In every Indian kitchen, there's that one dish that comes to the rescue when you want something **quick**, **hearty**, and **wholesome** — and **Upma** is just that. Whether it's a lazy Sunday breakfast, a light dinner, or a comforting bite on a rainy day, Upma always delivers.
Originally a staple in South Indian households, this humble dish has travelled far and wide across India, often appearing in tiffins, on train journeys, and at breakfast buffets. And for good reason. Upma is an excellent source of energy and is easy on the digestion, making it one of the easiest healthy dishes to prepare.

What Is Upma?

Upma is a **savoury porridge** made from **semolina (rava/suji)**, cooked with a tempering of spices, curry leaves, and vegetables. The word "Upma" comes from Tamil — *uppu* (salt) and *maavu* (flour/meal). While traditionally made with semolina, modern variations also use broken wheat (daliya), rice rava, oats, or even quinoa. Soft, fluffy, and lightly spiced, it's the kind of meal that feels light on your stomach but satisfying to your soul. Unlike Poha, upma takes some time to make it.

How to Make Upma: Simple and Classic

Ingredients

- 1 cup **rava (semolina)**
- 2–2.5 cups **water**
- 1 medium **onion**, chopped
- 1–2 **green chillies**, slit or chopped
- 1 tsp **mustard seeds**
- 1 tsp **urad dal (split black gram)**
- 1 tsp **chana dal (Bengal gram)**
- 8–10 **curry leaves**
- 1-inch **ginger**, grated (optional)
- 2 tbsp **oil** or **ghee**
- Salt to taste
- Fresh **coriander**, chopped
- **Roasted cashews** for garnish (optional)

- Finely chopped **carrot**, **beans**, or **peas** (optional)

Method

- **Dry roast the rava** in a pan on low heat until it turns aromatic and slightly golden. Keep aside.
- In a **kadhai or pan**, heat oil/ghee. Add **mustard seeds** and let them splutter.
- Add **urad dal**, **chana dal**, and roast till golden. Then toss in **cashews** if using.
- Add **curry leaves**, **chopped green chillies**, **ginger**, and **onions**. Sauté till onions turn soft.
- If using veggies, add them now and cook till they're tender.
- Add water and **bring to a boil**. Add **salt**.
- Slowly pour in the roasted rava while stirring continuously to avoid lumps.
- Stir well until all water is absorbed and the mixture thickens.
- Cover and let it steam for a couple of minutes on low flame.
- Garnish with **coriander leaves** and a squeeze of **lemon juice** if you like.

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.

🍽 Pro Tips from the Indian Kitchen

- **Roasting the rava** is key — it prevents stickiness and gives that perfect fluffy texture.
- For extra aroma, use **ghee** instead of oil.
- Don’t rush the water-adding step — stir constantly to keep it lump-free.
- Add a spoon of **grated coconut** or **sugar** for a unique regional twist (especially in Karnataka or Maharashtra styles).
- Keep a lid on for 5 minutes after cooking — this allows the steam to finish the job.

❤ Why We Love Upma

Upma is one of those dishes that **grows on you**. It’s not showy, not spicy, but comforting in a way that only a childhood favourite can be. It’s versatile (add what you want), quick (under 20 minutes), and economical.
From college students in hostels to seasoned cooks in South Indian homes — everyone has their version of Upma, and each one is equally lovable.

🌿 Ideal For

- Satisfying yet not too heavy – ideal for dinner on light days.
- Low in fat, can be made with minimal oil and added veggies.
- Mild and soothing — ideal when the appetite is low or digestion is weak.
- Made with semolina (rava/sooji), it’s filling yet easy on the stomach.

