

**Good Things Magazine
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WORTH ITS SALT... SPICE AT HOME

KAVITA FAVELLE LEARNS HOW TO MARRY INDIAN SPICING WITH WESTERN INGREDIENTS AND TECHNIQUES TO CREATE DELICIOUS MODERN FUSION FOOD AT HOME

Vivek Singh is one of Britain's most celebrated Indian chefs. Classically trained in India, he's been executive chef at The Cinnamon Club since it opened. Since then, he's launched sister restaurants Cinnamon Kitchen and Cinnamon Soho. A frequent face on cookery shows including *Saturday Kitchen* and *MasterChef*, Vivek has also published several successful cookbooks revealing the secrets of his contemporary Indian restaurant dishes and exploring 'curry' from India, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

In *Spice At Home*, Vivek brings us something new, by focusing on the more relaxed style of cooking he enjoys at home. Weaving together ingredients, flavours, techniques and influences from East and West, Vivek has created a collection of dishes that marry together the best of Asia and Europe respectively.

Introducing the book, Vivek recalls his childhood in a Bengali colliery where his father worked as an engineer. His mother cooked three or four full meals a day on a coal fire, preparing everything from scratch. With no refrigerator, she bought fresh ingredients daily and the family were taught to finish everything on their plates. Vivek expresses awe for her ability to cope with unannounced mealtime visits from friends and family, admiring her flexibility, innovation and ingenuity.

Today, living in London, cooking in the family home is a very different

prospect. Ingredients are easier to source and keep fresh, storing leftovers is not a problem and meal planning is immeasurably simpler, since it's less common for visitors to drop in unexpectedly. Another huge change is the availability of 'the whole world's ingredients, especially in the capital city; 'a melting pot of different cultures'. Vivek draws from these global influences for many of the book's recipes.

At the heart of the book are spices. 'India is the largest consumer and producer of spices in the world,' says Vivek, and the tradition of using spices for flavour, colour, taste, texture, preservation of ingredients and for medical and religious uses goes back thousands of years.

Vivek groups spices into three clusters - the basics, the aromatics and the rare - and gives advice on buying, storing and using them effectively. To start the lessons proper, he schools the reader in 'Spice Maths', a handy reference page providing six simple spice mixes for dishes such as korma, vindaloo and dhansak.

Then it's on to the recipes themselves, divided by when they are best enjoyed - for breakfast, lunch or dinner; or to entertain guests. Two more chapters share sides and sweets and at the end is a handy section on basics, covering more complex spice blends, core ready-prepared ingredients (such as ghee and crisp fried onions), basic techniques and a glossary.

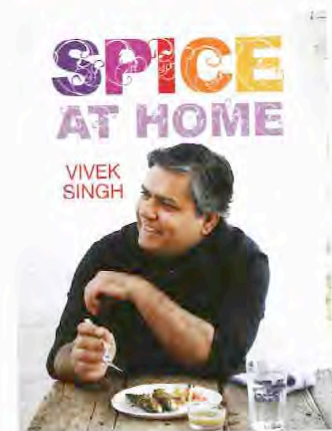
There are plenty of authentic Indian recipes in the book, from Poories and Stuffed parathas to Dal makhani and Paneer and peas curry. But the dishes which excite me the most are those in which Vivek playfully applies the influences of international ingredients and cuisines. To start the day, I might make Chorizo and cumin potatoes. For lunch, I lean towards Bangla Scotch eggs (see recipe), a Grilled chilli chicken toastie or Asparagus with curried yoghurt and 'gunpowder'. For dinner, I'm tempted by Pasta moily, Crab and curry leaf risotto and Lamb rogan josh pithivier. When friends come to dinner, I love the idea of serving Tandoori chicken pizza or Amritsar-spiced fish fingers; and who could resist ending with Apple and carom seed crumble or Lassi panna cotta (see recipe)?



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Fusion is often dismissed as a dirty word by chefs schooled in a world of rigid authenticity. But in *Spice At Home*, Vivek shares the reality of cooking in Britain today, guiding us with skill and temptation through a glorious fusion of Indian spices and modern British cooking.

'Spice At Home' by Vivek Singh is published by Absolute Press



BANGLA SCOTCH EGGS

The Bengalis like savoury cakes – they make them with potatoes and with fish, but call them 'chops'. Here I have given the same treatment to a mixture of vegetables, where the colour of the beetroot gives these a distinctive look.

Makes 8

INGREDIENTS

- » 18 quail's eggs or 8 regular free-range eggs, soft boiled
- » 50g ghee or clarified butter
- » ½ teaspoon black onion seeds
- » ½ teaspoon fennel seeds
- » ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- » 3 bay leaves
- » 2 onions, finely chopped
- » 2 carrots, finely chopped
- » ¼ of a medium cauliflower, finely chopped
- » 100g French beans, finely chopped
- » 1 teaspoon red chilli powder
- » 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- » 1 beetroot, boiled, peeled and finely chopped
- » 10g raisins
- » 1 teaspoon salt
- » ½ teaspoon sugar
- » 2 potatoes, boiled, cooled and grated
- » corn or vegetable oil, for frying

For the spice mix:

- » 1 teaspoon roasted coriander seeds
- » 2 green cardamom pods

For crumbing:

- » 2 eggs, whisked
- » 150g dried breadcrumbs



METHOD

If using quail's eggs, place the eggs in a pan with just salted water to cover the eggs and bring to the boil. As soon as the water comes to the boil, keep on the heat for just 45 seconds, then drain and chill the eggs in cold water. Allow to cool completely, then peel the eggs. Keep aside. If using regular eggs, lower the eggs into a pan of boiling salted water and cook for 6 minutes, then drain and chill in cold water.

To make the spice mix, pound the coriander and cardamom seeds coarsely using a pestle and mortar or in a food processor.

Heat the ghee in a deep, heavy-based wok. When hot, add the onion seeds, fennel seeds, cumin seeds and bay leaves. When they begin to crackle, add the onion and sauté for 6–8 minutes, until golden brown.

Now add all the vegetables, apart from the beetroot and the grated potato, as per the order of ingredients and sauté over a medium heat for a total of 4–6 minutes. Then add the red chilli powder, spice mix and the ground cumin and stir for an additional 5 minutes.

Add the raisins and diced beetroot and cook for another minute. Add the salt and sugar and stir well, then add in the grated potato and cook for 3–4 minutes until the mixture is evenly mixed, the colour turns reddish and the mixture becomes slightly shiny due to the ghee.

Cool the mixture, and when cold divide into 8 equal portions (or 18 portions if using quail's eggs). Roll them around the cooled boiled eggs. Dip the balls in the whisked egg, then roll in the dried breadcrumbs. Let the coated eggs cool in the refrigerator before frying.

Deep fry the eggs in batches at 170°C for 6–8 minutes until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper. Serve hot with any mustard-based sauce mixed with tomato ketchup.

LASSI PANNA COTTA

Anyone who has travelled to India in the summer will be familiar with the lassi stalls that pop up all over small towns and cities serving these cooling smoothie-style drinks. I love using the inspiration of lassi as the basis for a simple dessert which is great both for summer afternoons and for entertaining big numbers.

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- » 5 gelatine leaves (10g in total)
- » 500ml full-fat Greek yoghurt
- » 300ml whole milk
- » 125g caster sugar
- » ¼ teaspoon salt
- » 1 teaspoon green cardamom powder
- » 3–4 ripe mangoes, peeled, stoned and flesh chopped into 2.5cm dice
- » sprinkle of chaat masala (optional)

METHOD

Soak the gelatine leaves in 100ml of cold water to soften them.

In a mixing bowl whisk the yoghurt, milk, sugar, salt and cardamom powder until it turns frothy.

Melt the gelatine in 100ml warm water, then add to the yoghurt mixture. Mix well and pour into individual moulds or serving bowls. Chill in the fridge for a couple of hours, or even overnight if you have the time.

Mix the diced mango (or seasonal fruits) with chaat masala (if using), and set aside for 15 minutes to make a fruit chat. Serve the panna cottas with a mango chat garnish or with any seasonal fruit salad.