



# Chaat

For all of the polarizing opinions and experiences that permeate society today, there is at least one thing that we can all bond over - that annoying conversation you have with a friend or family member when you just don't know what you want to eat. You could spend hours on Uber Eats, Google, or Trip Advisor before everyone finally agrees on a restaurant and meal.

After all, with this era of information and content overload comes endless choices, especially in the food realm. Do I want Indian food or Japanese, Greek or Ethiopian? Do I want a meal that's sweet or sour, spicy or cool, soft or with a crunch? And then, when you finally decide, you realize that the food is much too expensive and definitely not great for your health.

## What is Chaat?

Chaat is used as an umbrella term to describe some of India's most treasured street foods. What's interesting about chaat is that you can use any ingredients to make it. For example, you can make chaat out of fruits, vegetables, samosas, lentils, chickpeas, or all of these combined - to name a few.

However, just like any other meal, this Indian staple has a few fundamental components to it that makes chaat beloved by millions; and unlike any other meal, these essential pieces combined together offer a range of tastes and sensations from spicy to cool, and salty to sweet, that will appease all of your edible desires at once.

Let's break down these core ingredients by craving:

**1. Soft:** Sometimes you just want your food to melt in your mouth and do all of the work for you. To satisfy your craving for the soft and the supple, all chaat dishes have a carb base, which starts off crispy but softens throughout the cooking process. Many people often use samosas, papdi, chickpeas, or potatoes as the primary carb in their chaat.

**2. Crunchy:** At the same time, little else can gratify the feel of chomping down on a crispy meal, which countless types of chaat also provide alongside a soft carb. This crunchy desire is often fulfilled through a chaat dish by including fried red onions or fried chickpeas, also known as channa masala.

**3. Sweet and Spicy:** An Indian meal would not feel complete without that classic Indian spice. In chaat dishes, the spice reveals itself in a rich mixture of chili powder and chaat masala. Plus, providing a unique juxtaposition to the spice is a sweetness contributed by a cilantro-mint or tamarind chutney; the contrast between sweet and spicy is central to all chaat dishes.

**4. Cool:** Lastly, the distinctive blend of spices and textures definitely requires an ingredient to cool it down, which is accomplished by adding a soothing, creamy yogurt to the dish. So don't worry, you won't be sweating!

# Delicious

## Let's break down these core ingredients by craving:

To ease your decision fatigue some more, here's a short list of India's most famous chaat dishes. You are guaranteed to fall in love with at least one, if not all of them, because each meal provides a variety of flavors and aromas.

### 1. Samosa Chaat:

The base carb in this dish is, you guessed it, samosas. The samosas are chopped up into small bits, and usually layered with channa masala. The channa masala itself is flooded with tomatoes, onions, and a variety of spices. Afterwards the meal is topped off with a thick yogurt, to counteract the spices, along with cilantro and tamarind chutney. Sometimes samosa chaat will include sev as well, which is a popular Indian snack consisting of small crunchy noodles.

### 2. Panipuri (also known as Gol Goppa)

A nation-wide favorite, panipuri even has celebrities, like Alia Bhatt and the late Irrfan Khan, drooling. Panipuri are rounded fried crisps that are filled with onions, chickpeas, potatoes, and tamarind or cilantro-mint chutney. You cannot leave India without trying panipuri at least once in a traditional roadside stall. In fact, when Katy Perry visited India in November of 2019, she made sure to try out homemade panipuri before her concert in Bombay!

Link to Irrfan Khan eating panipuri:

[https://www.instagram.com/p/B\\_pbTJAAPUP/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B_pbTJAAPUP/)

Fortunately, you won't have to travel all the way to India to eat an authentic chaat dish. There are plenty of wonderful Indian restaurants right here in Quebec that can cook up the perfect chaat dish for you. Check out this list to find the best chaat in Montreal!

### 3. Aloo Chaat

Another chaat dish that absolutely bursts with flavor is aloo chaat. The base carb for this dish is boiled potatoes, mixed with green and tamarind chutney, alongside spices such as chaat masala, cumin powder, black salt, and lemon juice. So if you're looking for a filling, healthy, aromatic, and appetizing meal that satisfies every possible craving you could have, any of these dishes will exceed your expectations. Just in case, here is a list of other chaat meals that are sure to have you racing to the closest Indian restaurant nearby.

