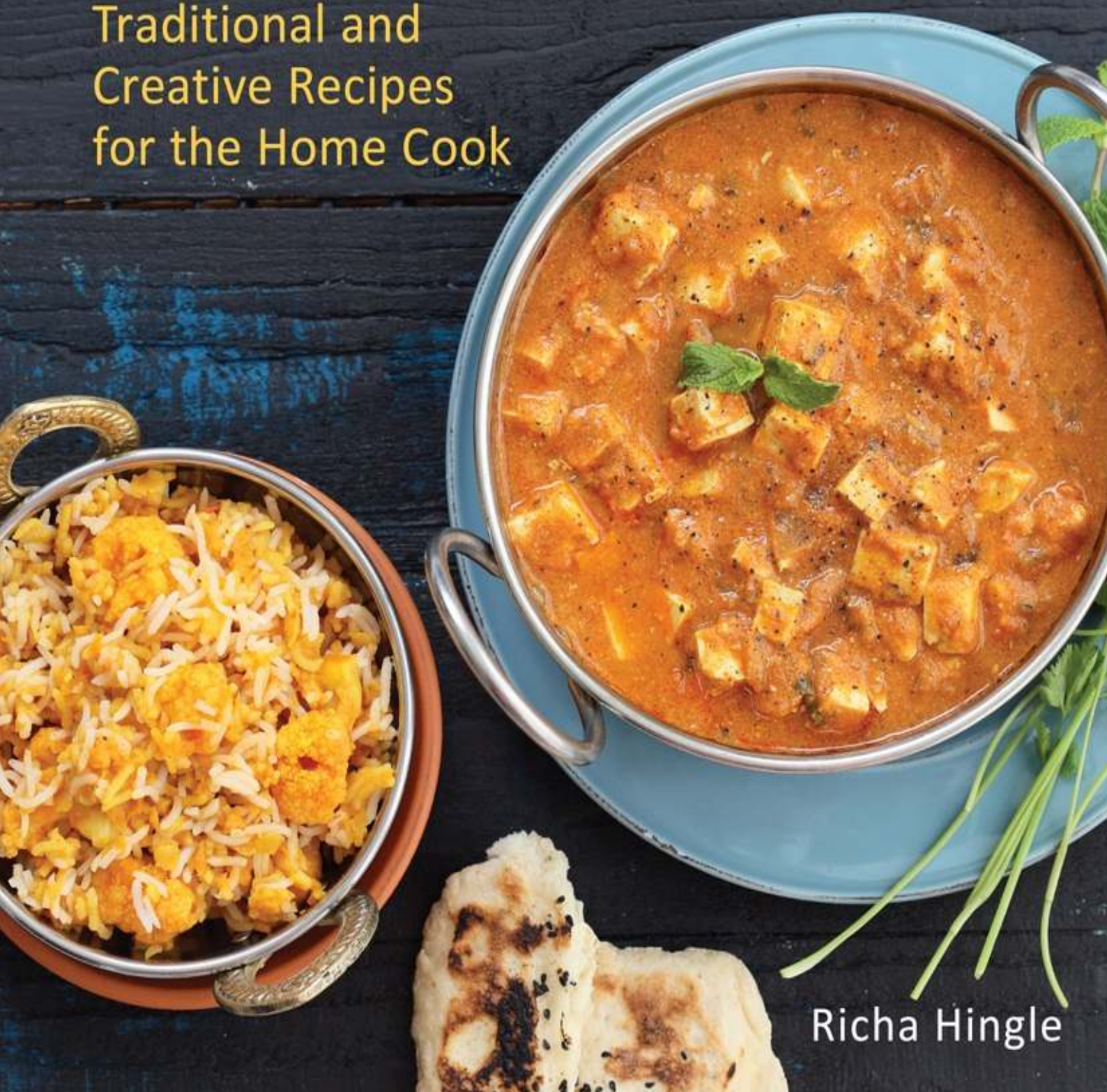


# Vegan Richa's Indian Kitchen

Traditional and  
Creative Recipes  
for the Home Cook



Richa Hingle

# What they're saying about Vegan Richa's Indian Kitchen

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Richa Hingle's first cookbook is nothing short of phenomenal. The software developer-turned-blogger sensation brings Indian cooking to the modern kitchen by simplifying traditional recipes, demystifying spices and pantry staples, and creating healthy versions of classic dishes. Whether you have a love affair with Indian food or are new to the flavors of one of the world's great cuisines, you will be dazzled by Richa's recipes and accessible style. Her Mango Curry Tofu, Street Style Tempeh Wraps, and Sweet and Sour Pumpkin have all become instant hits in my home—and I can't wait to keep cooking from one of the best cookbooks on Indian food (vegan or not) I've ever seen. —[Colleen Holland, co-founder of VegNews Magazine](#)

Richa's recipes for the vegan dietary lifestyle are rich and comforting. Love the refreshing take on some of the classics that often rely heavily on dairy. I can't wait to sample them! —[Raghavan Iyer, author of 660 Curries](#)

In this extraordinary cookbook, Richa Hingle masterfully combines the traditional flavors and techniques of Indian cuisine with streamlined cooking methods and healthier ingredients, resulting in the best collection of vegan Indian recipes anywhere. From sensuous curries and dals, to decadent dairy-free desserts, the beautifully photographed recipes are a feast for all the senses. —[Robertson, author of Vegan Without Borders, Vegan Planet, and others](#)

Richa makes Indian cooking easy and delicious. She teaches you all the basics of Indian vegan cooking from breakfast through dessert. There are four homemade naan recipes, plus you can wow your guests with homemade chutneys. This book is full of vegetable curries, like Okra in Sesame Coconut Sauce, and more than a dozen delicious dals. There are so many recipes that I have on my list to make—this book will spice up your meals every day! —[Kathy Hester, author of The Great Vegan Bean Book and OATrageous Oatmeals](#)

With superbly spiced recipes, eye-catching photographs and mouthwatering descriptions, this book will find a permanent place in your kitchen. Richa's recipe for Quinoa Cauliflower biryani alone is worth the price of the book. —[Monica Bhide, author Modern Spice and A Life of Spice](#)

If you're hungry for a culinary adventure, let Richa Hingle guide you effortlessly through a whole new world of flavor. Presenting traditional Indian dishes with her own unique flair, these beautifully illustrated recipes are informed by her mother's soulful home cooking and finely honed by years of kitchen experimentation. Although the dishes may be familiar for those with an appetite for spice, each bold, piquant bite is unparalleled. —[Hannah Kaminsky, author of My Sweet Vegan, Vegan Desserts, and others](#)



Gobi Mutter Masala ([here](#))

# Vegan Richa's Indian Kitchen

Traditional and Creative Recipes for the Home Cook

Richa Hingle



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# Dedication

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To my husband Vivek, because you take everything that life and I throw at you and make it beautiful.



Richa with her husband Vivek

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# Preface

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I am Richa Hingle, the recipe developer and food blogger at [VeganRicha.com](http://VeganRicha.com), and the author and photographer of this book. Namaste!

I grew up eating seasonal, local, and freshly made food that emphasized lentils, beans, vegetables, and fresh fruits. Mom was amazing at always having something for everyone at meal and snack times. My family was mostly vegetarian and there was minimal use of storebought or processed snacks. We were not very adventurous outside the usual Indian food while growing up. Dad liked the same set of dishes, while we kids were all picky eaters. I did not really cook much except to help Mom in the kitchen sometimes, but when I did cook, it would always be something too creative for most of the family to handle. Mom, my brother, and I would have to finish eating it. This was probably the first hint that I would eventually be using my creative abilities in the kitchen someday.

Mom had her hands full with three children and a husband who worked long hours, but she always had freshly made meals available for everyone. Dad liked a full spread of traditional Indian dishes at every meal and my brother, sister, and I all had our preferences. Mom eventually came up with a particular set of dishes to serve in rotation.

I was always a compassionate person. My husband remembers me from college talking about not using leather and why I had become vegetarian. You would think that would be indication enough for him about things to come. But a few years later, we were dating.

I left home for graduate studies and came to the United States. The lack of vegetarian options in restaurants, and living without Mom, got me into the kitchen. I remember getting home at three a.m. after working in the lab and whipping up a big Indian meal. The aroma from the spices and sauces and sometimes the sneeze-inducing spicy tempering would fill up the house. I worked as a software developer, got married, and moved to Seattle. A few years later, everything changed for me because of a severe health problem. It was a meningioma, and after the subsequent surgery, I was not able to go back to my software career. After years of recovery and accepting certain limited abilities, I started cooking and experimenting in the kitchen. I began my food blog and began baking yeast breads.

Around the same time, we adopted our Pomeranian named Chewie and started fostering other dogs. Food blogging and rescue work came together when I started reading vegan blogs. I made the connection of love for all animals. I couldn't eat one animal while I was caring for another as a member of my family. I also found out about the cruelties in the dairy industry. The incessant exploitation of the bond of motherhood between cows and calves made my heart ache. I went vegan gradually, and my husband followed.

The transition was not difficult, because everyday Indian food is already vegetable-rich vegetarian, and not too cheese- or meat-dependent. After the initial transition, I started working on vegan versions of restaurant-style Indian food, and cheese- and dairy-dependent desserts, to replace the memories and tastes I loved with plant-based versions. My goal was and is to not give up any foods we like, but rather to replace them with non-animal-based versions.

I do not have any culinary training. Most of what I cook comes from learning from Mom, cooking after I moved out of my parents' home, creative taste and texture combinations, and inspiration from other cookbook authors and bloggers. I am also still a picky eater, which I guess helps me come up with the right tastes and textures. Thankfully, my blog readers love them, too.

And so began my journey into regular blogging, learning, and experimenting. The fact that I learned most of my cooking outside of

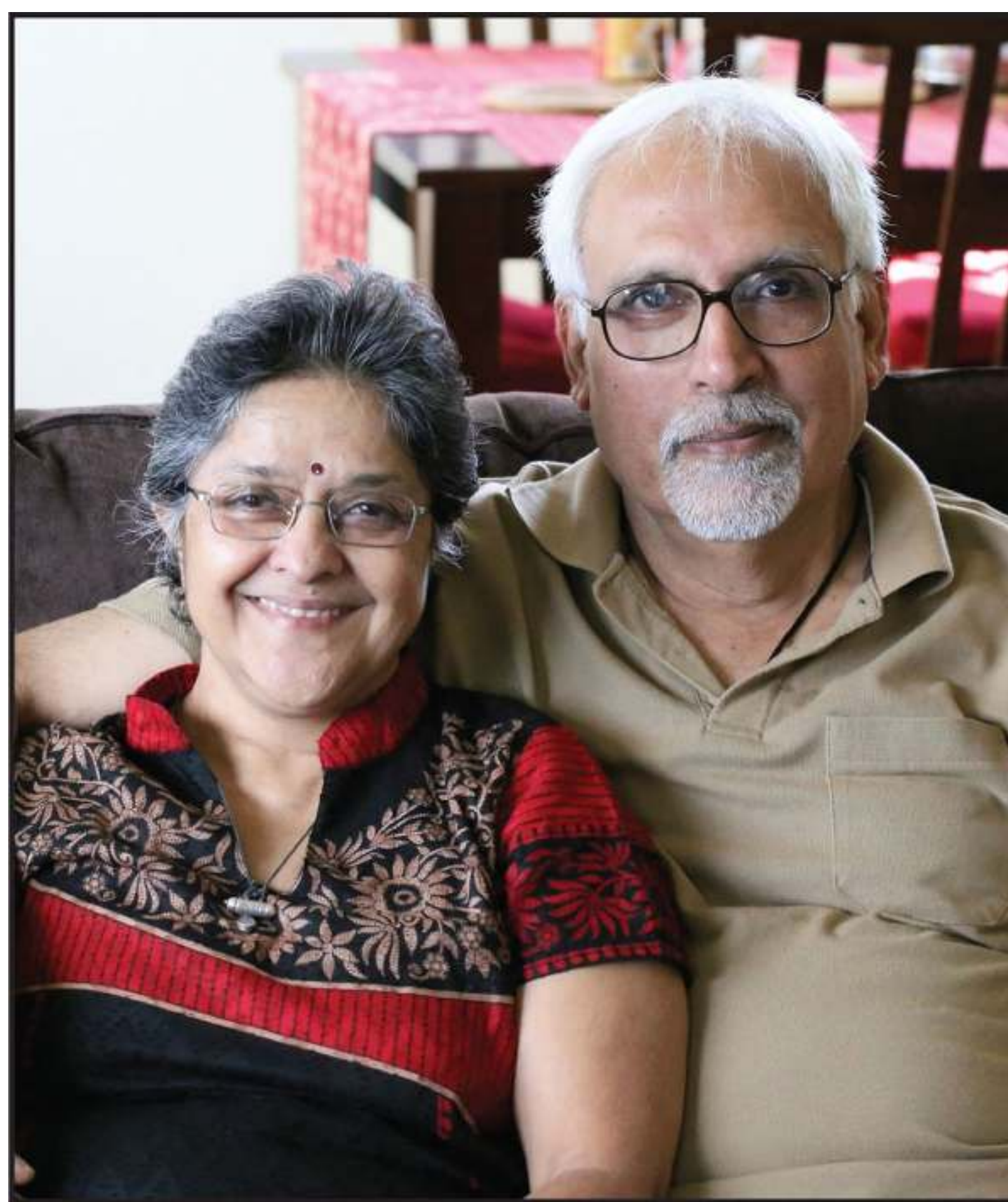
the traditional methods helped me apply my techniques across various cuisines and types of food. This, and the fact that most days myself cannot spend more than fifteen minutes standing in the kitchen, make my recipes simpler and more approachable than traditional, formal Indian cooking.

The relative simplicity of my dishes sometimes comes at the expense of authenticity. Some of the recipes might not taste exactly like the authentic recipe should, but this is how my tastes have evolved. Mom approves, though she believes in traditions, but she also believes in experimenting and change that is good for the body and for everyone.

Indian food made with love and a good balance of the spices and flavors is my favorite. Chefs around the world appreciate the plant-based focus of the cuisine. Everyone loves vegetables and beans made the Indian way.

This book is a labor of love in every way. It is also an extension of my vegan lifestyle, which combines my love of Indian food, simplicity, and compassion. Welcome to my Indian kitchen!





Richa's parents, Tripti and Tribhuvan Hingle



# Introduction

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You may already love Indian food. Now imagine being able to cook your favorite recipes in your own kitchen. From delicious daals to restaurant-style sauces, flat breads, savory breakfasts, snacks, and much more. How about some unique Indian desserts? Who would have thought you could one day enjoy dairy-free rasmalai, sandesh, or gulab jamun? Now you can. This book is a collection of 150 recipes inspired by Indian regional cuisines, culture, local foods, and proven cooking methods. Whether you want to add a touch of Indian flavor to your cooking, try some new spices, or add more protein using legumes and lentils to everyday meals, this book has got it covered. Let me take you on a journey where you can explore both familiar and new Indian flavors that are easy to make in your own kitchen. Discover healthy meals where nutrition-rich legumes, pulses, and vegetables are the stars. Let me help you fall in love with Indian food all over again.

I remember eating fresh and wholesome foods as a way of life. Bulk-buying whole grains and having them milled at our local mill had a huge influence on the food I cook today. My recipes reflect my knowledge of Indian spices and traditions, as well as worldly influences. I strive hard to make my food accessible to everyone, vegan or not, and I strongly believe that vegan food can taste so good that everyone can enjoy it.

Typically, authentic Indian techniques need multiple steps, pans, and cooking methods, but I have designed my recipes to be simple and easier with work flows that reduce cooking time and steps that use modern appliances and techniques from other cuisines. Usually, Indian recipes call for spices that may not be readily available in American supermarkets; however, I have replaced those with available ingredients wherever possible. I also provide variations that will allow you to be creative with the spices called for. I love it when my readers create their own versions of my recipes.

This book has been written for a wide range of people who either already love Indian cooking or don't know it yet. It's for new vegans and non-vegans who want to eat flavorful whole foods and gain a perspective beyond soy-based foods or salads. It's also for seasoned vegans who want to include new Indian flavors in everyday meals, learn about some new spices, or use up familiar spices in interesting ways. My recipe testers and blog readers often mention how the non-vegans in their families enjoyed these dishes, and how often they asked, "Are you sure this is vegan?" This book is also for anyone seeking recipes conducive to dietary restrictions, such as allergies to dairy, eggs, soy, gluten, or grains. There are even gluten-free flatbread recipes in the book that will work with any cuisine.

For lovers of Indian restaurant food, the Main Dish chapter will help you appreciate complex flavors and also show you how to make healthier, easier, crowd-pleasing options. You will be able to make rich restaurant-style sauces right in your kitchen. The creamy sauces make great weekend or entertainment options. Additionally, many of the recipes can be either baked or fried.

I promise you that these recipes are so delicious, you'll want to make them often for yourself, for your family, and for your guests. So, go ahead, cook up an Indian feast for you and yours. I hope you will enjoy using my Indian kitchen cookbook as much as I have enjoyed writing it for you.



## My Vegan Indian Kitchen

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My kitchen has become a combination of a well-stocked Indian kitchen and an elaborate vegan kitchen over the years since we went vegan. There are some ingredients that vegans use more than omnivores. The first few years, I would add a new ingredient to the kitchen if we needed it as a substitute for the non-vegan ingredient. After we'd settled into the vegan diet and lifestyle, I began experimenting with other ingredients. All this has helped me understand complex flavors and textures and has helped create a wonderful variety of dishes in the book.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

Whether you are new to Indian cooking or already familiar, you will find lots of dishes to make from this book. Look through the Grocery List [here](#) to ensure that you have the basic spices and pantry items on hand, and to get an understanding of the ingredients used. Also check out the section called Tools of the Trade ([here](#)) where I discuss equipment.

If you are a beginner, start with the predictable tastes and textures that you already know. Try the Gobi Mutter Masala, Masoor Dal Tadka, Palak Tofu, Chana Masala, Restaurant-Style Puffy Naan, Samosa, and Coconut and Besan Ladoos.

Then impress with Masala Lentils, Chickpea flour Pudla, Curried Green beans, Navratan Korma, Onion Bhajji, and Gajar Halwa, and Gulab Jamuns.

If you are an intermediate cook or are generally familiar with Indian food—which you will be after trying a few of the above—you can get more adventurous with Dal Makhani, Kathi Rolls, Gobi Musallam, Madras Chile Masala, Cholar Dal, Sandesh, and Rasmalai.

Quite a few Indian recipes generally start with a long list of spices, so that seems like a good place to begin. The combination of spices, herbs, and ingredients used in Indian cooking is what makes each dish unique. The extensive set of ingredients also makes the recipes flexible for substitutions and omissions.

Ethnic foods are getting more readily available in mainstream grocery stores. So much so, that for most of the book, you might not need to make a trip to an Indian store. The availability of dals and beans has also been increasing. The spices or pantry items that are not easily available can be ordered online or brought from an Indian store. I have tried to provide substitutes wherever possible. If a recipe needs a special spice or legume, you can either use a substitute or leave it out. Some recipes, however, need the spices or pantry items to give the dish its identity; in that case, I recommend that you do try the spices mentioned in the recipe. A lot of the listed spices are also used in other cuisines such as Ethiopian and Mediterranean, so they are a good investment.

### THE SPICES OF INDIAN COOKING

Indian spices and spice blends might seem intimidating at first. After all, we do use a multitude of spices, and each spice is used in more than one form. For example, we use whole cumin seeds, ground cumin seeds, dry-roasted ground cumin seeds, ground dry-roasted cumin seeds, oil-roasted cumin seeds, and so on. Each way adds a different flavor to the dish.



a spice tiffin

In Indian cooking, spices don't always mean added heat. Spices mostly add flavor, whether used alone or in combination with other spices. To start off, you need some basic spices such as cumin seeds, mustard seeds, turmeric, cayenne, coriander, and a garam masala spice blend. (A list of Resources where you can buy ingredients can be found [here](#).)

Whole spices stay fresh for years, while ground spices go stale and rancid after a few months. A good option for setting up your pantry is to invest in whole spices. Whole spices last much longer than ground spices, so you do not have to hurry to use them up.

worry about having to discard them before they get stale. However, the recipes might include whole or ground spices or even blends of ground spices. From the whole spices, you can grind small quantities to use for the month or just for the recipe. Always store your spices in a cool, dry area in airtight containers. I use glass or steel containers to store my ever-growing spice pantry. A spice tiffin or masala dabba (pictured) is often used in Indian households to reduce prep time. You don't particularly need one of these if your spices are generally stored within reach.

In the following description of the most commonly used spices in Indian cuisine, I provide the Western name followed by the Indian name in parentheses.

### Asafetida (hing)

Asafetida is the powdered resin of a large, fennel-like plant. As the name suggests, it has a fetid fragrance, but in cooked dishes it delivers a flavor reminiscent of leeks and garlic. Always store asafetida in an airtight container. I use it in small amounts in stews and vegetables. Asafetida is great to add to tempering (see below) for beans and dals to help with digestion. Asafetida itself is gluten-free, but it is usually ground along with a starch. Ground asafetida can contain wheat or other starches. Always check the label. Get the whole asafetida crystals to avoid gluten contamination. There is no good substitute for asafetida. Most recipes do not depend on it for flavor, so it can be omitted.

### Bay leaves (tejpatta)

Indian bay leaf is different from the bay laurel leaf available in the United States. Bay laurel leaves are shorter and light to medium green in color, with one large vein down the length of the leaf; while tejpatta leaves are about twice as long and wider, usually olive green in color, and with three veins down the length of the leaf. True tejpatta leaves impart a strong cassia- or cinnamon-like aroma to dishes, while the bay laurel leaf's aroma is more reminiscent of pine and lemon. You can find Indian bay leaves in Indian stores or online. Or you can just substitute the bay laurel leaves.

### Black mustard seeds (raee)

Mustard seeds have a bitter flavor profile. They are mostly added as a tempering. They lend an interesting bite, flavor, and an appetizing aroma to a dish. Mustard seeds are from the mustard plant, which is a cruciferous vegetable related to broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage. The seeds are also planted to grow saag (greens) which are stir-fried and eaten like any other greens.

White/yellow mustard seeds are mild; brown are somewhat pungent; and the small black mustard seeds have a strong flavor. Small black mustard seeds have the best flavor profile for Indian recipes.

### Black pepper (kali mirch)

Black pepper is the most commonly traded spice in the world. Black peppercorns can be used whole or in powdered form. Whole black peppercorns tempered in oil bring a beautiful flavor to biryanis, pulaos, dals, and curries. Whole peppercorns, roasted and ground with spices, add a depth to spice blends and sauces.

### Black salt, Indian (kala namak)

Kala namak is used extensively in the South Asian cuisines of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. It's used as a condiment or added to chaats, chutneys, salads, fruits, raitas, and many other savory Indian snacks. Chaat masala, an Indian spice blend, is dependent upon black salt for its characteristic sulfurous aroma. Those who are not accustomed to black salt often describe the smell as similar to rotten eggs. Kala namak is added to dishes to make them taste like eggs. It is used, for example, to season tofu to mimic an egg salad. In this book, kala namak is used in sauces for its sour profile.

### Cardamom pods, green (hari elaichi)

Cardamom is one of the most commonly found spices around the world. It has a strong unique taste with an intense fragrance, so a little bit does wonders. It is used as a flavoring agent in sweet dishes and as a spice in savory sauces or rice dishes. Whole cardamom pods retain freshness for a long time. The pods can be used whole, or the seeds from the pods can be removed and used whole or ground.

### Cardamom pods, black (kali elaichi)

These seed pods have a strong camphor-like flavor, with a smoky character derived from the method of drying. Black cardamom pods are much larger than green cardamom pods and are therefore often called “badi” (big) elaichi. Black cardamom enhances the flavor profiles of heavily spiced sauces and curries.



green cardamom

cloves

turmeric

cayenne

cumin seeds

coriander seeds

sambhar masala

stone flower

cinnamon sticks

garam masala

fennel seeds

bay leaves

## Carom seeds (ajwain, ajwan)

Carom seeds, ajwain, bishop's weed, thymol seeds, ajma, or ajmodika belong to the cumin and parsley family. Carom seeds have

sharp and penetrating flavor. They have been used since ancient times for their culinary, aromatic, and medicinal properties. Carom seeds are mostly used in whole form and only very rarely as a powder. The seeds are often part of a tadka or baghar mixture of spices fried in oil, which is used to flavor lentil dishes. They can be used in breads and crackers. It is popular in India to chew on the seeds with hot water to fix an upset stomach. Carom seeds or asafetida are generally added to chickpea flour/besan or beans to make them more digestible.

## Cayenne (red chile powder), whole chiles, and red pepper flakes (lal mirch)

Cayenne, or red chile powder is merely ground cayenne chiles and no other ingredients. Indian red chile powder is either ground cayenne or a chile closest to cayenne in terms of heat. Whole dried red chiles are also used frequently in tempering Indian dishes. Use dried California red for less heat and Thai, cayenne, or arbol for a spicy result. Whole red chiles in a dish slowly add flavor. If whole chiles are the only source of heat, break them in two before using. Substitute with red pepper flakes to taste. Red pepper flakes are crushed (not ground) dried red chiles. Usually more than one chile is used and the flakes can include cayenne, ancho, and other dried chiles.

## Cinnamon, sticks and ground (daalchini)

Cinnamon is the inner bark of a tropical evergreen tree. It is harvested as strips of bark rolled one inside another, and the best varieties are pale and parchment-like in appearance. The dried bark is highly aromatic with a warm, sweet fragrance. The pleasant smell of cinnamon stimulates the senses and calms the nerves, since it has a numbing and antiseptic effect. It can be used in broken pieces to flavor rice, sauces, and lentils. It can be ground roasted or unroasted to make up spice blends or flavor sauces and curries.

## Cloves, whole and ground (laung)

Cloves are the immature unopened flower buds of a tropical tree. Cloves form an important part of several dry masala blends used in Indian cooking, such as garam masala. They are used whole in curries and also fried with other whole spices such as peppercorn, cardamom, and cinnamon and added to dishes such as pulaos and biryanis.

## Coriander seeds (sukha dhania)

These seeds have a flavor similar to orange peel and honey. It is one of the more often used spices in my kitchen along with mustard seeds and cumin powder. Whole coriander adds a burst of flavor to potatoes. Ground coriander is frequently used in sauces and tadka for dals. Coriander leaves—also called cilantro leaves—and the stem of the coriander/cilantro plant are widely used as garnish in the Indian subcontinent.

## Cumin seeds (jeera)

Cumin seeds belong to the parsley and dill family. They have a distinctive aroma and a nutty, warmly bitter flavor. They can be used raw but are generally roasted or fried to enhance their flavor. Cumin is most commonly used in tempering for dals, beans, and rice. Most ground cumin is untoasted. Ground toasted cumin has a stronger, earthier flavor and is used to garnish yogurt dishes, curries, and chaat.

## Curry leaves, fresh or dried (kadi patta)

Kadi patta, also called kadipatta, karivepallai, or sweet neem leaves, come from a subtropical tree native to India. The green midsized leaves are joined to a main stem and have a faint aroma that can be experienced while cooking. The leaves are highly valued as a seasoning in southern and west-coast Indian and Sri Lankan cooking, and are usually fried along with the chopped onion in the first stage of the preparation. In their fresh form, they have a short shelf life and do not keep well in the refrigerator. You can freeze the fresh leaves very loosely packed in an airtight container for a few months. They are also available dried, though the aroma is largely inferior. You can add them to food whole or chopped. The curry leaves can be eaten along with the food or removed



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