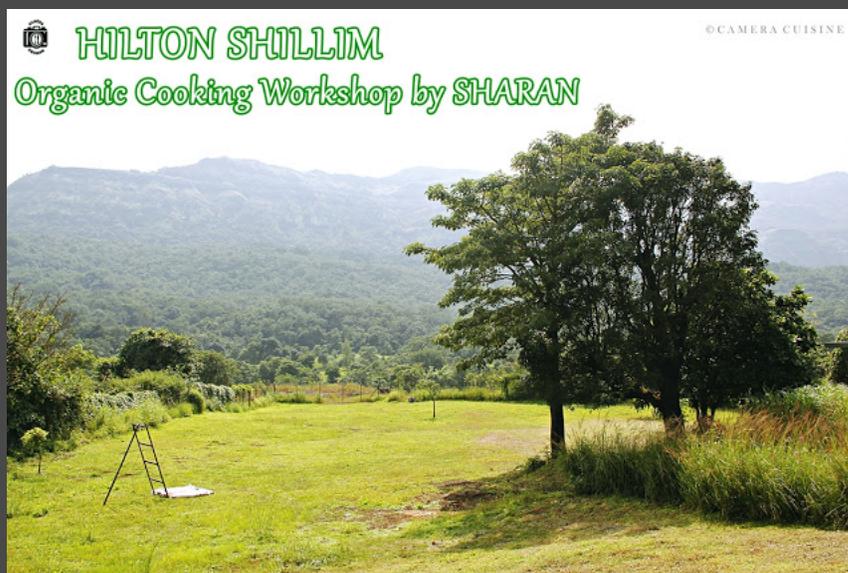


Saturday, 26 November 2016

Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa - A Scenic Getaway & Life Enhancing Organic Cooking Workshop by SHARAN



*It all started with a deep connection to nature and with the discovery by two brothers – William de Souza and Denzil de Souza - of the Shillim Valley, a unique bowl-shaped eco-hotspot nestled in the Sahyadri mountain range. I keep saying that our country INDIA itself is so beautiful that we need to keep exploring different parts of it. SHILLIM IS PARADISE ON EARTH! If you're a nature lover this place is definitely for you. Located about 30kms from Lonavala and 3 hours from Mumbai this place is offers different Wellness programs, a sanctuary for the mind, body & soul. A Wellness destination from where, after spending a few days, one would return to everyday life, transformed, rejuvenated and re-inspired.*



DR. NANDITA SHAH AND HER TEAM



DR. NANDITA SHAH FOUNDER OF SHARAN INDIA

SHARAN India; an organization with the goal of spreading awareness about holistic health and an ecologically sustainable compassionate lifestyle. There were many highlights of the cooking workshop primarily focusing on going “VEGAN” I had so many questions in my mind because I didn’t know anything about vegan food. A friend of mine who I was dining with a few days back has turned vegan. What is Vegan? Any person who does not eat or use any animal products, such as meat, fish, eggs, or cheese: Vegans get all the protein they need from nuts, seeds, and cereals. Dr. Nandita and her team also explained us the benefits by giving examples that how being vegan has benefited their families but turning Vegan for me is a big question as I’ve always been a milk person. There were many dishes that were taught in their cooking class. I’m going to share a few photos and recipes that I loved. Recipe courtesy SHARAN India.



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### BASIC GREEN SMOOTHIE

*Green smoothies are a great energizing way to start your mornings. They incorporate the goodness of greens with the sweetness of fruit.*

*To make a great green smoothie mix about 1/2 or less green leaves & about 2/3 fruit (except melons) & a bit of water. Flavourings can be added as needed (ginger, mint, lemon zest). Smoothies should not be strained. Do not add melons, vegetables (except green leaves), nuts or seeds. It's the best to alternate between the different kind of greens - spinach, mint, coriander, celery greens, spring onions, pak choy, beetroots, basil, betel etc. Bananas, mangoes, papayas, chikoo, grapes, passionfruit's & other pulpy fruits make a good smoothie. Here's the basic recipe.*

#### Ingredients

*2 frozen ripe bananas (you can also use fresh ones instead)  
A large handful of greens  
1/4 cup of water*

#### Method

*Place the green leaves in the blender with enough water to blend.  
Blend till the smooth green soup.  
Add the bananas and the other fruits.  
Add a couple of cubes of ice if needed.  
Enjoy this refreshing Smoothie!*



### Eggless Egg Salad

#### Ingredients

*1 cup crumbled firm tofu  
1/4 medium sized onion, chopped  
2 tbsp finely chopped capsicum - red or green  
2 tbsp finely chopped celery  
5-6 tbsp vegan mayonnaise  
Lemon juice to taste  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Parsley for garnish optional*

#### Method

Mix all the ingredients well. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Serves 3-4



#### Oil Free Pakoras

Want to be healthy and still eat Pakoras? Well now you can have your pakora and eat it too!

#### Ingredients

1 cup mixed chopped vegetables (you can use cabbage, onions, carrots or any vegetables of your choice)

½ cup besan

spices of your choice - ginger, garlic, chillies, red chili powder, whole dhania

¼ tsp turmeric

salt to taste

minced fresh coriander

water as needed to make the blend thick and sticky - just slightly thicker than normally used for pakoras

#### Method

Mix all the ingredients and make small 1 inch balls and put in a steamer. Steam till done (if you put a fork in, it will come off clean or the pakora does not stick to the steamer and can be easily moved)

Take them out of the steamer and pop them in the oven at 200C for a short time till outer crust is brown.

Serves 3-4



#### Stuffed Mushrooms

#### Ingredients

Button mushrooms with their stems removed

Cashew cheese (recipe given below)

Optional flavoring for the cheese, chopped sun dried tomatoes/olives/jalapenos/chillies/herbs

#### Method

Mix the flavorings to the cheese. Stuff the mushrooms with this. Bake till lightly browned on top.

Serve hot.



### Raw Cashew Cheese

*This cheese is easy to make and makes a wonderful spread.*

#### Ingredients

1 cup raw cashews (soaked for 6 to 8 hours)  
1/3 tsp unprocessed salt

#### Method

*Pour out the water from the cashews and place them in a blender.*

*Make this into a smooth paste adding a little water. Now leave this to ferment in a glass container for 8-24 hours depending on the room temperature until it begins to smell sour.*

*Add salt. Mix well and serve. Refrigerate to store.*

*This can keep for 10 days or more. Ideal for making cheesy sauces, dips and spreads, or even just directly on bread.*

*It can even be used on baked dishes and will brown slightly when baked.*

*Note- The fermentation time differs based on the room temperature and the climate of the place where you are. Please keep an eye on the cheese after 8hrs. It should be placed in the refrigerator after it begins to smell sour.*

*Serves 4-6*



### Peanut & Brown Rice milk combo Yogurt

#### Ingredients

1 cup peanuts (soaked for 4 hours)  
1/2 cup brown rice flour

#### Method

*Blend peanuts with water into milk. Heat the milk and add brown rice flour. After a boil, remove it from the gas. When warm, add the starter (curd / 5 to 6 chilli tops), and leave in a warm place to firm.*

*Can be easily kept in the fridge for 10 days. Serve cold!*



### Brownie

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup walnuts (or a mix of walnuts and cashews)
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 cup dates (soaked for an hour and pitted)
- 1 tsp vanilla powder
- A pinch of salt
- A pinch of cinnamon powder (optional)

#### Method

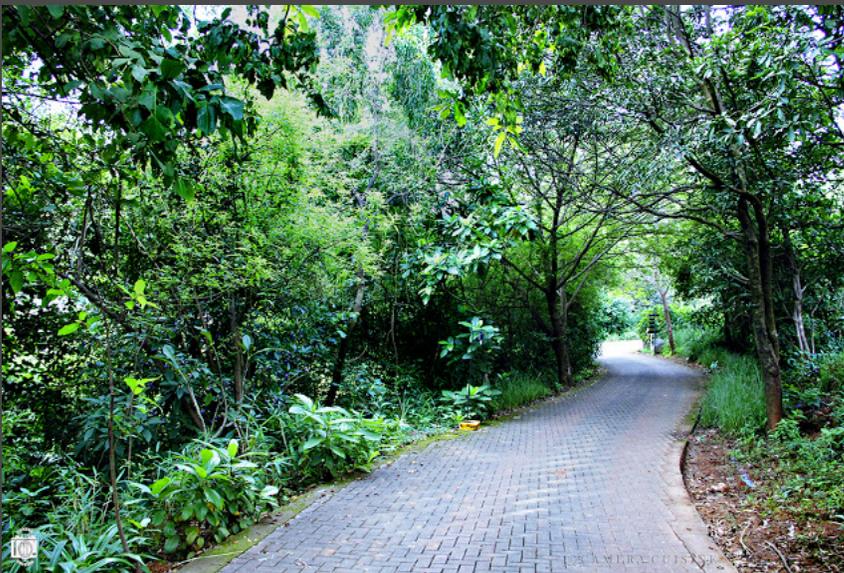
Just blend the walnuts (or a mix of walnuts and cashews), cocoa powder, dates, vanilla powder, and a pinch of salt. Add a pinch of cinnamon if you like.  
Refrigerate for about 4 hours.

<https://sharan-india.org/healthy-recipes/>





*This table was set for lunch after we finished the cooking workshop. It was out in the open and had a magnificent view. We chatted with Dr. Nandita Shah and her team over lunch. Tried vegan food for the 1st time and it didn't disappoint me. In fact, the food was heavy and was feeling very sleepy after a heavy meal but unfortunately could not sleep as we were invited just for a day and had to explore the property as well. We were taken around in a Tata Nano instead of buggies.*



#### Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa at a Glance

- 350 Acres of magnificent landscapes
- Shillim Spa
- 99 Villa's with Valley, Forest and Mountain views
- 6 different restaurants with a extensive range of culinary fare
- Meeting & Events
- Library
- Meditation Cave
- Rain water harvesting
- Mountain Pool Bar Bistro
- Infinity Pool
- Organic Farm
- Activity Area's
- Shillim Cooking Center
- Walkway
- Yoga Rooms

SPA SERVICE

- Accupres
- Acupunc
- Naturop
- Ozone T
- Ayurved
- Reiki
- Music &
- Tai Chi
- Hydroth
- Watsu
- Meditati
- Yoga
- Pilates E



MEDITATION CAVE



THE TEA HOUSE



POOLSIDE



THE WALKING TRACK



ORGANIC FARM



MOUNTAIN POOL BAR BISTRO



INFINITY POOL



© CAMERA CUISINE

VILLA INTERIORS



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VIEW FROM THE VILLA BALCONY



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PHOTO CREDIT: PRERNA SINHA (MAA OF ALL BLOGS)

*"On Earth there is no Heaven, but there are pieces of it"*

*Hilton Shillim is one of those pieces that one must explore! We highly recommend the property however the hospitality was a major let down. The PR agency was highly unprofessional and they had a lot teething problems. The tariff is steep on your pockets. Nature lovers, spa lovers and people who want "ME" time will love the wellness programs that they offer. I would love to chat with you in the comments section. Do let me know about your experiences when you visit Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa. Till then Take Care, Keep Travelling & Keep Exploring!*