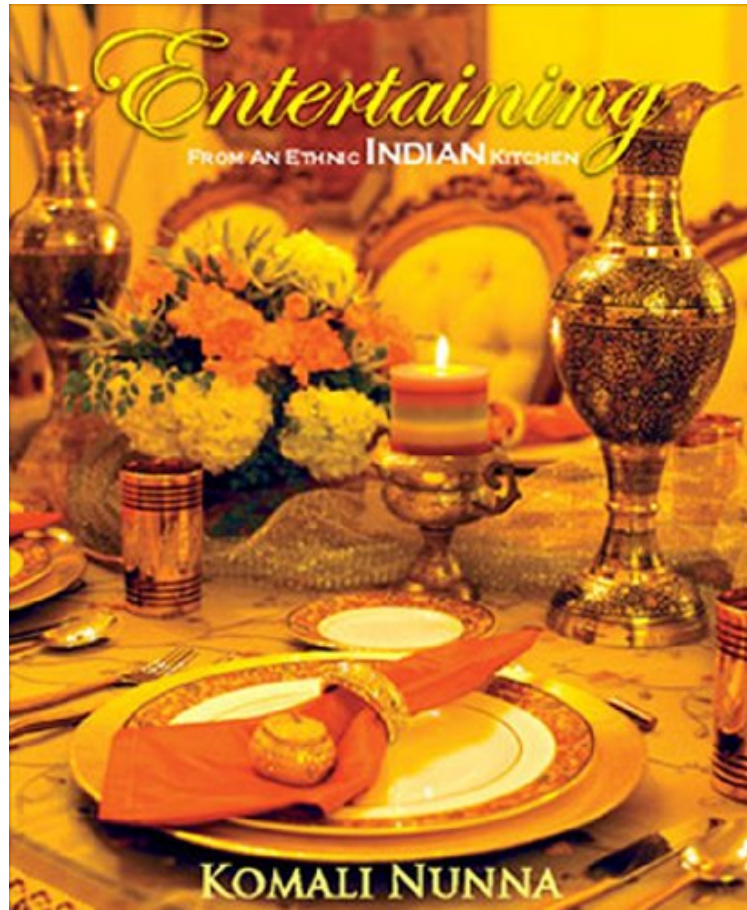


Entertaining From an Ethnic Indian Kitchen

Komali Nunna

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Komali Nunna : Entertaining From an Ethnic Indian Kitchen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Entertaining From an Ethnic Indian Kitchen:

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published or vanity-published books for review in order to manage our in-flow and also to avoid having to toss what are for the most part poorly-written, poorly-printed books. I've seen far too many bad books in my roles as book reviewer, book editor, and now editor-in-chief at different publications to believe that books outside the commercial realm have much to recommend them. But in April of 2010, when I attended the annual Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, I came across a booth staffed by a single person. This is always the sign of a self-published author and I usually avoid any eye or body contact (because I am wearing a press badge) until I can get past. One booth stopped me, however, and it proved to be the author of this book and her husband. Even from a distance I could see what appeared to be a fabulous cover. (I am also a long-time book design judge for a national contest.) Upon opening a sample copy, I proceeded to browse, and discovered, to my absolute delight, one of the most fabulous coffee table-style cookbooks (but with a strong, practical bent) I have ever had the privilege of seeing. (You can bet I bought it--and within five minutes of seeing it.) The family had invested in superb photography, excellent cover and interior designers, copy editors and proofreaders--all the complement a woman who really does cook all these dishes and knows how to share her recipes with those unfamiliar with the cuisine. The book is large, heavy, and the paper used on both the cover and the interior pages is rich and luxurious. It perfectly matches the warm coloration of the photographs and the dishes that often contain a saffron yellow hue. Even the end papers are an extraordinary photograph of the various herbs and spices used in Indian cooking. The title and TOC (Table of Contents) pages are wonderfully designed yet the necessary information is cleanly and clearly presented. The book is divided into the following categories. The Introduction, Elements of Entertaining, and Indian Cuisine parts provide practical information on non-food aspects such as style and design, themes, preparation and planning, invitations, menu, table setting, china and so on. While the author does not insist that you buy special dishes or silver, she does point out that small changes (such as napkins, flowers, or table accessories) are an easy and inexpensive way to change the look of your table. Her discussion of Indian cuisine is only a couple of pages long, yet in that brief space she manages to elucidate the different food choices for different areas and the reasons why those exist. You'll learn why yogurt, pickles and chutneys are important as are papadams and vadiams (wafers). She also offers suggestions for twelve different parties (or feasts) ranging from a casual "Snack Chaat Party" to elegant Christmas and New Year's Eve dinners. Each "party" section begins with opulent pictures showing the setting, food before beginning with the menu itself and the recipes. Since it is summer as I write this, the Barbecue Party seems appropriate to detail. "While barbecuing is a time-honored tradition in America," she writes, "Punjab is the only region in India where tandoor ovens are used to cook meat and bread outdoors." Sound good? It should. Recipes for her outdoor party include Manog Salsa Chips, Meyer Lemon Lemonade, Iced Tea with Saffron and Cardomon (I can personally vouch for this!), Pomegranate Margaritas, and Mango Margaritas. Entrees include Barbecued Whole Fish, Lamb Kabobs, Tamarind Glazed Pork Ribs, Tandoori Chicken, Corn Seekh Kabobs, Paneer and Vegetable Kabobs, Grilled Vegetable Chaat, Grilled Spicy Naan. There are two dessert recipes: Kulfi and Spiced Fruit Salad. One need not (nor would one) make everything, but it is all there. Plus, the recipes are written out extremely well. It begins with the number of servings, then a bulleted list of ingredients in bold, and finally the directions. There is almost always a large, clear photograph of the actual dish so you can see what you are going to get. And the spices are always clearly laid out. If you can make a particular spice like Tamarind Paste, she notes the page on which you will find that recipe. This book is a kind of hybrid, that is, it is both a sensuous gift book and a practical cookbook. Don't hesitate to take this into the kitchen and get spills on it while making its recipes because those splashes will only enhance the look. If you are an adventurous cook (though you need to have some knowledge it is enough to be a "mid-list level cook) you will love this book. I doubt there is any better.

This book is a fusion of Eastern philosophy and Western style. With over 250 photographs and 260 recipes, this is sure to be a favored culinary companion that provides insights into Indian food and culture. It shows how to establish entertaining style through the presentation of foods with a novel trademark touch. Each chapter has full course menus and tips for making any event special. This book is a visual treat that will surely stimulate your taste buds. Entertaining from an Ethnic Indian Kitchen offers a single memorable asset - traditional Indian culinary ideas fused with a charming international flair. This book is a beautiful quilt of "what is" and "what can be", each piece distinctly different from the other. Some ideas are presented with subtle variations whilst others are presented with a dramatic twist. Ideas range from warm, cozy fireplace dinners to elegant formal dining, complete with full course menu selections for any style and simple practical tips on making any event special. This book will establish a memorable impact on one's entertaining style.

About the Author Komali Nunna was born in Southern India and moved to the United States after she got married. She lives in Camarillo, CA with her husband and two children. She is a chemist by profession, and has an enduring passion for cooking, gardening and entertaining. After 25 years of enthusiastically entertaining her guests, she has ventured to