

CultureTalk Bangladesh Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Cooking Typical Foods

English translation:

-In your country...say, is there a kind of food which you learn or have to learn to cook since when you were a child? Is there any such work?

-Yes. In my country, say... those of us who... meaning what we cook... everyone, whatever she cooks, tries to pass on how to cook it to us; we learn. For example, in our village everyone likes *shutki*¹... and fish... they like eating this type of food... fish, *shutki* – that's what they like most.

- How do you cook these dishes? Can you name a dish that you like making?

- Yes. I do know how to cook. I can cook all these. For example, how to cook *shutki*? The way to prepare *shutki*... in order to cook *shutki*... perhaps you might want to put in some vegetable like peas, potatoes...then you first have to wash the peas and potatoes. After washing that... then you have to wash the *shutki* separately. Then using spices... if you want you can marinate and start cooking without using oil. And if you want it oily, you can cook using oil as well.

- Okay. Can make any sort of *pittha*?²

- Yes I can make *pittha*.

- Can you give us some names of the different types of *pittha*?

- Like *bhapa pittha*, *po-a pittha*, *handesh pittha*... there is one called *maara pittha*... I can make that. Then there is another called *chhappa pittha*... I can make that too.

- What do you usually need to make a *pittha*?

- To make *pittha*... if you want salty ones, then after preparing it with salt...after using salt, use turmeric... (to make) what is known as the turmeric *pittha*...using salt... I mean that it will taste salty. Then, if you want something sweet, you can have *kooli pittha*, made from the white part of the coconut...coconut is needed, molasses is needed.

¹*Shutki* is a special preparation of fish. Any types of fish, usually large ones from the sea, are dried in the sun. This dried fish is then cooked in different parts of Bangladesh in different ways according to its respective customs.

² *Pittha* is usually translated as “rice cake” because many of the preparations involve making dough. However the texture and taste of *pittah* is nothing like a cake's, and the taste can be sweet, salty or spicy. Different regions in Bangladesh have their own specialty and have different names for the same type of *pittha*.

- Is there a *pittha* that you can prepare really well?

- *Bhapa pittha*.

- Can you say something about it? How do you make it?

- The way to make *bhapa pittha*... first powder... the rice grains have to be crushed to powder. After it's been crushed th... then the way by which we make the fine powder... after crushing the grains... when the powder has been made... then with that we... say we have to refine the powder by passing it through a kind of strainer; we put the powder in the strainer and refine it. After refining it, we take the refined powder in a bottle (bowl)... we take some of the powder in the bottle (bowl). With that bottle... after putting some powder in that bottle, we put the white of coconut, molasses or anything sweet on it. Then after putting in those... we prepare the *pittha* from that.

- Okay. How does it, the *pittha*, taste?

- The *pittah* turns out to be delicious.

- In which season is this *pittha* usually prepared?

- During winter.

- Okay. Do you have fish farming in your village?

- Yes, we have fish farming in our village.

- What kinds of fish are raised?

- In our village they farm *Rui* fish, prawn, *Shol*³ fish... among smaller fish there are *Tengra*⁴ fish, *Puti* fish, *Mogha* fish, then... there are lots more different kinds of smaller fish.

- Do you know how to raise fish?

- No.

- Have you ever seen anyone at it?

- Yes, but... I have seen (men) like my uncles going into the pond to tend the fish. I have seen them do so two to three times. They bring the young fish, which will grow bigger, from outside... from a different country. After bringing the young fish, they release them into the water that collects in the pond.

³ A small sweet-water fish popular in Bangladesh.

⁴ *Tengra* and *puti* are small indigenous fish species common in Bangladesh.

- Okay. What's your favorite fish?

- *Ilish*⁵ fish.

- Are there any childhood incidents with friends that you will remember?

- Yes. I remember a lot of events where I spent time with my friends.

- Can you narrate such an incident?

- Take for example... we are five sisters. When we sisters get together, we fight a lot; we scold each other. Then, mother and father intervene and scold us for being so naughty.

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⁵ *Ilish* or Hilsa is the national fish of Bangladesh. It is similar in flavor and consistency with shad or river herrings and is an extremely popular fish used in Bengali cuisine.