

The Nicobar group of Islands, a part of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Separated from the Andaman group by the Ten Degree Channel in the Bay of Bengal, this island group comprises 22 islands, with 13 of them being inhabited. In the Nicobar region, traditional knowledge of adaptive food preparation and resource utilization has been crucial in overcoming agricultural development challenges. One notable example of this rich heritage is the making of *Kewadi* sweet, a delicacy created from Pandanus fruits (*Pandanus* sp.).



The Pandanus tree, abundant in the Nicobar Islands, is an important food source for the local people and it demonstrates a deep understanding of local environmental conditions. *Kewadi* sweet is made by skillfully extracting

the fragrant, nutrient-rich pulp from Pandanus fruits, which are then processed into a delightful treat. This preparation method highlights the cleverness of Nicobarese food practices, showcasing their ability to make the most of available resources. The fruit's natural sweetness and unique flavour profile make it a highly valued ingredient in traditional cuisine.

Kewadi Sweet Preparation Process

Firstly, the harvested fruits are chopped into tiny pieces (keys) for the next steps of the manufacturing process. Following cutting, the keys are heated in a pan with water. The cut keys are submerged in water for heating and covered with the leaf of the *Kinrul* tree (*Macaranga nicobarica*) to ensure even heating. The fruit must be heated to become softer so that the pulp can be removed more easily. The process of pulp extraction starts after heating the heating process.

On a level surface, the softened cut keys are laid out, and the pulp is gently separated from the fiber part by holding a heated key in one hand and pressing the stone against the fiber part with the other hand. Pressure is needed to apply carefully enough to separate the soft and edible pulp from the fibrous

portions. Followed by the pulp extraction, pulp dough and rolls are made in the next stage. The removed pulp is kneaded into a dough-like consistency and then shaped into cylindrical rolls. During the rolling process, some fibers from the extraction may mix into the pulp. These fibers are removed by threading a piece of thread through the middle of the ball by hand.

The *Kewadi* sweet's fundamental units are these rolls, which are meticulously made by hand to guarantee consistency in size and shape. In the next stage, dough rolls are covered with arecanut leaves. The rolls are skillfully wrapped as a crucial step in the process to guarantee that they are securely packed and ready for the heating step.

The last step in making *Kewadi* is to heat and cut the finished product. To produce the final texture and firm up the dough, the rolls are cooked once more after being firmly wrapped in leaves and placed in a cooking pan. Once the heating procedure is finished, the *Kewadi* rolls are taken off the heat source and given time to cool. They are then ready to be served or stored for later consumption after being cooled and chopped into smaller pieces.

Kewadi Sweet Preparation Process



Collection and disintegration of



Initial heating and Kinrul



Pulp extraction



Pulp dough preparation



Roll preparation & covering



Final heating and Kewadi

Kewadi is more than just a delightful treat—it's a meaningful part of the Nicobari culture, rich with tradition and history. This sweet delicacy not only provides nourishment but also plays a significant role in the communal life of the Nicobari people. The preparation and sharing of Kewadi strengthens social bonds and reinforces cultural identity. It is a living testament to the unity and collective spirit of the community.



Kewadi Sweet Preparation from Pandanus



Fruits by Nicobarese: Nurturing Tradition and Nutritional Security



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