

Saruwath Refreshing and Cool



A side view of the vibrant setting of the table

A flash of bright pink caught my eye. Set up with colourful umbrellas and an equally colourful display of glasses filled with multi-coloured liquid atop a table, beckoned commuters to stop by. Behind this alluring display a man was busily preparing Saruwath, a cool and refreshing drink, as passersby paused at this road side stall to seek some relief from the sweltering heat.

Words Krishani Peiris **Photographs** Menaka Aravinda

It is believed that Saruwath has been a popular fruit drink in many West and South Asian countries since long ago. The name Saruwath in Sri Lanka is derived from the variant colours of food dyes or syrups used to make the drink, which some claim have ayurvedic properties. This refreshing drink is mostly available in temporary stalls that are set up by the road side. Complete with a table, couple of chairs and umbrellas to provide some shelter, a Saruwath seller is all set to start his day amidst the onslaught of the scorching heat. Though

in the beginning many sellers used the food dye, nowadays they have resorted to using natural ingredients to make a wholesome fruit drink that is available in a wide range of flavours. These flavours include orange, mango, lime, nelli, pineapple, mixed fruit and much more.

Easy to Make...

At the Saruwath stall, we eagerly awaited our turn to place the order. The stall was made up of a long table decorated with glasses filled with the Saruwath food dye. Glasses brimming with hues of red, green, pink and orange with green tinged oranges used in making Saruwath - placed atop the glasses - were deftly arranged on three sides of the table presenting a vibrant setting. There were blue basins for washing the glasses and other utensils while the other ingredients used were also neatly arranged in various containers around the seller.

When our turn came, we were presented with two options - Orange or Mixed Fruit Saruwath. Curious as to how the Mixed Fruit Saruwath might taste, we placed our order and eased back to watch the seller as he busied himself. The ingredients used to make the Mixed Fruit Saruwath were oranges, kasa kasa seeds, sugar syrup, pineapple and papaya, cut into small pieces, salt and ice. First the orange was cut into half and the juice was squeezed into a glass. Here the seller mentioned that depending on the size of the orange he would use half or a whole fruit. Afterwards 1/4 teaspoon of salt was added along with 1 teaspoon of kasa kasa seeds, 1 1/2 teaspoons of pineapple and papaya pieces each.

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Then the seller turned to a huge white container that was filled with sugar syrup, dipped a ladle and filled the glass with the syrup. In order to make the drink cool, he then added crushed ice into the drink. After which he started to mix the ingredients together using a plastic jug. The mixing process itself was very fascinating to watch as he switched the drink from the glass to the plastic jug. With quick and precise movements, it seemed as if he was throwing a ribbon from one end to the other and catching it neatly within a distance of one yard. The seller continued thus for sometime, before serving us with the freshly made Saruwath.

A Refreshing Glass...

Taking a sip from the Mixed Fruit Saruwath, I slowly savoured the taste trying to distinguish the various flavours that tingled my senses. It was very sweet and yet at the same time it was very refreshing as the melted ice gave an invigorating feel to the drink. The pineapple and papaya pieces floating in the beverage added an extra zest to the whole experience while the salt gave way for a slightly tangy taste. The best part of the drink was that, it was an instant drink that is fully organic without any added food colourations. Thus, people do not have to worry about indulging in this chilled beverage.

Standing by the side of the stall we slowly sipped the cool Saruwath, enjoying the chilling effect that it had on our heat battered selves. In front of us vehicles zoomed past along the hectic road. As we watched some vehicles pulled to the side, drawn by the small crowd gathered around this striking stall and upon tasting the Saruwath their faces shone with appreciation as they truly seemed to enjoy the taste of Saruwath.

Ingredients used to make Mix Fruit Saruwath

Orange

Kasa Kasa Seeds

Sugar Syrup

Pineapple

Papaya

Salt

Ice

- Kasa Kasa seeds are prepared by first cleaning them thoroughly and then soaking them in water. The kasa kasa seeds used in the Mixed Fruit Saruwath were prepared by mixing water with the seeds.

- The Sugar Syrup is prepared by boiling water and sugar together.

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