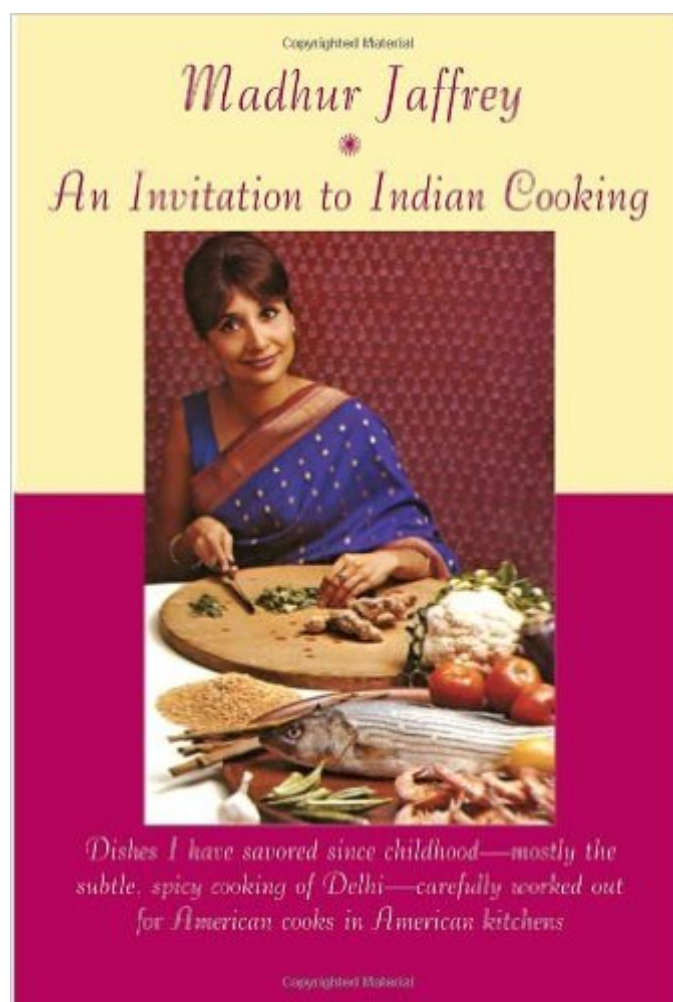


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An Invitation To Indian Cooking



Synopsis

^ ^ ^ This seminal book, originally published in 1973, introduced the richly fascinating cuisine of India to America "and changed the face of American cooking. Now, as Indian food enjoys an upsurge of popularity in the United States, a whole new generation of readers and cooks will find all they need to know about Indian cooking in Madhur Jaffrey's wonderful book. ^ ^ ^ Jaffrey was prompted to become a cook by her nostalgia for the tastes of her Delhi childhood, but she learned to cook on her own, in a Western kitchen. So she is particularly skillful at conveying the techniques of Indian cooking, at describing the exact taste and texture of a dish. The many readers who have discovered her inspiring book over the years have found it deeply rewarding, with recipes for appetizers, soups, vegetables, meats, poultry, fish, chutneys, breads, desserts, even leftovers, all carefully worked out in American measurements and ingredients for American kitchens. ^ ^ ^ This landmark of cookery makes clear just how extraordinarily subtle, varied, and exciting Indian food can be, and how you can produce authentic dishes in your own kitchen. From formal recipes for parties to the leisurely projects of making dals, pickles, and relishes, this "invitation" to Indian cooking has proved completely irresistible. ^ ^ ^ In 2006, the James Beard Foundation ushered this book into its Cookbook Hall of Fame.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Knopf; unknown edition (April 19, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375712119

ISBN-13: 978-0375712111

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars ^ ^ See all reviews ^ (77 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #151,440 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in ^ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Asian Cooking > Indian #127 in ^ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking by Ingredient > Herbs, Spices & Condiments #1861 in ^ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International

Customer Reviews

This is really an excellent cookbook. I've used it for around 20 years, and the pages are well-stained. The nice thing is that the recipes are truly adapted to American kitchens, which is not

always true for Indian cookbooks. And the recipes themselves are delicious. I have turned many friends on to Indian cooking through this book, some of whom have gone out & bought their own copies. A woman- from India- with whom I work copied several recipes, then decided she needed her own copy of the book. There is explanation of Indian customs and cooking methods, also, in a breezy style that is almost conversational. Thorough, interesting, and best of all-- tasty!

Fifteen years ago I bought *An Invitation to Indian Cooking* when Indian food was still hard to find. This was my first Indian cookbook and is still my favorite. Jaffrey explains the unusual (for an American) techniques and leads you through the recipes so carefully that you will lift the lid of the pot and smell the wonderful fragrance of Indian food with amazement! Just do as she says and you will have delicious Indian meals. I have served some of her recipes at parties and received wonderful compliments, even from people who thought they wouldn't like such food. I'm on my second copy of this book -- the only cookbook where that is the case! It's the best!

We have a 1992 Tiger Books edition (UK), *The Madhur Jaffrey Cookbook*. This book combines *Invitation to Indian Cooking* and *Eastern Vegetarian Cooking* -- it's nearly a thousand pages long! We use it almost every day. What I like best about it are the illustrations, the detailed descriptions of the cooking techniques and ingredients (I'm always overwhelmed with my own ignorance at those packets of strange things in an asian grocer!) -- and effusive way she describes the context in which she discovered many of the recipes and how they're eaten in different parts of India and Asia. Oh, and the recipes make for some incredibly good food. Although we're not vegetarians, we've found that the wide variety of vegetable dishes make for a more interesting way of getting enough vegetables, and having less and less meat in our diets--very good for the health, as are the spices!

I bought this book when it came out in paperback for the first time. It cost all of \$3.95, so that should give you an idea of how long ago that was. I have used it and loved it ever since. I've bought other Indian and Asian cookbooks, including some by Jaffrey, but this one remains my favorite. So why is "*An Invitation to Indian Cooking*" so special? For one thing, the fact that it's written to be used by "American cooks in American kitchens" doesn't mean that the recipes have been modified to death. Jaffrey includes an extensive section on spices and a preliminary introduction on Indian cooking in general. If you read these, you come away with a basic understanding of Indian cooking techniques. That may not sound so unusual today, but it was, back in the early 1970s when this book first came out. There are no pretty pictures in this cookbook, but Jaffrey provides very detailed instructions in

her recipes as to what the food is supposed to look like at each stage. This really helps if you're not familiar with Indian cooking. Her recipe headnotes and endnotes give helpful suggestions as to what to serve the dishes with and possible variations. As far as I'm concerned, "An Invitation to Indian Cooking" is a true classic.

I'm from Delhi myself, and I grew up with excellent North Indian cooking every day of my life. This is the cookbook that I recommend to my friends. Indian cooking is so very different from region to region that not every recipe is how I myself would make it ("kheer," for example, varies tremendously throughout India and though I make it completely differently from Jaffrey, her recipe is still tasty). But they're all good, they're all authentic, and they're all very easy to follow. I disagree with the person who said this is Americanized Indian cooking -- I think this is extremely genuine North Indian cooking. It's not South Indian or West Indian or Punjabi, and you can't expect it to be. The only book I use more is Jaffrey's "World-of-the-East Vegetarian Cooking" which is probably my favorite cookbook in the world. But I think this book still is truly the best introduction to Indian cooking, and it's an enjoyable read in its own right (don't miss the "foreword").

After returning from a trip to India, I decided I must learn how to cook the delicious foods that I was able to sample in various regions of that diverse and fascinating country. "An Invitation to Indian Cooking" is the book I bought, and it was clearly a great choice. The book has been very carefully adapted by the author for American kitchens - this in no way "waters down" or "Americanizes" the recipes as some other reviewers falsely assume has been said. The book DOES, deliberately, modify recipes so that they will be authentic despite the differences in the American market (our meats are more tender and have more moisture, for instance, so the methods for browning meat must be different than a cook would use in Delhi). These changes and adaptations are absolutely necessary to assure the dishes will taste and appear as they would in India. Ms. Jaffrey has done a marvelous job and her instructions are not only easy to follow, but the explanations are easy to understand and appreciate. By all means, if you want to try cooking Indian, buy this book - and her others as well.

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