

haldi  
Fine Indian Cuisine

a pinch of gold  
the story of turmeric through time & tradition

# The wonder spice



Charming colour. Musky essence. Peppery spice. Earthy flavour. Wondrous health benefits. The story of the irreplaceable spice gracing the great Indian kitchen, Haldi, needs to be told. Considered the healthiest spice known to humankind, Haldi boasts a storied history dating back nearly 4000 years to the Vedic culture in India. Within this rich cultural fabric, Haldi not only used as a culinary spice but also attained profound religious significance in Hindu traditions. Whether woven into the flavor of a meticulously prepared dish or

adorning the festivities of a joyous celebration, Haldi makes its place with profound elegance. As a symbol of prosperity and wealth on one occasion, and a veritable savior on another, Haldi's earliest documented usage, dating back to 2600 BCE, was unearthed in the cooking vessels of the Harappans - a testament to its enduring legacy.

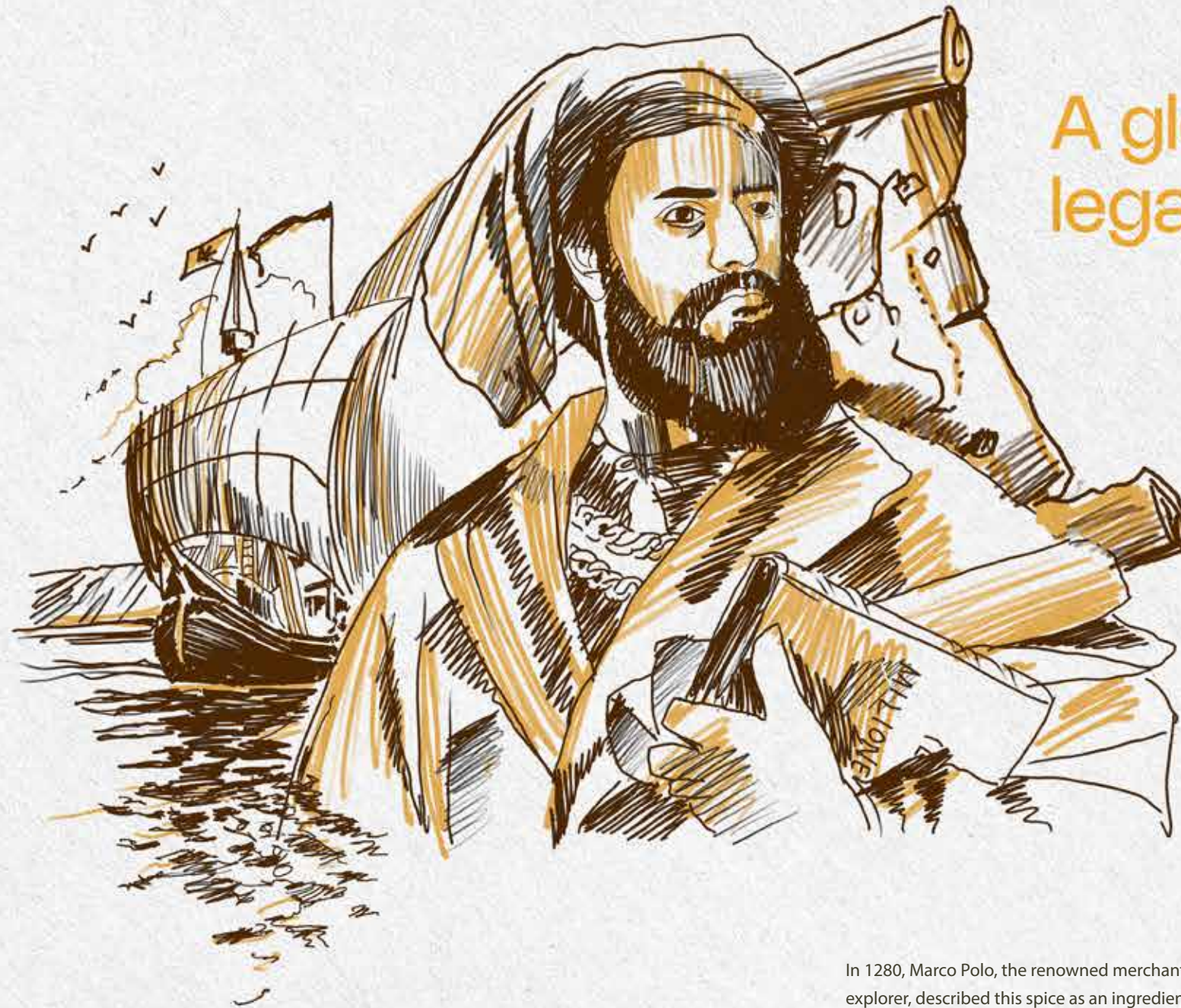
The most loved spice of India, Haldi, is a gold coin with two sides. It stands not only as a delectable spice enhancing gastronomic delights but also as a revered medicinal herb.

## Fondly called by 53 names



The nomenclature of the golden elixir, Haldi, has its roots tracing back to the Sanskrit word haridra. The etymology of its English counterpart, Turmeric, on the other hand, unfolds a linguistic journey, with its name stemming from the Latin phrase terra merita, meaning 'meritorious earth.' This nomenclature pays homage to the distinctive

color of ground turmeric, reminiscent of a precious mineral pigment. Reflecting its diverse cultural imprints, turmeric adopts the Latin semblance of curcuma in many traditions. In Sanskrit, Haldi boasts no less than 53 distinctive names, each resonating with an ode to its culinary and cultural significance.



## A glorious legacy

In 1280, Marco Polo, the renowned merchant & explorer, described this spice as an ingredient that possessed qualities so similar to that of saffron. Over centuries, in the Indian subcontinent, turmeric became a culinary cornerstone, adding a golden tinge to dishes and becoming a symbol of auspiciousness in various rituals. Historically, turmeric played a crucial role in the spice trade, captivating the interest of traders and explorers who sought to take this precious spice to distant lands. Its influence spread to Southeast Asia, the

Middle East, and eventually Europe, leaving an indelible mark on several native recipes.

Today, India produces nearly all of the world's Haldi crop and consumes 80% of it. Erode, a bustling metropolis in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, reigns supreme as the global epicenter of turmeric cultivation and commerce. Affectionately dubbed the 'Yellow City,' the turmeric of this place received Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2019.



## The science that's stranger than fiction

Haldi is a powerhouse brimming with numerous health benefits. The wonder component that steals the show is curcumin, a potent antioxidant that acts like a shield protecting our immunity with anti-inflammatory properties.

Imagine, your body is a bustling city that's constantly under attack from foreign bodies like germs and harmful microbes. Those are just like mischievous graffiti artists, leaving their mark on cell membranes and

your DNA, causing havoc along the way. Right then, Curcumin, steps in as a protective force field, neutralizing them and keeping us in good health.

When we heat up turmeric while cooking, we're not just infusing dishes with a golden hue, we activate the curcumin. This process unfolds its full potential, enabling it to be absorbed by your body. So, sprinkling a bit of turmeric in the curry or soup simply means adding a dash of natural medicine.

## A dash of Haldi to stay healthy



Did you know Susruta's Ayurvedic Compendium, dating back to 250 BC, recommends an ointment containing Haldi to relieve the effects of poisoned food?

Ayurveda, the ancient health indian science, suggests Haldi for various health conditions including strengthening the overall energy of the body, relieving gas, improving digestion, regulating menstruation, relieving arthritis and

many more. Many South Asian countries use it as an antiseptic for cuts, burns, and bruises, and as an antibacterial agent even today. It is also found to be useful in treating depression. The antiarthritic effects of turmeric include inhibition of joint inflammation and periarticular joint destruction.

From head to toe and skin to bone, Haldi makes everything better. It's a magical medicinal herb.



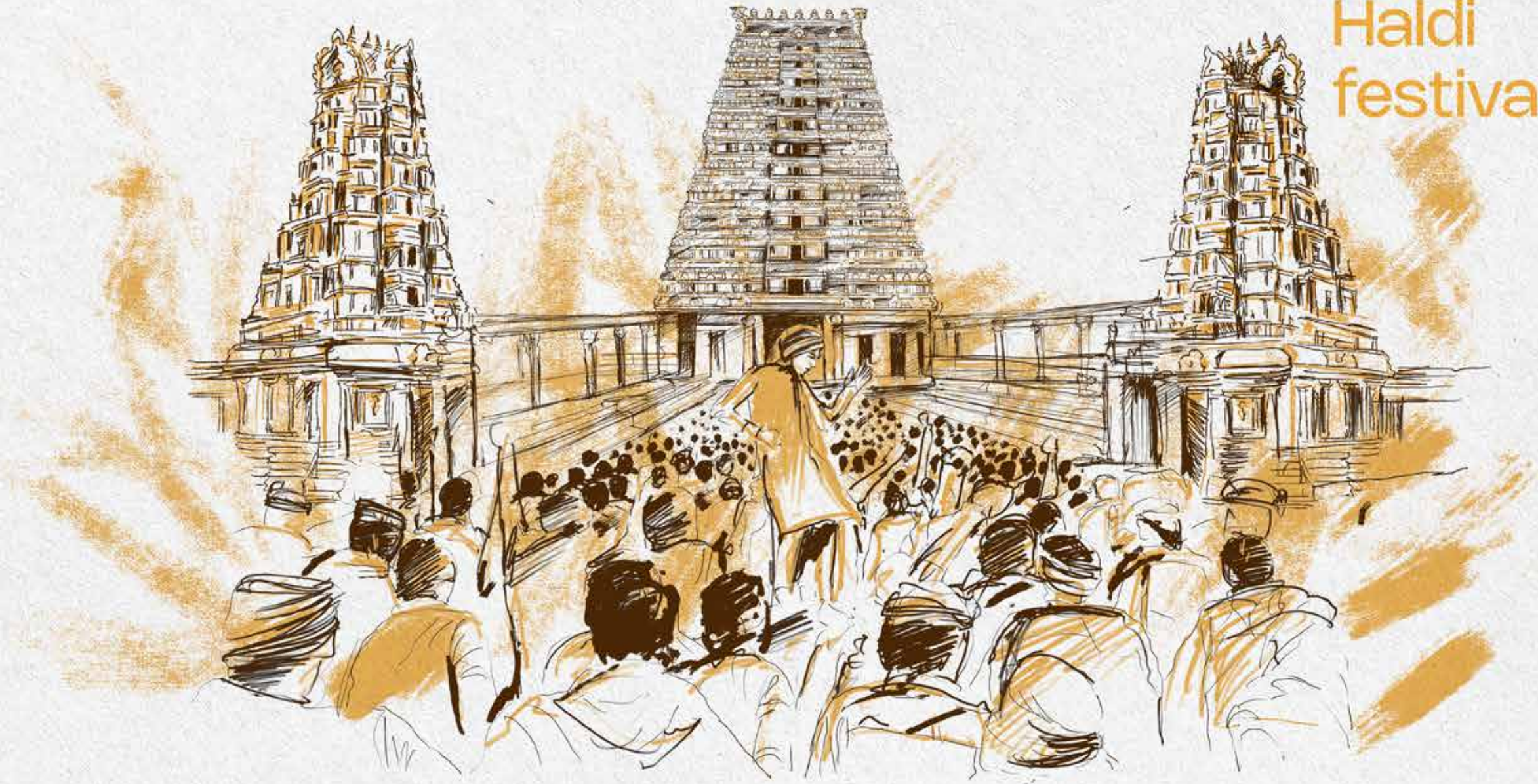
## The origin of the original

Over fifty varieties of Haldi are cultivated, each with its unique characteristics. However, not all are edible. The Lakadong variety emerges as the standout player, containing the highest curcumin content (7-12%). Whereas, the average curcumin percentage in most Haldi varieties range between 2-5%.

Nestled in the pristine hillocks of Lakadong village, in the foothills of Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills, this Haldi variety is a testament to the rich biodiversity of the region.

There are several other varieties such as Rajendra Sonia, Roma, Suroma, Ranga, Rashmi, Kasturi, and Kesari, each recognized for their high curcumin levels and medicinal values. In the realm of skincare and cosmetics, Kasturi and Kesari varieties take the center stage. The commonly used variety for cooking is *Curcuma longa* Linn or the Curry Manjal.

## The great Haldi festival



There is a vibrant festival in which the devotees of Lord Khandoba come together at his temple to engage in a joyous Haldi-splashing tradition. Haldi is playfully thrown around, accompanied by singing and dancing, transforming the temple town into the lively “Sonyachi Jejuri” or Golden Jejuri. This is the Bhandara festival, also called Somvati Utsav, which is held in Jejuri, Maharashtra. This colourful event occurs on Somvati Amavasya, a new moon day falling on a Monday.

Lord Khandoba, a revered folk deity from the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D., is widely worshipped in Maharashtra and Karnataka. The Jejuba temple stands as the primary among his various temples in the region. Revered for embodying qualities of Lord Shiva, Khandoba is associated with his wives Mhalsa and Banai, recognized as incarnations of Goddess Parvati and Ganga. The Lord, often depicted with four arms holding bowls of Haldi, is seen as an incarnation of sunlight.



## The golden thread of life



Haldi also has a place in all of life's profound moments, sprinkling its golden essence from birth to the final rites. From the moment a baby is born, Haldi plays a culturally significant role, representing purity and prosperity. Applied to thresholds during special occasions at home, it stands as a guardian of fortune, inviting prosperity into the home.

In the sacred realm of marriage, Haldi steals the spotlight, adorning wedding invitations with a pinch of its golden

glow. The bride and groom are also bathed with Haldi water. The versatile spice even finds its way into celebrations, with tiny Ganesha molds crafted with Haldi, embodying the spirit of auspicious beginnings. The act of grinding Haldi itself becomes a precursor to joyous occasions, marking the inaugural step in celebrations and setting the tone for a cascade of auspicious events.



## Just a pinch has a punch of wonders

- Ayurvedic turmeric tea is believed to have the potential to reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications and symptoms of arthritis
- Turmeric in everyday meals plays a therapeutic role in people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) by reducing airway inflammation
- The antibacterial properties of turmeric come into play when meat is marinated with turmeric infused herbs and spices
- Turmeric tea made with honey and ginger helps in weight loss
- Face packs with turmeric as a major ingredient help in lightening acne scars, controlling psoriasis and healing wounds
- Mango turmeric smoothie is the best go-to drink to boost immunity
- Turmeric essential oil has the magical power to soothe inflammation in joints, fight hair loss and restore the scalp
- The oleoresin extracted from turmeric is a flavoring & coloring agent that has marvelous hypoglycemic properties
- The ancient science of Ayurveda infuses turmeric in medicines to balance vata (space & air), pitha (heat) and kapha (water) of the human body
- Turmeric milk acts miraculously in menstruating women by alleviating pain

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