



MADHUR JAFFREY

—

Teaches Indian Cooking



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR: MADHUR JAFFREY

The icon who took food from the subcontinent to the world

A NONEXHAUSTIVE TIMELINE OF INDIAN HISTORY

Learn more about the country where Madhur grew up

6 COMING OF AGE

How the Partition of India changed Madhur's life—and influenced her cooking

7 EQUIPMENT LIST

Everything you need to get started

11 AN INTRODUCTION TO FLAVOR

A dozen essential spices for Indian cooking

12 IMPORTED FLAVORS

How spicy chilies became a staple

13 GARAM MASALA

14 ROASTED CUMIN POWDER

15 POTATO A THOUSAND WAYS

19 CHERRY TOMATO AND CUCUMBER SALAD

23 WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY CURRY?

Curry is convenient shorthand, but it carries a legacy of colonialism

26 GOAN SHRIMP

27 KERALA-STYLE FISH

30 SOUTH INDIAN MIXED VEGETABLE KURMA

31 BUTTER CHICKEN

35 SPICE BLOOM

A tadka adds an extra layer of flavor and texture to any dish

36 ALOO GOSHT (PAKISTANI POTATO AND GOAT)

37 LEMONY CHICKEN WITH CORIANDER (CILANTRO)

40 BAKED LAMB SHAMI KEBABS

44 CAULIFLOWER AND POTATOES WITH CUMIN AND ASAFETIDA



VEGETARIAN



VEGAN



DAIRY-FREE



GLUTEN-FREE



NUT-FREE

45 OKRA WITH SHALLOTS

48 EGGPLANT BHARTA

51 PLAIN BASMATI RICE

53 LAMB BIRYANI

57 CHAPATIS

59 MOONG DAL CHEELA (PANCAKE)

61 PLAIN SQUARE PARATHA

63 ALOO PARATHA

66 BESAN CHEELA (PANCAKE)

69 THE WORLD OF DAL

Legumes are the ultimate comfort food

**72 MOONG DAL AND RED LENTILS WITH
BROWNE ONIONS**

73 CHICKPEAS IN SIMPLE NORTHERN-STYLE

77 GREEN CHUTNEY

78 TAMARIND CHUTNEY

**80 PUNJABI-STYLE SWEET-AND-SOUR MIXED
VEGETABLE PICKLE**

81 PICKLED GREEN CHILIES

82 CUCUMBER RAITA

85 MASALA CHAI

87 DAHI PURI CHAAT

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR: MADHUR JAFFREY

The icon who took food from the subcontinent to the world

● **IN THE REALM** of international culinary ambassadors, Madhur Jaffrey stands alone. Her 1973 debut cookbook, *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*, transformed the West's understanding of Indian flavors and feasts. In the decades since, her friendly affect and clever recipes have been a constant companion to home cooks (and aspiring professionals) around the globe. She is responsible for introducing millions—if not billions—of people to the complexities of Indian cuisine.

Perhaps they see some of themselves in her; after all, Madhur's own entry into the kitchen was accidental. Born in Delhi, she studied acting and, as a young adult, moved to London

to attend the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Like many international students before her, she longed for the foods of her homeland. "That wonderful food that was cooked in our house on a daily basis suddenly vanished," she says. "I started writing letters to my mother and saying, 'Please, please, I can't cook. Teach me how to cook.'"

Her mother obliged, sending her shorthand recipes that amounted to little more than a few lines of basic instruction—take this, take that, brown it, add water, cover it, let it cook. "But those tastes were in my head—the flavor of cumin, the flavor of ginger," Madhur says. "I was able to re-create

A NONEXHAUSTIVE TIMELINE OF

INDIAN HISTORY

ca. 3300-1600 BCE

The Indus Valley stands as one of the world's most advanced Bronze and Stone Age civilizations, with two major cities (Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro).



ca. 1500-500 BCE

The earliest hymns of *Rig Veda*, one of the central texts of Hinduism, are composed in Sanskrit.



ca. 563 BCE

Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), Indian prince and sage founder of Buddhism, is born.



ca. 500 BCE

Mahavira, the last of Jainism's twenty-four great spiritual teachers, formalizes various traditions and ideas into the Jain religion.

ca. 200 BCE

The Silk Road trade route is established, supercharging cultural and economic exchanges among China, Arabia, Persia, Southern Europe, the Horn of Africa, and the Indian subcontinent.



a lot of the dishes that I used to get at home, and I found that discovery absolutely wonderful.”

She compiled these recipes to form the basis of *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*, championed into publication by Judith Jones. Jones, a legendary American editor, was also responsible for Julia Child’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, which revolutionized Americans’ understanding and appreciation of French cuisine. *An Invitation to Indian Cooking* had a similar impact, garnering rave reviews from home cooks and food critics alike. In a representative write-up, *New York Times* columnist Raymond Sokolov called it “the most useful and interesting introduction to Indian food that I have ever seen.”

Madhur’s meteoric rise in the realm of culinary literature made her a crossover star. By the time *An Invitation to Indian Cooking* arrived, her stage and screen career had already taken off. She took home a best actress award from the 1965 Berlin International Film Festival for her debut performance in *Shakespeare Wallah*. Throughout the 1970s and ’80s, she continued working with the Merchant Ivory film company, appearing in *Autobiography of a Princess*, *Heat and Dust*, and other features.

“

[Using my mother’s notes], I was able to re-create a lot of the dishes that I used to get at home, and I found that discovery absolutely wonderful.

—MADHUR JAFFREY

”

All the while, she also continued writing cookbooks—*Madhur Jaffrey’s World Vegetarian*, *A Taste of the Far East*, and *From Curries to Kebabs: Recipes From the Indian Spice Trail* are all considered classics—and traveling around India, learning new recipes. And she frequently put her camera presence and culinary knowledge to use in tandem, reaching even larger audiences as the host of cooking programs for major American and British public television networks.

Still, even after penning more than thirty cookbooks, winning countless awards, and enjoying a successful

acting career, Madhur is looking for fresh ways to innovate and educate. Her 2019 cookbook, *Madhur Jaffrey’s Instantly Indian Cookbook*, reimagines Indian cuisine for use in modern electric pressure cookers. And now she’s here, teaching this class. In it, you’ll learn not only the foundational elements of her world-famous dishes—from spices and breads to proteins and condiments—but also the cultural and historical context that surrounds them. Madhur hopes you’ll walk away with a newfound appreciation for Indian cuisine and hungry to continue learning even more.

ca. 600-700

Arab traders introduce Islam to India.



ca. 1400-1500

Guru Nanak, the first in a line of gurus (spiritual leaders), founds the Indian Dharmic religion Sikhism.

1498

Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama becomes the first person to navigate a sea route from Europe to India when he arrives in Calicut with chilies and pineapples from the New World.

1526

The warrior chieftain Babur defeats the Delhi sultanate, establishing the Mughal Empire in northern India.



Madhur (left) and her sister Latit at the gates of their family's orchard

COMING OF AGE

How the Partition of India changed Madhur's life—and influenced her cooking

• **IN HER 2006** culinary memoir, *Climbing the Mango Trees*, Madhur details her early childhood in India, which coincided with the waning years of British colonial rule. She recalls eating lunch with classmates of many religions—Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sikh. But in 1947, the Partition of India changed her world forever. The colony

of British India was divided into two independent states: India and Pakistan. The latter was split across two areas—East and West—which were 1,240 miles apart. (East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971.) Partition, and the ensuing physical carnage, forced millions of people to leave their homes and move to another

country where they felt safe: Hindus and Sikhs to India, Muslims to Pakistan. It was one of the largest, bloodiest mass migrations in human history. When her friends disappeared from school, Madhur was devastated. Her memories and feelings about Partition remain inextricably tied to those lunches at school, the simple joys of eating with a community. “Politics was such that the land was divided by the British, but the food didn’t change,” she says. “Even now. Many, many years have passed. We still tend to eat the dishes that we ate when everything was all India.”

1600

Britain's East India Company is chartered, formalizing the imperial channels of slave labor and political influence that lead to British rule over sections of the Indian subcontinent.

1654

Construction of the Taj Mahal is completed.

1857

Sepoy Rebellion begins as Indian soldiers rise up in mutiny.

1858

Queen Victoria installs British Raj, a feudal system of government wherein regional rulers act as subsidiaries of the British royal family.

1947

India gains independence from Britain; the subcontinent is partitioned into two sovereign states, India and Pakistan.



EQUIPMENT LIST

A few specialized appliances and tools will transform your Indian cooking

- Madhur uses a **cast-iron pan** to dry-roast spices.

- Spices used in Indian cooking are usually purchased whole. Grind them at home using a **coffee grinder**.

- Use a **rolling pin** and **griddle** to make Indian

flatbreads, like chapati and paratha.

- A **pressure cooker** saves time, especially while making dal.

- A **heavy-bottomed saucepan** is best for browning meats (*bhuno* means “to brown in oil”). It’s also excellent

for frying onions, garlic, and ginger—a quint-essentially Indian flavor combination.

- A **kadhai** (Indian wok) is used for both deep-frying and stir-frying.

Other kitchen essentials: sieves or fine-mesh strainers in several sizes, vegetable peelers, colanders, microplanes in different sizes (essential for grating), tongs (soft, nonmetallic ends), a mesh metal spoon (for fried foods), a fish spatula, a sifter, a food processor, an electric blender, an electric hot-water kettle, a garlic press, a bamboo chopping board, a teapot and cozy.



“

**I [have]
one grinder
for spices
and one for
coffee.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

”



SPICE

FUNDAMENTALS



“

**What really distinguishes
Indian food is its magical
use of spices. Some came
from Egypt. Some came
from the New World. But
we use them like a painter
uses colors.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

AN INTRODUCTION TO FLAVOR

Get to know a dozen essential spices for Indian cooking

● **“FOR INDIANS, SPICES** are like paints in a paint box,” Madhur says. “We get different shades from the same spice by doing something to the spice,” like roasting whole spices or grinding them into powders.

“It’s not what spices you use,” she adds, “it’s how you extract the exact flavor that you want from them.”

Indian food calls for a variety of spices, but Madhur says you don’t need to go full throttle at the grocery store straightaway. “Go consult a recipe and just get those spices,” she says. “Next time you make another dish or another two dishes, get the spices for just those dishes.”

Most spices used in Indian cooking are usually purchased whole and ground at home. Ground spices can be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to three months. Consider adding the following to your own pantry to establish a strong foundation (and to make the most of Madhur’s class!).

ASAFETIDA (hing) is a pungent resin and used sparingly in a variety of dishes. It has a savory, musky, garlicky flavor. It’s a common element in a tadka. Madhur buys hers ground, usually mixed with a little wheat flour. If you’re allergic to wheat, you can typically purchase it ground with rice flour.

CARDAMOM Two varieties of cardamom are used in Indian cooking: green cardamom and black cardamom. Cardamom is a layered spice: sweet, spicy, floral, with a peppery aftertaste. Black cardamom is an essential ingredient in garam masala, though Madhur often substitutes the black seeds for green seeds.

CINNAMON is the bark of the cassia tree and is rich and spicy in flavor. It’s used both whole and ground in many rice, meat, and vegetable dishes.

CLOVES, the dried buds of a plant native to Indonesia, are intensely sweet and bitter in flavor. A little goes a long way in rice and meat preparations.

CORIANDER SEEDS are used both whole and ground. Whole, the seeds are floral, light, and citrusy; ground, coriander powder is nutty. It adds earthy and lemony notes to dal. Always grind coriander seeds yourself using either a mortar and pestle or a coffee grinder. “If ground coriander is left to sit around, it turns to sawdust faster than most spices,” Madhur says.

CUMIN is used whole, roasted, or ground. It imparts an earthy, musky, and peppery flavor. Ground, roasted cumin is sprinkled into yogurt and chaat; always have some handy.

FENUGREEK SEEDS (methi) are bitter and extremely aromatic and used widely in South Indian dishes, from pickles to spice blends, like sambar powder, and chutneys.

MUSTARD SEEDS Two kinds of mustard seeds are used interchangeably in Indian cooking—brown and black. They reach peak mustard-y flavor when heated and are used as the foundation for a tadka.

NUTMEG is gentle and sweet and used in many Mughal and Kashmiri dishes. Use a nutmeg grater or a microplane as needed.

SAFFRON adds complex flavor notes to a finished dish: earthy and grassy, floral and sweet. A pinch adds brilliant color, aroma, and flavor to any rice dish.

TURMERIC root is cleaned, boiled, dried, and pulverized into a brilliant yellow powder that is nutty and delicately aromatic. Turmeric is used as a coloring agent and to lend flavor to meats, vegetables, rices, and dals. “It is considered to be a very important antiseptic for both outside and inside the body,” Madhur says.



IMPORTED FLAVORS

How spicy chilies became a staple

- Indian cuisine is known for its zing, but chilies aren't actually native to the country. Indeed, the peppers first came to Goa, on India's west coast, via Portuguese traders during the fifteenth century, and quickly spread throughout the subcontinent. Cooks soon learned to use red chilies, either dried or ground, to add color and a fiery thrum to dishes. Green chilies are now usually served fresh, pickled, or puréed; regardless of how they're prepared, green chilies have bite, and that heat tends to linger on the tongue. Prior to the introduction of chilies, Indians relied on black pepper, which is native to South India, to provide a kick. Today, on the Malabar Coast of Kerala, you'll still find Tellicherry peppercorns: Woodsy and earthy in flavor, mellow and warming, these are widely considered to be some of the finest peppercorns in the world.



Garam Masala

Makes about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup



INGREDIENTS

2 cinnamon sticks (2 inches each), broken into pieces

$\frac{1}{2}$ whole nutmeg, broken into shards with a meat pounder

1 tbsp green cardamom seeds (if using pods, crush in a mortar and pestle and discard the outer shells)

1 tsp black cumin

1 tsp whole black peppercorns

1 tsp whole cloves

- Garam masala, which translates to “hot mix of spices,” is a spice cabinet must-have. Recipes for this versatile seasoning vary from family to family, and Madhur’s recipe calls for six spices: cardamom, cloves, black peppercorns, cumin, nutmeg, and cinnamon. It’s the only spice blend she advises to roast and grind at home.

Try garam masala on meats, in rice dishes, and with vegetables. Madhur says she puts “a little garam masala at the end when I want that aroma of these particular spices.”

METHOD

1. Combine all of the spices in a clean coffee grinder or spice grinder. Pulse first, and then grind until you have a fine powder. Transfer the powder to an airtight container. Store in a cool, dark place.



Roasted Cumin Powder

Makes about 2 tablespoons



INGREDIENTS

½ cup whole cumin seeds

- Whole spices taste completely different when they're roasted. Heat releases aromatics from the spices, adding complexity and emboldening the spices' flavor. "We get different shades from the same spice by doing something to the spice," Madhur says.

Roasting cumin turns the seeds into "something different, something spicier that makes your mouth water," she says. Roasted cumin can be ground using a clean coffee grinder or spice grinder, a mortar and pestle, or a rolling pin. It's best when freshly roasted but can also be

stored in an airtight jar. In North India, roasted cumin is used as a garnish, sprinkled over raita or vegetables.

METHOD

1. Warm a small cast-iron skillet or similarly heavy-bottomed frying pan over medium-low heat. When the pan is hot, add the cumin seeds and roast, stirring continuously to prevent the seeds from burning as they cook, until the seeds are a shade darker and just beginning to smoke, 2 to 3 minutes.

2. Remove the pan from the heat, and quickly transfer the seeds to a bowl or a paper towel-lined plate to cool.

3. Using the paper towel as a funnel, place the seeds in a clean coffee grinder or spice grinder. Grind the seeds to a fine powder. Store the powder in an airtight container for up to 2 months.



Potato a Thousand Ways

Each variation serves 2



INGREDIENTS

For the potatoes with cumin seeds

2 large waxy potatoes, such as red potatoes or Yukon Gold

2 tbsp vegetable oil or another neutral oil, such as peanut oil

1 tsp whole cumin seeds

Salt to taste

For the southern potatoes

2 large waxy potatoes, such as red potatoes or Yukon Gold

2 tbsp vegetable oil or another neutral oil, such as peanut oil

1 tsp whole brown mustard seeds

2 dried red chilies

8 to 10 fresh curry leaves

¼ cup water

Salt to taste

● Using one, two, or three spices, you can transform simple potatoes into four different dishes. Spiced with just cumin seeds, the tuber becomes an Indian hash brown, perfect as a breakfast side. Red chilies, mustard seeds, and curry leaves are a popular flavor profile in the South; cumin seeds, mustard seeds, and sesame seeds are preferred in the North.

“The thing with India is that it’s always been split into different states that speak their own languages, have their own culture, have their own clothing,” Madhur says. “You’ll find that the food varies about as much as it does in the countries of Europe.”

METHOD

For the potatoes with cumin seeds

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the potatoes whole until they’re easily pierced with a paring knife, about 15 to 20 minutes depending on the size of the potatoes (make sure the potatoes are fully cooked). Drain, and when they’re cool enough to handle, peel and dice the potatoes into ½-inch chunks.

2. Heat the oil in a medium frying pan set over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, sprinkle the cumin seeds in an even layer. Let them sizzle in the oil for about 30 seconds.

3. Add the diced potatoes, and season with salt. Stir-fry until they’re golden brown, for 5 to 7 minutes or so. Taste, and adjust the seasoning as needed. Serve immediately.

For the southern potatoes

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the potatoes whole until they’re easily pierced with a paring knife, about 15 to 20 minutes depending on the size of the potatoes (make sure the potatoes are fully cooked). Drain, and when they’re cool enough to handle, peel and dice the potatoes into ½-inch chunks.

2. Heat the oil in a medium frying pan set over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the brown mustard seeds and wait for them to pop. Once the mustard seeds begin to sputter, add the red chilies, breaking them into 2 or 3 small pieces each, and shake the pan to coat the chilies in the oil. Toast the chilies for about 1 minute, or until they turn dark. Then add the curry leaves. Continue to shake the pan, standing back so as not to be splashed by the hot oil.

3. Add the potatoes, and stir to combine. Add the water, and season with salt. Turn the heat to medium-low. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the water evaporates, for 5 to 7 minutes or so.

4. Taste, and adjust the seasoning as needed. Serve immediately.







INGREDIENTS

For the northern potatoes

2 large waxy potatoes, such as red potatoes or Yukon Gold

2 tbsp vegetable oil or another neutral oil, such as peanut oil

1 tsp whole cumin seeds

1 tsp whole black mustard seeds

1 tbsp sesame seeds

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

Salt to taste

Lemon juice to taste

For the Dosa potatoes

2 large waxy potatoes, such as red potatoes or Yukon Gold

2 tbsp vegetable oil or another neutral oil, such as peanut oil

½ tsp chana dal

½ tsp urad dal

1 tsp whole black mustard seeds

8 to 10 whole curry leaves

½ cup chopped onion

1 tbsp fresh ginger

1 to 2 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped

½ tsp ground turmeric

Salt to taste

¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves

For the northern potatoes

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the potatoes whole until they're easily pierced with a paring knife, about 15 to 20 minutes depending on the size of the potatoes (make sure the potatoes are fully cooked). Drain, and when they're cool enough to handle, peel and dice the potatoes into ½-inch chunks.

2. Heat the oil in a medium frying pan set over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the cumin seeds and black mustard seeds. When the mustard seeds begin to pop, add the sesame seeds, which might pop, too.

3. Add the potatoes, and stir-fry until they're golden brown, then add the cayenne pepper. Stir well to combine, and remove the pan from the heat. Season with salt and a squeeze or two of lemon juice. Serve immediately.

For the Dosa potatoes

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the potatoes whole until they're easily pierced with a paring knife, about 15 to 20 minutes depending on the size of the potatoes (make sure the potatoes are fully cooked). Drain, and when they're cool enough to handle, peel and crush the potatoes into a very coarse mash.

2. Heat the oil in a medium frying pan set over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the chana dal. Fifteen seconds later, add the urad dal. When the dals begin to take on color, add the black mustard seeds. Once the seeds begin to pop, add the curry leaves followed by the onion, ginger, and green chilies. Stir for 2 to 3 minutes, and add a splash of water.

3. Cover and cook until the onions are soft. Add the cooked potatoes, and stir well to combine. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes more, stirring continuously and adding more water as needed, aiming for a loose, "floaty" consistency. Add the ground turmeric, and season with salt. Finish with the cilantro. Serve immediately.



Cherry Tomato and Cucumber Salad

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

2 medium cucumbers, such as Kirby, or 1 large English cucumber

1 pint halved cherry tomatoes or grape tomatoes, or 1 large heirloom tomato, diced or cut into bite-size wedges

Juice of 1 lemon

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp cayenne pepper

$\frac{1}{3}$ tsp roasted cumin powder (see page 14)

2 tbsp olive oil or peanut oil

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp whole brown mustard seeds

8 to 10 fresh curry leaves

- A tadka, the Indian technique of cooking a mixture of spices in fat to release their essential oils, is used to season dishes from dals to salads.

This simple tomato and cucumber salad is topped with a two-ingredient tadka—one made with mustard seeds and curry leaves. Be patient and attentive while making your tadka; the mustard seeds will have reached optimum flavor when they stop sputtering in the hot oil, and the curry leaves should be translucent and curled.

METHOD

1. Peel the cucumbers and cut them into quarters, first halving them crosswise and then halving each section lengthwise. Arrange the quartered cucumbers on a plate with the tomatoes. Drizzle the vegetables with lemon juice, and then season with salt, a few grinds of black pepper, and the cayenne pepper. Sprinkle the roasted cumin powder over the top.

2. Heat the oil in a small saucepan or skillet set over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the mustard seeds. When the seeds begin to sizzle and pop, add the curry leaves and cook until the leaves are glossy, a few seconds more. Remove the oil from the heat, and pour it over the cucumbers and tomatoes. Serve immediately.







DEMYSTIFYING
CURRY



“

**Eating is such
an important part of
our lives. It really tells you
who you are in many ways.
What you eat, how you
eat it, what your culinary
traditions are tells me
a lot about the people
of that country.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY CURRY?

.....
**Curry is convenient shorthand,
but it carries the legacy of colonialism**
.....

● **CURRY IS INDIAN, RIGHT?** Not so much. The word is used—especially in the West—as a catchall for a variety of spicy, sauce-based dishes cooked in various South and Southeast Asian styles. What qualifies depends on whom you ask. And the term *curry* isn't even Indian. "It's a very confusing word," Madhur says, "because it means different things to different people."

Indeed, the word *curry* doesn't appear in any of India's many official languages. Speakers traditionally call dishes by their specific names: kurma, dal, rogan josh, and so on. "We distinguish our dishes by the spices in them," Madhur says. "We say, 'Oh, this is made with cumin and asafetida. This is made with black pepper and chili pepper. This is made with green chilies and red chilies and cumin seeds.' I always like to distinguish the different foods by their special names that we use in India."

Okay, so what gives? The etymology of *curry* is sketchy, but historians agree that it first appeared in a sixteenth-century Portuguese travel log and suggest it is a bastardization of the Tamil word *kari*, a watery sauce served with rice. Regardless, the subcontinent's British colonizers came to use the term for any dish of vegetables, meat, or fish cooked in a

spicy sauce. The first curry recipe in Britain appeared in *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* by Hannah Glasse in 1747. In the twentieth century, *curry* became slang for a certain style of Indian cooking widely available in the U.K.—cream-based, often heavy on the turmeric, inspired by North Indian Mughlai cuisine. "And that's the way it has gone into England, as a word that symbolizes just Indian food," Madhur says, allowing that, "[I've] got to the point where I, too, say, 'Curry. I'm making curry.'"

Using the British definition, India is home to innumerable "curries": meen moilee, or Kerala-style fish from the southwestern corner of India, is coconut-milk based, fragrant, and tart; chicken makhni, or butter chicken, hails from Punjab in the far north and is creamy and mild; kurma, from Tamil Nadu, is a dish of mixed vegetables simmered in a cashew nut, green chili, and tomato sauce.

"How can you take such a big country with so many states within it, with such different cuisines within it, where every town has specialties and special dishes—how can you take all that food from around India and call it all *curry*?" Madhur says with a laugh. "You can call them curry or whatever you want," she adds in exasperation. "This is Indian food at its best."





Goan Shrimp

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil or vegetable oil, such as canola oil

2 medium shallots, finely chopped

¼ to 1 tsp cayenne pepper, plus more as preferred

2 tsp paprika or Kashmiri red chili powder

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

¼ tsp ground turmeric

1¼ cups coconut milk

1 lb large or medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

½ tsp salt

1 to 2 tsp lemon juice

4 servings plain basmati rice (see page 52) or jasmine rice, for serving

● The stars of Goan cuisine, which comes from the state of Goa on the western coast of India, are coconut and seafood, and both are on display in this rich shrimp curry. “Goa has a lot of coconut palms, and a lot of coconut is used in everyday cooking,” Madhur says. “Coastal cooking is so different from [cooking in] the center of India. We really didn’t use coconut. Indian food, like every food, keeps changing.”

This spicy dish, which can be served with short-grain rice, is a quick meal. Fresh shrimp are best, Madhur says, but frozen work, too. “Look and see which are the best frozen ones,” she adds. “You want them to be as clean and fresh as possible.”

METHOD

1. Warm the oil in a medium sauté pan set over medium heat. Add the shallots, and fry them until they begin to turn golden brown and crispy, a few minutes.

2. Remove the pan from the heat and add the cayenne pepper, paprika or Kashmiri red chili powder, black pepper, and turmeric. Stir well to combine the ingredients into a smooth paste.

3. Shake the can of coconut milk vigorously, then return the pan to the heat, open the can, and add 1¼ cups of the milk to the spice paste. Bring the mixture to a rolling simmer, stirring to scrape up any caramelizing bits on the bottom of the pan.

4. Reduce the heat to low and add the shrimp. Season with the salt and lemon juice, and cook until the shrimp are pink and opaque. Taste, season as needed, and serve with the steamed rice.

Kerala-Style Fish

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

1¼ lb skin-on wild sea bass fillet, about ½- to ¾-in thick, cut crosswise into 3-in slices

Salt

2 tbsp olive oil or canola oil

2 large shallots, finely sliced (about ⅔ cup)

1 tsp grated ginger

1 clove garlic, grated or crushed

1 cup water

½ tsp ground turmeric

½ tsp cayenne pepper, or to taste

1 tbsp paprika

1 tbsp lemon juice

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

½ cup canned coconut milk

2 to 4 servings plain basmati rice (see page 52) or jasmine rice, for serving

• This recipe, which comes from the coastal state of Kerala and features fish in fragrant coconut milk, has a hint of tartness and is a relatively easy one-pot evening meal. You can use wild sea bass, just like Madhur does, or substitute with haddock, halibut, mackerel, salmon, or kingfish. Just be sure to choose a fish that looks and smells fresh. Serve it with short-grain rice.

METHOD

1. Place the fish on a plate or sheet tray. Season with salt, and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan set over medium-high heat. Sauté the shallots until the edges begin to brown.
3. Add the ginger and garlic, and stir to combine. Stir-fry until the mixture is fragrant, stirring continuously, for about 1 minute. Carefully add the water, followed by the turmeric, cayenne, paprika, and lemon juice. Season with more salt and black pepper, and bring to a simmer.
4. Reduce the heat to low, and continue to simmer for 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally. Shake the can of coconut milk vigorously, then open it and add ½ cup of the milk to the spice mixture.

5. Return the sauce to a simmer, and arrange the fish inside the pan in an even layer. Cook the fish for 5 to 6 minutes or until it's just done, occasionally using a spoon to bathe the fish in the sauce. Taste, season if needed, and serve with rice.



Coastal cooking is so different from [cooking in] the center of India. We really didn't use coconut. Indian food, like every food, keeps changing.

—MADHUR JAFFREY







South Indian Mixed Vegetable Kurma

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp chopped raw cashews
3 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped (canned is fine)
1 tsp salt, divided
1 to 4 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye
½ tsp garam masala (see page 13)
½ cup chopped cilantro
2 tbsp peanut oil or olive oil
½ tsp whole black mustard seeds
½ tsp hulled urad dal (split black lentils)
1 dried hot red chili
15 fresh curry leaves
2 carrots, peeled and cut into ½-in rounds (about 1 cup)
1 cup shelled green peas (fresh or frozen and thawed)
½ small head of cauliflower, cut into ¾-in florets (about 1 cup)
1 cup green beans, trimmed and cut into ¾-in pieces
½ cup water
½ cup canned coconut milk
4 servings plain basmati rice (see page 52) or rice noodles

● In this cashew-based curry, dal is used to modify and enhance the flavor profile of the dish. “South Indians do something very different from the North,” Madhur says. “They not only use spices in their food, they also use dals. It completely changes the taste of the food that you’re cooking. It gets a totally southern taste”—which is to say, nutty and tart.

Madhur’s kurma can be served over plain basmati rice or rice noodles—the choice is yours.

METHOD

1. Cover the cashews with hot water in a small bowl. After 1 hour, drain them and transfer them to a blender or food processor.

2. Add the tomatoes, ½ teaspoon salt, green chilies, and garam masala to the blender, and blend until you have a smooth paste. Add the cilantro, and pulse to combine. Spoon the mixture into a bowl, and set aside.

3. In a medium saucepan, warm the oil over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the mustard seeds and urad dal to the oil. Once the seeds begin to sputter and pop, add the red chili. Swirl the pan a few times, then add the curry leaves, taking care to stand back while the oil sizzles.

4. Add the carrots, peas, cauliflower, and green beans to the spice mixture. Stir to combine, and reduce the heat to medium. Season with the remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and sauté for 5 minutes. Add ½ cup of water and bring to a simmer, then lower

the heat, cover, and continue to simmer for 3 to 4 more minutes.

5. Add the cashew-tomato mixture to the pan, and stir to incorporate. Bring to a boil. Cover once more and turn the heat to low. Cook until everything is tender, about 3 to 5 more minutes.

6. Shake the canned coconut milk well before stirring ½ cup into the kurma. Cook for 1 minute, until the milk thickens slightly and everything is well-combined. Serve with steamed rice or rice noodles.

Butter Chicken

Serves 4 to 6



INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp tomato paste
1 cup water
1 tsp grated ginger
1 cup heavy cream
1 tsp garam masala (see page 13)
¾ tsp salt
¼ tsp sugar
1 fresh hot green chili, such as bird's eye, finely chopped
¼ tsp cayenne pepper, or a similar red chili powder, such as hot paprika
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh cilantro
4 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp roasted cumin powder (see page 14)
1 stick unsalted butter
4 servings leftover boneless tandoori-style chicken (or store-bought)

• In this North Indian dish, the chicken is cooked twice: First, it's roasted "tandoori-style," only without the tandoor (a large vat-shaped clay oven that reaches extremely high temperatures). To simulate a tandoor, Madhur preheats the oven to its highest temperature—500°F or 550°F for most models—and cooks the meat in smaller pieces (legs, breasts, etc.). Once the chicken has been cooked in the oven, it is simmered in a rich sauce made of butter, cream, and tomato.

If you don't have the time to do both parts of this recipe, don't let that deter you; store-bought tandoori-style chicken works just as well here. Serve it with rice or naan for a hearty dinner.

METHOD

1. Combine the tomato paste and water in a large glass measuring cup. Whisk to combine, then add the ginger, heavy cream, garam masala, salt, sugar, green chili, cayenne, cilantro, lemon juice, and cumin. Stir well to incorporate.

2. In a large pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the tomato-cream mixture. Bring to a simmer, and sauté for a minute or so, stirring to combine with a rubber spatula.

3. Add the chicken to the pan. Turn it often so that it becomes coated in the sauce. To serve, transfer the chicken to a warm serving platter and spoon extra sauce over the top.



I remember as a kid, chicken was a special food. And I have that memory still within me. To this day, when I'm making chicken, I don't think of it as ordinary.

—MADHUR JAFFREY







SOUTH ASIAN MEATS

“

**Even before I eat, I will
smell it and say ‘ooh’ and
‘aah.’ Which is what chefs,
and certainly Indian chefs,
want to hear all the time.**

**We want to hear the
‘oohs’ and ‘aahs.’**

—MADHUR JAFFREY



SPICE BLOOM

A tadka adds an extra layer of flavor and texture to any dish

- Simply put, a tadka—which refers to both the method and its product—is a spice infusion that enlivens a dish. To make a tadka, whole or ground spices are flash-heated in hot oil or ghee; the fat extracts and delivers an explosion of aroma, taste, texture, and color. A tadka is done either at the start of the cooking process to flavor the fat or at the end to create a spice garnish (added just before serving). “What happens in a tadka is that the taste of every spice that you put in intensifies,” Madhur says. “And what you get as a result is that intensified taste in the dal itself.”

Aloo Gosht (Pakistani Potato and Goat)

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp olive oil, canola oil, or ghee

1 cinnamon stick (4 inches), broken into pieces

8 green cardamom pods, crushed

1 large red onion, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced into half-moons

3 cloves garlic, crushed

1 tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger

3 lb goat meat, a mix of bone-in and boneless, cut into 1½-in pieces

¼ tsp ground turmeric

1 tbsp ground coriander

¼ to 1 tsp cayenne pepper

5 cups water, divided

6 egg-size potatoes (about 1 lb), peeled

2 tsp salt

1 tsp garam masala (see page 13)

• Goat is widely available at halal and specialty butchers, and for this recipe, Madhur advises buying a variety of cuts: shoulder, leg, shank, neck; some pieces should be bone-in. (If you'd like, you can substitute lamb for goat; purchase meat that comes from the animal's shoulder, and make sure there's at least some bone.)

As for her own method, Madhur likes to include a marrow bone. "There's one thing that we as children just fought for every time the meat came to the table," Madhur says. "Even for those who don't want to eat the marrow—the flavoring, the richness that it gives to the sauce...makes it the best-tasting thing in the world."

While it might seem quite special, think of this as an everyday curry. Serve it with chapati and dal, or with plain basmati rice.

METHOD

1. Heat the oil or ghee in a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the cinnamon, cardamom, and onion slices, and stir to coat. Sauté until the onions turn light brown at the edges, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger, and stir to combine.

2. After about 1 minute, add the goat meat, turmeric, coriander, and cayenne pepper to the pot. Stir until everything is well combined, then add 1 cup water. Bring the mix-

ture to a boil, then lower the heat to medium and cover. Cook for 10 minutes, or until most of the liquid has evaporated. Remove the lid, and continue cooking for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring to ensure that the meat is evenly browned.

3. Add the remaining 4 cups of water, and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat once more to low, cover, and cook for 1 hour.

4. Add the potatoes to the mixture, and season with salt. Stir to combine, and increase the heat to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook for 30 minutes, or until the meat is fall-apart tender and the potatoes are easily pierced with a paring knife.

5. Add the garam masala, and stir to combine. Remove from the heat and serve.

Lemony Chicken With Coriander (Cilantro)

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

1 cup minus 2 tbsp water, divided

2-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped

6 tbsp vegetable oil

2½ lb chicken: a combination of skinless thighs, breasts, and drumsticks

5 cloves garlic, finely chopped

7 oz fresh cilantro leaves (weight without roots and lower stems), roughly chopped

½ to 2 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

2 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp ground coriander

½ tsp ground turmeric

Salt to taste

2 tbsp lemon juice

● This chicken curry is bright and fresh and can be made with easy-to-find ingredients such as lemon juice, ginger, and fresh cilantro. “The lemon juice gives it a little bit of sourness,” Madhur says. “The green coriander [cilantro] gives a kind of freshness and so does the ginger, and that combination is exceedingly pleasant to eat.” Try serving it the same way Madhur does, with basmati rice (see page 52).

METHOD

1. Combine 4 tablespoons of water with the ginger in a food processor or blender. Pulse until a paste forms. Set aside.

2. Heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed, lidded sauté pan set over medium-high heat. Working in batches if necessary, brown the chicken pieces in an even layer, searing them on both sides until golden brown. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, transfer the finished pieces to a large bowl.

3. In the same pan and oil, fry the garlic. Once the pieces begin to brown, lower the heat slightly and add the ginger paste. Stir-fry for 1 minute, then add the cilantro, green chili, cayenne, cumin, coriander, and turmeric. Season with salt. Stir to combine, and cook for another minute.

4. Return the chicken and any juices to the cilantro-spice mixture. Add the remaining water and lemon juice. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and cover.

5. Cook for 15 minutes, then use tongs to flip each piece of chicken. Cover once more, and cook until the chicken is tender and cooked through, another 10 to 15 minutes. If you would like a thicker sauce, increase the heat and bring the pan to a rapid simmer until the sauce is reduced to your preference.





Baked Lamb Shami Kebabs

Serves 4 to 8



INGREDIENTS

2 medium onions, divided: 1 thinly sliced into rings and 1 finely chopped

2 to 3 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped

1 handful fresh mint leaves, chopped (about 5 tbsp), plus a few sprigs for garnish

1½ tbsp lemon juice

Salt to taste, plus 1 tsp

4 tbsp blanched, slivered almonds

2 tbsp white poppy seeds

1 lb ground lamb (twice-ground if possible)

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp garam masala (see page 13)

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

3 tbsp plain yogurt

1 tbsp unsalted butter, for greasing

● Kebabs are usually made one of two ways: shaping minced lamb into hamburger-like patties and then sautéing them in a frying pan, or molding the meat around a skewer and cooking it in a tandoor.

Here, Madhur bypasses those steps and presses the meat into a sheet pan before letting it marinate so that it's infused with spices—cumin, garam masala, and cayenne pepper among them. Once they're cooked, cut the kebabs into squares and serve them with cocktails or as part of a meal.

METHOD

1. Submerge the onion rings in a bowl of ice water. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and keep it in the refrigerator until ready to serve, for 1 to 5 hours.

2. In a separate bowl, combine the chopped onion, green chilies, mint, and lemon juice. Season with salt, and stir to combine. Set aside for at least 20 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.

3. Heat a small skillet or frying pan over medium-high heat. Toast the almonds until they are golden brown, shaking the pan or stirring occasionally, about 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer the toasted almonds to a plate or bowl, and let them cool.

4. Return the pan to medium heat, and toast the poppy seeds until they turn a shade darker, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the poppy seeds to a small bowl, and let them cool.

5. Using a clean coffee grinder or spice grinder, grind the almonds until they are a

fine powder, and empty the powder into a large bowl. Repeat with the poppy seeds, and add the powder to the almond powder. Add the lamb, cumin, garam masala, cayenne, yogurt, 1 teaspoon of salt, and the reserved onion-mint mixture. Use your hands or a wooden spoon to combine all of the ingredients together, kneading the mixture into a ball.

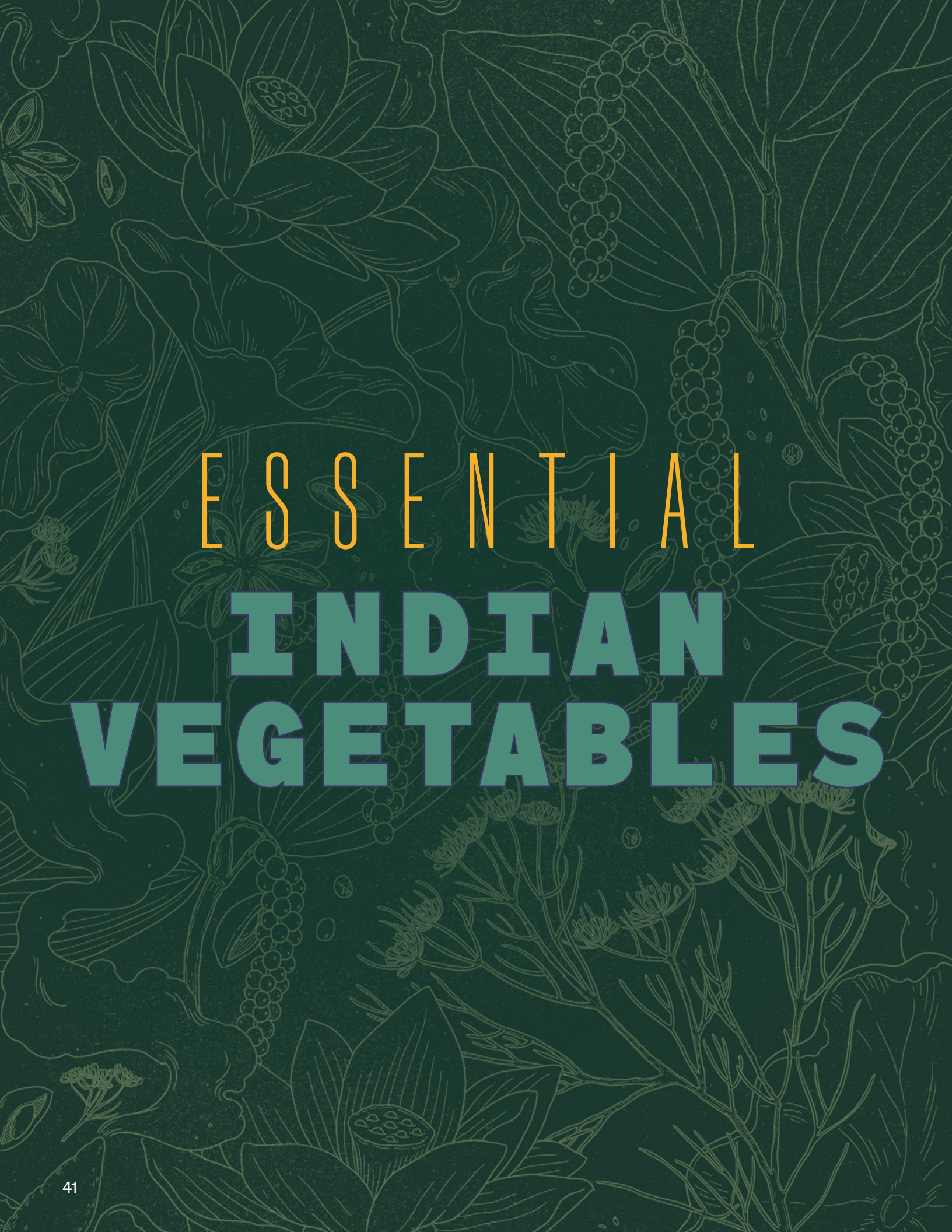
6. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

7. Grease the bottom and sides of an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with the butter. Transfer the meat to the center of the dish, then flatten it so that it reaches the edges. Pat it into an even layer with your fingers.

8. Place the baking dish in the oven and bake for 50 minutes. After 50 minutes, remove the dish and carefully drain off any liquid that has accumulated. Return the dish to the oven. Turn the oven to the broil setting, and grill until the top of the patty is crispy, about 1 minute.

9. Take the onion slices out of the refrigerator, drain them, and place them on a clean kitchen towel. Gather the edges of the towel together and twist to drain any excess water from the onions.

10. To serve, slice the lamb patty into 1-inch squares and arrange them on a platter or plate, then top with the chilled onions and the reserved sprigs of mint.



ESSENTIAL
INDIAN
VEGETABLES



“

**Whatever vegetables
you choose to eat,
remember that there are
dozens and dozens of ways
of making them.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY



Cauliflower and Potatoes With Cumin and Asafetida

Serves 3 to 4



INGREDIENTS

1 large red potato
1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground coriander
¼ tsp ground turmeric
¼ tsp red chili powder
1 tsp salt
3 tbsp peanut oil or olive oil
¼ tsp ground asafetida
½ tsp cumin seeds
1 medium head cauliflower, broken into florets (about 5¼ cups)
½ cup water

● “Cauliflower is not an Indian vegetable,” Madhur says. “It came from the West. And we eat a lot of it.” Indeed, this Punjabi curry is now a ubiquitous dish across India.

Madhur’s recipe makes for an easy and satisfying weeknight vegetarian meal. For the best results, be sure to use a red potato and cut the cauliflower into florets that are roughly the size of the diced potato to ensure uniform cooking.

METHOD

1. Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Once it’s boiling, cook the potato until it can be easily pierced with a paring knife, about 10 minutes. Drain and let the potato cool. When the potato is cool enough to handle, peel it and dice it into 1-inch cubes. You should have about 1¼ cups.

2. Combine the cumin, coriander, turmeric, chili powder, and salt in a small bowl. Set aside.

3. Warm the oil in a large nonstick frying pan or wok set over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the asafetida, quickly followed by the cumin seeds. Once the seeds begin to sizzle, add the cauliflower florets

and the diced potato. Stir to combine, and sauté until the vegetables begin to turn golden brown, about 6 to 8 minutes.

4. Add the spice mixture to the pan and toss. Add the water, and stir to combine. Cover the skillet or wok and reduce the heat to low. Cook until the cauliflower is tender but not falling apart, about 5 to 7 more minutes. Serve immediately.

Okra With Shallots

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

12 oz fresh okra pods, stems and tips removed

¼ cup olive oil, canola oil, or peanut oil

½ tsp cumin seeds

3 large shallots, halved lengthwise and sliced into thin half-moons (about ¾ cup)

1½ tsp ground coriander

¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes

½ tsp salt

1 tsp lemon juice

● According to Madhur, okra doesn't get its due: Many complain that the pods are slimy, but this is easily avoidable. When cooking with okra, make sure they're fresh and crisp, and keep them dry before cooking.

This recipe calls for cooking the okra with shallots. Small shallots are used widely in South Indian cuisine, but if you can't track down small shallots, Madhur advises using three bulbs of the larger European varieties available in many markets.

METHOD

1. Slice each okra on the bias into 3 to 4 pieces, and transfer the pieces to a medium bowl.

2. Warm the oil in a frying pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil begins to shimmer, add the cumin seeds. Let sizzle for a few seconds, then add the sliced okra. Stir to combine, and sauté for about 5 minutes.

3. Add the sliced shallots, and continue to fry until the shallots have picked up a little color, about 3 minutes.

4. Reduce the heat to low and add the coriander, red pepper flakes, and salt. Stir to incorporate, and stir-fry for 7 to 9 minutes, until the okra is crispy and tender. Add the lemon juice, and mix well to combine. Taste, and adjust the seasoning as preferred.





Eggplant Bharta

Serves 4 to 6



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large eggplant
- 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
- 1-inch piece ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 tbsp water
- 1 14-oz can whole tomatoes
- 5 tbsp vegetable oil
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- ½ fresh hot green chili, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped (optional)
- 1 tbsp roughly chopped Chinese parsley or cilantro, plus more for garnish
- ¾ to 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp garam masala (see page 13)

● When Madhur was a child, the cooking in her home was done over coal or wood (this predated gas ovens). During that time, some vegetables—like eggplant—were roasted in the ashes produced while other ingredients were cooking over the flame. “We used to bury the whole eggplant in the ashes till it roasted and got charred all over,” Madhur says. Once roasted, the charred skin of the eggplant was peeled off, and the smoky flesh was cooked even more with tomatoes and onions.

In the modern kitchen, the eggplant can be roasted in the oven or on a gas-powered stovetop until its skin is blackened and blistered, but the rest of Madhur’s delicious recipe remains the same.

METHOD

1. To roast the eggplant in the oven:

Preheat the oven to the broil setting, and grill the eggplant on a baking sheet until it is evenly charred on all sides.

2. To roast the eggplant on a gas-powered stovetop: First line the base of the burner with aluminum foil. Rest the eggplant stem side up on the stove grate, directly over a medium-low flame. Once the base is thoroughly blackened and scorched, rest the eggplant on its side. Repeat this process, rotating the eggplant so that it becomes evenly blackened and quite soft, using the stem to help guide it. If using tongs, take care not to grip the eggplant too hard. The entire roasting process takes 25 to 40 minutes.

3. Once the eggplant is roasted, place it on a plate and bring it to the sink. Run cool water over the eggplant, and remove the charred skin. Coarsely chop the peeled eggplant and place the flesh in a medium bowl. Set aside.

4. Combine the onion, ginger, garlic, and water in a blender or food processor, and purée into a paste. Remove 2 tomatoes from the can, coarsely chop them, and set them aside. Transfer the remaining tomatoes to an airtight container and freeze, or keep them in the refrigerator for another use.

5. Warm the oil in a skillet or sauté pan set over medium heat. Add the onion-ginger-garlic paste followed by the turmeric. Stir-fry the paste until it turns a shade darker, about 5 minutes. Add the green chili, if using, then add the Chinese parsley or cilantro. Cook for 1 more minute, then add the chopped tomatoes.

6. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 10 minutes, stirring every few minutes or so. Add the eggplant, and increase the heat to medium-low. Cook until all of the ingredients are well combined, another 10 to 15 minutes. Then season with salt, lemon juice, and garam masala.

7. Transfer the cooked bharta to a warm serving platter or plate, and garnish with the remaining parsley or cilantro.



THE MAGIC OF
RICE



**The characteristics of
each rice are different.
Basmati rice elongates.
It expands and becomes
longer. And a little bit of
rice becomes a lot of rice.
It's absolutely beautiful.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

Plain Basmati Rice

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

1 cup uncooked
basmati rice

- This is the simplest way to cook basmati rice, an aged, aromatic long-grain variety from the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. Washing the rice thoroughly to remove its surface starches and steaming it in the oven ensures that each grain is separate, a hallmark of well-cooked rice. In India, “we say that when you cook basmati rice, it should be like brothers,” Madhur says. “Close to each other, but not stuck to each other.”

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Place the rice in a large bowl, and cover it with a few inches of cold water. Swish your fingers through the rice to agitate it, then drain the water using a fine-mesh strainer. Rinse the rice 3 to 4 more times with fresh water. Submerge the rice in water a final time, and let it soak for 30 minutes.

3. After 30 minutes, drain the rice with a mesh strainer, and add it to a large, heavy ovenproof pot with a tight-fitting lid. Add 1½ cups of water to the pot, stir, and bring to a boil over medium heat.

4. Cover the pot with a layer of aluminum foil, and secure the lid. Place the pot in the oven, and cook for 30 minutes.

5. Remove the pot from the oven, and let the rice sit for 10 minutes before lifting the lid. Fluff the cooked rice with a fork or paddle, and serve.



We say that when you cook basmati rice, it should be like brothers: Close to each other, but not stuck to each other.

—MADHUR JAFFREY





Lamb Biryani

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

2 cups best-quality basmati rice

3 tbsp water, plus 12½ cups, divided

3 tbsp salt, divided

2 tbsp whole milk, warmed

1 tsp saffron threads

3 medium onions

4 cloves garlic

¾-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and chopped

4 tbsp blanched, slivered almonds, divided

13 tbsp vegetable oil, divided

3 tbsp golden raisins

1½ lb boneless lamb shoulder, diced into 1-inch cubes

1 cup plain yogurt

5 to 6 whole cloves

½ tsp whole black peppercorns

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 tsp coriander seeds

1 cinnamon stick

¼ heaping tsp fresh ground nutmeg

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

2 tbsp unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

3 hard-boiled eggs, peeled, at room temperature

● Biryani is a lavish and celebratory meal of rice, meat, and aromatic spices. Madhur likes to highlight the dish even further by adding something special: saffron.

“So what do you do with saffron? You just don’t plunk it in,” she says. “What I do—which I’ve learned to do from the Kashmiris—is roast it very slightly. Then put it in warm milk, and let it stay for three hours or so until the color comes out.”

The result? Shining white rice adorned with gorgeous golden hues from the saffron. “It is definitely a party dish,” Madhur adds. “When you make this, there is nothing else. This is the main event.”

METHOD

1. Place the rice in a large bowl, and cover it with a few inches of cold water. Swish your fingers through the rice to agitate it, then drain the water using a fine-mesh strainer. Rinse the rice 3 to 4 more times with fresh water. When the water runs relatively clear, drain the water, and add 7 cups fresh water and 1 tablespoon salt. Stir to combine, and let the rice soak for 3 hours.

2. Meanwhile, pour the warm milk into a tiny bowl. Set a small cast-iron pan over medium heat. When the pan is hot, add the saffron threads and gently stir until they turn a shade darker, in a matter of seconds. Once they’re toasted, transfer the threads to a paper towel or plate, and then crumble them into the warm milk. Steep the toasted saffron threads for 3 hours.

3. Slice 2 onions in half lengthwise, then slice them crosswise into thin half-moons and set aside. Roughly chop the remaining onion, and transfer it to a blender or food processor with the garlic cloves,

ginger, 2 tablespoons of the almonds, and 3 tablespoons of water. Blend or pulse until the mixture has the consistency of a thick paste.

4. In a nonstick pan set over medium-high heat, heat 6 tablespoons of the vegetable oil. Fry the sliced onions until they’re golden brown and crispy, then use a slotted spoon to transfer them to a paper towel-lined plate. Add the raisins to the same oil, and fry them until plump, about 10 seconds. Remove the raisins with a slotted spoon to a second paper towel-lined plate. Add the remaining almonds to the same oil, frying them until they’re golden brown. Remove the almonds from the oil, and place them alongside the raisins to cool.

5. Working in the same pan with the same oil, begin browning the cubes of lamb in batches. Add only a few pieces at a time, and sear each side evenly. Place the finished lamb in a medium bowl while you work.

6. Add 7 more tablespoons of oil to the pan. Reduce the heat to medium, and add the garlic-ginger mixture to the hot oil. Fry, stirring continuously, until the paste caramelizes slightly and turns a darker shade of medium brown. Add a splash of water as needed to prevent sticking.

7. Return the browned lamb and its juices to the pan. Add the yogurt 1 tablespoon at a time, stirring to combine after each addition. Season with 1¼ teaspoons of salt, and add ½ cup of water. Bring to a simmer. Cover the pan, reduce the heat to low, and continue to cook for 30 minutes.



8. Meanwhile, prepare the whole spices. Combine the cloves, black peppercorns, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a spice grinder or clean coffee grinder. Grind the spices to a fine powder.

9. After 30 minutes, add the spice blend and cayenne pepper to the pan. Stir well to combine. Cover the pan once more, and cook for another 30 minutes.

10. After 30 minutes, remove the lid and increase the heat to medium. Cook, stirring constantly, until the pan juices have reduced to about 1 cup.

11. Remove the pan from the heat, and spoon off any grease from the surface. Transfer the meat mixture to a heavy-bottomed, lidded casserole dish, and spread the meat to form an even layer. Cover the dish with the lid or a piece of aluminum foil to keep the lamb warm.

12. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Bring 12 cups of salted water to a boil in a large pot.

13. Drain and rinse the rice that had been soaking, then slowly add it to the boiling water. Cook the rice for 6 minutes at a rapid boil.

14. Drain the rice once more, uncover the casserole dish, and pile the rice on top of the meat in the shape of a hill. Use a chopstick to make a 1-inch opening down through the center of the rice, a bit like a volcano. Drizzle the saffron-infused milk over the sides of the rice in streaks, then rest the pieces of butter at even intervals around it. Sprinkle the meat and rice with 2 tablespoons of the fried onions.

15. Cover tightly with a layer of aluminum foil, then secure the lid. Bake for 1 hour.

16. Gently fold the rice and meat together, and transfer everything to a warmed serving platter. Slice the hard-boiled eggs into long quarters, and arrange them around the rice. Garnish the top with the golden raisins, almonds, and remaining onions.



INDIAN BREADS

A decorative background featuring intricate, light-colored patterns on a textured, parchment-like surface. A large, dark green double quote mark is positioned at the top center, with a dotted line extending from it to form a rectangular frame around the text.

“

Eating with the hands is such a sensual experience. Nothing is coming between you and the food. No utensils of any kind. It's your body and your food. It's the deepest kind of pleasure that you can get.

—MADHUR JAFFREY

Chapatis

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

1 cup ata (finely ground Indian whole wheat flour, such as Sujata Gold), plus extra for dusting

½ cup lukewarm water, plus 2 tbsp

● This ubiquitous griddled flatbread is a popular Indian food accompaniment. Like many breads in India, chapatis are made by combining unleavened stone-ground whole wheat flour, called ata (also spelled atta), with water. The ingredients may be minimal, but making chapatis is equal parts art and science. “The word *chapati* is actually quite interesting,” Madhur says. “It means ‘to slap.’ There is a little slapping—or a lot of slapping—in the making of a chapati.”

Chapatis cook very fast—make them right before you sit down to eat.

METHOD

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour and the lukewarm water. Knead the mixture with your hands until it comes together into a soft and pliable dough, about 10 to 15 minutes. Form the dough into a smooth ball, and transfer it to a clean bowl.

2. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth or kitchen towel, and let the dough rest at room temperature for at least 3 hours.

3. After 3 hours, turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface, and continue kneading the dough for a few more turns. Using a bench scraper or a sharp knife, divide the dough into 6 pieces, and roll each piece into smooth balls between your palms. Flatten each ball into a thick disc. Cover the discs with the kitchen towel, dampening it with a bit more cool water as needed.

4. Warm a medium cast-iron skillet, an Indian-style tava, a Mexican comal, or a crepe pan over medium heat. (Madhur likes to use her trusted nonstick, flat, heavy crepe pan—the same one she uses in class.)

5. Sprinkle a little more flour over your work surface if needed, and roll out the first chapati. (To prevent the remaining dough balls from drying out, keep them covered while you work.) Using a rolling pin, roll the dough into an even 6-inch round, flipping it multiple times and dusting with as little flour as possible.

6. Pass the chapati between your palms to tap away excess flour, then slap it onto the center of the prepared pan. Cook the chapati for 20 to 30 seconds without moving it: This is the moment when the bread will form its signature light brown spots.

7. Use a fine metal spatula to flip the chapati, and cook it for an additional 20 to 30 seconds on the second side. Flip it again, and gently press down on the chapati with a dry, wadded-up kitchen towel, rotating clockwise in between presses, for 10 to 20 seconds more. The chapati should puff up as the trapped steam is distributed through the applied pressure. (If you are using an electric stove and the chapati doesn't puff up, put an oven rack directly over a hot burner and put the cooked chapati on it until it swells, for 1 to 2 seconds.)

8. Transfer the finished chapati to a plate lined with a clean dish towel or tea towel, and fold the towel over the top of the chapati to keep it warm while you work.

9. Give the pan a quick wipe to clear away any charred flour, and repeat the cooking process with the remaining dough balls. Lower the heat while you roll out the dough, and increase it back to medium when you're ready to cook to prevent scorching.



Moong Dal Cheela (Pancake)

Serves 8 to 9



INGREDIENTS

1 cup hulled moong dal (split mung beans)

1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

¼ tsp ground turmeric

1 tsp salt

¾ cup water, plus 3 tbsp

1 to 3 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped

Fresh cilantro, finely chopped

2 large shallots: 1 finely chopped and 1 finely sliced into rings

6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil or peanut oil, for frying

½ cup julienned red peppers

Salt to taste

Pepper to taste

Red chili powder to taste (optional)

Assorted chutneys, pickles, and yogurt relishes, for serving

● “India has hundreds of pancakes,” Madhur says. “You can make them out of anything.” These flourless pancakes, made with moong dal, or mung beans, are a breakfast favorite in the North; they’re often served with yogurt relishes, chutneys, or pickles. They can also be used as a gluten-free alternative to chapatis.

If you like to plan ahead, make the batter the day before you’re ready to cook it. Keep it covered in the refrigerator; it can also be frozen.

METHOD

1. Rinse the moong dal, and transfer the beans to a large bowl. Cover them with cool water, and soak for 5 to 6 hours. After 5 to 6 hours, drain the beans and transfer them to a blender or food processor.

2. Add the ginger, garlic, turmeric, and salt to the blender with ¾ cup water. Blend until fine. Add the chilies and cilantro, and pulse 1 or 2 more times. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Add the chopped shallots and 3 tablespoons of water. Stir well to combine.

3. Warm 1 teaspoon of the oil in a nonstick pan set over medium-low heat. When the oil is hot, spoon about ⅓ cup of the moong dal mixture into the center of the frying pan. Cook for 1 to 2 seconds, then, using the underside of the measuring cup, gently spread the batter outward in a spiral motion. When it reaches 5 inches in diameter, use a

small rubber spatula to brush the remaining wet batter at the center toward the edges, taking care not to disturb the bottom.

4. When the pancake is about 7 to 8 inches across, spread 1 tablespoon each of the sliced shallots and julienned peppers on the surface, and press down on the shallots and peppers gently with the spatula so they adhere to the pancake. Drizzle a little oil around the rim and the top of the pancake. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and red chili powder, if using. Cover and cook until the underside of the pancake is golden brown and crispy, about 2 minutes.

5. Uncover the pan and flip the pancake. Cook uncovered for another minute. Transfer the pancake to a plate, and cover it with a second inverted plate to keep the pancake warm while you repeat the cooking process with the remaining batter.

6. Serve the pancakes with chutneys, pickles, and relishes of your choice.



Plain Square Paratha

Serves 8



INGREDIENTS

2 cups ata (finely ground Indian whole wheat flour, such as Sujata Gold), plus more for dusting

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp peanut oil or any other vegetable oil, plus 5 to 6 tbsp (use melted ghee, if you prefer)

1 cup lukewarm water

● Parathas use the same dough as chapatis and are also made on the griddle, but they are thicker, richer, and more substantial than chapatis. Plain parathas—“rather like flaky pastry, but not that complicated at all,” Madhur says—have oil or ghee (clarified butter) brushed between layers of folded dough. Parathas are savory and can be served with any meal. At breakfast, you might eat them alongside yogurt, whipped butter, or Indian pickle; at lunch or dinner, they are wonderful with vegetables and meats.

METHOD

1. Combine the ata and salt in a large bowl. Add 1 teaspoon of oil or ghee, and stir to incorporate. Slowly mix in the lukewarm water, kneading until the dough is soft and not too sticky. Lightly flour your work surface. Turn the dough out of the bowl, and knead it until it is smooth and pliable, about 10 minutes. Transfer the kneaded dough to a clean bowl, drizzle it with a bit of oil, and turn the dough to coat it. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and allow it to rest for 30 to 60 minutes. (Alternatively, if you're planning ahead, place the dough in the refrigerator overnight. Allow it to return to room temperature before using.)

2. After 30 to 60 minutes, turn out the dough and knead it a few more times. Using a bench scraper or a sharp knife, divide the dough into 6 equal portions. Form each portion into a ball, and place the balls on a plate. Cover the balls with a damp towel to prevent them from drying out.

3. Warm a 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. While it heats, place the remaining oil or ghee in a small bowl with a pastry brush, and have additional ata nearby for dusting as needed. Once the

surface of the skillet begins to smoke, remove the skillet from the heat.

4. Lightly flour your work surface, and remove 1 dough ball from beneath the damp towel. Flatten it slightly, then use a rolling pin to roll it out into a 6-inch round, dusting it with flour as you work and flipping the paratha frequently to prevent it from sticking.

5. Brush the surface of the paratha with oil or ghee, then fold the upper third of the round to the center. Brush it with oil or ghee again. Fold the bottom third so that it overlaps the first, and brush it with oil or ghee. Fold each end of the rectangular paratha toward the center to create a square shape; brush the folds with oil or ghee.

6. Press down lightly to flatten, and continue dusting, flipping, and rolling until the square is 6 inches across.

7. Return the pan to medium heat, and give it 1 minute to heat. Slap the paratha between your palms a few times to remove any excess flour, then slap it onto the center of the skillet.



8. Cook until bubbles appear on the surface, about 1 minute. Working quickly, use a spatula to flip the paratha (you should have a few nice golden brown spots), brush it with oil or ghee, and press down on the bubbles as they rise. Cook for just under 1 minute more, then flip and brush the paratha with more oil or ghee.

9. Cook the paratha for 10 seconds, then turn it 4 final times until it's golden brown, waiting 3 to 4 seconds between turns. Remove it from the skillet, and set it on a plate lined with a tea towel. Cover the paratha to keep it warm.

10. Reduce the heat to low, and repeat with the remaining dough. Be sure to lower the heat while you roll out each paratha to prevent the pan from becoming too hot. Wipe off any burnt excess flour with a cloth towel as needed.

11. To reheat, cover the parathas with foil and place them in an oven heated to 350°F for 10 minutes.

Aloo Paratha

Serves 6



• Potato parathas are a popular breakfast in North India, and they're often served with chutneys, yogurt relishes, and pickles (and, of course, coffee or sweet tea). Two things to consider as you prepare your parathas at home: heat level and moisture. Parathas are traditionally a spicy dish, and Madhur advises using skinny Indian green chilies, such as bird's eye, rather than serrano peppers or jalapeño peppers (bird's eye chilies are usually sold in most East Asian markets). To counteract any wetness, allow the potatoes to cool and dry completely before incorporating them into the bread.

INGREDIENTS

4 medium-size red potatoes (about 1½ lb)

For the paratha

2 cups ata (finely ground Indian whole wheat flour, such as Sujata Gold), plus more for dusting

¼ tsp salt

1 tsp peanut oil or any other oil, plus 5 to 6 tbsp (use melted ghee, if you prefer)

1 cup lukewarm water

For the stuffing

¼ to ½ tsp cayenne pepper or similar red chili powder

¼ tsp garam masala (see page 13)

2 tsp coarsely ground coriander seeds

1 tsp amchoor (dry mango powder), lumps crushed

1 to 3 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped

A generous handful of fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped

1 tsp salt



METHOD

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add the potatoes, and cook until they're easily pierced with a paring knife, about 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and set aside to cool. Once the potatoes are cool enough to handle, transfer them to the refrigerator to dry completely.

2. Combine the ata and salt in a large bowl. Add 1 teaspoon of oil or ghee, and stir to incorporate. Slowly mix in the lukewarm water, kneading until the dough is soft and not too sticky. Lightly flour your work surface. Turn the dough out of the bowl, and knead it until it is smooth and pliable, about 10 minutes. Transfer the kneaded dough to a clean bowl, drizzle it with a bit of oil, and turn the dough to coat it. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and allow it to rest for 30 to 60 minutes. (Alternatively, if you're planning ahead, place the dough in the refrigerator overnight. Allow it to return to room temperature before using.)

3. After 30 to 60 minutes, turn out the dough and knead it a few more times. Using a bench scraper or a sharp knife, divide the dough into 6 equal portions. Form each portion into a ball, and place the balls on a plate. Cover the balls with a damp towel to prevent them from drying out while you assemble the potato stuffing.

4. Peel the boiled potatoes, and place them in a medium bowl. Use your hands to break them up—aim for small pieces rather than the texture of mashed potatoes. Add the cayenne pepper, garam masala, coriander seeds, amchoor, chilies, and cilantro. Mix to combine.

5. Warm a 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. While it heats, place the remaining oil or ghee in a small bowl with a pastry brush, and have additional ata nearby for dusting as needed. Once the surface of the skillet begins to smoke, remove it from the heat.

6. Season the potatoes with the salt, and stir to combine. Divide the mixture into 6 equal portions, and roll them into balls.

7. Lightly flour your work surface, and remove 1 dough ball from beneath the damp towel. Flatten it slightly, then use a rolling pin to roll it out into a 5½- to 6-inch round. Brush the surface of the dough with a bit of the oil or ghee, and place a ball of the potato mixture in the center. Pinch the edges of the dough around the stuffing until it is completely contained. To secure, twist the folds at the top and flatten the entire paratha with your palm. Dust the paratha with flour and place it folds side down on your work surface.

8. Continue rolling out the paratha, flipping every few rolls and dusting with more flour as needed. Roll until the paratha is 7 to 7½ inches across.

9. Return the skillet to medium heat. Slap the paratha between your palms a few times to remove any excess flour, then slap it onto the center of the skillet.

10. Cook until bubbles appear on the surface, about 1 minute. Working quickly, use a spatula to flip the paratha (you should have a few nice brown spots), brush it with oil or ghee, and press down on the bubbles as they rise. Cook for just under 1 minute more, then flip, and brush with more oil or ghee.

11. Cook the paratha for 10 seconds, then turn it 4 final times, waiting 3 to 4 seconds between turns. Remove it from the skillet, and set it on a plate lined with a tea towel. Cover the paratha to keep it warm.

12. Reduce the heat to low and repeat with the remaining dough and stuffing. Be sure to lower the heat while you roll out each paratha to prevent the pan from becoming too hot. Wipe off any burnt excess flour with a cloth towel as needed.

13. To reheat, cover the parathas with foil and cook at 350°F for 10 minutes.





Besan Cheela (Pancake)

Serves 5 to 6



INGREDIENTS

1 cup chickpea flour
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp ground cumin
¼ tsp ground turmeric
¼ tsp garam masala (see page 13)
¼ tsp ground asafetida
1 cup water
1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and finely chopped (about 3 tbsp)
2 tbsp finely chopped shallot
1 fresh hot green chili, such as bird's eye, destemmed and finely chopped
About 3 tbsp of pure olive oil or peanut oil, divided

● Chickpeas are rich in protein and “used for hundreds of things in India,” Madhur says, including these crepes (which are often referred to as “Indian omelets” in western India).

In her version of chickpea pancakes, Madhur incorporates tomato, onions, and green chilies. The result is a light, flavorful pancake, soft in the middle with a crispy edge.

METHOD

1. Sift the chickpea flour, salt, cumin, turmeric, garam masala, and asafetida in a large mixing bowl. Add the water, and stir with a wooden spoon until the mixture transforms from a thick paste to a thin, pourable batter. Break up any lumps with the back of the spoon. Alternatively, purée all the ingredients in a blender, starting with the water, followed by the flour and spices, then transfer to a large bowl.

2. Add the tomato, shallot, and green chili to the batter, and mix well to combine. Let the mixture sit for 2 hours.

3. Heat ½ teaspoon oil in a 6-inch nonstick frying pan set over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, stir the batter a few times from the bottom of the bowl. Using a ladle or a measuring cup, scoop about ¼ cup batter into the center of the pan. Tilt the pan to help the batter run evenly to the edges of the pan, and fill in any holes or rips with a little extra batter. Cook until the underside is reddish brown and crispy, about 2 minutes.

4. Flip the pancake and cook for another 2 minutes, gently pressing down with the spatula. Transfer the cooked pancake to a large plate, and cover it with an inverted plate to keep it warm.

5. Repeat with the remaining batter, stirring from the bottom of the bowl before portioning out each serving.

6. To reheat, place the pancakes on a heat-proof plate and warm for 15 seconds in a microwave oven.



COMFORTING LEGUMES



“

**Dals have this very
soothing, gentle quality to
them that feels almost
like a blanket. Makes you
comfortable, soothes you.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

THE WORLD OF

DAL

Legumes are the ultimate comfort food

● **“INDIANS JUST LOVE** all their dals,” Madhur says. When she says dal, she’s using an umbrella term for a variety of protein-rich lentils, beans, and peas. They are essential to Indian cuisine; in one form or another, dal is eaten daily in many Indian homes.

“Each [dal] has its own character,” Madhur explains. Dals are so varied that it would be pointless to enumerate them all, but these are seven that Madhur often uses:

1. CHANA DAL

(SPLIT CHICKPEAS) are used to make a dal that has a nutty taste.

2. CHANA

(CHICKPEAS) are the star of Punjabi chole masala, or chickpeas stewed in an onion-tomato sauce.

3. MASOOR DAL

(RED LENTILS) are a striking salmon pink, but turn golden once cooked.

4. MOONG DAL

(MUNG BEANS) are used hulled or unhulled, split or whole in both savory and sweet dishes.

5. RAJMA

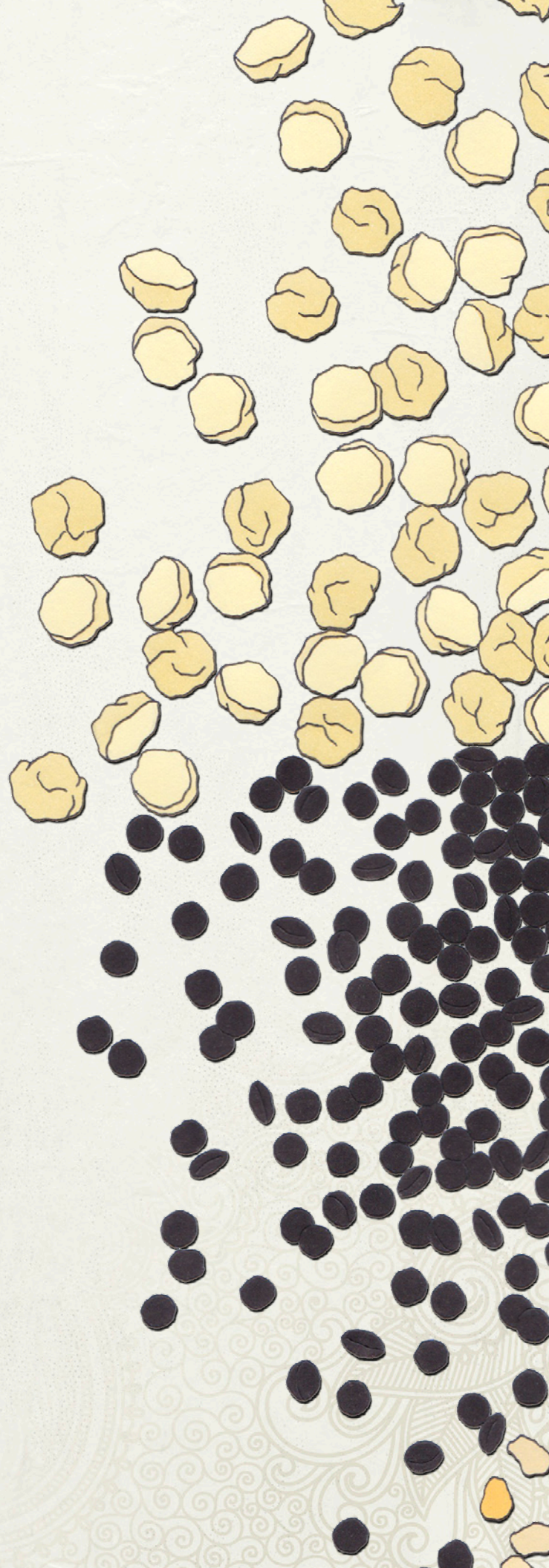
(KIDNEY BEANS) have an earthy flavor and a smooth texture once cooked.

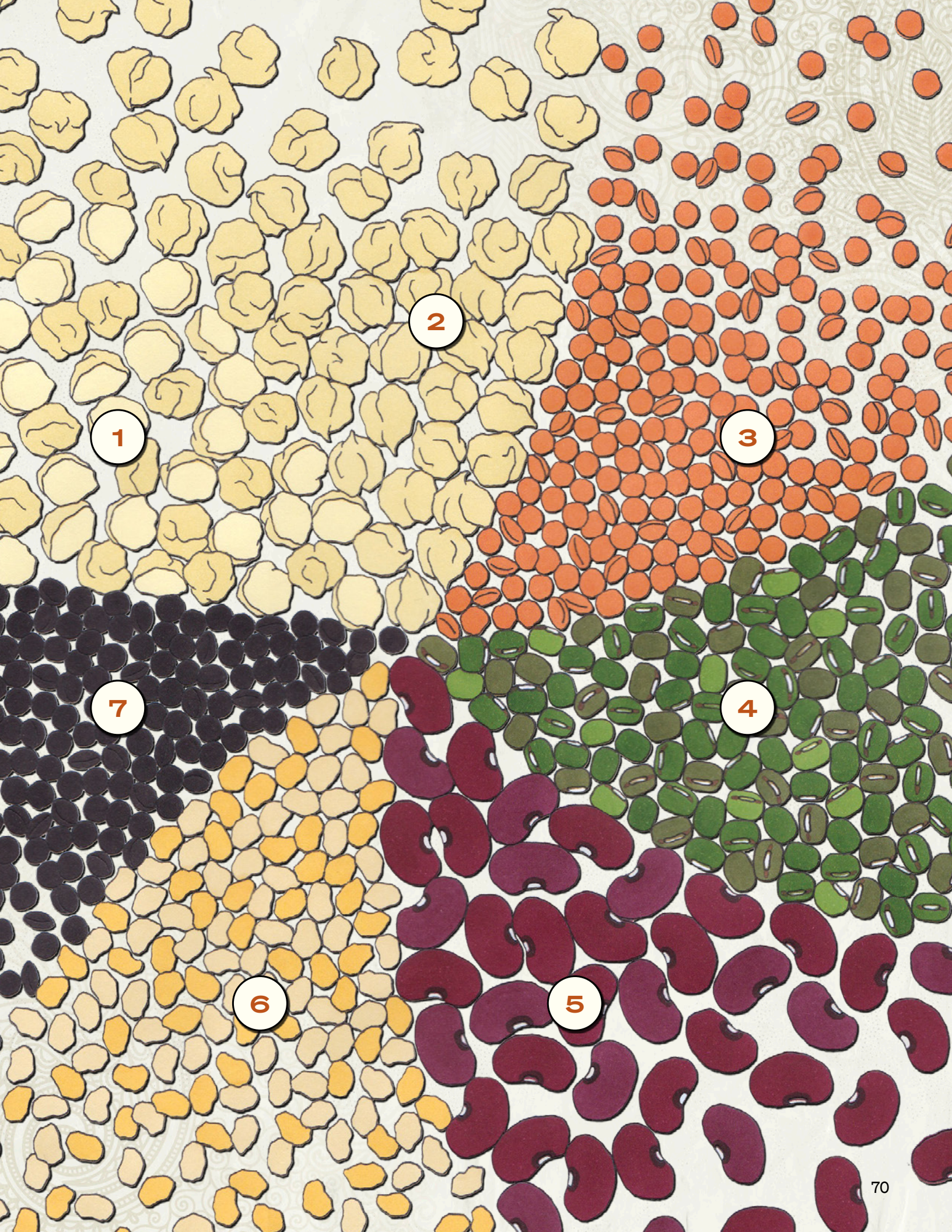
6. TOOVAR DAL

(HULLED & SPLIT YELLOW PIGEON PEAS) are used in South Indian sambar, a ubiquitous variety of tamarind-spiked, lentil-and-vegetable stew.

7. URAD DAL

(BLACK LENTILS) are also used hulled or unhulled, whole or split in a variety of preparations—like idli in the South and dal makhni in the North.





1

2

3

7

4

6

5



Moong Dal and Red Lentils With Browned Onions

Serves 6 to 8



INGREDIENTS

1 cup moong dal
(split mung beans)

1 cup masoor dal
(split red lentils)

6½ cups water

½ tsp ground turmeric

1¼ to 1½ tsp salt

4 tbsp oil or ghee

Pinch of ground
asafetida

1 tsp cumin seeds

3 to 5 dried hot red
chilies or ¼ to ½ tsp
red chili powder

1 small onion, sliced
into thin half-rings

• This dish uses two varieties of dal: moong (mung bean) and masoor (red lentils). The dals bring incredible texture and flavor, while the onions bring something slightly unique. “I’m putting them in because I like the taste of browned onions very much,” says Madhur. “The classic [tadka] would be just the asafetida and the cumin and the red chilies.” Serve with plain basmati rice (see page 52) or with vegetables and meat.

METHOD

1. Combine the moong dal and the masoor dal in a large bowl, and look for any small stones or debris. Wash the dal in several changes of cool water until the water is relatively clear.

2. Drain the dal using a fine-mesh strainer, and transfer it to a large, heavy-bottomed, lidded pot. Add the water, and bring it to a simmer over medium heat. Remove the froth that rises to the top with a skimmer. Lower the heat a bit, and add the turmeric. Stir to mix. Cover the pot partially, and turn the heat to low.

3. Cook for 40 to 50 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are tender. Season with salt, and leave the pot on very low heat while you temper the spices and fry the onions for the tadka.

4. Place a small skillet or frying pan over high heat, and add the oil or ghee. When the oil or ghee is hot, add the asafetida and cumin seeds. Once the seeds begin to sizzle (this will take only a few seconds), add the chilies and allow them to darken for a few seconds. Add the sliced onion, and fry until the slices are reddish brown and crispy.

5. Remove the lid of the pot with the cooked dal, and top with the hot oil, onion, and spices from the skillet. Cover the pot immediately to infuse the lentils with the aromas, and remove it from the heat. Stir well to incorporate all of the ingredients before serving.

Chickpeas in Simple Northern-Style

Serves 4 to 6



INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp olive oil or peanut oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp grated ginger

3 cloves garlic, crushed

1 to 3 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, finely chopped

2 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp ground cumin

¼ tsp ground turmeric

3 tbsp tomato paste

2 15-oz cans organic chickpeas, drained, soaking liquid reserved

1 tsp salt, plus more as needed

• This dish is excellent comfort food—the chickpeas are cooked slowly in an onion and tomato sauce enhanced by a mix of spices. These northern-style chickpeas are traditionally served with bhatura, deep-fried leavened bread from Punjab, for a rich and decadent meal. But any Indian bread, such as naan, will do.

Madhur likes serving her chickpeas in a tortilla garnished with raw onion, radish, and cucumber, but experiment on your own to see what you like best.

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a medium frying pan or nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the onions, and sauté them until they're softened and beginning to brown, about 7 to 8 minutes. Add the ginger, garlic, and chilies. Stir to combine, and continue to fry another few minutes until the onions are golden brown.

2. Add the coriander, cumin, and turmeric, and stir to incorporate. Add the tomato paste, and stir again.

3. Add the chickpeas, 2¼ cups of either the chickpea soaking liquid or water, and the salt. Stir until everything is well combined, then bring the mixture to a simmer. Reduce the heat and cover the frying pan, simmering on low for 30 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed. Serve immediately atop dressed lettuce leaves or in a tortilla.





PICKLE, CHUTNEY, & RAITA

EMBELLISH EVERY
MORSEL



“

**When we sit down to eat
an Indian meal, we have
our main dishes, which
may be cauliflower or a
meat dish or a potato dish.
But it's never enough. We
need our embellishments.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

Green Chutney

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

2 tsp lemon juice or lime juice

¾ cup finely chopped tomato

1 cup roughly chopped fresh mint leaves

1 cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro leaves

5 to 6 fresh hot green chilies, such as bird's eye, destemmed

½ tsp sugar

⅛ to ¼ tsp salt

● Herbaceous green chutney was traditionally made with only three ingredients—mint, cilantro, and green chilies—using a grinding stone. Here, Madhur includes finely chopped tomatoes, as modern food processors and blenders need moisture and heft to produce a chutney of the right consistency. A dollop goes well with kebabs, chaat, and more.

METHOD

1. In the bowl of a food processor or a blender, combine the lemon juice or lime juice, tomato, mint, cilantro, chilies, and

sugar. Blend until the mixture transforms into a smooth paste, scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula as needed.

2. Add the salt, and continue to pulse until the ingredients are well combined. Taste, and adjust the seasoning as preferred. Store in an airtight container, and refrigerate in between uses.





Tamarind Chutney

Serves 4 to 6



INGREDIENTS

- 1 brick seedless tamarind paste
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup hot water
- 6 tbsp sugar, or to taste
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp roasted cumin powder (see page 14)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp powdered ginger
- 1 heaping tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves

• Tamarind chutney—a condiment that’s all at once sweet, sour, and spicy—is traditionally made from dried tamarind that is sold in a brick, which is then soaked and strained into a paste. “We had a big tamarind tree in our house,” Madhur says. “As children, we used to love to eat them. Even now, I can’t resist. I just want to break this off and put it in my mouth because I love eating the tamarind just by itself.”

If you can’t find dried tamarind bricks in a market near you, ready-made paste is available online. Avoid purchasing tamarind concentrate; it has a different consistency and flavor.

METHOD

1. Break off about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup tamarind, or a piece about the size of a large tangerine. Break this piece into smaller pieces, and place the pieces in a medium bowl.

2. Cover the tamarind pieces with the hot water, and let them soak overnight. The next day, mash the tamarind pieces between your fingers to loosen them.

3. Set a coarse mesh strainer over a large bowl. Strain the tamarind pulp, pressing down with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon. Be sure to scrape up any excess paste that clings to the underside of the strainer.

4. Add the sugar, salt, cumin, cayenne pepper, ginger, and mint leaves. Stir well to combine. The finished chutney should have the consistency of a heavy, pourable cream; if the mixture is too thick, add a little water.

5. Store the tamarind chutney in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 7 days, or freeze for longer storage.



Punjabi-Style Sweet-and-Sour Mixed Vegetable Pickle

Makes 1½ quarts



INGREDIENTS

1 carrot, peeled and cut into 2-by-¼-inch matchsticks

1 to 2 turnips, peeled and diced into ¾-inch cubes

½ head of cauliflower, root end trimmed and cut into small florets

1 cup mustard oil

1 cup brown sugar, packed

⅔ cup distilled white vinegar

6 tbsp whole brown or yellow mustard seeds

4 to 5 cloves garlic, crushed (about 2 tbsp)

2 ½ tbsp grated ginger

2 tsp ground cayenne pepper

3 tbsp salt

● Indian pickles are often cured in the sun, on a windowsill or even outdoors, and require a bit of patience. But the wait is worth it.

This recipe uses brown sugar, mustard seeds, and mustard oil to transform carrots, turnips, and cauliflower into a versatile sweet-and-sour condiment that can be served with any meal.

METHOD

1. First, blanch the vegetables. Heat a large pot of water over medium-high heat. Once it's boiling, add the carrots, turnips, and cauliflower, and allow the pot to come to a boil once more. Remove it from the heat, and drain. Arrange the vegetables in a single layer on a large plate or sheet tray to cool.

2. In a small skillet, warm the mustard oil over medium heat until wisps of smoke can be seen coming off the surface. Remove the skillet from the heat, and allow it to come to room temperature.

3. Combine the brown sugar and vinegar in a large bowl, and stir to dissolve. Using a clean coffee grinder or spice grinder, grind the mustard seeds to a fine powder and add them to the bowl, along with the garlic, ginger, cayenne pepper, and salt.

4. Add the blanched vegetables to the spice mixture, and toss to coat. Transfer to a clean, wide-mouthed, 1½-quart glass jar with a noncorrosive lid. Top with the mustard oil, and seal. Give the jar a few good shakes to evenly disperse the oil.

5. Place the pickle jar in a sunny place for 10 to 15 days. (If you're using a spot outdoors, remember to bring the jar inside at night.) Shake the jar once or twice a day. Once the pickles are mature, keep them in the refrigerator between uses—they'll last for several months.

Pickled Green Chilies

Makes 1½ cups



INGREDIENTS

½ lb fresh hot green chilies (about 2 cups), such as bird's eye, Thai chilies, or serrano peppers

4 tbsp black mustard seeds

4 tsp salt

1 tsp cayenne powder or similar red chili powder

1-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped

2 tbsp mustard oil

3 tbsp lemon juice

● Madhur's family recipe for pickled green chilies combines three very fiery ingredients: hot green chilies, cayenne powder, and black mustard seeds. Each adds its own type of heat—the green chilies have a sharp bite and leave your tongue tingling; the cayenne powder lends radiant heat and provides color; the mustard seeds bring an unmistakable pungency. She adds just a tiny bit to anything she's eating.

METHOD

1. Using a damp kitchen towel, clean off each chili. Arrange the chilies in a single layer on a tray or large platter, then set the platter in a sunny spot to dry out the chilies.

Put on a pair of rubber gloves, and slice away the stems, then finely slice the chilies and place them in a mixing bowl. Remove your gloves, and thoroughly wash your knife and work surface.

2. Using a clean coffee grinder or a spice grinder, grind the mustard seeds into a fine powder. Add the powder to the bowl of sliced green chilies, followed by the salt, cayenne pepper, and ginger. Stir to combine.

3. Warm the mustard oil in a small saucepan or skillet over medium heat. Once the oil begins to smoke, remove the saucepan from the heat and set it aside so the oil cools completely. Once the oil cools to room temperature, add it to the bowl of chilies and mix well.

4. Transfer the mixture to a lidded glass jar large enough to hold 2 cups of liquid. Seal the jar and place it wherever it will be exposed to the most sunlight over the course of the day. Let it sit for 24 hours. Shake the jar every so often.

5. The next day, add the lemon juice. Seal the lid again, and shake the jar vigorously. For the next few days (3 to 4 in the summer, up to 7 in the winter), keep the sealed jar in a sunny spot as it matures. Once the chilies lose their color and the mixture tastes slightly sour, it's ready. Store in the refrigerator in between uses.





Cucumber Raita

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

5-inch cucumber

2 ½ cups full-fat plain yogurt

2 tbsp finely chopped fresh mint leaves

½ tsp cumin seeds, ground in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder (or ½ tsp ground cumin powder)

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

Salt and pepper to taste

● Raita is a yogurt-based condiment served with rice or meat in a variety of Indian cuisines, often to counterbalance a meal's spice and heat.

There are endless varieties of raita—"You could put almost anything in yogurt and have it as a relish," Madhur says—but her version incorporates grated cucumber and chopped mint for a refreshing and light concoction that can be paired with biryani or kebabs.

METHOD

1. Place a box grater in a medium bowl. Peel the cucumber, then finely grate it.

2. In a separate bowl, whisk the yogurt until it's smooth. Add the cucumber, mint, cumin, and cayenne pepper, and season the raita with salt and pepper. Mix. Keep it in the refrigerator, covered, until ready to use.



TEAS &
SNACKS



**I always loved food.
Everything that I was
eating as a child, I
somehow recorded and
remembered since the age
of one, or even when
I was born and I was
given a lick of honey by
my grandmother.**

—MADHUR JAFFREY

Masala Chai

Serves 8



INGREDIENTS

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground cloves

½ tsp ground cardamom
or 8 green cardamom
pods, crushed with a
mortar and pestle

½ tsp ground ginger

Freshly ground black
peppercorns

6 bags black tea, such
as Assam or Darjeeling

6 cups water

4 cups whole milk

8 tsp sugar

• Masala chai, a creamy, soothing South Asian beverage, is a heavenly combination of black tea, spices, sugar, and milk. The chai's spices are meant to be customized; Madhur's recipe calls for a mix of cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, ginger, and black pepper, but feel free to experiment with other spices from your own cabinet.

Masala chai is sweetened, and Madhur's recipe uses 1 teaspoon of sugar per cup; double that amount for an even sweeter concoction.

METHOD

1. In a large pot, combine the cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, ginger, about 10 good grinds of black pepper, the tea bags, and the water. Bring to a boil over medium heat.

2. Cover the pot, and reduce the heat to low. Simmer the chai for 10 minutes.

3. Remove the lid, and add the milk and sugar. Stir to combine, and bring the pot to a simmer again. Simmer for another minute or so.

4. Decant the tea through a fine-mesh strainer into a large teapot or individual cups. Serve immediately.

“

Make it the way I suggest the first few times. Then you say, 'I can do something else. I can do better.' Use what you are told to use first. Then improvise.

—MADHUR JAFFREY

”



Dahi Puri Chaat

Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

4 small red potatoes

½ cup plain yogurt or curd, plus 6 tbsp

6 pani puris (small puffed breads, store-bought)

½ cup cooked chickpeas

2 to 3 tbsp tamarind chutney (see page 80)

½ tsp roasted cumin powder (see page 14)

½ tsp red chili powder, plus more as needed

Salt to taste

1 tbsp green chutney (see page 79)

½ cup sev (squiggly chickpea noodles, the thinnest you can find, store-bought)

● With this recipe, Madhur takes you into what she calls “the special world of street food.” “Indian street food is chaat,” she says, “and *chaat* means ‘to lick.’ So anything that is so luscious that you’re licking your lips after [is chaat].” Dahi aloo puri chaat is a serving of boiled potatoes, chickpeas, and yogurt stuffed into small, deep-fried flatbreads (puri) and topped with a mouthwatering mix of spices and tamarind chutney.

This chaat offers a mix of textures and flavors rarely found in other cuisines—hot and cold, raw and cooked, spicy and soothing. It’s best to prepare dahi aloo puri à la minute; otherwise, they will become soggy.

METHOD

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the potatoes until they’re tender enough to be easily pierced with a paring knife, about 10 to 15 minutes, then drain them and set aside. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel and roughly chop them. Place them in a medium bowl.

2. In a separate bowl, whisk the yogurt until it is smooth and flowing.

3. Place the puris on a plate, and use your finger to gently poke a hole through the top layer. Place 3 or 4 pieces of potato into each puri, followed by 4 to 5 chickpeas. Spoon a bit of tamarind chutney over them, then top with about 1 tablespoon of the plain yogurt so that it just reaches the top of the puri.

4. Sprinkle each puri with cumin powder, red chili powder, and salt.

5. To finish, drizzle with green chutney and a generous sprinkle of sev. Serve immediately.



CREDITS

VARIOUS ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE AND IMAGES OF MADHUR JAFFREY

Courtesy Cohen Film Collection LLC; Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia; BBC Studios

ADDITIONAL FOOTAGE AND IMAGES

Courtesy Alamy; Dissolve Inc.; Getty Images; Pond5; Shutterstock

