



Author Sivakamy Mahalingham

Flipping through the pages of this book of sumptuous recipes is indeed a delightful experience in which one comes across a spread of traditional Sri Lankan and Indian cuisine supplemented by a good deal of Western goodies. The epicurean journey begins with taste and ends in delight and Sivakamy Mahalingham guides us through it all the way.

Words Suharshi Perera

Food is not all about taste. Nutrition and convenience are also essential components in the art of cooking. The author has given pride of place to all these aspects in her book 'Rice and Curry Kari' making cooking a tasteful experience to beginners as well as the seasoned. The book promises a lot of innovations as 'curry' has been interpreted in the Asian context as 'kari' to include the authentic flavours of traditional Sri Lankan and Indian cuisine in its recipes.

'Rice and Curry Kari' presents over 300 recipes of traditional Sri Lankan and other cuisines adapted to modern living in the West, while encouraging the reader to experiment with combinations of spices to suit their own palate. The author says the book has been compiled to make cooking convenient with simple steps. It clearly guides the non-Asian reader as to how to prepare the ingredients and where to find them making it a familiar exercise and hassle-free for all.

With secrets mastered for over 41 years, Sivakamy presents an array of delectable Sri

Lankan dishes to the reader who does not have much time to spend in the kitchen with the busy, modern lifestyle. Born in Colombo and moved to the UK her tried and tested recipes ideally match today's requirements as most of them could be prepared in 30 to 45 minutes thus encouraging the reader to cook a healthy and tasty meal at home in very little time while saving money that is spent on take-away food. The book invites the reader to savour the authentic Sri Lankan meal even while she/he is away from home.

The author decided to document her day-to-day cooking as she felt the skills should pass on to the future generation of children growing up in the West.

For this reason she wrote down the recipes for her son who left home for university, to encourage him to cook for himself rather than sending him parcels of food every week. "I scribbled the recipes for him making sure they are easy to make. He suggested that all of them should be collected and made into a book and the profits be given away to charity." As decided all profits from the 1,500 copies printed will be channeled to cancer research.

The book becomes a comprehensive guide to Asian cooking as the author begins with basics in cooking and proceeds to a range of dishes categorised by importance. She first introduces the spices and ingredients, an integral aspect of the Asian kitchen giving the reader a taste of the Sri Lankan and Indian culinary experience. The utensils and equipment used in cooking as well as the measurements are useful to become a seasoned cook and the book undertakes that task.

It gives a complete outline of the dishes with prominence to rice. It lines up a variety of preparations of rice, as it is the staple diet of the Asian meal. It has chapters for vegetable dishes, which are very common in Sri Lanka, special dishes that need a bit of planning, finger foods, salads, beverages, puddings and cakes, with variations to most of them. The book also includes a comprehensive guide to preparing seafood, chicken and lamb, offering a wider choice to non-vegetarians as well.

'Rice and Curry Kari' brings out all the flavours of traditional Tamil, Sinhalese and Indian cookery with a special chapter dedicated to dips, chutney and sambal. The glossary and hints come in handy to beginners and persons not familiar with Asian cooking.

According to Sivakamy the aim of the book is to encompass all six tastes in Ayurveda - sweet, sour, salty, bitter, spicy and astringent in a particular meal with a combination of ingredients. To that effect the book becomes a handbook to experiment and hone the skill of cooking that suits individual lifestyles.

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Aubergine Omelette

Cooking time: 30 minutes | Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 large aubergine
- 4 shallots, finely chopped and diced
- 3 green chillies, finely chopped
- 4 eggs
- salt to taste
- little oil or ghee
- 1 tsp roasted mixed chilli powder
- 1/2 tsp garam masala paste
- 1/2 tsp garlic/ginger paste

Method:

- 1 Brush the aubergine with a little oil and grill it. Keep turning until all sides are equally cooked.
- 2 Peel the skin and mash the aubergine. Add the green chilli, onions, garam masala, chilli powder and salt. Mix well.
- 3 In a bowl, beat the eggs. Add the aubergine mix and beat it well.
- 4 In a large frying pan heat the oil and pour half of the mixture, cover and cook on low heat.

With a spatula carefully turn the egg over and cook the opposite side. Serve onto a plate. Repeat with the other half. Cut the fried egg and serve.

Yoghurt Rice

Cooking time: 35 minutes | Serves: 4 - 5

Ingredients:

- 2 cups basmati rice
- 500g natural yoghurt
- 3cm root ginger finely chopped

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