



DESERT DESSERT

Yummy! Now whip it up with camel milk

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WANT TO get rid of wrinkles? Need a good body lotion? Try camel milk.

And before you say 'yikes', there's a lot more you can do with camel milk — drink it plain or try camel milk *kulfi*, *lassi* and even flavoured milk. Branded as "karab kulfi" and "karab lassi" (karab is Hindi for camel), camel milk products are hitting the shelves in Bikaner.

The good part is that these products come cheap. Here's a price list: Rs 5 for camel milk *kulfi* and Rs 2 each for *lassi* and flavoured milk. You can take your pick from flavours like vanilla, pineapple, rose and saffron. And camel milk at Rs 5 per litre costs less than half of what buffalo or cow milk costs.

Scientists experimenting with camel milk also claim it is low on fat and healthier than ordinary milk.

The products — developed, packaged and marketed by the National Research Centre on Camel (NRCC) — have hit it off well with consumers in Bikaner. Once the government gives the go-ahead, there are plans to market them all over with a full-fledged awareness campaign.

"Tell them it is camel milk and people are hesitant," said a senior scientist. It is for precisely for this reason that *kulfi* was served to over 100 people and a survey done before revealing that the *kulfi* was made from camel milk. Forty-eight per cent graded it as very good, 26 per cent said it was excellent and less than four per cent said it was okay.

Research is also on to use camel protein powder on diabetic patients while scientists are trying to prove that camel milk cures liver ailments and helps patients suffering from leprosy, jaundice, tuberculosis, asth-

ma and piles.

Affiliated to the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, NRCC is the only institute in Asia involved in camel research. Scientists here have been conducting experiments on camel milk for the last five years. They got their first breakthrough when they successfully packaged camel milk products. That followed the cosmetic experiment when camel milk creams were used on 60-year-olds with positive results.

The "real achievement", says principal scientist G.P. Singh, would be when camel milk can be used in the area of health. While one or two private institutes in Bikaner have claimed that camel milk helps diabetics, the NRCC is treading with caution. "There have been claims and counter-claims but we want to be absolutely sure," senior scientist Dr Raghendra Singh told HT.



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