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Masala: Much More Than Just an Indian Cookery Book

Alain Vanden Abeele

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Alain Vanden Abeele : Masala: Much More Than Just an Indian Cookery Book before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Masala: Much More Than Just an Indian Cookery Book:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Suffers from oversimplification By Kat LI stumbled across this book while I was in Omnivore Books in SF and started kicking myself soon after leaving for not purchasing it. Since there really is not much information anywhere on what this book contains, I'll first post the contents, then get into my review. The sections of the book are organized by: Thali, tiffin chaat Masalas Spices herbs Ginger Rice, lentils bread Fruit nuts Chicken eggs Crustaceans shellfish Kerala fish Within those sections, appetizers, starters, soups, meat, fish, vegetarian, desserts, "biscuits", and beverages are jumbled together. The recipe listings fall under these more traditional headings, however these don't completely account for the recipes given under Thalis - in those few pages you'll find things like Dhal fry, Terrine of Oxtail, Tandoori of giant prawns, Pakora with sole, fennel marsh samphire... Appetizers: Goan crab cake Indian meatballs Pinchos of chicken with tamarind Masala dosa Pakora chicken veg. Raita Tuna rilette Spiced cashews Mini-clafoutis of chicken and asparagus curry Veg. samosa Starters: Fried duck

liver with mango, pineapple, sweet curry broth
Marinated salmon
Marinated tiger prawns
Mulligatawny of mussels
Mussels au gratin
Oysters in cucumber jelly
Quick-fried scallops on mango chutney with mango coconut cream
Razor shells in lime-coriander
Scoubidou of sole with tomato and ginger compote in Crecy soup
Soups: Crecy soup with ginger and ginger power
Gazpacho carrot and pumpkin with tumeric pomegranate
Rasam
Soup of coriander with smoked fish
Lentil, lime and tumeric soup
Meat: Anjou pigeon with 3 carrot prep.
Lamb biryani
Chicken tikka masala
Chicken vindaloo
Fried spring chicken with pachadi of beetroot
Indian chicken casserole Flemish style
Kalaan of banana with minced meat and cashew nut bread
Kali dahl with preserved pig's cheeks
Nargisi koftas with thakkali curry
Pork tenderloin filled with cashew, aloo masala mash croquettes, and tumeric gobi
Ragout of vension rogan josh with rice croquettes and beetroot pachadi
Rogan josh
Fish: Avial of root vegetables with squid and salmon
Baingan with tiger prawns and tomato chutney
Eel ras chawal
Molee fish curry of mackerel
Pollichathu of swordfish
Sambhar of monkfish
Thoran of pineapple and white cabbage with Cochin fishburgers
Vegetarian: Aloo chaat
Chapati
Lime rice
puli
hora
Naan
Paratha
Spicy curry of young green beans and ginger
Theeyal of Mechelen asparagus and egg
Uttapam
Desserts: Kulfi of cardamom and nuts
Payasam with caramelized bananas
Pickles of sweet fruit with vadouvan masala
Poached saffron pears
Salad of fresh fruit with ginger cream and chutney
Upama with cinnamon and vanilla
Biscuits: Colonial ginger cake
Crunchy ginger biscuits
Ginger pudding
Muffins of banana, ginger and lime
Turban shapes with cinnamon and garam masala
Beverages: Ginger lemonade
Ginger orangeade
Ginger punch
Ginger tea
Kerala masala coffee
Mango lassi
Salted lassi
*****Review*****
The good: There are some really intriguing recipes in here that I've never seen in other Indian cookbooks (and I have quite a lot). I am excited about the pumpkin soup recipe as well as all the ginger-based recipes. The photography is beautiful, both of the dishes (there seems to be one per dish) and various people/places. Tips are included for some of the recipes, a lot of these concern plating/presentation. The recipe for Rogan Josh makes a pretty good Rogan Josh. The not-so-good: The ingredient lists are in paragraph form, and for me at least, that makes it much more likely that I'll miss something. Several of the recipes that involve meat, like the sole, tandoori prawn, pigeon recipes don't give any kind of measurement for how much meat you should be using. This is a pretty substantial oversight, as obviously the quantity of sauce to prepare, cooking time, etc all vary with the weight thickness of your meat. I guess the authors decide to simplify for the Western world, but uttapam and dosa are not made with wholemeal flour rice flour - they are made by soaking rice and urad dal, and making a batter out of that (at least, that's how I was taught when I went to India and that's how other South Indian cookbooks instruct you in their preparation). This is a very big difference in terms of final taste. Maybe it's similar, or even just as good, but I'm a bit skeptical. The rogan josh is pretty good...but it's not nearly as good as the rogan josh prepared in "the food of india", which is absolutely the best, most consistently delicious cookbook I've ever made Indian food from. I've cooked about 15 different dishes from that, and they've all been phenomenal. I compared the two recipes, and this one is almost exactly the same, except the cooking methods is a little different and this recipe is missing about 4 spices that the other cookbook includes. Somewhat similarly, the naan recipe seems a bit off, and it doesn't include nigella seeds - which "the food of india" does. Those nigella seeds made a big impact on getting my naan to taste authentic, so I'm a bit disappointed not to see them here. Finally, one thing to note, deciliter is a common unit of liquid measurement in this book, so get ready to do some conversions if that's not something you're used to using.

Indian cookbook to end all Indian cookbooks! The Indian word Masala means a 'roasted mixture of herbs and spices'. This cookery book is a delicious mix of traditional recipes from India, Indian recipes with a Western touch, European regional dishes with an Indian twist, and new creations that combine the best of both cuisines. Seasoned to taste with atmospheric sketches and snippets of information on India.

About the Author
Alain Vanden Abeele has been familiar with India for years and has been fascinated not only by the country, but also with its cuisine. This gave him the idea of publishing, together with chef Biju of Malabar House in Cochin, a book of recipes that would make Indian cuisine accessible to every devotee.