

# Family Cookbook



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# Family Cookbook

*dedicated to:*

*Chamma Sri Jain  
Chandra Prakash Jain*

*Without whom we would not be here!*

*special dedication to:*

*Hem Lata Jain*

*My dear, departed Naniji, without  
whom Kavita and I wouldn't have  
wanted to learn how to cook*

*special thanks to:*

*Swaran Jain  
Kusum Jain  
Kavita Jain  
Deepali Jain  
Harvind Samra  
Rohan Jain  
Nisha Jain*

*for their contributions of time, effort,  
and tastebuds into making this cookbook a reality!*



## Family Cookbook

<b>SPICES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INGREDIENTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TECHNIQUES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ESSENTIALS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
PANEER.....	11
RICE.....	13
CHONK.....	14
GREEN CHUTNEY.....	15
TOMATO SAUCE.....	16
<b>SNACKS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
TEA.....	18
BREAKFAST DAAL.....	19
DHOKLA.....	20
UPMA.....	22
SHROOM SANDWICH.....	23
<b>QUICK RECIPES.....</b>	<b>24</b>
BHINDI SABZI.....	25
DAAL.....	26
QUICK RAJMA CHAWAL.....	27
GHETTO KHEER.....	29
<b>MAIN DISHES.....</b>	<b>30</b>
MATTAR PANEER.....	31
JEERA RICE.....	33
BLACK CHHOLE / ALOO.....	34
SPINACH (SAAG).....	36
DAAL MAKHANI.....	38
KADI.....	40
JACKFRUIT.....	42
PAO BHAJI.....	44
REFRIED BEANS.....	46
<b>SWEETS.....</b>	<b>47</b>
MILK CAKE.....	48
CHUM CHUM.....	50

## Spices

Spices are the cornerstones of Indian cooking. There is an amazing array of them and even more ways to use them. Here, you'll find some of the most common spices and how they can be used.

**धनीया: (dhania)** This comes in two forms. The light brown powder (**coriander**) has a sweet smell and is quite fluffy. It adds a sweet, vaguely minty flavor to food. The fresh, leafy form (**cilantro**) is commonly used to garnish dishes. Cilantro has a strong, sweet minty flavor.

**लाल मिर्च: (lal mirch)** Comes in either powder (**cayenne**) or dried whole (**dried chillies**) form; imparts a strong heat to a dish, as well as a bright red color.

**हरी मिर्च: (hari mirch)** Fresh green hot peppers (jalapeño or otherwise); introduces a fresh, hot flavor to a dish. The seeds contain capsaicin oil, which is the source of the heat. Remove the seeds to reduce the impact of these peppers.

**हल्दी: (haldi)** Also called **turmeric**, this comes in either powder or whole root form; adds little flavor, but adds a strong yellow color to anything it touches (watch out for staining your kitchen and clothes with this). Haldi is known to be good for digestion and for bone growth.

**अमचूर, खटाई: (amchur, khataai)** Made from green mangoes, amchur adds a sour taste not unlike lemons and imparts a light brown color. In fact, it can be used almost interchangeably with fresh lemon. Replace ½ tsp amchur with 1 tsp lemon juice. Be careful using amchur- it is not especially healthy and the taste can easily overpower a dish.

**नमक: (namak)** Pure **table salt** or **sea salt** in either granular or rock form, is the ubiquitous flavor enhancer. Generally bad for the health, and is known to cause hypertension, but it tastes oh so good 😊

**चाट मसाला: (chaat masala)** This is one of those spices that defies translation. Chaat masala comes in either powdered or chunky form. In general it contains many ingredients like black salt, ginger powder, and amchur. It has a strong aroma and adds a strong, tangy flavor to anything it touches.

**राई: (raai) Mustard seeds** look like tiny black spheres. This spice usually pops violently when fried, and produces a subtle, mustard green-like flavor.

**जीरा: (jeera) Cumin seeds** look like little khaki-colored oblong seeds. When fried in oil, they impart an unmistakably Indian flavor to a dish. There's nothing like the smell of jeera and onions frying!

**अज्वायन: (ajwain)** Ajwain look similar to jeera, except they're round, rather than oblong. When fried in oil, they add a taste similar to jeera, except more pungent.

**कलौन्जी: (kalonji)** These tiny, teardrop-shaped black seeds are also known as **Nigella**. They impart a slight nutty flavor similar to sesame. They especially taste great sprinkled on fresh naan.

**हींग: (heeng)** A very strong and pungent spice also called **asafoetida**, heeng should be used in extreme moderation. It produces a strong savory flavor, even using the most miniscule amounts. Using too much causes severe heartburn.

**गरम मसाला: (garam masala)** This pungent, cinnamon-like spice can be had coarse or in powdered form. Garam masala imparts a strong, spicy heat with a lot of body to a dish.

**मेथी: (methi)** Also called **fenugreek**, these little yellow seeds pack a strongly bitter punch. These are essential for pickles or making kadi.

**काली ईलायची: (kalee elychee)** Black cardamoms are used as flavor enhancers in many spicy dishes. Add them while cooking, but remove them before serving, as they are not good to eat by themselves. They impart a subtle smoky flavor and are often left in the sauce of the dish they're used in.

**ईलायची: (elychee)** Green cardamoms are small green pods containing little black seeds that impart an aroma and flavor similar to eucalyptus or camphor. Though typically used in sweets and tea, it sometimes is used in spicy dishes or taken alone as a mouth freshener. Crush the pods and seeds for a bold taste, or simply crack the pods to reduce the impact.

**काला नमक: (kala namak)** Also known as **black salt**, this pinkish powder introduces a strong savory taste to anything it touches. This is the main ingredient in chaat masala. Beware- contains lots of sulfur!

## Ingredients

**बास्मती चावल:** (basmati chawal) There is only one kind of rice for Indian cooking, and basmati is it. **Basmati rice** is known for its long grains and its distinct aroma, which translates into a unique flavor. Any other rice will lack the aroma, consistency, and taste of basmati and will detract from the food you serve with it. Though expensive, this rice is very much worth it.

**आटा:** (atta) Finely ground **whole-wheat flour**. Buy it in bulk from the Indian store, but avoid the coarse whole-wheat flour from health food stores.

**बेसन:** (besan) **Gram flour** is made from ground kala chana and has a unique flavor that is often associated with fried foods.

# Techniques

*Cooking didn't come all that easily for me. I didn't really pick it up until I moved out of mom and dad's house to attend college ½ hour from home. After a few months of living on my own, I found that I missed eating real food- not the "food" they served in the dorms, not 4<sup>th</sup> rate pizza, and certainly not greasy fast food! Mom told me that if I wanted to eat her cooking, I'd have to learn to make it myself. So I did just that. On the weekends I would come home and watch Mom cook and take notes.*

*I lived in an apartment with my old buddy Harvind for 3 years in college. Over that time I slowly worked out not just recipes, but lots of different techniques. I found that having a recipe was only half the equation- if I didn't know how to be flexible; my food would not really turn out good. Fortunately enough, I had a captive audience of 3 friends who'd eat anything I put in front of them, no matter how it turned out. What you'll see below are a few things I've picked up over the years... Shashi Jain*

## ❖ If you're just starting out

- **Don't be afraid to experiment!** The recipes in this book are a good *starting point*. Change them to your own taste, and enjoy trying new things! If you're worried about things not turning out well, cook in small amounts while you experiment
- **Simple sabzis are EASY.** All you need is oil, a vegetable, and spices. See the recipe for simple bhindi in the main dish section. Replace the bhindi with the vegetable of your choice, and you'll be set!

## ❖ Spices

- Make a mixture of spices in the proportion given in the bhindi recipe below. This should be enough to make most recipes. Add 3 tsp of this powder to any sabzi. Very convenient.
- Food made with pre-mixed spices doesn't taste as good. Do yourself a favor and get a spice rack. Label each jar with the hindi and English names (see the spice section above) and learn how each spice changes the flavor of a dish. Impress your special guy/lady friends who come over as well!
- Cooking food is essentially a chemical process. Vegetables that cook in a more acidic environment tend to become more fibrous and leave an unpleasant texture. Adding spices to vegetables increases acidity or decreases it. When you cook add the acidic spices at the very end. This includes amchur, lemon juice, and chaat masala.
- Roast the masalas in oil to bring out the flavors. The masalas should turn one shade darker than they are in powdered form. Over-roasting to a black color means you need to start over.

- ❖ **Tomatoes** : Indian cooking requires large quantities of tomatoes. There are many shortcuts available to make buying and storing tomatoes easy:
  - Use vine-ripened tomatoes (dark red) for salad and the pale ones for cooking. The paler the tomato, the longer it's been sitting in a freezer truck, and the likelier that the consistency will be mushy.
  - Buy cans of crushed tomatoes or tomato puree. Avoid canned tomato *sauce*- it contains vinegar, which ruins the flavor of Indian food.
- ❖ **Roti and Naan**
  - Whole-wheat tortillas are a good substitute for rotis, in a pinch. Avoid the ones containing vinegar, as they will not taste right or have the right texture.
  - The same applies for naan- check the grocery store for greek-style pita bread, not pita pockets, made without vinegar. The real bread is exactly the same as naan!
  - Heat naan and roti to a slight crisp in a toaster oven and serve with butter.
- ❖ **Utensils and Measuring devices**
  - To cook, you'll need a good-sized frying pan, large, medium, and small pots with lids, a rice cooker, and a set of cooking spoons (which will come with 3-4 different mixing/serving tools). That's it! You can make almost anything you need with these items.
  - Invest in a glass measuring cup. You'll find it's easier to make many recipes in this book and recipes you'll find online as well!
  - The cap of a 2-liter soda bottle holds one tablespoon (tbsp). A teaspoon (tsp) is about ½ of that!
- ❖ **Storage**
  - Buy the largest cans of tomato puree or crushed tomatoes and freeze them in ice cube trays! Store the cubes for later use. Use 2-3 cubes in place of a medium sized tomato. These cubes will last for a year.
  - Freeze chutney in ice cube trays like tomato puree. When you want to eat chutney, thaw a few cubes in a microwave. Chutney stored this way lasts for a year and can be thawed and served in small portions.
  - Store excess atta, rice, and spices in the freezer (fridge is ok too). This keeps the bugs out and makes these items last at least twice as long. Ensure that when you use the atta that it's at room temperature, or anything you make will be very dry.
  - Make one big batch of food on the weekends and refrigerate in small containers. The food will stay good for 3-4 days. Reheat only the portion you'll be eating in a separate container. Never reheat and re-refrigerate.
- ❖ **Pressure cooking**
  - Bring the pressure cooker up to pressure on medium-high heat. When the whistle blows, turn the heat to medium.
  - NEVER open the pressure cooker until the pressure is down. You can seriously burn yourself if you do.

- If you don't have time to wait for the cooker to cool enough for the pressure to come down, run cold water over the cooker until the pressure comes down.

❖ **Miscellaneous**

- Cucumbers make a traditional salad for Indian meals. However, they contain a chemical that makes them bitter. You can remove this chemical by chopping off the end that was attached to the vine, scoring the exposed surfaces with a knife, and rubbing the pieces together. This action draws out the bitterness and produces whitish foam. Washing off the foam leaves the cucumber sweet!
- For daal, use 4:1 water to daal ratio whole daals (including chana and masoor/brown) and 3:1 for split daals (urad and moong, typically).
- When cooking rice, use a 2:1 water to rice ratio. This will result in dry, non-sticky rice with the nice consistency.

# Essentials

## Paneer

पनीर

(pūh-neer)

*by Shashi Jain*

*Every culture has a cheese. The English and the French are known for hundreds of different kinds of cheese, which they typically pair with wine and bread. The Chinese make cheese from soy beans- tofu. This recipe is the India's take on cheese. You're not Indian unless you like it.*

Ingredients:

1-gallon whole cow's milk

½ cup fresh lemon juice

salt to taste (optional)

Preparation:

1. Paneer is essentially the fat solids (curds) removed from milk. Curds are removed by rapidly boiling milk and adding a curdling agent, such as lemon juice. You can use different curdling agents to get different textures and tastes in your paneer. Be creative.
2. Bring milk to a rapid boil. If you wish, add salt at this time. Constantly stir the milk and scrape the bottom of the pot, or the milk will burn at the bottom and the paneer will be ruined.
3. Add the lemon juice when the milk is boiling. Watch the curds drop out of the liquid (whey). Stir to help it along. When the curds have dropped out fully, the whey will become translucent, watery, and quite yellow in color. Remove the pot from the burner.
4. Line a strainer with cheesecloth. Pour the curds into the strainer. The curds of paneer will be caught and the whey will drop out.
5. Tie the cheesecloth in a knot and hang from the kitchen faucet. Drain until desired consistency is achieved. Place curds on a flat plate and cover with plastic. Store in the fridge or freezer, or cut into cubes and fry.

Hints:

- You can use 2%, but it won't save fat and you'll just end up with less paneer.
- Buttermilk produces a thicker, creamier paneer with a smaller volume of milk, as there is much more fat in buttermilk than even in whole milk.
- Any citrus juice can be used as a curdling agent. Vinegar can also be used, but it produces a different tasting paneer.
- Cheesecloth can be purchased from any cooking store, and is also called "flour sack." Never use cheesecloth that's been dried with fabric softener, unless you like paneer that smells like a fresh summer breeze!
- Save the whey! Store it in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Using this water to make pooris and rotis will result in very soft, tasty bread.
- The amount of draining will affect the consistency of the paneer. The longer you drain the curds, the drier they will be. The more whey the curds retain, the creamier they will be and the easier they will be to fry!
- Paneer stored in the freezer will last up to 1 year.
- Salt adds a nice flavor to paneer, but only if it won't be used for sweets.

*makes a few cups of paneer*

## Rice

चावल

(chaa-wǔl)

*by Kusum Jain / Shashi Jain*

*Rice Cookers suck. Don't be lazy.*

Ingredients:

1 cup Basmati rice

½ tsp butter

2 cups water

2 cloves

pinch of salt

Preparation:

1. Rinse the rice and drain as much of the water as you can. Rinse it once, or you'll lose many of the nutrients.
2. Bring the water to a boil with the salt and butter over high heat.
3. Add the washed rice and cloves to the boiling water. The mixture will immediately stop boiling.
4. When the rice begins to boil, turn the heat to medium-low and cover the pot. Let simmer until the water is completely gone. You can usually hear when there is no water left, as the rice will stop gurgling.
5. Let the rice stand and cool for 5-7 minutes before serving. The rice should be fluffy and non-sticky.

*makes 2 cups of rice*

## Chonk

छोंक

(chönk)

*by Kusum Jain*

*Chonk is used to add flavor to a mild dish. This is kind of like Indian tobasco sauce; you use it to add as much heat as you want. Use this on daal and kadi, especially. This is the simple recipe for chonk that I grew up with. Be adventurous and try adding different things to it!*

Ingredients:

2-3 tbps Olive oil or vegetable oil

pinch of heeng

½ tsp jeera

½ tsp mirch

Preparation:

1. Heat the oil until it is hot and runny. Be careful not to burn the oil, or heat too much. If the oil is too hot, the remaining ingredients will be burned immediately.
2. Add the jeera and roast. Then add heeng and mirch in that order. Let the spices roast until they are slightly darkened, but not burned.
3. Remove from heat and serve or store.

*Makes 3 tbsp of chonk*

## Green Chutney

हरी चटनी

(ha-ree chüt-nee)

*by Kusum Jain*

*Chutney is India's version of mustard. Actually, since Indian culture is much older than English, maybe it should be the other way around. In any case, chutney is a generic word for a condiment that adds flavor. There are hundreds of different recipes and just as many flavors, but this is the most common. Use it with any recipe you find in here as a side or as an ingredient!*

Ingredients:

2 bunches of fresh cilantro, washed thoroughly

¼ bunch of fresh mint leaves OR 1 tsp dried mint leaves (podheena)

1 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp dhania

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp mirch (or 1 jalapeno pepper)

1/2 tsp amchur

1/4 tsp jeera

1/4 tsp black salt

Preparation:

1. Chop off the thick, hard stems of the cilantro.
2. Puree cilantro in blender. Start with a little water at the bottom, adding fresh cilantro slowly. Add mint, if desired. Use the crush/blend/chop cycle on the blender until the cilantro is completely liquefied.
3. Add all masalas and mix.
4. Taste and adjust masalas as needed.

*makes 3-4 cups of chutney*

## Tomato Sauce

टमाटर सॉस

(tō-mā-tar sōs)

*by Rohan Jain*

*...the white wine is optional!*

### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup onion, grated
- 1 tsp garlic, minced
- 1 ½ cups tomatoes - peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 1 ½ tsp tomato paste
  
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 ½ tbsp white wine (optional)
  
- 1 ½ tbsp fresh basil, minced
- ½ tsp dried oregano

### Preparation:

1. Steep (soak) the basil and oregano in white wine for 10 minutes.
2. In a skillet over medium-high heat, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. When onions are translucent, stir in tomatoes and tomato paste followed by the steeped herbs and wine. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Remove sauce from heat and puree in a blender or food processor.
4. Serve over pasta or use in an Italian recipe!

makes 1 ½ cups

# Snacks

## Tea

चाय

(chai)

*Indian Chai is special hot tea heavily laden with milk, spice, and sugar. Chai is the quintessential Indian drink. There are as many recipes for chai as there are uses. You'll see chai served before and after meals, to guests over snacks, in warm weather and cold.*

### Ingredients:

1 tsp Red Label tea (or similar)  
pinch of fresh ginger

½ cup water  
½ cup milk

½ tsp tea masala (optional)  
sugar

### Preparation:

1. Bring water to a boil over medium-high heat.
2. Add tea leaves and all spices. Bring to a boil again.
3. Add milk to the chai. Bring to a boil once again, then immediately remove from heat.
4. After the last boil, pour tea through a strainer into the serving cup. Add sugar to taste. Enjoy!

### Hints:

- Use the serving mug as a measuring cup; the recipe is scale-able to any size using this method.
- Chai masala can be made many different ways. Here's one way. Grind the following ingredients very finely and store in the refrigerator:
  - 10 pods of green elychee (or more to taste)
  - 4 cloves
  - 1 tsp ground cinnamon powder
  - ½ tsp fennel seeds (sauf)
  - ¼ tsp black pepper

*serves 1*

## Breakfast Daal

नाशता दाल

(naash-thaa daal)

*by Kusum Jain*

*Looking for something light and nutritious? Try breakfast daal. When I was growing up, if you observed fast, you broke your fast with this daal, with no mirch or lemon juice.*

### Ingredients:

1 cup moong daal, washed

1 ½ cup water  
lemon juice

½ tsp salt  
¼ tsp haldi  
pinch of mirch  
3 tbsp chonk

### Preparation:

1. Clean and wash daal. Ensure there are no rocks in it!
2. Put daal, water and masalas in pot and cook on medium heat. Cover and bring to a boil.
3. Once boiling, turn heat down to low.
4. When the daal boils, white foam will float to the top of the water. Remove this foam as it is produced.
5. Cook for 10 minutes, or until no water is left. You should be able to hear when the last of the water is gone.
6. Turn off heat, cover completely and allow the daal to sit and steam for 10 minutes.
7. Add chonk to daal and lemon juice to taste.

*serves 3-4 people*

## Dhokla

ढोकला

(dhōk-laa)

*by Kusum Jain*

*Swaran was always craving dhokla, especially the way Mina Bisarya (an old family friend) made it. So I learned how to make it. (Shashi's note: Mom rules).*

### Ingredients:

1 cup chana daal  
¼ cup toor daal  
2 tsp yogurt  
ginger, minced  
jalapeño peppers, minced

1 tsp oil

1 tsp salt  
2 tsp Eno

### Chonk:

1 tsp oil  
1 tsp raai  
½ tsp paprika  
½ tsp sesame seeds (optional)  
cilantro (optional)

### Preparation:

1. Soak daals for 4-5 hours in the morning.
2. Grind daals in a blender. Mix in oil, salt, yogurt. Cover and let sit overnight.
3. In the morning, mix ginger and peppers into the batter.
4. Mix Eno into batter.
  - a. Note: Add Eno just before cooking. You cannot leave the batter uncooked after adding Eno.
5. Steam the dhokla for 10-12 minutes. The dhokla is done when a fork inserted into the middle comes out clean.

- a. If you don't have a steamer, split the batter into two batches. Put the Eno into each batch immediately before performing the next step.
  - b. Pour each batch into a cake pan small enough to fit in my largest pot. Then put some water in the pot and place a bowl upside down in the water. Put the cake pan on top of the bowl, cover, and cook for 10-12 minutes on medium heat.
6. Prepare chonk. The recipe is the same as normal chonk, except the spices listed above are used.
  7. Pour chonk over the top of the dhokla and let cool.
  8. Cut dhokla into cubes and serve with mint chutney.

*serves a whole bunch of people ☺*

## Upma

उप्पा

(üp-maa)

*by Kusum Jain*

*If you want to stay away from fried food, try upma. I first learned how to make it when Shashi Kant was just a baby. He used to like it a lot, even with hot peppers in it!*

### Ingredients:

½ cup sooji (Cream of Wheat)

1 tbsp urad daal

1 small jalapeno pepper, chopped

2 cups water (4x sooji)

1 tbsp oil

1 tbsp lemon juice

½ tsp raai

½ tsp salt

### Preparation:

1. Heat oil on medium heat. When hot, add raai and cover. Note that frying raai will pop all over the place if you don't cover.
2. When raai starts roasting, take pan off the burner and add the pepper and daal. Put back on the burner.
3. When daal turns pinkish-brown, add the sooji and roast.
4. Stir often, so it cooks evenly, until it is pinkish in color.
5. Add the water and stir well. Cook covered over medium heat
6. Stir often. The upma will splatter, so be careful. When the upma stops splattering, uncover and keep stirring it until it's fairly thick.
7. Add lemon juice to taste.

*serves 3-4 people*

## Shroom Sandwich

कुकुरमुता सैंडविच

(kü-kür-mütha sänd-vich)

*by Nisha Jain*

*I made up this recipe. I really don't know how, but I did, and it usually gets really rich...*

### Ingredients:

1 can sliced mushrooms  
2 tbsp spaghetti sauce  
1 slice Kraft singles cheese  
1 slice of toast  
butter

### Preparation:

1. Put a few pieces of butter in a pan and put the heat on medium-low.
2. Put the mushrooms in the pan after the butter melts. Wait until the mushrooms turn lightly brown and then add spaghetti sauce.
3. Add 1 piece of cheese (it's better ripped up) and wait until melts.
4. Put it on toast and enjoy!

*serves 1*

## Quick Recipes

## Bhindi Sabzi

### भिन्डी सब्जी

(bhīn-dee sūb-jee)

*by Shashi Jain / Kusum Jain*

*This is as simple as it gets. Use any vegetable you want, but with the same concoction of spices. Don't worry if the spices turn black, as it will still taste ok.*

#### Ingredients:

1 lb. okra

olive or vegetable oil

1 tsp salt

1 tsp dhania

1 tsp jeera

½ tsp amchur

½ tsp mirch

¼ tsp chaat masala (optional)

¼ tsp haldi

pinch of heeng (optional)

#### Preparation:

1. Add 2 tbsp of oil to a small pan and heat on medium-high. When the oil is runny, add jeera and fry until golden brown. Skip that if your spices are all mixed together.
2. Add remaining spices and okra. Mix well enough to ensure okra is completely covered in spices.
3. Cook until okra is tender. Serve with roti or rice

*erves 2, depending on how hungry you are!*

## Daal

दाल

(daal)

*by Shashi Jain*

*We don't need no steenkin' pressure cooker!*

### Ingredients:

1 cup masoor daal

4 cups of water

1tbsp lemon juice

1 tsp salt

¼ tsp haldi

¼ cup chonk

### Preparation:

1. Place daal, water, salt, and haldi in a pressure cooker. Cover and bring the mixture to a boil on medium-low heat. Cook for 5 minutes after the whistle sounds.
  - a. If you don't have a pressure cooker, put the ingredients in a rice cooker instead! Just place the ingredients in, cover, and turn rice cooker on. The daal will cook in the same amount of time as rice.
2. When done pressure cooking (or when the rice cooker shuts off), the daal should be nice and soft, though without much liquid. Add 1-cup water and bring to a boil, if the daal is too thick or if it hasn't cooked all the way.
3. Make chonk as outlined below and add to the daal. Also add lemon juice.
4. Serve daal with rice or rotis. Sprinkle with chaat masala, if desired.

*serves 2*

## Quick Rajma Chawal

राज्मा चावल

(raaj-maa chaa-wūl)

*by Shashi Jain*

*I came up with this recipe on the fly due to lack of enough pots to cook both rajma and chawal separately. Oddly enough, it tasted pretty good and became something of a staple of mine in college!*

Ingredients:

1 cup Basmati rice, washed  
1-2 cans light red kidney beans, drained and washed  
1 medium-sized onion, chopped  
½ cup tomato sauce (or 2 tomato cubes)

3 cups water  
1tbsp lemon juice

1 tsp salt  
1 tsp dhania  
1 tsp jeera  
½ tsp amchur  
½ tsp mirch  
¼ tsp haldi  
¼ tsp garam masala  
pinch of heeng (optional)

Preparation:

1. Add enough oil to cover the bottom of a pan with a thin layer of oil. Heat the oil on high heat, until it becomes thin and runny. Don't let it burn.
2. Slowly add jeera seeds and fry until golden brown.
3. Add onions and fry until they are translucent.
4. Add the rice, tomato, spices, lemon juice, and water. Bring the mixture to a boil on medium-high heat. After it boils, turn to medium-low and let simmer.

## Family Cookbook

5. Check the rice periodically. When it becomes soft (it should happen within 10 minutes or so) add the kidney beans and cook for another 5-7 minutes or until the beans soften.
6. Set the mixture aside and let cool. What you'll end up with looks a lot like a well mixed, but saucy, rajma chawal- kind of like a jambalaya. Enjoy!

*serves 2*

## Ghetto Kheer

खीर

(kheer)

*by Shashi Jain*

*I discovered this one by accident. Don't ask me how. It tastes good 😊*

### Ingredients:

2 large scoops French vanilla ice cream  
1 cup rice, cooked  
pistachio (optional)

### Preparation:

1. Heat rice slightly in a microwave (10-15s should be enough)
2. Scoop out ice cream onto the rice. Allow it to melt enough that it is still semi-solid. Mix well. If you like warm kheer, then heat further.
3. Garnish with pistachio and enjoy!

*serves 1*

## Main Dishes

## Mattar Paneer

मटर पनीर

(müt-ür pū-neer)

by Shashi Jain

*It's funny what you'll do when you're craving Indian food and your mom is 1500 miles away. Here in Oregon, there's no such thing as a good Indian restaurant, and at the time, I didn't know any Indian aunts who'd cook dinner for me. In the end, I bit the bullet and tried it myself. What you see here is the result of about a half dozen attempts. By the way- Deepali won't make mattar paneer anymore, she always asks for this one ☺*

### Ingredients:

~3 cups frozen or fresh green peas  
~1 cup fresh paneer (or recently thawed), crumbled  
½ tsp ginger, minced (pickled or unpickled)  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 medium onion, minced  
½ cup tomato puree (or 3 tomato cubes)  
1-2 small jalapeño peppers, minced

olive oil

1 tsp dhania  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp jeera  
¾ tsp mirch  
½ tsp khataai  
¼ tsp haldi  
pinch of garam masala

### Preparation:

1. Add enough olive oil to cover the bottom of a large frying pan with a thin layer of oil. Heat the oil on high heat, until it becomes thin and runny. Don't let it burn.
2. Slowly add jeera seeds. If they sizzle, put them all in and fry until golden brown.

3. Add onions and garlic and fry until they are translucent. Add the ginger and the jalapeño and fry until everything is slightly brown and caramelized.
4. Add tomato sauce plus ½ cup water. Add all spices, *except khataai and garam masala*. Stir and heat until lightly boiling. This will form the basis for the sauce.
5. Add peas and paneer. I prefer to use plain paneer, neither fried nor cubed. This isn't the traditional way, but you do end up getting paneer in every bite!
6. Adjust to medium heat and cover. Add water to suit your tastes for sauce. If there is too much water, turn the heat slightly higher and boil the mixture with the cover off until the water is reduced.
7. When the peas have turned a drab green, add the khataai and mix thoroughly. Adjust the spices as necessary. Before serving add a pinch of garam masala on top.

*Makes enough for 2-4 people. Serve with warm naan or rice!*

## Jeera Rice

जीरा चावल

(jee-ra chaa-wal)

*by Shashi Jain*

*Deepali and I have a long-standing argument about how to do this. I believe that you fry the rice with the jeera and then add water. She thinks you add the water first and then the rice and butter. I'm right, so my version is here. I win!*

Ingredients:

1 cup Basmati rice

1 tbsp butter

2 cups water

2 tsp jeera

pinch of salt

Preparation:

1. Rinse the rice and drain as much of the water as you can.
2. Melt the butter in a pan. Fry the jeera until golden brown.
3. Add the rice and stir until all grains are coated with butter and jeera is mixed in.
4. Add water and salt and bring to a boil over high heat.
5. Turn the heat to medium-low and cover the pot. Let simmer until the water is completely gone. You can usually hear when there is no water left, as the rice will stop gurgling.

*makes 2 cups of rice*

## Black Chhole / Aloo

काले छोले / आलू

(kaa-ley cho-ley / a-loo)

*by Swaran Jain*

*I learned to make this dish from my father. He would cook food slowly and take his time with the preparation of masala. The wait was well worth it. He was not in favor of putting so much masala that you could not taste the beans- he wanted to strike the right balance. It was fun to watch him. He would gather up all the masala in a plate and put everything in water. He reasoned that the masala needed to be cooked well but not burned. When it is cooked with moisture, the masala has time to release its wonderful aroma and flavor. Slow cooking also unlocks the natural taste of the chana. When I make kala chhole, it reminds me of my dad.*

*In 1982, my mother was dying of cancer. She was staying with Devesh at the time we all received the call to come. I reached Connecticut on Saturday afternoon. Mom had not eaten anything for several days, as she could not do so. She spoke few words, but one was clear- she wanted me to make black aloo. This was her last meal. For me, this recipe is an emotional reminder of our parents, their legacy and their love for us.*

### Ingredients:

1 cup dry garbanzo beans (whole chana) OR  
4-5 large potatoes (aloo), cubed

1 tea bag

1 medium onion, minced

1 green chili, minced

1 inch of ginger, minced

2 cloves of garlic, minced (optional)

vegetable or olive oil

water

1 tsp dhania

1 tsp chaat masala

1 tsp jeera

1 tsp amchur

1 tsp salt

½ teaspoon black pepper  
pinch of heeng

Preparation:

1. Prepare the garbanzo beans
  - Soak 1 cup of garbanzo beans in water overnight.
  - Put garbanzos, 4 cups of water and ½ teaspoon of salt into a pressure cooker. Cook on high heat until whistle blows, and then turn heat down to medium. Cook for an additional 30 minutes and then set aside. *Do not strain the beans!*
2. Boil 2 cups of water. Once boiling, add 1 tea bag. Then add ½ teaspoon salt, dhania, chaat masala, heeng and black pepper. Remove the tea bag and set the brew aside.
3. Add enough vegetable oil to coat the bottom of a large pan. Heat the oil until it is thin and runny and then add jeera. Fry until golden brown and add onion, chillies, garlic and ginger. Fry until onion becomes caramelized.
4. Add the spiced tea water and cook until the mixture thickens. The oil will begin to separate from the mixture.
5. Add garbanzo beans, including water they were boiled in, to the pot. The water should only just cover the beans. Mix well. Once the water begins to boil, turn heat to low and let simmer for 30 minutes.
  - If making this recipe with aloo, add raw potatoes at this step and add fresh water to cover the potatoes. Skip step 1 if you're not using garbanzo beans.
6. Adjust salt as needed and add amchur before serving. To thicken the mixture, you can mash some of the beans and/or aloo.
7. Serve with warm naan or rice, and freshly cut onion and lemon.

Hints:

- Add potatoes (aloo) to add a different flavor to this dish, or replace garbanzos with potatoes entirely. Skip step 1 for the latter case.
- Instead of using tea to brew the spices, add 2 tbsp of green chutney for a spicier flavor.
- Skip the first step if you're using canned garbanzo beans. Use plain water in place of the water used to boil the dry beans in step 6.

*Serves 3-4 people*

## Spinach (Saag)

पालक साग

(paa-lük saag)

*by Kusum Jain*

*My mom used to make saag and makki ki roti during winter. In those days makki ki roti and saag with spoon full of ghee and some gud or shakkar (brown sugar) was quite a treat.*

### Ingredients:

1 bunch of fresh spinach  
1 bunch of fresh mustard  
1/3 cup moong daal  
2 tablespoons of besan

1 tsp lemon juice  
olive or vegetable oil

1 ½ tsp dhania  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp haldi  
½ tsp mirch  
½ tsp jeera  
pinch of heeng

### Preparation:

1. Soak moong daal overnight, if using whole moong daal. If you are using split moong daal, then you do not need to soak the daal
2. Clean and wash spinach and mustard. Once the spinach and mustard are clean, chop.
3. Put spinach, mustard greens, moong daal, salt and around 1 cup of water in a pressure cooker. Pressure cook on high heat for 5 minutes after the whistle blows. Allow the pot to cool.
4. Once the pressure cooker has cooled down, and the pressure is down, open the pressure cooker and let contents cool for a little bit.
5. Puree contents with a blender (traditional or hand work fine). The mixture doesn't have to be completely smooth – some lumps will give a nice texture.

6. Put the pureed contents back in a pot and cook over low heat. The mixture will splatter a lot, so be careful.
7. In a small bowl, mix the besan, water, haldi, dhania, and half of the mirch. Mix well until all lumps are removed. The mixture should have a consistency similar to pancake batter.
8. Add this mixture to the saag and let it cook on low heat for 20-30 minutes. If you don't have that much time, you can just cook it for 10-15 minutes.
  - a. You can also simmer the saag in a microwave with reduced heat (60%) for three 10 min. cycles, mixing well in between. Be sure to cover the pot.
9. Make chonk (see recipe above) and add to the saag.
10. Add lemon juice to taste. Serve with makki ki roti.

Hints:

- Use equal quantities of mustard and spinach leaves. If you are not sure you have equal quantities, use less mustard. Using more mustard than spinach will result in a very unpleasant taste.

*Serves 3-4 people*

## Daal Makhani

दाल मक्खनी

(daal mü-küh-nē)

*by Swaran Jain*

*I have always liked daal makhani. It has wonderful flavor, but I could not stand the amount of butter that it usually comes with. It hides the taste of the daal. I first had this black daal when I was in 7th grade at my Punjabi friend's house. They put too much ghee in it, but it was cooked on low heat all night on cow dung coals. My friends mother knew that I liked that daal so she would make it often for me.*

*I wanted to make this daal in such a way that its taste remains the same but without the overwhelming amount of fat. It took a long time and many attempts to perfect this recipe. It requires slow cooking overnight with occasional mixing. After 24 hours of slow cooking all the flavors become very apparent and constant mixing brings a creamy, buttery taste to it with out using so much butter. It goes well with fresh naan; in fact you'll want to learn how to make fresh naan for this dish.*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole urad daal
- ¼ cup red kidney beans
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 inch of ginger, minced
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced (optional)
- 1 jalapeño pepper, minced
  
- 6 cups of water
  
- 2 black cardamoms
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ajwain seeds
- ¼ tsp haldi
- 1/3 cup chonk

### Preparation:

1. Add all ingredients to a slow cooker, except chonk and amchur. and mix well.

2. Put cooker on low heat and cover, leaving a small opening for steam to escape. Let everything cook overnight.
3. In the morning, turn heat to high and cook for another 2-3 hours, until the daal is thick and creamy.
  - a. If you do not have time to cook this daal overnight, first pressure cook all the ingredients for 30 minutes after the first whistle blows and then slow-cook on high heat for 5-6 hours until it is thick and creamy.
4. Add chonk to daal and cook for another 10 minutes.
5. Add salt and amchur to taste.

*serves 4-5 people*

## Kadi

कढी

(kur-dhē)

*by Kusum Jain*

*Kadi is an all time favorite with all of us. The pakori's for the kadi are always finished before I have a chance to put them in the kadi. I always had and still have to make twice as many pakori's as needed. The smell of kadi/chawal makes all of us hungry at any time of the day!*

### Ingredients:

#### Kadi

1 cup of yogurt  
1 serving spoon of besan

2 tablespoons oil  
water  
lemon juice (optional)

1 tsp salt  
¼ tsp methi seeds  
¼ tsp haldi  
¼ tsp mirch  
amchur (optional)  
pinch of heeng

#### Pakoris

2 serving spoons of besan

oil for deep frying  
water

¼ tsp baking powder  
salt  
mirch

Preparation:

1. Prepare pakoris.
  - a. Add enough water to the pakori besan to make a thick paste.
  - b. Stir in the baking powder and salt, and mirch to taste.
  - c. Heat the oil for frying. Add a small bit of the batter to determine when the oil is hot enough. The batter should boil rapidly as soon as it enters the oil.
  - d. Fry the batter, one teaspoon full at a time to make pakoris. Fry until golden brown. Set the pakoris on a paper towel to let excess oil drain.
  - e. (*Optional*) Set aside the dry pakoris in a pot of water to soften.
2. Mix yogurt and besan together. Add water until the mixture has the consistency of pancake batter.
3. Heat the oil in a large pot. When the oil is runny, add heeng, methi seeds, haldi, mirch, and salt.
4. Once everything is roasted, add ½ cup of water and the yogurt/besan mixture.
5. Stir constantly until the mixture boils. Once the mixture boils, turn heat down to medium-low and let the mixture cook for 30 minutes. Continue stirring mixture constantly.
6. You will need to add a lot of water to keep the mixture from becoming too thick. Besan soaks up a lot of water.
7. Once cooking is complete, taste for sourness. If the kadi is not sour enough, add lemon juice or amchur to taste.
8. Add pakoris to kadi and serve over rice!

Hints:

- You can make this recipe using buttermilk instead of yogurt. Replace the yogurt with 1 ½ cup buttermilk. This makes a thinner, less creamy kadi.

*serves 3-4 people*

## Jackfruit

कटहल

(kū-t-hūl)

*by Swaran Jain*

*My mother would make jackfruit sabzi in the summertime. It was available fresh in India at that time. I remember loving the seeds, as they are very sweet and savory. Mom would make it without garlic or onion. In the late 70's I ate this sabzi with onion and garlic at Shobha's place (Kusum's younger sister). It was so tasty that I tried making it myself by cooking it slowly and striking the balance with masalas and the taste of jackfruit. Since it is not possible to get this sabzi fresh in this country, one can only use canned, but it is always a tasty treat. Try it with any paratha or freshly baked naan.*

### Ingredients:

1 can of jackfruit (drained and washed)  
1 medium onion, minced  
1 jalapeño pepper, minced  
1 large tomato, chopped  
1 tsp ginger, minced (optional)

vegetable or olive oil

1 tsp jeera  
1 tsp dhania  
½ tsp mirch  
salt  
amchur

### Preparation:

1. Add enough vegetable oil to coat the bottom of a large pan. Heat oil on medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the jeera and roast it.
2. Add onion, pepper, and ginger. Fry until the onions are golden brown. Add dhania and mirch and roast.
3. Add tomatoes. Mix well and cook for about five minutes. Mash the tomatoes as they are cooking.

## Family Cookbook

4. Add in the jackfruit. Mix well and turn heat down to low.
5. Cover and cook until tender (approximately 20 minutes).
6. Add salt and amchur to taste.

*serves 3-4 people*

## Pao Bhaji

पाव भाजी

(pow bhaa-jee)

*by Deepali Jain*

*Pao Bhaji was something we ate on special occasions, and only then by special request. In spite of the heart-attack inducing amount of butter, pao bhaji is one of the tastiest foods to come out of India. Think desi sloppy joes!*

### Ingredients:

2 lbs mixed vegetables

2 big potatoes

1 big onion

2-3 cloves of garlic (optional)

lots of buns, your choice

1 stick of butter

2-3 cups tomato puree

lemon juice

2 tsp pao bhaji masala

1 ½ tsp dhania

¾ tsp mirch

1 tsp jeera

1 tsp salt

¼ tsp haldi

¼ tsp garam masala

### Preparation:

1. Wash and chop all the vegetables.
2. Add the vegetables to a pressure cooker with ¼ cup of water and cook until whistle blows twice. Set the vegetables aside for 10 minutes, to let them steam and cool down.
3. In a large pot, melt half of the butter. Fry jeera until golden brown. Add the onions and garlic (optional) and fry until translucent.

4. Add all spices and the tomato puree. Heat the mixture until the melted butter starts collecting on the sides.
5. Add the cooked vegetables to the sauce and mash them extremely well in the pot. The mixture should look uniformly brown and form a light paste. Add water to thin the mixture as needed and allow it to cook on medium-high heat for 5 minutes.
6. Add lemon juice and butter to taste. Adjust spices as necessary.
7. Serve hot with buttered buns and sliced onions pickled in lemon juice.

*serves a whole lotta people*

## Refried Beans

मैक्सिकन दाल

(mä-xī-cūn daal)

*by Shashi Jain*

*Ok, so there is no good translation into Hindi for this, but I sure had fun making one up! Mexican food has always been a favorite for our family. Chances are that if you've visited Kansas, you've eaten at Taco Johns. That place was the inspiration for this recipe, which developed over 25 years into what you see here. Though it's a simple recipe for "refried" beans, you can use it in almost any Mexican dish- tacos, enchiladas, burritos, nachos, etc. The little bit of desi masala is what makes it special!*

### Ingredients:

3 cans of pinto beans (~4 cups)

1 medium onion, chopped

2-3 tbsp Pace or Old El Paso salsa

olive or vegetable oil

2 tbsp mexican spice mix (lawry's taco seasoning is good)

½ tsp ajwain

½ tsp garam masala

### Preparation:

1. Add enough vegetable oil to coat the bottom of a large pan. Heat oil on medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the ajwain and roast it.
2. Add onion and fry until it is caramelized.
3. Add beans, Mexican spice, and salsa. Stir for a minute. Using a hand blender, mash the beans into a paste, adding water as necessary.
4. Cook over medium-low heat for 5 minutes, or until the beans become slightly dark. Add garam masala and mix well.
5. Serve in tacos, burritos, enchiladas, taco salads, or nachos. Use salsa, lettuce, cheese, sour cream, olives, and onions to garnish. Also tastes good with a little tofu mixed in!

*serves 3-4*

# Sweets

## Milk Cake

कला कन्द

(kū-laa kũndh)

*by Kusum Jain*

*I learned how to make Milk Cake from Alka Rattan, an old family friend. What attracted me to this recipe is the time it took to cook and how delicious it is. I always wanted to find something new, as Swaran had a big sweet tooth (before diabetes).*

### Ingredients:

14 oz. Ricotta Cheese (part skim or whole)  
21 oz. Carnation dry milk  
7 oz. Sugar  
1 stick sweet butter

### Preparation:

1. Melt butter in a deep glass dish in the microwave oven. This takes about 1 minute at full power, depending on the microwave.
2. Add the ricotta cheese to the butter, mix well with a spoon, and microwave for 2 minutes at full power.
3. Add dry milk and sugar, mix with a spoon, and microwave for 3 minutes at full power. As the mixture begins to bubble up, take the dish out and mashed the mixture down with a potato masher or any other utensil that will work.
4. Repeat step 3 at least 3 more times. You will have to adjust cooking time based on how powerful your microwave is. WATCH for how high the milk cake bubbles- you'll know when to stop when it doesn't bubble very much and the color starts to change.
5. Put the mixture in a shallow corning ware dish and cook it twice more, at 2 minutes each. Check that the cake turns a pinkish color.
6. Let it cool and then cut into square or diamond shapes. Serve room temperature.

### Hints:

- Ricotta cheese comes in 14 oz. plastic containers. Use that container to measure out the dry milk and sugar. You'll need 1½ container of dry milk

and ½ container of sugar. If your ricotta doesn't come in these containers, just use these proportions:

- 2 parts ricotta
- 3 parts dry milk
- 1 part sugar
- Whole milk ricotta cheese requires less cooking time

*serves a few, depending on the sweet tooth*

## Chum Chum

चम चम

(chūm chūm)

*by Kusum Jain*

*Before Shashi Kant was born, Swaran broke many blenders trying to make ras gulla, ras malai, or chum chums. Thanks to the invention of the food processor, I can make all of these for him. Chum chum and ras malai are all time favorites of our friends here in Kansas and many times I am called on to make chum chums for large parties.*

Ingredients:

1 gallon whole milk  
3-4 fresh limes or lemons (squeezed)  
2 ½ cups sugar  
dry milk  
unsalted pistachio nuts, finely sliced

rose water (optional)  
5 cups water  
yellow and red food coloring

Preparation:

1. Make paneer using the recipe given above, using the milk and lime/lemon juice.
  - a. Hang the paneer in cheesecloth from the water faucet and let it drip. You may have to squeeze the water out by hand. Once water stops coming out, take out the paneer and let it cool for a few minutes.
  - b. Mash the paneer in a food processor using a steel blade. It should take 2-3 minutes.
  - c. Make oval shape patties about one inch long. Do not make them too big. Save 2-3 tbsp paneer for the garnish.
2. In a 4-quart pressure cooker make syrup using 2 cups of sugar and 4 cups of water. (In 6-quart pressure cooker use 3 cups sugar and 6 cups water). Bring the syrup to a boil over medium-high heat.
3. Add 3 drops of yellow and 2 drops of red food coloring.

4. Add 12 paneer patties to the boiling syrup. Cover the pressure cooker and put weight on it. Once the pressure starts building, turn heat to medium. Cook on medium heat for 3 minutes after the whistle blows one time.
5. Remove the pressure cooker from heat, put it in the sink, and let it sit for 1-2 minutes to cool off. Let cold water run on the cooker until all the pressure is down. Remove the weight from it, and carefully open the lid. Chum chum should have at least doubled in size. Remove the chum chums from the syrup and place into a container.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 for the remainder of the patties. When necessary, add more sugar and water (in the same 1:2 proportion) to the syrup.
7. When all patties are cooked, pour the leftover syrup over the chum chum. Add a few drops of rose water to the syrup, if desired.
8. Garnish
  - a. In a non-stick pan add some milk and the paneer set aside earlier.
  - b. Cooking on low heat, add some dry milk to the mixture and cook until it is smooth and dough-like.
  - c. Add some sugar (to taste) and let cool.
9. Serve cold- lay the chum chum pieces in a tray, add a small ball of the sweet garnish on top, and sprinkle with sliced pistachio. Enjoy!

Hints:

- A food processor is almost essential for this recipe. It is very efficient at tearing the paneer apart into something that is easily workable. In addition, it gives the paneer a pleasing texture.
- Chum chums have to cook in a lot of syrup and only a few at a time. If you try to cook in less syrup or too many pieces at one time they will not come out right. Yes, you will waste syrup at the end.
- The ideal color for chum chums is pink, but you can make them any color you want. Be creative!
- Chum chums can be made ahead of time and kept in the refrigerator for up to three weeks, if the temperature stays constant. You can also freeze and re-thaw, but the texture might change.

*makes about 40 pieces*