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Greetings to my fellow Malayalis! Onam, the most cherished festival of Kerala, brings with it the lavish feast, “sadya” – a delightful array of dishes, savored across the globe by millions of people. This Onam, amidst the joys of celebrating with family and friends in Canada, I embarked on a personal journey to explore the glycemic variability of sadya, using the CGM (Continuous Glucose Monitoring) Libre system by Abbott. I wanted to see if it was possible to enjoy the sadya, mindful of its glycemic implications and calorie count. Malayali diaspora outside of Kerala celebrates Onam with a fervor matching that of our homeland. In North America, this often entails long drives to community events, partaking in 4-5 sadyas within a span of two weeks, navigating hectic work schedules, and managing other summer activities. These commitments necessitate us to follow a stringent exercise and diet regimen. From a calorie perspective, as per the MyFitnessPal app, a standard Kerala Vegetarian Sadya, including two payasams, is approximately 2600 calories. To offset this, one would need 4.4 hours of running or 6.6 hours of walking.

While adaptations such as incorporating millets, vegetable oil or artificial sweeteners can make the sadya healthier, traditional preparations for vast gatherings often rely on conventional ingredients such as coconut oil, coconut, matta rice and jaggery. Also, it is not always possible to restrict the portion size since most items are served in advance on the banana leaf before one is seated to have the meal.

Celebrating Onam with Sadya & CGM Libre: A Personal Exploration on Glycemic Variability and Calorie Count

