

The Café Spice Cookbook: 84 Quick and Easy Indian Recipes for Everyday Meals

Hari Nayak

Jack Turkel, Photographer

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It wasn't until Indian-born chef Hari Nayak arrived in New York that he had his first taste of Chicken Tikka Masala, yet this dish is the one many Westerners associate with Indian cuisine. While his version of this Anglo-Indian classic is included in *The Café Spice Cookbook* (and is the most popular menu item at his Café Spice restaurant), Nayak also introduces a heady variety of regional dishes. There are fish and seafood recipes from coastal Kerala, Steamed Yogurt Pudding inspired by traditional Bengali sweets, and chutneys, breads, soups, salads, and beverages from all over the Indian subcontinent.

Indian food is often a food photographer's nightmare. It's notoriously difficult to photograph well, consisting as it does of so many layers of spices and other small ingredients enveloped in brownish sauces. Photographer Jack Turkel is to be commended here for his technical prowess and evocative photos shot through with natural light and styled with rustic tableware and settings.

All of Nayak's recipes are tailored for the American home cook. Armed with his short introduction to a few simple traditional Indian cooking techniques, ingredients, and preparation of basic spice blends, it is easy to replicate these tasty Indian dishes in short order.

Ready, set, naan.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (Summer 2015)

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