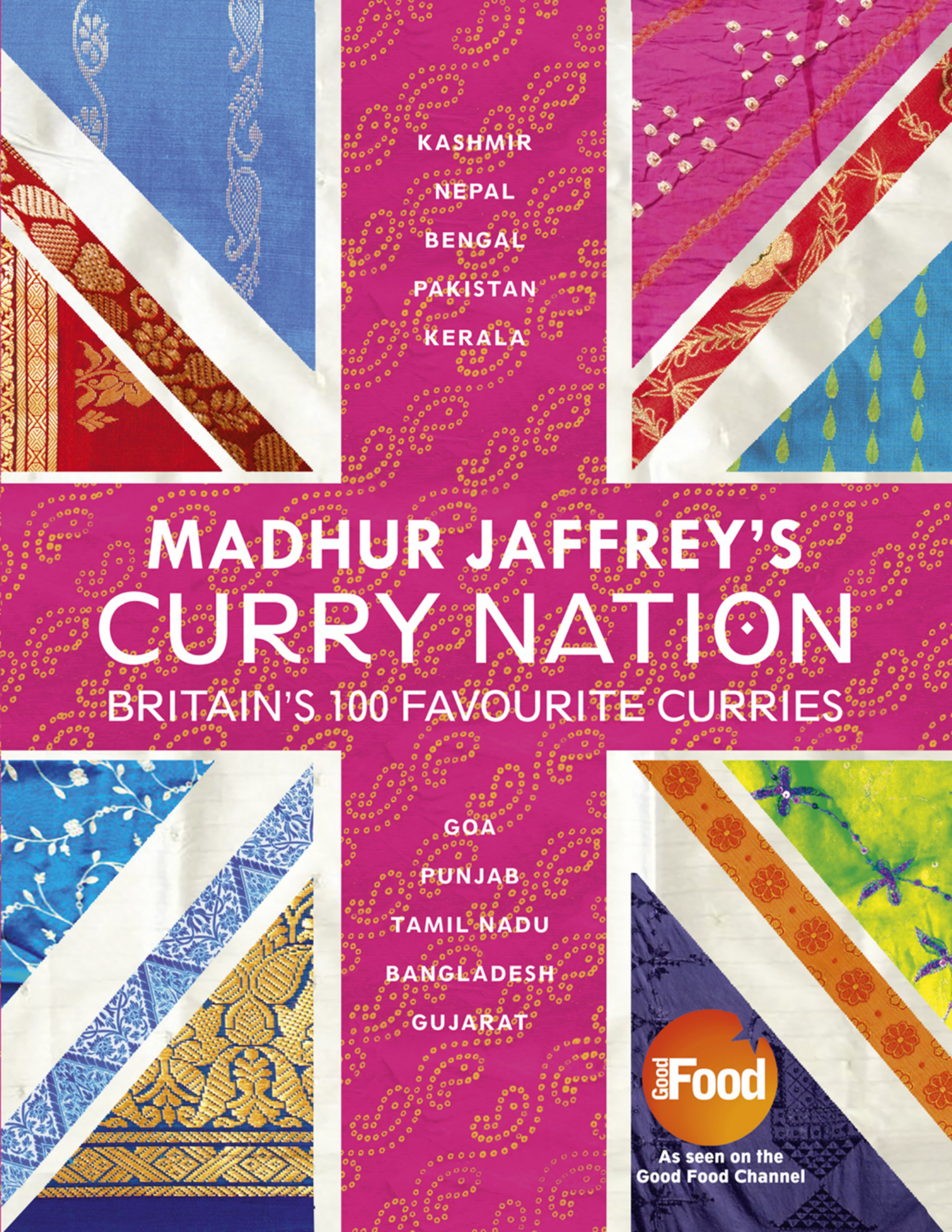

KASHMIR
NEPAL
BENGAL
PAKISTAN
KERALA
MADHUR JAFFREY'S
CURRY NATION
BRITAIN'S 100 FAVOURITE CURRIES
GOA
PUNJAB
TAMIL NADU
BANGLADESH
GUJARAT
Good Food
As seen on the
Good Food Channel

Contents

Copyright Page

List of Recipes

Coconut chutney

Coconut rice

Cucumber, onion and mint raita

Curried lamb’s kidneys

Dal fritters (dal vadas)

Dry okra (sookhi bhindi)

Dry coconut chutney

Egg curry

Fenugreek chicken (methi chicken)

Fire-roasted aubergines with garlic and tomatoes (bharta version I)

Fire-roasted aubergines with curry leaves (bharta version II)

Flatbreads stuffed with potatoes (aloo paratha)

Fish balls in masala (fish kofte)

Fish in a Bengali-style sauce (macher jhol)

Fresh coriander chutney

Fried puffed breads (bhatura/padora)

Fried savoury biscuits (matthias)

Goan pork vindaloo with potatoes

Goan prawn curry

Green masala minced chicken (hare masala ka chicken keema)

Green mango, coconut and cashew nut chutney

Ground greens in the Punjabi style (sarson ka saag)

Gujarati vegetable samosas

Gurkha-style pork curry with choi sum

Himalayan salad

Hot Punjabi king prawn curry

Kale cooked in an East African style (sukuma wiki)

Kashmiri-style rich lamb curry

Keralan fish curry

Lahore lamb biryani

Lamb browned in its sauce (lamb kosha)

Lamb meatball curry (kofte)

Lamb with okra (bhindi gosht)

Lamb with potatoes (aloo gosht)

Lamb with beetroot (chukandar gosht)

Lamb with whole spices (khara masala gosht)

Lemonade (nimbu pani)

Mango pickle

Mango salsa

Mango-flavoured yogurt drink (mango lassi)

Madhur’s chicken tikka masala

Madhur’s hot and sour aubergine

Masala chai

Minty beef meatballs (pudinay vale kofte)

Mixed black dal

Nagore chicken curry

Nepalese potato salad with a sesame dressing (aloo ko achar)

Onion bhajias

Pakistani lamb curry

Pakora, pea and potato sabzi

Pan-roasted whole chicken with carom seeds

Peas with fresh Indian cheese (matar paneer)

Plain yellow rice

Prawn curry with spinach

Potato and spinach curry

Potato and long bean curry

Potato filling for masala dosa

Potatoes with fresh fenugreek (butteta ne methi)

Prawn salad (prawn bharta)

Red lentil and chana dal

Rice cooked with chicken in an aromatic chicken broth (yakhni pullao)

Rice with peas (matar pullao)

Rice with toor dal and vegetables (khichri version I)

Rice and mung dal (khichri version II)

Roasted masala potatoes

Rogan josh shepherd’s pie

Salty spiced lassi (taaq)

Seared halibut with Bengal dopiyaza sauce

Semolina halva (sheera)

Southern savoury pancakes (dosa)

Spiced banana tarte Tatin

Spicy chickpeas, potatoes and beans in a tamarind sauce (chana aloo chaat)

Split pea and tomato sauce with noodles (dal dhokri)

Sprouted mung bean salad

Stuffed aubergines (vengan na raviaya)

Sweet mango curry

Sweet yellow rice (meetha pullao)

Sweet yogurt ‘custard’ with cardamom (bhapa doi)

Tangy rice pancakes (khatta puda)

Tangy, spicy fruit salad (fruit chaat)

Tamarind chutney

Tapioca pearl fritters (sabudana vadas)

Tapioca pearl and sweet potato fry (sabudana usal)

Tomato chutney

Whole roasted masala chicken

Yogurt sauce with broad beans (kadhi)

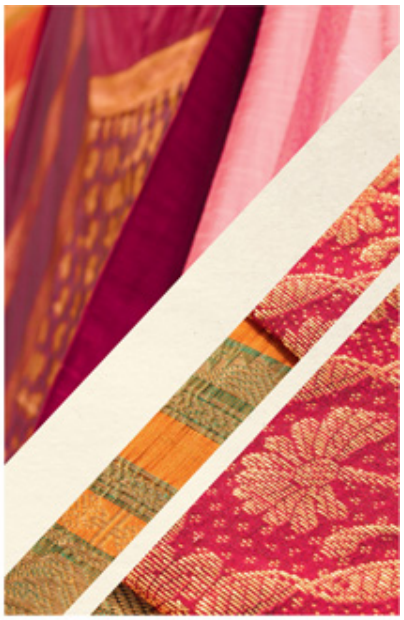
About the Book

Madhur Jaffrey presents the nation’s best curries

Travelling across the UK, Madhur visits local Indian and other South Asian communities. Through more than 100 authentic recipes Madhur shows how it’s possible to sample virtually the whole of Indian cuisine without ever leaving the British Isles.

About the Author

Madhur Jaffrey first introduced the West to the delights of Indian food almost 30 years ago and is the authority on Indian cooking. With several hit TV series to her name, she is returning to the UK to reflect on how attitudes have changed towards her native cuisine. Her bestselling titles include *Madhur Jaffrey's Ultimate Curry Bible* and *Curry Easy*.



Madhur Jaffrey's

CURRY NATION

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Madhur Jaffrey's

CURRY NATION

Britain's 100 Favourite Recipes

EBURY
PRESS

This book is dedicated to Britain,
the Curry Nation that welcomed me all those many years ago

Introduction

If Britain once colonised India, India has now returned the favour by watching spellbound as its food completely colonised Britain.

The Hindostanee Coffee House was the first Indian restaurant ever to open its doors to the British public in the early nineteenth century. Its owner, Dean Mahomed, had served under a British officer in India and followed him to Britain. The restaurant was situated on George Street, near London's trendy Portman Square, and offered diners the comforts of the hubble bubble pipe as well as 'Indian dishes, in the highest perfection, and allowed by the greatest epicures to be unequalled to any curries ever made in England'. It filed for bankruptcy within two short years, as it could not entice enough customers.

Shift the scene to 2012. Today there are about 10,000 Indian restaurants, employing 80,000 staff, making the industry worth £3 billion according to one source, and accounting for two-thirds of all those who dine out. 'Going for an Indian' has become a commonplace way to spend the evening. Indian food in supermarkets alone is worth well over £600 million. This includes ready-meals and spicy sandwiches. Each Thursday night, every branch of the popular Wetherspoons pub chain turns into a Curry Club, offering 'a curry and a pint' for a reasonable price. It sells more than 70,000 curry meals every Thursday, or 3.6 million annually.

How times have changed. The sad Hindostanee Coffee House, Britain’s first Indian restaurant, has now been recognised, some 200 years later, with the Mayor of Westminster unveiling a green plaque at the site. What is more, the country’s former favourite dish, fish and chips, has been replaced by chicken tikka masala, leading the former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, in a speech celebrating Britishness, to declare, ‘Chicken tikka masala is now a true British national dish, not only because it is the most popular, but because it is a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences. Chicken tikka is an Indian dish. The masala sauce was added to satisfy the desire of the British people to have their meat served in gravy.’ Wetherspoons sells 15,000 servings of it every single week, apart from all the other curries. Marks & Spencer sells 18 tonnes of it a week. If all the chicken tikka masala served in Britain in one year was piled up, it would form a tower 2,270 times taller than the Millennium Dome.

Very recently, I was sitting in front of a mirror in Leicester being made up for a film. The make-up artist, Meinir Jones-Lewis, told me a story in her lilting Welsh accent. A friend, a Welsh actor, was visiting her in London. He wanted to go to a proper Indian restaurant, which would surely be superior to anything in Cardiff. Once there, he called the waiter and ordered ‘a chicken vindaloo, ’alf and ’alf.’ The waiter looked puzzled. The actor repeated his request, slowly, more clearly and more loudly. The waiter still did not understand. The actor then turned to the seemingly dim-witted waiter and yelled, ‘Chicken vindaloo with ’alf rice and ’alf chips!’ That is how some people eat it in Wales.

Britain has, indeed, adapted Indian ‘curry’ to the way it wants it and this varies in different parts of the country. The

meaning of the word itself has changed and evolved, in keeping both with the demands of the British people and with the changing, complex relationship between Britain and India.

This relationship started in 1600 with the formation of the East India Company. By the start of the eighteenth century, trade with India was flourishing. As it expanded and East Indiamen spread out into the Indian heartland looking for spices, saltpetre (for gunpowder), salt and indigo, they had to eat, and the only fresh food to be had was Indian. Many took to it with a passion and, in letters home, often included recipes to set out a fuller picture of their exotic lives. Those who had profited mightily from their trading returned home early with their newly acquired wealth and, sometimes, Indian servants in tow and, now designated ‘nabobs’, settled down on newly bought country estates to eat curries and prosper. If they did not have Indian servants, they had their wives and mothers cook the curries for them. When in town, they could stop at some of the coffee houses that had started serving curry meals by the late eighteenth century and have their fill of curry there.

Curries began to appear in cookery books. The first such recipe is in Hannah Glasse’s *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, published in 1747. It is hardly a curry and more of a gravy, having just a bit of roasted coriander and black pepper in it to give it an exotic flavour and a spoonful of rice for thickening. It was as if the author could just about manage to dip a tiny part of one toe in the unknown, exotic waters. In a later edition, she removed the coriander and rather boldly added turmeric, for its colour, and some ginger! So, already, there were two types of curry in Britain, a robust, almost macho one, sometimes eaten with additional

chillies and swigs of Madeira, favoured by returning all-male members of the East India Company, and the ‘barely there’ version for the uninitiated.

During the nineteenth century, women began to join their men in India, running households with dozens of servants who cooked elaborate Indian meals on demand. Not a single dish was called ‘curry’ by the Indians. But the British, having already borrowed the Tamil word ‘kari’, meaning ‘sauce’, for the Indian food they ate and looking for an umbrella name to cover the variety laid out on the table, began to call all the dishes ‘curry’ and the entire meal ‘curry and rice’. And that seems to have stuck. Queen Victoria, who had Indian servants, seems to have enjoyed her curry, though on her menus its name was written out in French!

While curry eaters with fond memories of real Indian food remained, curry for the general public in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had progressed slowly from Hannah Glasse's minimalist recipe. During World War I, when thrift was called for, recipes appeared teaching housewives to perk up leftover roasts with sauces using curry powder, butter, milk, sour apples and lemon juice. Curry powder was king and could be added to soups, dressings, jellied veal and fish soufflés.

Veeraswamy's, the second major Indian restaurant to follow the Hindostanee Coffee House, opened in 1926 right off Piccadilly Circus. It was fashionable and immediately attracted royalty and nobility. By 1955, according to the *Good Food Guide*, there were nine Indian restaurants in London and four outside it.

I arrived as a student in 1957 and, soon after, witnessed the curry heavens opening up. In the 1960s and 1970s, near-identical Indian restaurants, each copying the other's menus word for word, began to spring up on every High Street. The curries were generalised, often coming from no specific region of India. Whether the restaurant owners were Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian, they all cooked the same things and all food was 'Indian'.

All the dishes served in these eateries were given standardised names and were assumed to have standardised amounts of heat. So korma began to represent the mildest, madras and vindaloo the hottest. In Britain, these distinctions are now firmly entrenched. I have heard a schoolboy boast, 'Oh I don't eat korma any more. I order bhuna or madras.' Indians, who make no such distinctions

and who cook local dishes according to their family's tastes, would not know what this boy was talking about. Britain was creating its own British curry world that could be grasped and understood. But the curry world was to move on even as part of it stood still.

The reason for the great surge in restaurants could well have been the surge in immigrants of South Asian descent. Immigration was much easier for members of the Commonwealth before 1962. The textile mills in West Yorkshire and Lancashire were booming in the 1950s, and many Pakistanis, Kashmiris from Mirpur, took advantage of the cheaper fares to find jobs there. Those who eventually became restaurateurs, such as Mumtaz Khan of Mumtaz in Bradford and Leeds, insisted on adding their own Kashmiri spice blend, basaar mix, to the foods they served.

Many of the Punjabis who came from India settled in London's Southall, opening eateries that served parathas (pan-fried flatbreads) stuffed with potatoes, lassis (yogurt drinks) and aloo gobi, a classic made from cauliflower and potatoes.

Bengali seamen, mainly from Sylhet, had been coming to Britain since the seventeenth century as lascars for the East India Company. With the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, thousands of them poured into Britain. Today almost 90 per cent of Indian restaurants in Britain are owned by Bangladeshis, with many of them forming the staff as well. Ironically, they rarely serve Bangladeshi food. They reserve dishes such as fish balls in masala for their home cooking.

The 1960s and 1970s brought another large group of Indian immigrants, those from Africa. Rising African nationalism and

resentment from leaders such as Idi Amin caused Indians who had settled in East Africa to flee. They had British passports and so most came to Britain, often in multi-generational family groups. Many Gujarati East Africans settled in the Midlands, often in the same small houses once owned by English mill workers. Today, a drive through Leicester could take you to Bobby's, which declares itself 'passionate about vegetarian food'. It serves Gujarati specialities, including one of my favourites, dal dhokri, a spicy split pea and tomato broth with fresh, handmade noodles. Drive south to Coventry to find Bimal Parmar's Gujarati-African food. Kukupaka is a delicious chicken with a coconut sauce, while mogo pili pili are cassava chips with African chilli sauce. None of these would be found in a traditional curry house.

In 1982, I made my first television series for the BBC. That same year the Bombay Brasserie opened just off Gloucester Road in London. I was cooking authentic, home-style Indian dishes for a British public that seemed very ready for them, and the Bombay Brasserie was serving very authentic regional Indian foods in an elegant club-like setting that was inviting and appealing. The public raised its arms and embraced us both.

The journey of Indian food into British hearts has been steady and almost inevitable. In this multi-cultural nation, curry today is as British as pork pies and is available any way it is desired. You want chips with curry sauce? Well, come with me to a little place in Glasgow where a Turkish manager takes some yellow powder out of a can proclaiming that the contents are 'made in China', pours it into a bucket, adds boiling water from an electric tea kettle, then mixes it all with a hand-held blender. This he pours over some fat chips.

Do you wish to see little seven-year-olds learn how to make a Kashmiri potato and spinach curry? There is an ambitious programme to bring inner-city children from Leeds and Bradford together with farming kids from the Yorkshire Dales, so they can get to know each other better. They live in bunk barns and, among other things, make each other's foods. They have already made a shepherd's pie. Now they are making a curry. Two heads, one dark, the other light, are bent over a chopping board, touching each other. Very slowly and earnestly, both children are slicing hot green chillies.

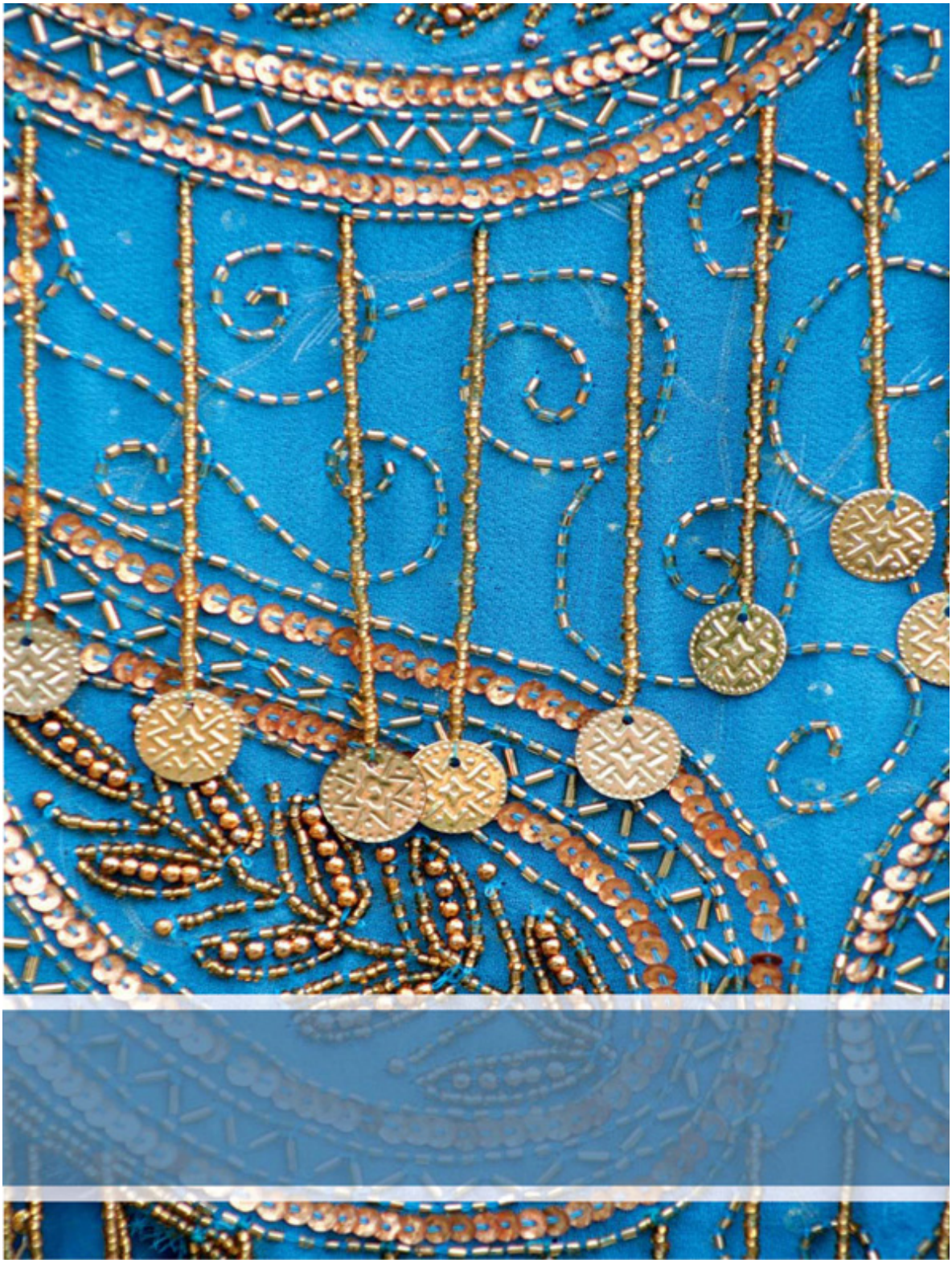
In the Curry Nation that is Britain today, you may go to a pub and order your chicken tikka masala with a pint and have the satisfaction of getting exactly what you expect, or you could go to the glamorous Cinnamon Kitchen in what was once a warehouse for the East India Company and see what modern fantasy of French techniques and Indian seasonings the chef, Vivek Singh, may conjure up for you. If you want the best of home-cooked Gujarati food, look up Gujarati Rasoi on the Internet. You will either find them in London's Borough, Broadway and Exmouth Markets or at their new restaurant.

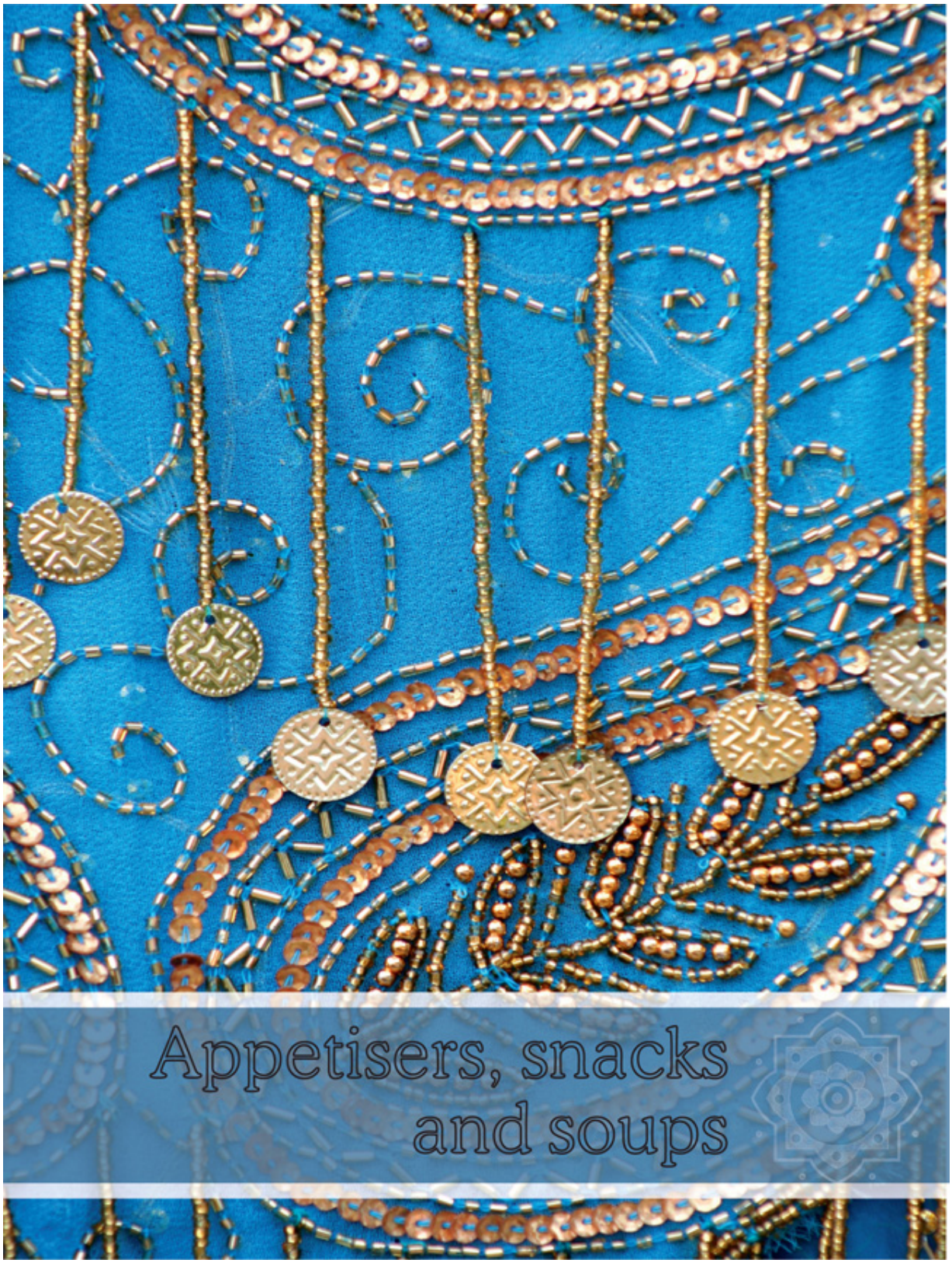
You wish to dine at home? Indian cookery books are in every book shop and there are plenty of Asian grocers to fill up your basket with their wares. Okra, curry leaves, green chillies, ginger, tamarind paste, chickpea flour? Almost every ingredient needed for South Asian cookery is now available, sometimes imported directly from India, even batter to make dosas (pancakes) and Alphonso mangoes, the best India has to offer.

Right now a talented Bangladeshi author may be in her kitchen preparing a mustardy prawn salad (bharta) for her husband, a young, energetic Pakistani wife may be washing

rice for an elaborate, saffron-inflected chicken biryani to entertain a dozen guests, a Gujarati gentleman from East Africa may be getting ready to cook up some dhora (chicken) kebabs, and a young, pretty former student may be boiling potatoes to make a delicious Nepalese potato salad with a sesame dressing for her Gurkha father.

It is the best of times for this Curry Nation. You may go out and enjoy any kind of curry your heart desires. If you wish to eat at home, remember: a lot of the recipes I have mentioned are in this book!





Appetisers, snacks and soups

Spicy chickpeas, potatoes and beans in a tamarind sauce (chana aloo chaat)

Sprouted mung bean salad

Fried savoury biscuits (matthias)

Onion bhajias

Tapioca pearl fritters (sabudana vadas)

Dal fritters (dal vadas)

Tapioca pearl and sweet potato fry (sabudana usal)

Gujarati vegetable samosas

Chicken kebabs (dhora kebabs)

Chilli mutton chops (chilli champ)

Split pea and tomato sauce with noodles (dal dhokri)

Spicy chickpeas, potatoes and beans in a tamarind sauce (chana aloo chaat)

Yesmien Bagh Ali, Skipton, Yorkshire

Serves 6

Chaats are popular Indian snack foods that tantalise the taste buds with their salty, sweet and sour combination of flavours. They may be made from fruit such as guavas and star fruit (for a fruit version, see here), from vegetables such as sweet potatoes and potatoes, from dumplings and crispy noodles, or from boiled dried chickpeas. Here, in a modern British twist, Yesmien finds a good use for canned kidney beans and chickpeas.

Yesmien uses a bottled, shop-bought tamarind sauce. see here to make your own Tamarind Chutney instead.

400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 large potato, boiled, peeled and chopped
150g (5½oz) pomegranate seeds (optional but lovely)
1 large red onion, halved and finely sliced
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
4 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons tamarind sauce, or to taste
6 teaspoons chaat masala (ideally Yesmien's Chaat Masala, see here)
4 tablespoons finely chopped coriander leaves
salt, to taste

lime wedges, to serve (optional)

Put all the ingredients except the coriander leaves, salt and lime wedges into a bowl and mix gently. Taste and add salt as required.

Sprinkle the coriander leaves over the top and serve with lime wedges, if you like.

Sprouted mung bean salad

Sarojini Gulhane, London

Serves 4

This is a typically Central and North Indian dish, eaten at breakfast, lunch or just as a snack. Sarojini's mother cooked it for her brothers and sister on school days, when school started at half past seven in the morning! I remember my mother making it for breakfast on Sundays.

All sprouts are much easier to digest than the beans themselves. Unlike East Asian sprouts with long tails, South Asian sprouts have tails that have barely emerged. You can buy them from South Asian grocers, or sprout them yourself over two days.

100g (3½oz) whole, green-skinned mung beans
4 teaspoons olive or sunflower oil
½ teaspoon mustard seeds
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ medium onion, finely chopped
½ hot green chilli
½ teaspoon finely grated or crushed garlic
½ teaspoon peeled, finely grated root ginger
¼ teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon turmeric
½–¾ teaspoon salt
1 medium tomato, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped coriander leaves