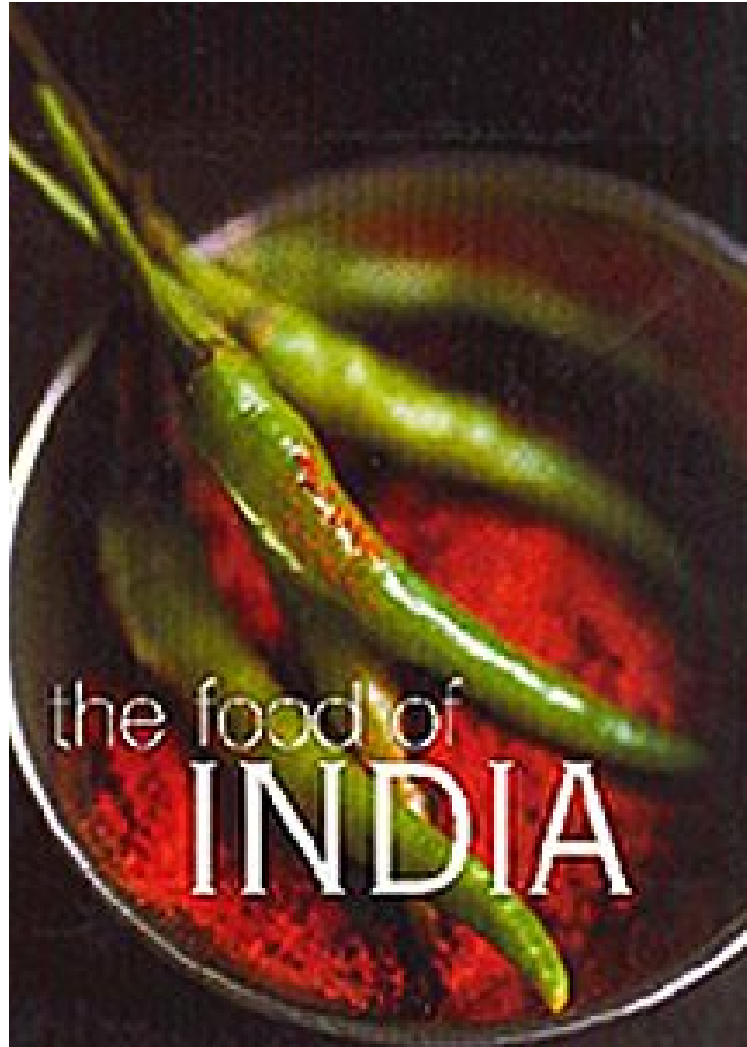


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The Food of India

Priya Wickramasinghe
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Priya Wickramasinghe : The Food of India before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Food of India:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. One of the bestBy Rupert HuseI cook a lot of Indian food and have taken classes in it as well. This cook book is strong on three levels. One - it gives you some instruction on buying ingredients, availability, substitutions etc. It doesn't just list a nebulus name of some spice you have never heard of. Two - Every recipe is a winner. I mean they are all really great. Three - Each dish has a picture, and that picture is well done. I think a picture of what something is supposed to look like is very helpful. If nothing else it can help give you an idea of the consistency a dish is supposed to have, which is important with Indian food.Faults - This cooks book is a

collection of recipes. It is not intended to give the theory of the cooking style say in the way Yamuna Devi does in Lord Krishnas Cuisine or Julie Sahni does in her cookbooks. This cook book will enable you to pop out a great dish with pretty much every recipe and that is what a cook book is supposed to do. It might even inspire you to take some courses or read up more about Indian cooking. That's what this book did for me and I have recommended it to virtually everyone I know as probably the best first Indian cook book. That does not mean the recipes are simple. If you want simple and fast, Indian cooking isn't for you. If you want "oh wow, you made this yourself?" reactions at your next dinner party, get this cook book and start two days ahead. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful book with wonderful photos and history By Hannah Yu I love collecting cooking books part of the Food of Series, and this book was as expected. Colourful, crisp, and lots of pictures, I was quite content with the condition of the book along with the packaging. The Food of Series is one of the better cooking book collections I own and I am happy to add India to my collection. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Authentic Recipes By Chand Having owned this book already in paper back, I wanted to gift a friend in hard cover. There are books with other pictures on the cover by the same author, which do not have the same recipes. This one is just "The food of India" the other books all have additional titles, like The food of India - A Journey for Food Lovers, street foods, etc. The recipes provided in this book are the best since they are the most popular items from both South and North India along with photos and story behind them as other reviewers have described. My only complaint being, the seller did not respond to both my inquiries to this date!

Covers the different food in India, in its various forms.

About the Author Priya Wickramasinghe is a chef and author originally from Sri Lanka whose previous titles include Spicy and Delicious and Leith's Indian and Sri Lankan Cookery. Carol Selva Rajah is a chef, author, teacher, and television presenter. She has written 12 cookbooks including Makan-Lah!: The True Taste of Malaysia. She also writes frequently for Australian Gourmet Traveller and many other publications. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. The Food of India India is a very complex country culturally, geographically and from a culinary point of view. Cooking styles vary not only from state to state and town to town but also from suburb to suburb. Modern India is one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is made up of 25 states and 7 territories and its people use 18 major (and over 1600 minor) languages and practice 7 major religions. Despite this, and its history of constant invasion and change, India has kept a strong sense of national identity and has used outside influences to its advantage. INFLUENCES Historically, Indian cuisine has had many influences, one of the biggest being vegetarianism brought about by religious beliefs. Buddhism and Jainism came to India around the 6th century BC and though they faded as major religions in India, they were particularly successful in converting people to a way of life in which living beings are considered to be sacred. Hinduism predated both these religions but early Hindu texts such as the Mahabharata show that meat was not originally prohibited. Meat is still occasionally eaten by some Hindus. Over time, vegetarianism slowly pervaded Indian culture and today it is practiced by many people, particularly in the South. The sacred status of the cow, a Vedic idea from before Hinduism, also remains to this day. In 1525, the Moghul emperors arrived and brought with them their own style of cooking, architecture and living, which affirmed their religion, Islam, and its Arabic heritage. Muslims had periodically been invading India since the 10th century but this later time was the period of their greatest influence and at one stage they ruled nearly the whole subcontinent. Pork was taboo but meats such as lamb and chicken were eaten as long as they were killed according to Muslim law. Many dishes were a product of the court chefs, trained in Central Asian, Persian and Afghani culinary styles. Money was no object and imagination was boundless. The Moghuls incorporated some of their favorite foods such as almonds, cream and dried fruits into Indian cuisine and introduced cold weather fruit such as peaches, cherries and apricots to the orchards of Kashmir. The use of saffron and gold and silver leaf reflects the opulence of Moghul cuisine, especially in sweets. These influences are most apparent in northern India and in areas such as Hyderabad, the site of an ancient court, where there were Muslim settlements. China, another ancient culture, had also long had an association with India via its maritime and overland trading routes. The Karhai and wok are extremely similar in appearance, though which came first is impossible to say. Chinese-style bowls are used to serve soups and foods thought to have come from China. Some words, such as 'chinyani' meaning peach, start with 'chin'. The Chinese word for tea, 'cha', also became incorporated into the language when the British began to cultivate tea in India. Influences from further afield can be seen in Goa and Kerala where the Portuguese established ports, in Chennai (Madras) where the British set up the East India Company, in Pondicherry, a French enclave, and in Kolkata (Calcutta), the center of the British Raj. With the Europeans came more widespread Christianity (St Thomas had arrived in AD 52) and new styles of cooking to add to the established Muslim and Hindu ways. Foods such as potatoes, tomatoes, capsicums (peppers) and chillies, imported from the New World via Europe, were gradually incorporated into local cuisines until in some cases, as with the chili, they became ubiquitous. The British influence on Indian cuisine was much less than the Indian impact on British food. For example, the British encouraged the idea of frequently nibbling on tiffin, which are little snacks. Also the Indian cooks of the British Empire, urged on by their memsahibs, learned to make cakes, yeasted breads and

'curries', which were more suited to the British palate. The British developed a liking for spicky food and trasnported the idea back home where it was Anglicised. **INDIAN FOOD MYTHS** The type of Indian food found in the majority of Indian restaurants is based on a very successful menu formula. The original versions of these resturants were run by Punjabis in India where they served a mixture of Punjabi cuisine, such as tandoori and Moghul dishes such as korma and biryani. As the popularity of the cuisine grew, the 'menu' was established, then replicated in new restaurants. This menu represents a tiny section of Indian cuisine. In India, there is no such thing as a curry. The word is of English origin, based on the Tamil word 'kari' meaning black pepper, and is a term used to denote all kinds of Indian dishes, particularly those in a sauce. Dishes in India are named eitehr for the combination of spices used (rogan josh), for the cooking method (korma, biryani, do piaza), or the their main ingredient (saag, aloo gobi). Curry powder does not exist within India, the closest equivalent being masala (spice mix). There are hundreds of masala combinations. In northern India, they tend to be dry mixtures using ground spices such a garam masala and in the southern area, wet ones, such as coconut masala, using fresh spices. Indian food in not universally hot. Some dishes contain lots of chilies; others none at all. **EATING** Meat or vegetarian dishes are never the main part of the meal. They are always an accompaniment to rice or breads and are eaten alongside relishes, chutneys and other dishes such as dal. Yoghurt or curd is also served with meals and is particularly useful for cooling hot or spicy food. The types of dishes eaten vary according to religious group. Hindus tend to eat vegetable dishes and dals served with plain boiled rice. Muslims serve meat and seafood dishes, breads, and fried snacks such as samosas. but dal does not pay such an important part. So generally, Indian meals consist of a couple of vegetable dishes (and meat or fish where appropriate), some relishes or chutneys. yoghurt, rice, breads and a dessert, usually all served at the same time. Sometimes, samosas or other deep-fried snacks are included. Meals are often served on thalis, which, are large, flat plates, made from banana leaves or metal. Though more prevalent in southern areas and in Gujarat, they are a common element of Indian cuisine, used by all strata of society. The leaf or plate is covered with either small mounds of food or metal bowls called katoris which hold the food. The food, eaten with the fingertips of your right hand, is replenished as you eat. Paan is a collection of spices and aromatics often served at the end of the meal to freshen the breath and act as a digestive. A betel leaf is folded around pieces of betel nut and either lime paste, red katha paste, chewing tobacco or mitha masala (spices). The whole lot is chewed before either spat out, or in the case of mitha masala, swallowed. **THE FOOD OF THE NORTH** The cuisines in the north of India cover a wide range of food styles, the main influences coming from the cooking of the Moghuis and Punjabs, as well as from the land, which produces a diverse range of grains. Traditionally, rice was not eaten in large quantities as the climate of the area meant it could not be easily grown, However, in Jammu and Kashmir, and in Dera Dun rice was grown on terraces in the Himalayan foothills. Basmati, the king of rices, comes from Dera Dun and is prized throughout India. As breads are a staple, there is a huge range to choose from. In Kashmir and Jammu, the kulcha and sheermal are Middle Eastern in style, in the Punjab and Haryana, naan are cooked in tandoors, and parathas, puris, chapatis and roti are widely eaten. Breads are usually served with dishes which have a thick sauce that is easily scooped up. Dishes with a more liquid sauce are generally served with rice. Dairy products such as malai (cream), paneer and yoghurt appear at almost every meal in some guise or other. Butter appears in the form of ghee or makhan (white butter). Dishes are thickened and enriched with cream and in the Punjab butter is used both as a condiment and as a flavoring. Rajasthani cuisine contains many dishes cooked in buttermilk, milk or butter. This cooking style evolved because water was scarce and its use as a cooking medium had to be avoided. Northern dishes are often cooked in sealed pots in very little liquid, a method known as 'dum'. Meat is a feature of northern cuisine. This is a reflection of Moghul influences as well as those of other communities such as the Parsis and Sikhs. Lamb is a popular meat though game is also favored in the Punjab and Rajasthan. Pulses and legumes are commonly eaten and a dal of some sort, often well spiced, will accompany every meal. Spices in these areas tend to be based on 'hot mixes'. This means warmly flavored spices rather than heat from chilies. Many spices are dry-roasted before being used. in order to add depth to their flavor. The most well known is garam masala which is used to temper dishes at the end of cooking. The custom of cooking in community ovens or tandoors prevails in rural areas, especially in the Punjab. The ovens are used to cook breads and roast meats, something which is not possible in home-style kitchens, where cooking pots are set above open: fires. **THE FOOD OF THE CENTER** Central India has an eclectic mix of foods which can be roughly divided into East (Bengal), West (Gujarat and Maharashtra) and Central (Hyderabad) styles. Fish feature heavily on both coasts while Hyderabad has a cuisine with Moghul overtones and a diet rich in meat. Fish, both coastal and those from inland waterways, appear in many Bengali, Assamese and Orissan dishes, hilsa being a particular favorite. Smaller fish are made into soupy johl or deep-fried with spices. Larger ones are covered with thick spice pastes and steamed or fried. On the opposite coast, the fish market on Mumbai's (Bombay) Sassoon Docks is the busiest in India and caters to...