

Lunu Miris: Spicy, Tangy, Crunchy And More!

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Dried red chillies and salt crystals are placed on the grinding stone

Onion chilli sambol best describes ‘Lunu miris’. The spicy explosion of flavours is often a favourite amongst locals and a must-have accompaniment with Milk Rice - a staple Sri Lankan breakfast.

Words Prasadini Nanayakkara **Photographs** Indika De Silva

A simple and quick preparation makes lunu miris an easy addition that can transform a meal. It is a dish that has evolved from the more traditional methods involved in its making, to quick conveniences. However, as with most Sri Lankan dishes the ways of old remain true to authentic flavour.

The best method of blending the ingredients is by grinding the ingredients on a 'miris gala' or grinding stone

All that is needed for 'lunu miris' are dried red chillies, red onions, salt crystals, Maldivian fish (dried and salted tuna pieces), a dash of lime and in some instances pepper corns for a more intense flavour.

The best method of blending the ingredients is by grinding the ingredients on a 'miris gala' or grinding stone. The dry red chillies, salt crystals, pepper corns are placed on the granite slab first to grind. After a few rolls to pulp the ingredients, the Maldivian fish pieces and red onions are added and rolled on the slab further till all the ingredients have blended well to reach an even texture. A dash of lime is then added, mixed well and served. Its striking red appearance is by no means deceptive. Just a smidge on the tongue gives a mouthful of hot, tangy flavourful goodness with a subtle crunch!

To suit modern day conveniences, simpler forms of ingredients can be used, requiring less exertion for the preparation. For instance instead of whole dried chillies, chilli flakes can be used and other ingredients in reduced forms as well. The red onions can be chopped finely prior to adding to the mix. It can be said that the flavour and texture of the sambol rely on the culinary intuition involved in its making.

Often, simply lunu miris as the only side will suffice for an appetizing meal. And just a dollop will do!

Lunu miris is an appealing side with not just milk rice, but other mild flavoured mains such as hoppers, rotti, and starchy dishes like manioc. Not just its flavour, simply the bright red presence completes the presentation of a spread. Often, simply lunu miris as the only side will suffice for an appetising meal. And just a dollop will do!

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