. Their homemade appearance generates an essence of humble charm and also the mindset of the nation's age-old culture and tradition.

For any occasion, whether it's a gift for a friend, a party, or just a lazy afternoon on the couch, Peni-Cadju are small chops of honey drenched peanuts that most easily make any day a good day. Right alongside stands a jar of the clear, crisp ice cube like sweet - Sukiri is conventionally used as a cough soother, or so they say, however, it may even be an excuse to fake a sore throat for a chance at that irresistible sugary savour.

A preparation of roasted sesame seeds mixed in with heavy treacle is made into a hard candy, otherwise called Thala-Bola. Petite spheres of crunchy heaven, these sweets are a favourite amongst the many festivals celebrated around the country and of course a delightful, anytime, sharing snack. Also rolling in bountiful flavour is Boondi, deep-fried and soaked in sweet syrup, these mouth watering-can't-have-enoughs are sold in rows of yellow, red and green at local markets.

Ears are peeled for that glorious chime of the candy-man's bell, trailing the pavements indicating that his basket is full with Bombai Motai. This is enough for children and even adults to rush toward the delicious resonance of this flossed sugar echoing throughout their neighbourhoods.

Puhul Dosi or pumpkin preserve, with its glistening granules of sugar glaze, comes in roughly cut chunks or cubes, which becomes an indulgence of one too

many. In celebration of the same, rolls in the well-rounded Seeni-Bola. These candy striped spherical toffees are truly a pleasure to see, especially for a room full of sweet teeth.

Even the mere mention of their name - Gem Biscuits, stops almost any child from crying. Topped with multi-coloured icing sugar and enjoyed in a bag filled with others like them, the biscuits are a real eye-catcher and not to mention a quick pacifier.

Another admired treat, comes in minute sizes and in a blend of adoring colours. With a soft cumin centre, the colourful frosted coating on the outside makes for a delightful introduction to the completely atypical flavour on the inside. These Cumin Sprinkles are usually chewed following a meal, as a way to freshen the breath or to sweeten the palette.

Like most confectionery out there, Sri Lankan sweets are as rich in sugar as they come and are treasured by the locals. Even for those with acquired tastes, sugary treats from the paradise isle would be the sweetest of experiences!

