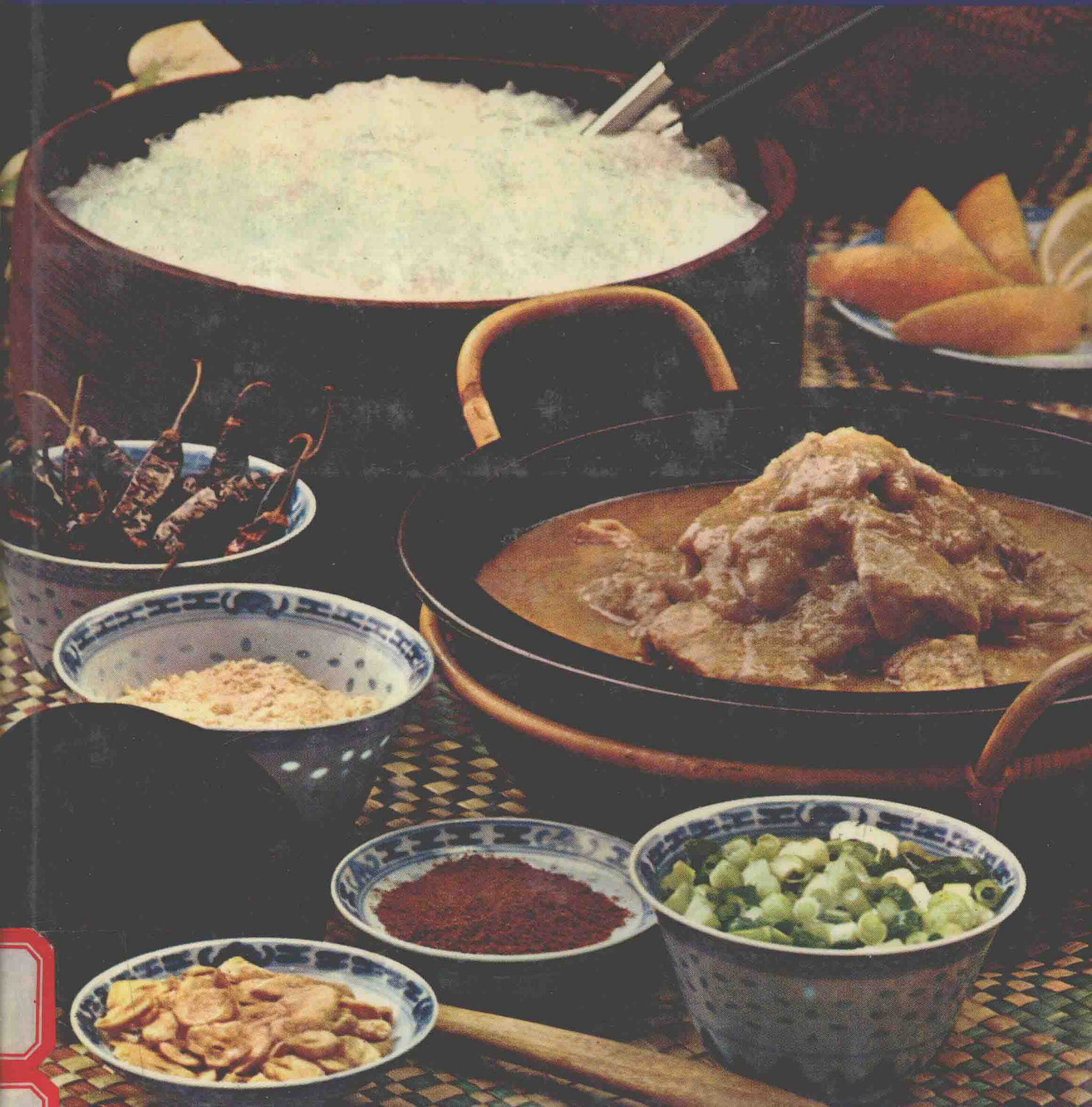


# south east asian cookbook



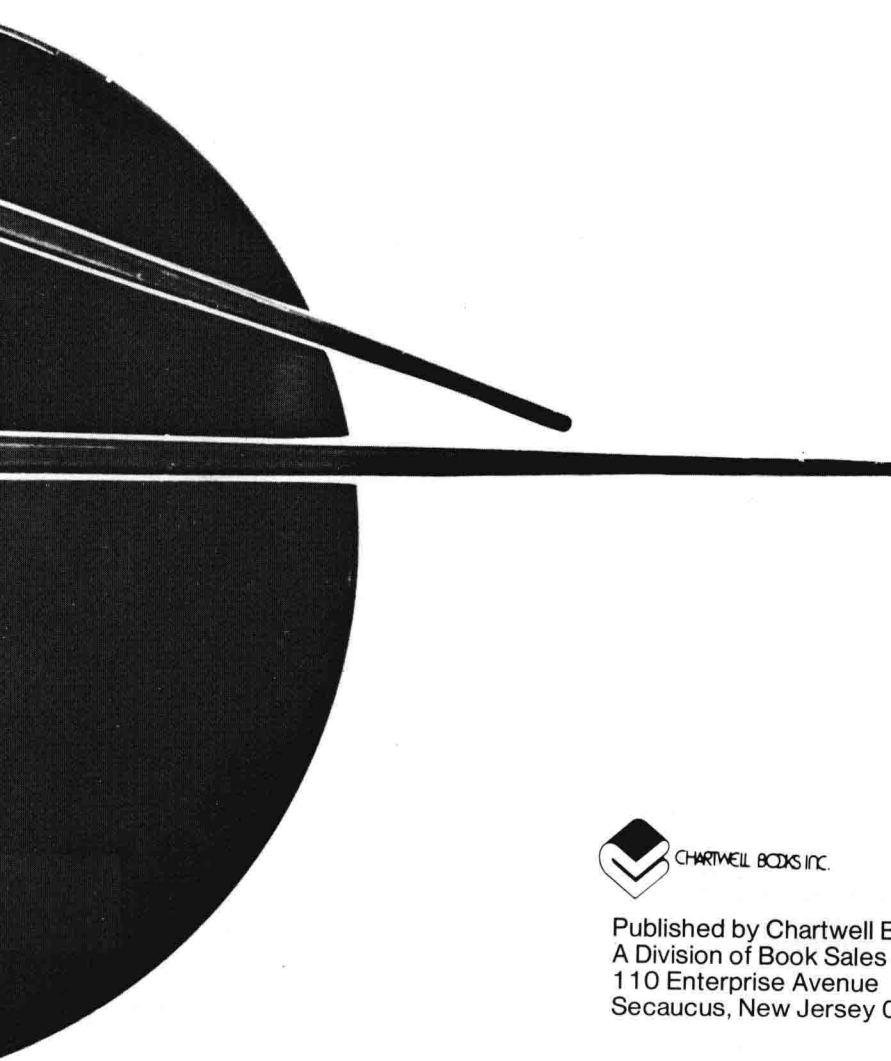
charmaine solomon

# **south east asian cookbook**



# **south east asian cookbook**

**charmaine solomon**



CHARTWELL BOOKS INC.

Published by Chartwell Books Inc.  
A Division of Book Sales Inc.  
110 Enterprise Avenue  
Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

This edition  
Published by Chartwell Books Inc.  
A Division of Book Sales Inc.  
110 Enterprise Avenue  
Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

First published by Paul Hamlyn Pty Limited  
176 South Creek Road, Dee Why West, Australia 2099  
First published 1972  
© Copyright Paul Hamlyn Pty Limited  
Produced in Australia by the Publisher  
Typeset in Australia by G.T. Setters Pty Limited  
Printed in Hong Kong

ISBN: 0-89009-302-4

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any  
means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,  
without the prior written permission of the publisher.

# **contents**

**india 10**

**sri lanka 31**

**burma 50**

**thailand 60**

**indonesia 65**

**malaysia and singapore 76**

**china and japan 89**

**entertaining 101**

**menus 112**

**accompaniments 114**

**glossary 115**

**index 118**

# guide to weights and measures

At the time of publication, the kitchen measures used throughout this book refer to those adopted by THE STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (A.S. S2-1970 Measuring Cups and Spoons for Domestic Purposes). All spoon measurements are level unless otherwise stated. A good set of scales, a graduated Australian Standard measuring cup and a set of Australian Standard measuring spoons will be most helpful. These are available at leading hardware stores.

The Australian Standard measuring cup has a capacity of 250 millilitres.

The Australian Standard tablespoon has a capacity of 20 millilitres.

The Australian Standard teaspoon has a capacity of 5 millilitres.

All spoon measurements are level spoonfuls.

## American/Canadian Weights

American weights and measures are the same except for the tablespoon.

Housewives in AMERICA and CANADA using this book should remember that the Australian standard measuring tablespoon has a capacity of 20 millilitres, whereas the AMERICAN/CANADIAN standard measuring tablespoon has a capacity of 15 millilitres, therefore use an American standard tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon.

## A SPECIAL NOTE TO NORTH AMERICAN READERS

Lists of ingredients in this book have been designed to cater for cooks using either American Standard measures or metric measures, as can be seen from the following example:

1.5 kg (3 lb) chicken  
3 cups water  
2 large onions  
5 tablespoons flour  
½ cup milk

This listing can be read in two ways:

American	Metric
3 pound chicken	1.5 kilogram chicken
3 AMERICAN cups water	3 METRIC cups water
2 large onions	2 large onions
5 AMERICAN tablespoons flour	5 METRIC tablespoons flour
½ AMERICAN cup milk	½ AMERICAN cup milk

It must be stressed that the quantities given in the American and metric ingredients listings are in proportion, but they are NOT exact conversions — the metric yield is approximately 10 per cent greater than the equivalent American Standard yield. Therefore, to use this book successfully, follow American Standard quantities or follow metric quantities but do not use a mixture of the two.

### Using metric measures

The metric measuring cup specified in this book has a capacity of 250 millilitres (250 ml). Clearly graduated metric measuring cups and jugs can therefore be used for all liquid and dry cup quantities given in the recipes. Note that:

¼ metric cup	=	60 ml
½ metric cup	=	125 ml
¾ metric cup	=	185 ml
1 metric cup	=	250 ml = ¼ litre
2 metric cups	=	500 ml = ½ litre
3 metric cups	=	750 ml = ¾ litre
4 metric cups	=	1,000 ml = 1 litre

The American Standard teaspoon and tablespoon can be used for measuring metric quantities. The American teaspoon has exactly the same capacity as the metric teaspoon specified in this book:

1 metric teaspoon = 5 ml = 1 American teaspoon

## IMPORTANT POINTS

New Zealand, Canadian and American weights and measures are the same except that the Australian Standard measuring tablespoon has a capacity of 20 millilitres (20 ml) or 4 teaspoons, whereas the New Zealand, Canadian and American Standard measuring tablespoons have a capacity of 15 millilitres (15 ml) or 3 teaspoons.



# oven temperature guide

This is an approximate guide only. Different makes of stoves vary and even the same make of stove can give slightly different individual results at the same temperature. If in doubt with your particular stove, do refer to your own manufacturer's temperature chart. It is impossible in a general book to be exact for every stove, but the following is a good average guide in every case.

The following chart also gives approximate conversions from degrees Fahrenheit to degrees Celsius (formerly known as Centigrade). This chart can be used for conversion of recipes which give oven temperatures in metric measures.

Description of Oven Temperature	Thermostat Setting		° C
	°F		
	Automatic		
	Electric	Gas	
Cool	200	200	100
Very slow	250	250	120
Slow	300-325	300	150-160
Moderately slow	325-350	325	160-170
Moderate	350-375	350	170-190
Moderately hot	375-400	375	190-200
Hot	400-450	400	200-230
Very hot	450-500	450	230-260

## pronunciation

Saying Eastern names is very easy as they are completely phonetic. This guide to vowel sounds will help:

a as in ah

e as in met

i as in pin

ie as in pie

o as in vote

u as oo in moot



# cooking equipment

If you are serious about cooking curries and don't possess an electric blender, think seriously about getting one. My blender is in constant use.

It grinds curry ingredients and spices to a fine powder. It crushes peppercorns; grinds coconut; blends onions, garlic, herbs and other ingredients to a smooth purée and makes curry paste. In fact, it does all the jobs that are done on grinding stones, with a mortar and pestle, or in grinding mills in Eastern homes. If you like to cook Asian food in a country where household help is limited, then you need (believe me, you do need) an electric blender with a good, powerful motor and a tough glass container.

There are a few other moderately priced gadgets I depend on very much. One is a very sharp Chinese chopper. This chopper has a large, thin blade that slices and chops ingredients with great ease. It slices onions paper thin and is also useful for slicing and shredding meat, fish, poultry and vegetables necessary for some Eastern dishes. Choppers can be bought in small and large sizes and most of them have dark metal blades. They don't look very beautiful, but they do get the job done.

A good, sharp, stainless steel grater is another thing I use all the time for grating garlic and ginger — a quick alternative to crushing or chopping.

# preface

For years I've been giving recipes to friends. I'm always pleased when they tell me the results are marvellous, the recipes surprisingly easy. 'Why don't you put them in a book,' they say. Well, at last, it seems I have done so. It makes me happy to know that through my book many more people will be able to explore the delights of Eastern food.

The recipes are authentic, but the methods are those I have perfected in my kitchen in Australia without the benefit of those wonderfully willing servants we are blessed with in the East, who chop and grind and prepare ingredients for the mistress who decides to do a little cooking.

I am grateful to many people who gave me an interest in cooking — . . . first there was my Aunt Muriel — a gentle person whose artistry in making cakes, confectionery and other delights is one of my childhood memories. She was an accomplished pianist too and from her I learned that good cooking is an art as creative as painting or music.

. . . my father's sisters, Miss Elva and Miss Claribel Poulier, with whom I lived for many years, are renowned in Ceylon for their prize-winning chutneys, pickles and everyday cooking of an extremely high standard. From them I learned meticulous attention to detail.

. . . my mother and grandmother, born and brought up in Burma, and both superb cooks. My grandmother also lived for many years in India and shared with me her knowledge of Indian food. By their good cooking at home they taught me to have high standards in my own kitchen.

. . . Margaret Fulton, Cookery Editor of *Woman's Day*, has encouraged and helped me since we met eight years ago. She said, 'You'll just have to find time to do this book, Charmaine, no matter what else you don't do.' From her I learned that you put everything else aside when you have an important project on hand. (Margaret, there's dust under the beds and a room full of ironing!)

. . . my children — gourmets each and every one. Even the baby prefers his steak marinated Japanese-style. From them I have learned, too late, not to show off to your kids — they then have to be fed in the style to which they've become accustomed.

Last, but most important of all, I am grateful to my husband, Reuben. A musician by profession, he is a truly creative cook himself. If it had not been for his wide knowledge of Eastern food and appreciation of my efforts, I would not have been encouraged to make a special study of the subject. His enthusiasm and help have made this book possible. From him I learned that George Meredith, who said, 'Kissing don't last, cookery do,' was not altogether right. Kissing **do** last — as long as the cookery is up to scratch!

I hope you enjoy cooking and eating this food as much as I've enjoyed writing the recipes for you.

# india

I have always loved Indian food, but only learned to cook it when my grandmother came to stay with us. She had lived for many years in India and when she prepared a meal I enjoyed it right from the moment I stepped in the door and smelt the appetising fragrance, to the time I had to stop eating because there simply was no room for more.

My husband is a keen cook too, and the three of us had some great times in the kitchen. Nana was a born homemaker, a born mother — one of those women who glory in being a woman. She taught me many things — among them to cook Indian food so that I have been paid the supreme compliment of being told it is 'even better than Mogul Street'. (Mogul Street is famous for its kebabs, parathas and other Indian specialities.)

India is a land of contrasts and this is also true of its food. It varies from the rich, mild dishes of North India to the hot, spiced preparations of the South.

Average Westerners, asked what food they associate with India, will name curry. But every spiced dish is not a curry, and curry is not just one dish. It embraces a whole range of dishes, each distinctly different according to the spices and herbs used in varying combinations. This clever use of spices is the outstanding feature of Indian cookery. Subtle or pungent, hot or mild, there is something to suit every palate.

Rice is the staple food in some provinces of India, while in others the daily bread is the chapati, made from whole wheat flour. These round, flat discs are cooked on a hot griddle for a few minutes only.

In India, religions impose many food taboos. Muslims will not eat pork. Hindus will not eat beef. Buddhists will not take life and so will not even crack an egg. Many are vegetarians. Whatever their rules in regard to diet, most Indians obey them implicitly.

Indian vegetarian cooking is in a class by itself. It includes superb curries; barthas (purées) and bhajis (fried vegetables); bhajias (fritters) and vadais (crisp rissoles of lentils and peas); home-made bread with spiced vegetable fillings; rich sweetmeats made with vegetables and fruits, others made with lentil flour and still others based on milk and clarified butter. All are flavoured with spices and are rich with almonds and pistachio nuts.

Many Indians eat with their fingers, even at formal meals, using the right hand only. Done expertly, it is neat and graceful. When eating Indian breads, there is no other way. Tear off a piece of chapati or paratha, use it to scoop up the accompaniment, fold over neatly and place in the mouth. No trick to it.

When eating rice and curry, however, many do prefer to use a dessertspoon and fork. Rice is served first in the centre of the plate. Then various curries and accompaniments are placed around it. The rice is the base against which curries may be savoured, and only one curry should be tasted with each mouthful of rice.

The recipes that follow merely scratch the surface of India's richly varied cuisine. But if you cook and enjoy these dishes, they will have opened the door to a whole new world of flavour.

# chapatis

Flat discs of unleavened wholemeal bread, with a delightful flavour and chewy texture.

**Yield: 20-24**

**3 cups fine wholemeal flour or roti flour**

**1 teaspoon salt**

**1 tablespoon ghee or oil, optional**

**1 cup lukewarm water**

Place wholemeal flour in a mixing bowl, reserve approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for rolling the chapatis. Mix salt through the flour in the bowl, then rub in ghee or add oil, if used. Add water all at once and mix to a fairly soft dough. Knead dough for at least 10 minutes. (The more it is kneaded, the lighter the bread will be.) Form dough into a ball, cover with clear plastic and stand for 1 hour or longer. (Dough wrapped in clear plastic and left overnight makes very light and tender chapatis.)

Shape dough into balls about the size of a large walnut. Roll out each one on a lightly floured board (using reserved wholemeal flour) to a circular shape, as thin as a French crêpe. After rolling out chapatis, heat a griddle plate or heavy based frying pan until very hot. Place chapati on griddle and leave for about 1 minute. Turn and cook other side a further minute. Press lightly around the edges of the chapati with a folded tea towel or with an egg slice. This encourages bubbles to form and makes the chapatis light. As they are cooked, wrap in a clean tea towel until all are ready. Serve immediately with butter, dry curries or vegetable dishes.

# puris

(pronounced poo-rees)

**Deep Fried Wholemeal Bread**

Proceed as for chapatis (see above). When all the dough is rolled out, heat approximately 2.5 cm (1-inch) of oil in a deep frying pan. When a faint haze rises from the oil, fry puris, one at a time, over a moderate heat. Spoon hot oil continually over the cooking puri until it puffs and swells. Turn over and fry other side in the same way. When both sides are pale golden brown, drain on absorbent paper.

Serve immediately with curries and bhajis.

# parathas

## Flaky Wholemeal Bread

Probably the favourite variety of Indian bread, parathas are rich, flaky and deliciously flavoured with ghee; kebabs and parathas is a combination which is quite famous. A dear old friend of my grandmother taught me her method of rolling and folding the parathas — the easiest and most successful one I've tried.

**Yield: 12-14**

**1½ cups fine wholemeal flour**  
**1½ cups plain white flour or roti flour**  
**1½ teaspoons salt**  
**1 cup water**  
**8 tablespoons ghee**

Sieve wholemeal flour, white flour and salt into a mixing bowl and rub in 1 tablespoon of the ghee. Add water, mix and knead dough as for Chapatis (see page 11). Cover dough with clear plastic and stand aside for 1 hour.

Divide dough into 12-14 equal portions and roll each into a smooth ball. Melt ghee over a low heat and allow to cool. Roll each ball of dough on a lightly floured board into a very thin circular shape. Pour 2 teaspoons of the melted ghee in the centre of each and spread lightly with the hand. With a knife, make a cut from the centre of each circle to the outer edge. Starting at the cut edge, roll the dough closely into a cone shape. Pick it up, press the apex of the cone and the base towards each other and flatten slightly. You will now have a small, roughly circular lump of dough again. Picture facing title page shows how this is done.

Lightly flour the board again and roll out the dough very gently, taking care not to press too hard and let the air out at the edges. The parathas should be as round as possible, but not as thinly rolled as the first time.

Cook on a hot griddle liberally greased with extra ghee, turning parathas and spreading with more ghee, until they are golden brown. Serve hot with grilled kebabs, Onion Sambal (see page 25) and Podina Chatni (see page 24).

*Note:* 3 cups roti flour may be used instead of the wholemeal and plain flour.

# pilau

Rice cooked in stock with spices.

**Serves:** 4-5

1 x 1 kg (2 lb) chicken  
4 cardamom pods  
10 peppercorns  
4½ teaspoons salt  
1 onion  
3 cloves  
2½ cups long grain rice  
5 tablespoons ghee  
1 large onion, finely sliced  
¼ teaspoon saffron strands, or 1/8 teaspoon powdered saffron  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
½ teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger  
½ teaspoon garam masala  
½ teaspoon ground cardamom  
3 tablespoons rose water  
¼ cup sultanas  
¼ cup fried almonds  
1 cup hot cooked peas  
4 hard-boiled eggs

Make a strong, well-flavoured chicken stock by simmering chicken in water to cover with cardamom pods, peppercorns, 2 teaspoons salt, and the onion stuck with cloves. Simmer for approximately 2 hours. Cool slightly, strain stock and measure 4 cups. Remove chicken meat from bones, cut into bite-size pieces and set aside. (If time does not permit the making of home-made stock, combine 4 cups of boiling water and 4 large chicken stock cubes, mix together thoroughly.)

Wash rice thoroughly in water, drain in a colander and allow to dry for at least 1 hour. Heat ghee in a large saucepan and fry sliced onion until golden. Add saffron, garlic and ginger and fry for 1 minute, stirring. Add rice and fry 5 minutes longer over a moderate heat, stirring with a slotted metal spoon. (This prevents breaking the long delicate grains of rice which add so much to the appearance of this dish.) Add hot stock, garam masala, cardamom, remaining salt, rose water, sultanas and reserved chicken pieces, stir well. Cover pan with a tightly fitting lid and cook over a very low heat for 20 minutes. Do not uncover saucepan or stir rice during cooking time.

When rice is cooked, remove from heat and stand, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Fluff up rice gently with a fork and place in a serving dish, again using a slotted metal spoon. Garnish with fried almonds, hot cooked peas and eggs cut in halves.

# mogul biriani

Biriani is a very rich pilau, usually layered with a spicy mutton or chicken savoury mixture and steamed very gently so that the flavours blend while the rice and meat remain in separate layers.

It is the masterpiece of many Eastern cooks and the central dish at festive dinners. Here is a recipe for a lamb biriani, suitable for serving at a party.

**Serves:** 12-15

**Cooking time:** 20-30 minutes

**Oven temperature:** 160-170°C (325-350°F)

1 x 2 kg (4 lb) leg of lamb, boned  
5 tablespoons ghee  
3 large onions, sliced  
6 cloves garlic, chopped  
1½ tablespoons finely chopped fresh ginger  
6 tablespoons mild curry powder  
4 teaspoons salt  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 teaspoon garam masala  
1 teaspoon ground cardamom  
2 fresh chillies  
½ cup chopped mint  
500 g (1 lb) ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander leaves or mint  
Pilau (see page 13)  
1 tablespoon extra ghee

Trim all excess fat from lamb and cut lean lamb into large cubes. Heat ghee in a saucepan and fry the onion, garlic and ginger until soft and golden. Add curry powder and fry 1 minute longer, then add salt and lemon juice. Add cubed lamb and fry, stirring constantly, until it is thoroughly coated with the spice mixture. Add garam masala, cardamom, whole chillies, mint and tomato.

Cover and cook over a very low heat for approximately 1 hour, stirring occasionally. When lamb is tender and gravy very thick and almost dry, turn off heat and remove whole chillies. Sprinkle with chopped coriander.

*Pilau:* (See page 13.) Double all quantities and leave cooking times the same. Make a strong stock substituting 2-3 lamb shanks for chicken. Measure 8 cups stock.

When pilau is cooked, allow to cool slightly. Melt extra ghee in a large ovenproof casserole and put in one-third of the pilau, packing it in lightly. Spread half the lamb savoury over, taking it right to the edges of the casserole. Cover with half the remaining pilau. Repeat layers. Put lid on casserole and place in a moderately slow oven for 20-30 minutes.

To serve, garnish as for pilau.

For special occasions, add blanched pistachio nuts and edible silver leaf to the garnish in traditional Indian style.



# kitchrī

## Savoury Rice and Lentils

Serves: 4

1 cup long grain rice  
1 cup red lentils  
2½ tablespoons ghee or butter  
2 large onions, finely sliced  
4 cups hot water  
2½ teaspoons salt  
1½ teaspoons garam masala

Wash rice and drain well. Wash lentils well, removing any that float to the surface, then drain thoroughly.

Heat ghee in a saucepan and fry onion gently until golden brown. Remove half the fried onion and reserve. Add rice and lentils to pan and fry, stirring constantly, for approximately 3 minutes. Add hot water, salt and garam masala. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer over a very low heat for 20-25 minutes or until rice and lentils are cooked. Do not lift the lid or stir during cooking time.

Serve hot, garnished with the reserved fried onion.

# kofta curry

## Meatball Curry

This is one of the tastiest curries. Seasonings are mixed in the meatballs which are then cooked in a spicy gravy.

**Serves: 6**

### Koftas:

500 g (1 lb) finely minced lamb or beef  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
¼ teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger  
1 fresh green or red chilli, seeded and finely chopped  
1½ teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon garam masala  
1 egg, well beaten  
oil for deep frying

### Gravy:

2 tablespoons ghee or oil  
2 medium onions, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh ginger  
1 teaspoon ground turmeric  
1 teaspoon garam masala  
1 teaspoon chilli powder, optional  
2 ripe tomatoes, chopped  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander or mint

*Koftas:* Mix minced meat, onion, garlic, ginger, chilli, coriander, salt and garam masala together. Shape into balls the size of small walnuts. Dip in beaten egg and deep fry in hot oil until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper.

*Gravy:* In a large heavy saucepan, heat ghee and fry onion, garlic and ginger until soft and golden. Add turmeric, garam masala and chilli powder if used and stir for 1 minute. Add tomato, salt, lemon juice and stir well. Add koftas. Cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes or until gravy is thick. Add chopped coriander for last 5 minutes of cooking time. Serve with boiled rice, vegetable curries and other accompaniments.