

## Ashia's Table: Family Recipes from India and Beyond

**Ashia Ismail-Singer**

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Ashia Ismail-Singer's vibrant cookbook shares Indian recipes that are influenced and intensified by family and regional tastes.

Part of Ismail-Singer's singular cultural history, these dishes evince an adventurous spirit. Her Indian grandparents were devout and enterprising Memon Muslims, who, "never afraid to migrate and progress," traveled to Africa to pursue new business interests. Born in Malawi, she emigrated to the United Kingdom as a child. A sense of wanderlust later compelled Ismail-Singer to move to New Zealand, where she has lived since 1997.

*Ashia's Table* includes the standards of Indian cooking, including chutneys, samosas, and curries. There is introductory ingredient and spice information, along with information on making the often-used ghee, or clarified butter. Preparing naan, paratha, and roti breads is explained, accompanied by step-by-step photographs.

Beyond these flavorful Indian offerings are Spicy Shepherd's Pie, Cassava Fries, and a Middle Eastern-inspired eggplant salad made by Ismail-Singer's sister, Farha. Her other sister, Nini, contributes a nutty chicken dish that's rich with pistachios, almonds, cashews, tomatoes, and cream. There is a recipe for traditional raita, or cucumber-yogurt sauce, too, as well as an intriguing mango variation.

*Ashia's Table* also features enticing desserts, like chocolate cardamom pudding, beet halva, and a delectable, sticky caramel-date cake. Sweet basmati rice with raisins and cherries is served at Memon weddings, and the healing Hyder Kheer is a turmeric latte, fragrant with honey and cinnamon, and often concocted "at the first sign of a cold."

Welcoming and informative, *Ashia's Table* stresses that Indian cooking shouldn't seem complicated or intimidating. Engaging memoir elements wend in, and the text is brightened with family snapshots.

An elegant collection of recipes that's suited to pass on to next generations, *Ashia's Table* brings new elements to Indian cuisine, preserving traditions while "creating food that spans generations, geography, and ethnicity."

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