



COOKING CLASSES
AT SUR LA TABLE



EXPLORE INDIAN COOKING

WITH CHEF TAMICA B.

INDIAN INGREDIENTS GLOSSARY

The recipes in this packet feature many typical Indian ingredients which can be found in most well stocked grocery stores or Indian markets.

Ajwain seed: The small pod has an oval shape like caraway and cumin. The flavor of ajwain is strong and pungent, similar to a combination of anise and oregano.

Basmati rice: Basmati rice is long grain rice that is uniquely fragrant and delicious and features prominently in Indian, Pakistani, and Middle Eastern cuisine. It can be either white or brown.

Brown mustard seeds: In India the brown or black mustard seeds are preferred over the larger yellow variety found in Western cooking. They have a pleasing flavor and are known to aid digestion. Mustard seeds are used in India to flavor vegetables, dals, and pickles.

Cinnamon: The bark of the cinnamon tree is often used in Indian curries and pilafs to give the dish a rich flavor. With its warm, sweet flavor, cinnamon is one of the biggest workhorses on the spice shelf. Cooks often use it to flavor baked goods and drinks but cinnamon also works wonders in stews and sauces.

Cloves: Cloves are nail-shaped dried flower buds of the clove tree. They have a strong, pungent, sweet flavor. They are used in many meat dishes, marinades, pickles, and in garam masalas. Cloves are used whole or ground.

Coriander seeds: Coriander seeds are very light weight and have a mild flavor. Coriander seeds, like cumin, are used both as a whole spice and ground. Coriander is the seed of the plant and its leaves are called cilantro.

Cumin seeds: Cumin lends a sweet and mild flavor to dishes and is one of the main ingredients in the Indian spice blend called garam masala. Cumin can be used as a whole spice or ground. When toasted, whole cumin seeds release more aromas. As with any spice, toasting will greatly enhance the flavor.

Garam masala: Garam masala is a blend of spices that may include cloves, cardamom, cinnamon, black peppercorns, nutmeg, and mace. Garam means "hot"—not spicy hot, but hot in the sense that these spices are said to increase body temperature. Whole garam masala could include whole cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, cloves, cardamom (black or green), whole mace, and black peppercorns. Ground garam masala is often added at the end of cooking in small quantities so that the full aroma is not lost.

Ghee: Ghee is a traditional cooking fat from India. It is the result of heating butter on the stove and removing the impurities and milk solids that rise to the top in the form of foam and fall to the bottom like crumbs. What's left is a deliciously golden substance that has a flavor unique from butter, has a higher smoke point, and is easier on the digestion.

Green cardamom: Cardamom, either in pods or ground, is used throughout India to flavor curries, vegetables, rice, desserts, and the ever-famous masala chai. The pod itself is neutral in flavor; it is the brown sticky seeds inside the pod that give that wonderful flavor. The pods should be kept whole, as ground cardamom quickly loses flavor. When a recipe calls for ground cardamom, the best way is to crack open the pods using the back of a spoon and grind the small brown seeds inside with a mortar and pestle. When a recipe calls for whole cardamom, the pods can be cracked open slightly to help release the full flavor of the spice.

Turmeric: Turmeric looks similar to a ginger root but when cut has a gorgeous orange-yellow color. Turmeric is used in Indian dishes for the intense color as well as its mildly aromatic and earthy flavor. Turmeric is most commonly found dried and ground but is becoming more widely available in its fresh form.

CLASSIC BUTTER CHICKEN

Yield: 4 servings

Don't be intimidated by the list of ingredients; the recipe is actually quick and easy to make. Both the sauce and the marinated chicken can be prepared ahead of time and cooked at the last minute.

Chicken marinade:

*1/4 cup whole-milk plain yogurt
1 tablespoon minced ginger
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground mace
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/4 teaspoon chile powder
1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 pound skinless, boneless, chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces*

Tikka Masala sauce:

*1/4 cup ghee or coconut oil
1 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
1/2 cup tomato paste
12 green cardamom pods
1 teaspoon crushed red chile flakes
4 teaspoons ground turmeric
2 teaspoons garam masala
2 teaspoons ground coriander
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 (28-ounce) can crushed, peeled tomatoes
2 cups heavy whipping cream
Sea salt
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste*

- 1. To marinate chicken:* To a large bowl, add the yogurt, ginger, garlic, spices, and lemon juice; whisk to combine. Add the chicken and stir to coat completely. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or up to 8 hours.
- 2. To prepare tikka masala sauce:* To a large skillet, add the ghee and heat over medium-high heat until the ghee is hot and shimmering; add the onion and cook until browned, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the tomato paste, cardamom, and chile flakes and cook, stirring often, until the tomato paste darkens in color, about 2 minutes. Add the remaining spices and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
- 3. Add the tomatoes and marinated chicken to the sauce and bring to a boil, stirring often. Reduce heat to a simmer, scraping up the browned bits on the bottom of the pot. Stir in the cream and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through and sauce thickens, 20 to 25 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and lemon juice.*
- 4. To serve:* Transfer the chicken and sauce to a warmed serving dish.

CARDAMOM-SCENTED BASMATI RICE

Yield: 6 servings

Soaking the rice is optional but highly recommended to prevent the delicate rice from breaking during cooking. If you don't want whole spices in the final dish, make a sachet with cheesecloth and butcher's twine to hold the spices and remove it before serving.

1 ½ cups basmati rice
1 ½ tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil
½ teaspoon caraway seeds
4 green cardamom pods
1 bay leaf
½ cinnamon stick
2 whole cloves
2 cups water
Sea salt
Zest and juice of 1 lemon

- 1. To prepare rice for cooking:* Rinse basmati rice with cold water until water runs clear and is no longer cloudy. Soak rinsed rice for at least 30 minutes in cold water before proceeding with the next step.
- 2. Set a medium saucepan with tight fitting lid over medium-high heat. Add ghee and spices and toast until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add rice and 2 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook for 10 minutes or until tender. Fluff rice with a fork; taste and adjust seasoning with salt. Keep warm until serving. Right before serving, fold in lemon zest. Taste and adjust seasoning with lemon juice.*

COCONUT VEGETABLE CURRY WITH CASHEWS

Yield: 4 servings

This mild vegetable curry is quick to cook and a welcome vegetarian addition to an Indian meal. For ease, use the rim of a teaspoon to peel the ginger and chop it in a mini food processor.

*1/4 cup vegetable oil
2 shallots, thinly sliced
4 large garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh ginger
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 teaspoons ground coriander
1 tablespoon curry powder
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
2 carrots, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch thick rounds
1 red bell pepper, trimmed, cored and cut into 1/8-inch thick strips
1 cup green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
1 (13-ounce can) coconut milk
2 cups spinach leaves
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoon fresh lime juice, plus more to taste
1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves, for garnish
1/2 cup toasted cashew nuts, for garnish*

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add oil, swirling to coat, and then add shallots, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring constantly, until shallots are soft, 2 to 3 minutes. Add cumin, coriander, curry powder, cardamom, and cayenne and cook, stirring constantly, until spices are fragrant and toasted, 2 to 3 minutes, taking care not to burn them.

2. Add carrots, bell pepper strips, and green beans stirring to coat with oil and spices. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Add coconut milk, stirring well to combine. Partially cover skillet and simmer until vegetables are crisp-tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove lid and stir in the spinach; cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Add lime juice, taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

3. *To serve:* Place curry in a serving bowl and garnish with cilantro leaves and cashews.

HOMEMADE GARLIC NAAN

Yield: 8 naan

Naan, the classic Indian flatbread, is normally cooked in a tandoor, a clay oven that can generate temperatures in excess of 800°F. To simulate the high heat and humidity of a tandoor, we've cooked the bread on a pizza stone with the oven cranked up to 500°F.

3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 tablespoon sea salt
1/2 cup plain whole-milk yogurt, at room temperature
1/2 cup boiling water
1 teaspoon active dry yeast
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
1 large egg
1/2 cup unsalted butter or ghee, melted, divided
Vegetable oil, as needed
2 tablespoons minced garlic
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro

1. To a large bowl add flour and salt; whisk together and set aside.
2. To another small bowl, add yogurt and boiling water; whisk together. Add yeast, sugar, egg, and 1/4 cup melted butter, mixing well. Pour yogurt mixture into the flour and mix just until a soft and sticky dough forms.
3. Add a few tablespoons of vegetable oil to a small bowl and set next to work surface. Oil your hands and then knead the dough, either in the bowl or on an oiled surface, until smooth and elastic, oiling your fingers as needed to prevent sticking, 10 to 12 minutes. Cover dough with plastic wrap and let stand in a warm place for about 1 1/2 hours, or until doubled in size.
4. Warm remaining butter in a small saucepan over low heat. When butter is hot, remove from heat and add garlic; set aside.
5. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface and cut into 8 equal pieces using a bench scraper. Roll each piece of dough into a small, tight ball. Place dough balls on a lightly oiled baking sheet, spacing them about 1 inch apart. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and let rest about 15 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 500°F and place a pizza stone on the center rack.
7. Working with 2 balls at a time, place dough ball on a lightly floured work surface and roll into a 7-inch oval. Using a fork, prick the entire surface of the dough 10 to 12 times. Brush lightly with garlic butter. Transfer each oval to a piece of parchment, cut just larger than the dough. Using a pizza peel, slide parchment paper onto the pizza stone in the oven. Bake until bread is puffy and golden, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from oven using tongs, arrange on serving platter and cover with foil to keep warm. Repeat with remaining dough. Serve as part of an Indian meal dusted with chopped cilantro.