

If you've ever woken up to the aroma of mustard seeds popping in hot oil, onions being sautéed with a hint of turmeric, and the soft sound of a kadhai sizzling — chances are, someone in the house was making **Poha**.

Poha, or flattened rice, is one of the most comforting and humble breakfast dishes in Indian homes, especially in states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and parts of North India. It's light, nourishing, and can be rustled up in just 15-20 minutes. But for most of us, it's more than just a dish — it's nostalgia served warm.

So, what exactly is Poha?

At its heart, Poha is **flattened rice**, made by parboiling rice and then flattening it into dry flakes. These flakes are incredibly versatile — they absorb flavour beautifully and cook quickly, which is what makes them perfect for quick meals. Depending on where you are in India, you'll find many variations — **Kanda Poha** in Maharashtra, **Bataka Poha** in Gujarat, and even **Indori Poha** topped with sev and pomegranate! Let us cut the sev and pomegranate.

How to Make Poha: The Classic Maharashtrian Style

Here's a simple, homely version you can try— and you've got the perfect start to your day.

□ Ingredients

- 1 medium **onion**, finely chopped
- 1-2 **green chillies**, chopped (adjust to taste)
- 1 tsp **mustard seeds**
- 1/2 tsp **turmeric powder**
- 8-10 **curry leaves**
- 1 tbsp **peanuts** (optional but highly recommended!)
- Salt to taste
- 1 tsp **sugar** (optional, for a mild sweetness)
- 1 tbsp **oil**
- Juice of half a **lemon**

- Fresh **coriander**, chopped (for garnish)
- **Sev** (optional topping)

□ Method

- **Rinse the poha** in a strainer under running water for a few seconds. Let it sit and soften. You'll know it's ready when it breaks easily when pressed between fingers — not mushy, just soft.
- In a **kadhai or pan**, heat the oil. Add **mustard seeds** and let them splutter. Add **peanuts** and roast until golden.
- Toss in the **curry leaves**, **green chillies**, and **onions**. Sauté until the onions turn soft and translucent.
- Add **turmeric powder** and stir well.
- Gently mix in the **rinsed poha**. Add **salt**, a pinch of **sugar**, and mix lightly so it doesn't break. Let it steam on low heat for 2-3 minutes.
- Squeeze some fresh **lemon juice** on top. Garnish with **coriander leaves** and **sev** if you like a bit of crunch.

□ Ayurvedic Benefits of Upma

- **Easy to Digest (Laghu):**
 - Made with semolina (rava), upma is light on the stomach and easy to digest — suitable for those with weak digestion or during convalescence.
- **Balances Vata (when warm and moist):**
 - Served hot with ghee and mildly spiced, it helps pacify **Vata dosha**, especially when dryness or cold is aggravated.
- **Can be Tridosha-Friendly (with adjustments):**
 - **Vata:** Add ghee, ginger, and warm spices like cumin or mustard seeds.
 - **Pitta:** Avoid too much chili or mustard seeds; add cooling herbs like coriander.
 - **Kapha:** Add black pepper, ginger, and lots of vegetables to reduce heaviness.
- **Sattvic in Nature:**
 - When prepared mindfully, with minimal spice and without onion-garlic, upma is **sattvic** — promoting clarity, calmness, and harmony.
- **Nourishing but Not Heavy (Brimhana without Ama):**
 - Provides steady energy without creating toxins (**ama**), especially when cooked with fresh vegetables and digestive spices.

- **Supports Agni (Digestive Fire):**

- The inclusion of warming spices like mustard seeds, ginger, or hing helps kindle **Agni**, aiding digestion and assimilation.

- **Good for Morning Consumption (Dinacharya aligned):**

- Ideal for breakfast as per Ayurvedic daily routine, as it provides nourishment without overloading the system.

□ Pro Tips from the Indian Kitchen

Use thick poha – thin ones tend to get mushy.

Add **grated coconut** or **pomegranate seeds** for some regional flair.

Make it spicy or sweet — Poha doesn't mind. It's kind like that.

Why We Love It □

Poha isn't just a dish — it's a warm hug from your childhood, a travel snack wrapped in newspaper, or that thing you quickly whip up when guests show up unannounced. It's affordable, adaptable, and deeply rooted in our everyday lives.

Next time you're wondering what to make for breakfast — or a light evening bite — give Poha a go. Simple, satisfying, and so very Indian.

What are the health benefits of Poha without Peanuts?

Poha without peanuts is a [healthy](#) and nutritious snack. It is low in fat and calories, and is a good source of dietary fibre, vitamins, and minerals. It is also a good source of complex carbohydrates, which can help to keep you feeling full for longer.

Peanuts are also a good source of dietary fiber and provide a wide range of essential nutrients, including several B group vitamins, vitamin E, minerals such as iron, zinc, potassium and magnesium, antioxidant minerals (selenium, manganese and copper), plus other antioxidant compounds. People who are not able to digest peanuts and develop reactions in the body must be cautious.

