

DINER JOURNAL



ISSUE 30
INDIAN SUMMER

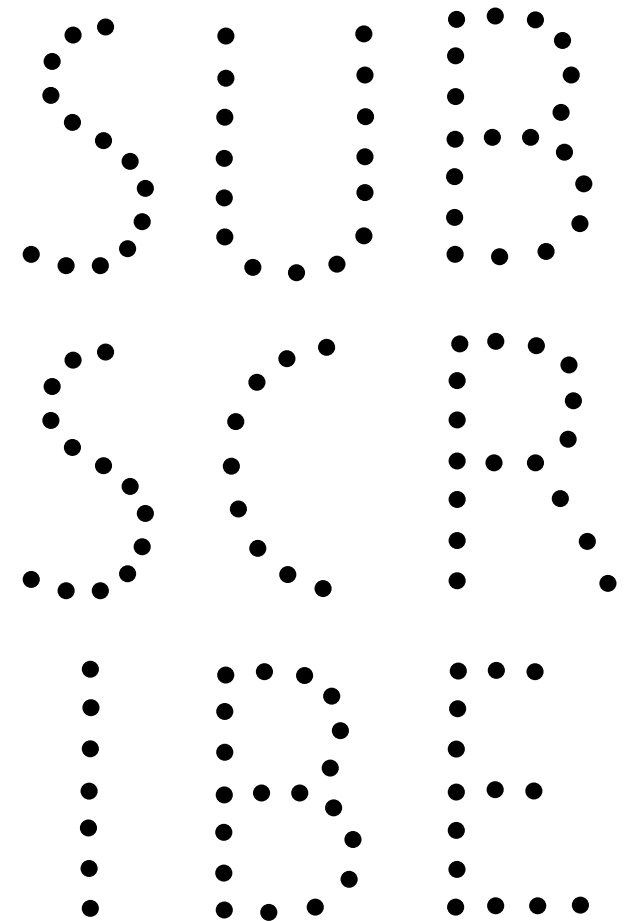
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AN INDIAN SUMMER

Everything is a matter of attention. Love is a matter of attention. Texture. Flavor. Pigment. Void. You wouldn't know it was gone if you didn't go looking. Tangled up in bloom. A bowl of culture. A purple moon.

This is the thirtieth issue of the Diner Journal. We have paid attention at least thirty times. For this Journal we asked friends and family to turn their attention to spice, to the East, and to exploring.

The Journal has never been about knowing. Maybe it's more about wonder? About the unknown? Often I can't imagine it will come together at all. But then I look around and I remember what a gift it is to imagine together. How else does anyone see the sea? -AD

TURNING THIRTY

I spent my thirtieth birthday smoking pork outside of my last apartment in Chicago. I had a party on the sidewalk and in the adjoining alley. My friends played four square, smashed a piñata, and ate Jell-O shots. I ordered commemorative beer cozies through my sister Molli, black with silver lettering; "Millicent Souris, Livin' the Dream since 9/1/1973." All 210 of them, because "that's where the price break came."

Thirty feels like a milestone because we measure milestones in numbers like this, ones that end in zero or five, depending on your numerology. As we age, the decades freak us out. We're always looking to live in the perfect age and stay present, but time continues to pass. There is far too much time left to idealize youth. We run away from youth with every breath. The perfect age is the one you inhabit at this very moment.

Hindsight is cruel, clarity can be harsh, and the passage of time becomes more rapid as it transpires. Blink and a year has gone. Two decades ago, a year was an excruciating length of time. Then again no one told me I had to make a part time job of moisturizing when I turned forty.

What makes it (life) bearable are the people around us. Our friends and communities, our support systems that grow and strengthen over years. It's best to spend our constructed milestones surrounded by these people rather than the dark side. I have done both so consider this a testimony. When you're staring at a hardened twenty-four hour assessment of your accomplishments and failures, you'll need to break the critique up with some love and levity. Otherwise it's far too easy to chalk life up to another night of the same lessons learned over and over again, or even worse, something completely unremarkable.

But look at the names here in this issue, look at all the names here! There are so many contributors in this thirtieth issue of Diner Journal! A gaggle of people, some that have graced the floors, the kitchens or the offices of Diner and Marlow & Sons; some of these people have never even been on the payroll. All of them are family.

Collaboration is the essence of Diner Journal. No one could have predicted when Diner Journal began that this is what Issue Number 30 would look like. Or that it would even exist. Like most things in this life it is not what you intend but what you become. So here we are. This Journal is all circles, light, and togetherness.

-Millicent Souris



PANEER CURRY

KELLY REID

If Wikipedia had been invented in the eighties and you searched “renaissance woman,” you would have seen a picture of my Mum. Her hair would be permed and she’d be wearing a handloomed vest, tight jeans, and big red eyeglasses. She builds. She sketches. She can park a double-wide trailer. She worked from home when we were small, out in her potting shed, throwing ceramic wares for like-minded D.I.Y.-ers at craft fairs across New Zealand.

At one of these fairs, she met a fellow potter and his wife who, being Indian, had cornered the craft fair market on ethnic food and wore colorful traditional dress. Barbara, my Mum, hasn’t met a hue on the color wheel she doesn’t like, so when her two favorite worlds, color and curries, collided, she became a regular at the stall and visited enough times to figure out the secret spices used in each samosa and chutney. I’m not entirely sure what my father thought of this culinary off-ramp, but he ate everything she made, almost always, and with few refusals.

One of my favorite dishes to this day is saag paneer. Not one to stand on ceremony, when I asked Mum for her recipe,* the one she gave me was from the restaurant she now owns named Bach on Breakwater.** It is a New Zealand comfort food restaurant on Breakwater Bay. Her recipe is for pumpkin paneer curry. I spun it further and substituted sweet potato. I feel like you can’t get a reliable sugar pumpkin these days.***

Making the paneer was the most intriguing for me, like the time we made hokey pokey**** in science class. It had this very technical, science feel to it. One minute you are calmly stirring your milk, then you add the vinegar, and huzzah, it turns into something else completely different before your very eyes. Cheese! But damn, what a huge amount of milk and cream for such a relatively small yield. I mean, we had a house cow. I don’t know what regular people do.

* Mum’s restaurant is a beachside spot in the small city of New Plymouth. Her recipe called for measurements in metric and also dessert spoons and latte cups. I assume the chefs are about as careless as I was at eighteen (well-seasoned staff is hard to come by, by the Bay.) Her “traditional” measuring equipment went missing long ago. I had to try to remember how big said items were to translate it, as well as taste and adjust as I went.

** Bach, pronounced “batch,” means a small, super-basic beachside holiday home, made of inexpensive building supplies and furnished with leftovers and extras from your real home.

*** Someone #tbt me to 2005 and tell me I’m not turning into my mother, with comments like that.

**** Hokey pokey is caramelized white sugar and golden syrup that has baking soda added, which causes it to expand rapidly. You stir furiously to combine before it burns and then pour it out to set. A woman-made honeycomb. I don’t remember the chemical lesson we were meant to glean that day, but the metamorphosis, and the name, always stuck with me.

PANEER

5 cups whole milk

¼ cup cream

¼ cup white distilled vinegar or lemon juice

Heat the milk and cream over low-medium heat until it just begins to simmer. Turn off the heat and pour in the vinegar; it’ll split and look a hot mess. Stir it to combine; it will look coagulated. Line a colander with a damp cheesecloth and carefully pour the hot curds and whey into it. Rinse the curds in cold water, then draw up the corners and form into a ball. Tie your ends up to the kitchen faucet and let gravity drain the excess liquid out for about 20 minutes. With the cheesecloth, press and pack the curds into a disc shape, about an inch thick. Place the disc, cheesecloth and all, on a plate; place another plate on top; and weigh it down with something heavy. A brick or cast-iron pan works well if you have it. If you’re in charge of dinner, this can be done in as little time as 2 hours, but if you have to be somewhere, it’s fine to leave it in the fridge overnight. Then BAM! You just made some cheese.

SWEET POTATO CURRY

2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed

½ large onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 thumb of ginger, peeled and finely minced

extra-virgin olive oil

3 T red curry paste

1 t turmeric

2 t cumin

2 t coriander

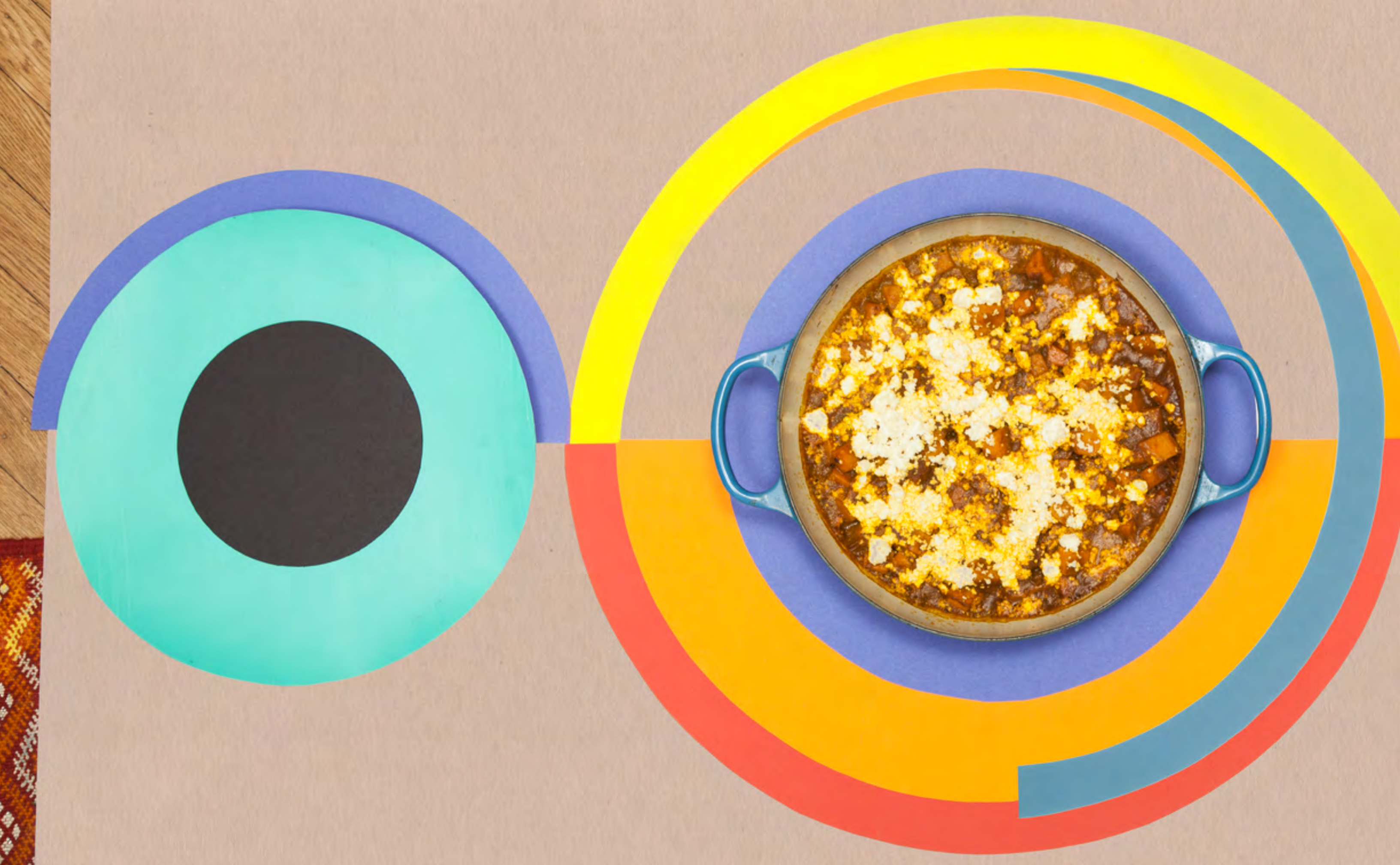
1 T + 1 t tomato paste

1 can coconut milk

½ cup vegetable stock

1 bunch cilantro, chopped

Boil the cubed sweet potatoes with a dash of salt until just cooked, drain, and set aside. Sauté the onion, garlic, and ginger with a heavy-handed glug of extra-virgin olive oil on a low-medium heat until the onion has softened, then add the curry paste, turmeric, cumin, and coriander, and stir well to avoid it catching. Add the tomato paste and stir to combine. Turn up the heat to medium-high, pour the coconut milk and stock in and bring to a boil and season to taste. Lastly combine your sweet potatoes and curry together and return to medium heat, stirring for a couple of minutes to let everything get acquainted. Remove from the heat. Crumble the paneer into the curry and serve immediately. Garnish with cilantro.



CURRIED TUNA

CAROLYN BANE

Before I started cooking professionally, I worked way the fuck out in Queens, at a job that made me miserable. It's only redeeming quality was its proximity to empanadas, hand-pulled noodles, huge Italian sandwiches, Korean BBQ, the best hummus and Israeli pickles, Tamarind rice, and curry and beers on Friday. I went to Indian markets and came home with big bags of black mustard and fenugreek seeds that remained forever sealed in my kitchen cabinet. I knew my culinary limits, so I picked up **Quick and Easy Indian Cooking** by Madhur Jaffrey. To be honest, what drew me to the curried tuna recipe was probably that I had a lonely old knob of ginger rolling around my fridge, and little else. The results were spicy and tasty, and I made it several times after, sometimes missing this or that ingredient.

I tried to recall anything else I cooked during the years I lived next to Puccio Marble & Onyx. I made a steak with Gorgonzola sauce for a new boyfriend who sneezed a lot and then told me he was allergic to dairy. For a New Year's party, I cooked and picked dozens of crabs for crab cakes while sitting on newspapers on the kitchen floor. My fingers were killing me by the end and I thought, **WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST BUY THE CANNED STUFF?** Remembering this time in my life makes me a little melancholy, and tuna curry sounds like a weird thing best eaten alone, but making this again for the first time in years, I was heartened to find that it is actually delicious and perfectly worthy of sharing. This recipe is adapted from Madhur Jaffrey's.

- 1 T (or more) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced into half-moons
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 t curry powder (Jaffrey calls for Bolst's, but anything works)
- 6-oz. can good quality tuna, packed in oil
- ½ hot green chile, seeds intact, thinly sliced
- ½-inch piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 T cilantro, finely chopped
- salt
- black pepper

Put the oil in a frying pan and set over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onion and garlic. Stir and fry until the onion begins to brown. Add the curry powder, stirring to distribute. Add the tuna and its oil, breaking it up into chunks. Add in the green chile, ginger, and cilantro, and lower the heat. Stir. Taste for salt, adding more if needed. Crack in a bunch of black pepper. Mix well. Remove from heat. Serve at room temperature or cold. For guests, make a nice open-faced sandwich on thin slices of toasted sourdough. Or in the spirit of using whatever's in the fridge, go for your old tortillas, warm them up, and voilà, you can relax solo, with a delicious fusion taco. You're welcome.



WITHOUT A TANDOOR, CHICKEN

JAKE LINDEMAN

After long hours working in a restaurant or on a photo shoot, I tend to get home quite late, and the thought of eating another bodega sandwich (see Diner Journal 29) became less appealing over time. This chicken is something I make in a large batch at the start of a week, and eat pretty much every night. I never seem to tire of it and it has evolved over time, mostly with the addition of more spices and dialing in the techniques. Frank Reed, my roommate and sous chef at Roman's, started buying more and stranger spices to stock our pantry which has inspired me. The actual recipe is a bastardization of many different techniques that I have picked up from magazines or TV cooking shows. Its authenticity is certainly questionable, but this recipe is really about the stuff that I like and want to eat after working an eighteen-hour day. I understand that chicken skin is flavorful but, in this stew, it tends to float off and away, so I prefer skinless here. Save the skin for schmaltz.

8 garlic cloves, chopped	1 t fennel seed
5-inch knob ginger, peeled and chopped	cinnamon stick, don't grind
½ cup yogurt	3 cardamom pods, don't grind
2 t salt	1 onion
1 t smoked paprika	2 T butter
1 t turmeric	2 T neutral oil
2 T white vinegar	2½ T turmeric
¼ cup neutral oil	2 T chile powder
6 chicken thighs, bone-in and skinless	14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
2 T black pepper	2 cups water
2 T coriander	salt
1 T + 1 t cumin seeds	yogurt

For the marinade, smash the garlic and ginger to a paste in a mortar and pestle. Mix into a bowl with the yogurt, salt, paprika, turmeric, white vinegar, and neutral oil. It should look and taste similar to a tangy BBQ sauce. Toss the chicken in the marinade. Refrigerate for a couple of hours.

Gather your spices. Toast the black pepper, coriander, cumin seed, and fennel seed in a skillet, swirling a bit, until fragrant. Let cool for a minute, then grind it to a powder in a spice grinder. Set aside. Transfer the onion to a blender and blend to a paste. Add the butter and oil to a pan and fry the onion until a little color develops, about 10 minutes. Then add the spices, stirring to bloom, including the turmeric and chili powder. Add 2 tablespoons of the remaining garlic and ginger paste and stir to combine. Add tomato and water to deglaze the pan. Bring to a simmer. Check seasoning. Add salt. This is going to reduce, so don't season too strongly.

Sear the chicken in a cast iron pan at very high heat to get a little char, then slip the thighs into the simmering pot. Cook for about two hours. Remove the thighs. Pull the meat from the bone and return the meat to the pot. Rewarm and stir in the yogurt.

I make this in a big batch so I can eat butter chicken all week. Make a big pot of rice, too. When ready to eat, get a small pan, put as much curry as you want into it, and add just a little milk to thin it out, then add the rice and set over high heat. Stir it vigorously. As it starts to reduce, the rice warms, so you end up with the perfect ratio of rice and curry. The sauce at that point gets a real silkiness and clings to each grain of rice. It's almost like a thick porridge, or a curried risotto. Always add a big dollop of yogurt on top.





THE BUTCHER'S CABBAGE

LEE DESROSIERS

What I find fascinating about Indian cuisine is the way it evokes a heartiness in vegetables that we tend to attribute only to meat. Indian techniques employ much more depth than, say, the hilarious rebranding of vegetables, like **cauliflower steak**. India has more vegetarians than in any other country. Vegetables need to be the satisfying center of a meal.

Cooking at home for me centers around vegetables. As a part of my job butchering whole animals at Reynard, I eat meat all day, often raw. When I cook dinner, I am seeking balance in my diet. I've adapted this recipe from Julie Sahni's **Classic Indian Cooking**. It follows the basic principles of toasting spices and infusing the flavors into the vegetable by steaming it in its own liquid. The resulting flavors are always satisfying.

This recipe champions the ubiquitous white cabbage, but if you can get your hands on kohlrabi use it. Kohlrabi sliced into medallions in this dish is most delicious.

1 small head white cabbage, grated on a box grater

or 2 peeled kohlrabi, cut into ½-inch rounds

4 T coconut oil

1½ t coriander

1 t black mustard seeds

8 curry leaves

1½ T ginger, peeled and grated

1 shallot, thinly sliced

1 small green chile, thinly sliced

½ t turmeric

¼ cup water

1 t lemon juice

Set up all the ingredients in small bowls or ramekins since the order in which they are added is crucial and done in rapid succession.

In a large lidded saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add mustard and coriander seeds and reduce heat to medium. Add curry leaves and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Add chiles and stir until fragrant, also about 15 seconds. Add shallot and ginger and cook, stirring constantly, until slightly softened, about 1 minute. In quick succession, add the turmeric and stir vigorously to ensure the spices don't burn, but the oil turns yellow, about 10 seconds. Add the cabbage and salt and stir-fry until it just starts to wilt, about 1 minute. Add water. Put the lid on and let the cabbage cook, stirring occasionally, until wilted, 7 to 10 minutes. Remove the lid and turn the heat up to reduce the liquid until it coats the vegetables and not the pan. Add lemon juice and a little more oil if the cabbage looks a little dry.

CALDIN

ANDY ALEXANDRE

I love foods that are colorful. Stewed black beans with sliced garlic. Scallions and coconut milk, served with a steaming bowl of white rice. Hummus with roasted cremini mushrooms, pine nuts, and parsley. A spring vegetable salad made from grilled English peas and radishes, served with paneer, toasted cumin seeds, chili flakes, and pea leaves. When I am lucky enough to eat these foods, I always think of the many other people who could be eating the exact same thing or something closely related and where they might be at that particular moment. A mother and daughter in Jacmel, Haiti, could be preparing beans the same way as I am, or are they muddling the scallions to increase flavor? They could be grating a coconut and squeezing it to extract the milk instead of using canned milk. Would they be shucking black beans that they grew, or were the beans bought from a market a few hours before?

Caldin is a dish that originates from India. I learned the recipe during my apprenticeship at Tabla, in Manhattan. Over the years I have altered the original recipe and added a few ingredients that I love and almost always have on hand: cashews for their mildly sweet flavor and green cardamom pod for its floral aroma. I also find that pureeing the cauliflower scraps and adding them to the Caldin gives the dish a thicker, smoother consistency and can be then eaten on its own, or served with a variety of side dishes such as rice, naan, or lachha paratha. It can then easily be turned into a small feast.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 medium cauliflower | ½ T turmeric |
| 4 T extra-virgin olive oil | 1 T black peppercorns, ground |
| 1 Spanish onion, sliced | 1½ quarts water (or vegetable stock) |
| 4 cloves garlic, minced | 1 cup coconut milk |
| 2-inch piece ginger, minced | salt, to taste |
| 1 green cardamom pod | ¼ cup cashews, toasted |
| 2 cloves | 1 lime, cut into wedges |
| 1 t cumin | cilantro leaves |

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. Cut the cauliflower from its core and break it down into florets, the larger the better. Chop the core roughly and set aside. Add the oil to a medium-size pot over low heat and put in the whole spices, except for the turmeric. Wait until the spices have bloomed and become aromatic, about 3 minutes or so. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 2 minutes. Then add the onions and cauliflower core and any small pieces of cauliflower that may have fallen off. Sweat these vegetables for another 5 minutes, then add about a tablespoon of salt, the water, and coconut milk. Cover the caldin and simmer for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, season the cauliflower florets with salt and pepper. And put into a preheated oven at 450 degrees to roast for 5 to 7 minutes. Set aside when done. Lightly toast the cashews.

Check the simmering caldin after 10 minutes and remove from the heat. Puree in a blender until smooth. This process should be done in two batches. To serve, ladle the finished caldin in a bowl and add some roasted pieces of cauliflower and cashew. Garnish with slices of fresh lime and cilantro.





SARSON KA SAAG

NICK PERKINS

I spent the last wintery months of this year braising, long-cooking, and marinating hearty greens. It's not something that I've always gravitated toward. In the past I've been much more likely to adjust the way greens are dressed: using a heavier Caesar dressing for large bitter greens or marinating and bruising greens with nuts and lots of vinegar to break down and soften a batch of sturdy kale. But braising greens has tremendous utility. In addition to consolidating and softening tougher leaves, it's a great way to make use of the whole head of lettuce. Take escarole, for example. The innermost white and yellow leaves are the crunchiest and tenderest, and just the right amount of bitter. These are the makings of an impeccable salad, and their perfection is fleeting from the moment they leave the ground, so it is best to eat them immediately. The outer layers however are tougher—best to braise or marinate for another day.

When faced with the challenge of exploring an Indian dish, I quickly landed on sarson ka saag or "saag made with mustard greens," from the north, in the Punjab region. There are countless variations, but the central tenet is that the greens be long-cooked, until they are soft and nearly falling apart. I use a lot of onions here to impart sweetness and body.

7-8 medium-size garlic cloves, smashed	2 T cornmeal
2-inch piece ginger, diced	salt, to taste
olive oil	1 t cumin
3 red onions, diced + more for frying	1 t coriander
1 large bunch mustard greens	1 t turmeric
2 large bunches spinach	1 t sweet chili powder

Toast the garlic and ginger in a pan on low heat with a generous bit of olive oil, deglaze with red onions, and mix until melted and sweet. Meanwhile, dump mustard greens and spinach into boiling water and let cook for a minute or two until soft. Scoop greens out with a strainer, let drain for a minute, then chop roughly. Add to the softened onions and mix.

Transfer greens, onions, garlic and ginger to a nice thick-bottomed medium sized pot. Make sure your flame is low. Move greens often with a wooden spoon. Sprinkle in cornmeal. You might need to add a bit of water as it cooks. Don't let it stick. Add salt and other spices, to taste. I use about a teaspoon of each. Cook for about an hour, but it's really up to you at this point.

To finish, shallow fry onions in olive oil, until they are just crunchy. Divide the sarson ka saag among bowls and sprinkle with fried onion, chili, and turmeric for color. You can add a pour of olive oil, or just as easily finish your greens with a big dollop of yogurt, or a bit of ghee. Serve with roti or anything else that works for dipping. I imagined sarson ka saag as a vegetable side to accompany a main, but having a big batch of the stuff around for a day or two inspired a number of nontraditional combinations. Add a hard-boiled egg, chopped radishes, herbs, and some day-old beans to make for an instant and healthy lunch.

PISTACHIO CARDAMOM KULFI

NEALE HOLADAY

Kulfi is similar to ice cream, but richer and denser because it calls for reduced milk and it does not get spun. I first tried kulfi in grammar school when we had World Culture Day. Each grade level would learn about a certain culture and present its findings to the other grades. One of the classes focused on India, and we ate mango kulfi. It was amazing. I didn't make it until I was in culinary school, and I failed miserably the first time. If you do not reduce the milk slowly and stir it as it cooks, it will burn. I have since tested a few different recipes and have learned that as long as you carefully watch your milk, it turns out perfect. I do not know if my folding whipped cream into the reduced cream is traditional, but it adds a lighter and richer texture, which I love.

5¼ cups whole milk

1 t ground cardamom

½ cup organic sugar

1 cup pistachios, toasted and chopped

½ cup heavy cream

Lightly spray an 8 × 8 inch baking tin with cooking spray and line completely with aluminum foil. Set aside. In a pot, bring the whole milk and cardamom to a boil. Reduce milk over medium heat, stirring constantly, until reduced to ⅓ the amount of milk. It is very important to stir constantly and evenly so the milk solids do not burn. This can take about an hour. When reduced, stir in sugar over heat, just until dissolved. Remove from heat and pour mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a mixing bowl. Stir in toasted and chopped pistachios and let cool. Once the mixture is cool, whip heavy cream to medium stiff peaks in another bowl. Fold whipped cream into reduced milk and pistachio mixture. Immediately spread into a prepared baking tin and freeze for 4 to 6 hours, until completely set (similar to a semifreddo). When set, flip over the baking tin onto a cutting board and peel the foil off the kulfi. Quickly and carefully cut the kulfi into 2½ × 2½ inch squares or parallelograms with a sharp knife. It is necessary to work quickly so the kulfi does not melt. Store in the freezer. Serve with more toasted and chopped pistachios.



ENGLISH PEA SOUP w/ DATES, COCONUT & MINT PATTY GENTRY

I once ran a South Indian restaurant. My former business partners, Gary and Isabel MacGurn, still own and run the Hampton Chutney Company. They had lived and worked in India. My experience of India was only through the kitchen, but I felt privileged to be able to learn about the deep traditions and love that goes into Indian cooking. It's a craft taken very seriously. People's ability to cook speaks for them, and when the traditions and recipes are passed on each is treated with total awareness and respect. The spice mix that is the base of most dishes is called **magic**. When I close my eyes and think of Indian cooking, I see turmeric. Its color reminds me of the robes monks wear. It looks like eye shadow, smells like ancient tombs and flowers, and, when used judiciously, adds a layer of mysterious flavor and warmth that is quite beautiful.

Currently I own and operate Early Girl Farm on Long Island. As I write this spring is now upon us, and the first vegetable I fantasize about tasting after the long winter are English peas. I love to watch them slowly climb the trellis and burst into thousands of small white flowers that are the bearer of the sweet green jewels that we eat like candy. Of course, mint is waking from its winter sleep, and tender young leeks are plentiful, as well. In this soup, the combination is wonderful and, when we eat it, we are reminded of the fleeting gifts of spring.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ¼ cup olive oil + more for frying | sea salt |
| 1 T black mustard seeds | 4 # English peas, shelled, blanched,
shocked, drained, and blotted dry |
| 10 fresh curry leaves | 1 can coconut milk |
| 2 t cumin seeds | ¼ cup fresh mint leaves |
| 1 large onion or several spring leeks,
roughly chopped | 1 leek julienned fine, soaked in cold water
to remove sand, drained and dried well |
| 1 small jalapeño, chopped with seeds | flour |
| 1-inch knob of ginger, roughly grated | 1 t turmeric |
| 4 cups good water | |
| 1 scant cup pitted dates | |

In a big pot, heat olive oil until it just starts to smoke. Add the black mustard seeds. They will quickly begin to pop. This should take about 30 seconds. When the seeds start to stop popping, add the curry leaves until they pop (a few seconds longer). When the curry leaves calm down, add the cumin seeds and quickly toast, again, for a few seconds. Add the onion, jalapeño, and ginger. Stir vigorously. Turn down the heat and sauté until the onion is wilted. Add the water and dates and simmer gently for about a half hour, to get the flavors to mingle. Add sea salt, to taste. Remove the broth from the heat and let cool.

Add the broth to a blender in batches of about 2 cups each with blanched peas and puree until uniform and smooth. With the final pea and broth puree in the blender, add the coconut milk and mint and puree until thoroughly mixed. Add salt, to taste.

Heat oil slowly in a small pot or small saute pan. Toss sliced leeks in flour and shake well to remove excess. Test oil by putting in a leek strand to see if it fizzes at a medium heat. When oil is ready add leeks and fry until crispy and golden brown. Carefully remove from oil and drain on paper towels. Toss with a few pinches of turmeric salt to taste. Sprinkle over top soup and serve.



MANGO LASSI

KIM McNALLY

Mango lassis bring me back to hot summer nights in Chicago, walking through Little India on Devon Avenue. Devon is lined with markets and shops where produce spills out into carts on the street and fabric stores sell colorful saris and bangles. The evening air smells of exotic spices. Even with the endless shops in sight, I was always there for one reason: dinner. Some of the best and most memorable meals I've had were on Devon, many at small, family owned restaurants which sadly have since closed.

With whoever I could find willing to make the trek north of the city, a mango lassi was always the first order. Many of the businesses would sell lassis in to-go cups and we'd drink one quickly to cool down before heading into the next restaurant on my list, ready for adventure and a delicious meal. This particular lassi recipe is flavored with cardamom for added depth and salt to balance out the sweetness from the fruit and sugar. Use the ripest mangoes you can find to make a sweet and bright lassi.

2 cups chopped mango

¼ cup sugar

2 cups plain yogurt

¼ cup whole milk

1 cup ice

¼ t kosher salt

½ t ground cardamom

In a blender, puree mango with sugar. Add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth and creamy, approximately 2 minutes. Pour into individual glasses and serve immediately. Garnish with a pinch of flaky sea salt and ground cardamom if you like.



MAKHANI SAUCE

SARA MOFFAT

While on my dad's motorcycle tours along the foothills of the Himalayas, we would stop along the dusty road for lunch, which is my favorite meal of the day in India. We would all be hot and sweaty and a bit frazzled because of the fifteen accidents we were almost in (with people, cars, trucks, rickshaws, cows, you name it), and we would strip our gear off and sit in the shade at a tiny table. Hot chai tea would be served and then plates upon plates of food from the roadside cart. Naan, paratha and chapati, red and yellow dal, raita, vegetables (usually cauliflower and potatoes), or aloo gobi, rice, and paneer makhani.

We would eat, and all the riders would be freaking out about how good the food was—even better than the food at the little roadside stop the previous day. As we got higher in elevation, the food get would get better and better. There was a Sikh resort hotel where all the food was vegetarian, and they would serve a mango lassi that was like pure heaven, followed by paneer in makhani. You could just fall on the floor, it was so good.

Makhani is an insanely vivid tomato, butter, and spice sauce. It is served traditionally with paneer cheese, but it can easily compliment chicken or vegetables. Vegetables would certainly lighten it up a bit. It's a rich dish. Here, potato stands in for the cheese. Eggplant can work nicely, too.

2 14.5-oz. cans diced tomatoes

3 garlic cloves

2-inch piece ginger,
peeled and sliced

4 T butter or ghee

2-3 bay leaves

2 pieces cinnamon bark

7 whole cardamom pods

10-12 cloves

½ t red chili powder

½ t ground turmeric

½ cup water

salt

1-2 T honey

½ cup heavy cream

½ t garam masala

5 large russet potatoes, peeled, sliced,
and boiled until just tender

1 T fenugreek leaves, fresh or dried

1 T fresh cilantro, chopped

Blend the tomatoes until pureed and set aside. Crush garlic and ginger into a paste using a mortar and pestle. Melt the butter in a large saucepan and add bay leaves, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, red chili, and turmeric. Stir and toast over medium heat until fragrant. Add the garlic and ginger paste. Stir until the raw aroma of garlic dissipates, 2 to 3 minutes. Dump in the tomato puree with all of its juices. Stir well and simmer on medium heat. Reduce for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the water and salt, and the honey to taste. It should be slightly sweeter than salty. Add the heavy cream and garam masala. Stir until the sauce is a gorgeous pink-orange color (think sunset). Let the sauce thicken slightly and add the potatoes (or fresh paneer, sautéed chicken, or braised eggplant). Let the potatoes heat through in the sauce. Add fenugreek leaves and stir gently, then garnish with cilantro. Eat with fresh paratha, chapati, or butter naan. See page 44.



SAAG PANEER

SARAH SUAREZ

I first discovered saag paneer in college at a fancy Indian restaurant on Newbury Street, in Boston. I worked at a café in the busy, crowded shopping district and pulled double shifts on the weekends. Working in restaurants as a young person, I followed in my father's footsteps and learned to live well beyond my means. So on my break, I would treat myself to a fancy late lunch of saag paneer. After that, it became my delivery food staple and continues to be the comforting menu item I reach for, however boring or bland it can sometimes be. This is a more vibrantly green version than you might find, since I added Tuscan kale to the spinach and left the greens a little less finely chopped. Saag means green, so any nice cooking greens would work. I also made the paneer, which is a fresh cheese similar to ricotta. You can buy paneer or replace with halloumi. You can also make clarified butter, or go all the way and try to make the traditional Ayurvedic ghee, which is really healthy and delicious. I cheated and just bought a jar of ghee. This recipe is suited for two.

homemade paneer, see page 9

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1-inch piece ginger, peeled and chopped

1 serrano chile, stemmed and chopped

3 T ghee + 2 T

6 cups spinach, roughly chopped

2 cups Tuscan kale, roughly chopped

kosher salt, to taste

6 T heavy cream

1 t garam masala

¼ t ground turmeric

¼ t ground cumin

pinch cayenne

While your cheese is pressing, chop all of your ingredients for the greens. Place garlic, ginger, chiles, and ¼ cup water into a blender and puree until smooth.

Unwrap the cheese. Cut into ½ × 1 inch pieces. Heat 3 tablespoons of ghee in a nonstick pan over medium heat. Working in two batches, add the cheese and fry on each side until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Transfer the cheese to a plate and set aside; reserve pan with ghee.

Return the pan to the stove, add 2 more tablespoons of ghee, and melt over medium-high heat. Add the ginger-garlic puree, and stir for about 30 seconds. Add the greens, salt to taste, and cook, stirring until the greens wilt, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and stir in the cream and spices. Most recipes will tell you to cover the pan at this point, but if you leave it uncovered and keep stirring, the vibrant green color will be retained. Add your cheese to the pan and continue cooking until the liquid thickens and reduces and the greens are at your desired softness—for me, only about 5 more minutes.



MEDU VADA

DAM MARKSON

There's something about "O"-shaped foods that's been long overlooked and underappreciated. Perhaps such foods are designed so well that they seamlessly integrate into our lives without a thought. When was the last time you considered the negative space on your breakfast plate? I grew up with some very clearly identified "O"-shaped foods: bagels, donuts, Cheerios, and SpaghettiOs—yet I never acknowledged their peculiar existence until I got my first job at Bruegger's Bagels, as a freshman in high school. I was a sandwich maker extraordinaire, and their youngest employee, eventually entrusted to boil and bake heaping piles of deliciously doughy bagels for the 7 a.m. rush. I learned that the design of the missing middle guaranteed a fast and uniform cook throughout, and saved time in the process.

Besides function, there is something to consider about the poetic form within the "O": a cross-cultural symbol expressing cycles and unity, directional movement, and space and time. It is a positive symbol that is easy to hold and fun to eat. When I came across medu vada, I had a visceral, mouth-watering reaction—a complete Homer Simpson moment of sheer desire. Medu vada is enticing for many reasons, with its golden shine, dotted with specks of minced green chile peppers. And of course, if you can't keep the "O" set it free. This recipe will make for perfect palm sized fried fritters, as pictured.

- 2 cups of moong dal (split mung beans)
- 1 t black peppercorns
- 1 t cumin seeds
- 3 curry leaves, chopped
- 2 green serrano chiles, deseeded and minced
- ½ white onion, chopped
- ½-inch piece ginger, minced
- 3 t salt
- 3 cups vegetable oil, for frying

Soak the beans for at least 4 hours, preferably overnight. When ready, drain the liquid and save a cup of it for later. Then blend the beans until you get a nice smooth batter. Use a spatula, intermittently, with the blender off, to scrape down the sides into the mixture. You can add water at this point but only small amounts, like a tablespoon. (If you add a few drops of batter to water it should float and that's when you know it's ready.)

In a mortar and pestle grind the black peppercorns, cumin seeds, and curry leaves. (I had to use dried curry leaves, but you can order fresh online.) Transfer the spice mixture and the batter to a bowl, then add the serrano peppers, onion, ginger, and 2 to 3 teaspoons of salt to taste, then mix. Heat vegetable oil on medium to med-high, for deep-frying. Have a bowl of water next to you when forming the medu vada for dipping your hands into. (It helps to keep the fritter from sticking to your hands.) Scoop a palm-size amount of batter and round it by cupping back and forth until you have an oval. Using your thumb, press into the center and swirl it around and all the way through. The result will look much like a bagel or donut. The dough will be wet, so forming a perfect "O" is quite a challenge. Slide the batter into the oil to fry. Use a flat and wide spatula to save yourself from burning-oil splatters. Heat slowly until they are golden brown and cooked all the way through. Soon you'll have 15 to 20 ready to eat. Serve with tomato chutney. See page 36.



ANJULI MUNJAL AND ALL THE TINY BOWLS

At my parents' house, it's important to start shouting ahead of time that "dinner's ready" so that there are enough hands to carry the food to the table. As the last chapatis are flipped, the rice, dal, paneer, chana, and cauliflower are placed on mismatched trivets, forming a parade down the center of the table. Finally the small silver bowls make their entrance. Everyone settles in and begins to pass around dishes. Salty pickled mango, lemon and gooseberries, spicy carrots, chopped raw chiles, and onion are accents scattered among pots and plates. Bowls get handed over and under and nearly collide with the yogurt, chutneys, and cucumbers soaked in garam masala vinegar. Indian food is to be shared, but condiments allow you to modify, amplify, add spice, salt, sweeten, or cool to taste. Here are some simple recipes for condiments inspired by some of my favorite traditional ones. I recommend storing these in the refrigerator in glass jars and serving in stainless steel bowls with small spoons.

SIMPLE RAITA

1 cup plain yogurt
1 cucumber, peeled and diced
½ t salt or black salt
1 t garam masala
cilantro, chopped

Mix the first 4 ingredients together. Sprinkle chopped cilantro on top and serve.

SPICY CARROT PICKLES

1½ cups thin carrot sticks,
peeled, washed, and dried
½ cup mustard or vegetable oil
4 garlic cloves
1½-inch knob ginger
1 T black or brown mustard seeds
1 t coriander seeds
1 t fennel seeds
1 t fenugreek seeds
2 t amchoor, mango powder
1 t turmeric
½–1 t salt or black salt
½ cup lime juice or white vinegar

Sterilized a small mason or jam jar and dry thoroughly. Put spices, garlic, and ginger in a food processor and pulse to make a coarse blend. Warm the mustard or oil on medium heat in a saucepan. Cook spice mixture for about one minute. Don't let it burn. Add carrots and stir to coat. Leave on medium heat for about 5 minutes. Put the carrots in the jar and add lime juice or vinegar. Let cool and then refrigerate. (Don't let any water get into the jar during use.)



PICKLED RED ONIONS

ANJULI MUNJAL

1 diced red onion

1:1 ratio of white vinegar to water

1 t salt

¼ cup chopped cilantro

Sterilize a small mason or jam jar and dry thoroughly. Place onions in the jar. Bring the vinegar water and salt to a boil, then let it cool slightly. Pour over onions in the jar and put the lid on. Let cool completely, then refrigerate. When serving a side of pickled red onions, garnish with cilantro. You can also make this recipe without heating. Simply omit the water and serve the same day.

TOMATO CHUTNEY

DAM MARKSON

Tomato chutney is an amazing pairing for medu vada, with bright colors of vermilion and amber. Color complements form and function.

½ T vegetable oil + ½ t

1 t moong dal (unsoaked mung beans)

3–4 dried chiles, deseeded and broken

+ 1 for tempering

½-inch piece ginger, chopped

black pepper to taste

2 large tomatoes, diced

salt, to taste

½ t asafoetida + pinch

1–2 cloves

2 T water

½ t brown mustard seeds

7–8 curry leaves, fresh or dried

2–3 fenugreek seeds

Heat a teaspoon of oil in a frying pan on low. Add moong dal until they start browning, then add chiles, ginger, and black pepper, and stir until the dried peppers start to wilt and change color. Add tomatoes, asafoetida, and salt. Sauté the tomatoes on low for about 7 minutes. Remove from heat, add water, and blend until it comes together as a paste. Set aside. To temper use the same pan, add the oil and mustard seeds till they crackle, then add chile, curry leaves, asafetida, and fenugreek seeds. Cook until the leaves are crisp or broken down. Add the tomato paste you've made and sauté together for a few minutes. Stir and serve with medu vada.

MR. CURRY ON TEMPERING & SPICE

REBECCA COLLERTON

Saltie started with three chefs. We tried to interpret our favorite restaurant dishes to fit between two slices of bread, but gave ourselves a bit of leeway when it came to specials, soups, salads, or egg bowls. Not bound by bread, we could bring some of the cuisines we were interested in to the table.

The three of us try to evoke often our fantasy restaurants: Caroline's is Italian, Elizabeth's involves a wagon-wheel concept, and I came up with Mr. Curry. I wanted to invoke those English dishes I'd been hankering for: vegetables smothered in a thick red sauce, lamb vindaloo, jalfrezi with bites of whole chiles, sides of spinach, yogurt sauce, and pickles. Add to that fluffy charred naan bread, flocked wallpaper, and pints of lager. Mr. Curry nudged its way into Saltie and now operates three nights a week and is a fragrant labor of love.

Flowers, leaves, roots, bark, seeds, bulbs—there are so many different spices in Indian cooking. Each can be used in endless combinations to produce an infinite variety of flavors: sweet, sharp, hot, sour, spicy, aromatic, tart, fragrant, pungent. Not only the combination, but the way you use them will affect the flavor. They can be roasted, popped in fat, or ground untoasted. Making anything for Mr. Curry involves pulling 5 or 6 different spices off the shelf, plus a couple of less used ones out of a bag, and sprinkling every stainable surface in a coating of turmeric. The aroma of the spices is heady and pervasive. The number of spices can be quite intimidating, but after a while you begin to understand their personalities.

Using spices to finish a dish is actually a good way to begin. I like to think about what I want the finished dish to taste like—spicy, warm, sour, bright. And then mentally work backwards until a plan is hatched. It would be so much easier if you could define that one spice, or flavor, that is the ever elusive curry. More... cowbell? Curry is a combination of factors, with everything working in harmony, the spices and techniques bring out the best in each other. Teamwork.



MR. CURRY'S YELLOW DAL

REBECCA COLLERTON

Mr. Curry's yellow dal is a great example of using a temper (or tarka) in the kitchen, to good effect. A tadka uses hot oil or fat to bloom whole or ground spices, releasing their aromas and complexities. It can be as simple as mustard seeds popping in hot oil, or it can combine cumin, dried chiles, cinnamon, cardamom, or anything you fancy. Dal really benefits from a temper. You do not need to use a lot of oil, but make sure it's hot and the spices are popping. Stir the tadka in right before serving. It is a fresh-in-your-face reminder of the flavors running through the dish. Ideally dal should be thick and creamy, flecked with the seasoning, as well as bright and warm from the lemon and spices.

2 cups yellow split peas

2 bay leaves

2 t turmeric

2-inch piece cinnamon bark

6 whole green cardamom pods

salt

2 T olive oil

1 T mustard seeds

½ t asafoetida

2 medium onions, thinly sliced

6 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced

1-inch piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced

4 chiles de árbol, lightly crushed

4 canned plum tomatoes

1½ t fennel seeds

1½ t cumin seeds

2 t coriander seeds

2 t fenugreek seeds

1¼ t black peppercorns

3 t cayenne pepper

3 t turmeric

lemon juice

dried fenugreek leaves

salt

Rinse the yellow split peas and add to a large heavy-bottomed pot. Add 6 cups of water, bay leaves, turmeric, cinnamon, cardamom, and a good pinch of salt. Bring to a boil and simmer gently, partially covered, for 45 to 60 minutes, stirring occasionally. The dal should reach a creamy, mashable texture.

In a large cast iron skillet, roast the whole spices separately until fragrant. Grind the toasted spices and add the cayenne pepper and turmeric. Set aside.

In the same hot skillet, begin building the tempering for the split peas. Cover the bottom of the skillet with a good slick of olive oil and add the mustard seeds. Once the mustard seeds begin to pop, add the asafoetida and let it sizzle. Begin adding the onions and let them cook. Once the onions start to brown, add the garlic, ginger, and chiles de árbol. Cook out the rawness before adding the ground spices. Lower the heat and continue cooking until the oil starts to separate. Squeeze in the 4 tomatoes and continue cooking everything together until you have an oily sauce. If the mixture seems too dry, add some cooking liquid from the split peas.

Add the sauce to the split peas, cooking over medium heat. Stir together until everything is incorporated. Season with lots of lemon juice, more salt, and crushed fenugreek leaves. Serve with lemon wedges, rice, yogurt sauce, pickles, and bread. Add vegetables or even put an egg on it.

VEGETABLE SAMOSAS

REBECCA COLLERTON

This makes ten samosas, which, like garlic naan, may or may not be enough.

2 t sea salt + more to taste

3¹/₃ cup flour + more for dusting

2 t heaped turmeric

1 cup cold butter, diced

1 egg + 1 for wash

cold water

2 medium potatoes

1 cup fresh peas

vegetable oil or ghee

2 t mustard seeds

1 t cumin seeds

1 onion, diced

2-inch piece ginger

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 t ground coriander

1 t chili powder

¼ t turmeric

4–5 chiles de árbol

lemon juice

chopped cilantro

Combine salt, flour, turmeric in a food processor. Add butter and mix until a shaggy dough forms. Beat the egg and add egg and cold water in a slow stream and pulse until a stiff dough forms. Flour and divide the dough into 10 portions and leave covered with a damp cloth.

Cook the potatoes in a pot of salted water until soft. Drain and cool, then peel and dice into ¼-inch cubes. Blanch the fresh peas in plenty of boiling salted water until they turn bright green, then shock in an ice bath. Heat the vegetable oil or ghee in a heavy-bottomed pan. Once it's hot, add the mustard seeds. When they begin to pop, add the cumin seeds, followed by the onion. Add salt. Once the onions start browning, add the ginger, garlic, ground coriander, chili powder, and turmeric. Crumble the chiles and add to the mixture.

Add the drained peas and diced potato and cook with ½ a cup of water for about 20 minutes, until everything comes together. You can mash everything together with a fork. The object is to create a thick sauce. Season with lemon juice, cilantro, and salt. The mixture should not be too dry, as it will set up as it cools.

Place the balls of dough on a lightly floured surface and roll into rounds of about 5 inches in diameter. Moisten the edges with water. Place a spoon of the onion and spice mixture in the center of each round. Fold over and press all around to seal the edges.

Brush samosas lightly with an egg wash and place on a baking sheet in a 350 degree oven for around 20 minutes, or until golden on the outside and hot in the center. Serve with every condiment you can get your hands on. Be sure one is spicy and one is a seasoned yogurt.



LIME PICKLE

BECKY JOHNSON

The first time I heard of lime pickle, I tried to imagine what it tasted like. Limes can't really get more sour, right? I tried a spoonful straight out of the little metal bowl at Curry in a Hurry on Lexington. It was a salt blast, followed by a rush of flavors: spicy, aromatic, bitter, sour, and pungent, like a concentrated relish. It's hot and cool, orange and green. I was hooked. I decided to try to make it at home, to watch the process, and always have a stash on hand. Lime pickle is made by softening and preserving limes with salt, then adding an array of fragrant spices. This recipe is quite spicy. You can tune the spices to your liking. The thinner the skins, the less time it takes the lime to break down and become edible. Rounder, smoother limes seem to have thinner skins.

15 limes

1 cup coarse salt

3 T red chili powder

1½ t turmeric

1 T fenugreek seeds

1 T coriander seeds

1½ t cumin seeds

4 T neutral oil, canola or grapeseed

3 t black mustard seeds

2 t cumin seeds

½ t asafoetida, aka stinking gum

(take a whiff)

6 cloves garlic, smashed

2 long green chiles

Wash the limes. Dry them. Sterilize a jar. Let the jar dry completely. Cut the limes in half, then each half into 8 pieces. Load a layer of limes in the jar and sprinkle with salt. Repeat. You should have plenty of salt to cover each layer. (Many recipes call for rock salt or a mix of sea salt and black salt. I tasted some black salt. It was smoky and strong. I decided to use Maldon.)

Make sure the lid is also clean and dry. Close the jar, give it a shake to disperse the salt evenly, and place it on a sunny windowsill for 2 to 3 weeks. This seemed crazy to me. Anytime I've infused, extracted, or cured anything, I've left the sun out of the equation. But it was emphasized in all the recipes that I read: exposing the pickle to strong sunlight is crucial.

Shake the jar each day to help them soften. On day two, the green was gone; the fruit was light brown. After a week, the limes had sunken down into their own murky juice. They looked very soft. I was afraid to open it. In two to three weeks, it was time to add the spices and temper the pickle.

Lightly toast the fenugreek, cumin, and coriander seeds separately in a dry pan. The fenugreek will take the longest. The seeds are hard, like little stones, and should turn light red. Cool the toasted spices completely, then grind. Set aside. Heat the oil slowly. Add mustard seeds. When they start to dance around and pop, add the chopped garlic and green chiles. Sauté for just a few seconds. Add the cured limes with their juice. (Nothing weird happened when I unclamped the lid. No pressure or bubbles. The limes were calm and stable. Salt is amazing. It seems like too much liquid, but it will disappear.) Stir and cook for 2 to 3 minutes on medium heat.

Mix in the fenugreek, chili powder, and turmeric. Stir well to coat the fruit. Turn off the heat. Add the asafoetida. (Most recipes call for more than ½ teaspoon. If you enjoy the smell of it, go for more. It does mellow with heat and gives a depth of flavor.) Turn off the gas or remove from the heat. Mix well. Cool down to room temperature before storing in a sterilized, dry, airtight jar. The flavor will improve after time. Pickle is good at room temperature for 3 to 4 months, or refrigerated for 6 to 8 months. I've been serving it chopped up and mixed with yogurt. Try this on avocado toast. I also mix lime pickle with mayo and smear it on roasted potatoes.



NEVER ENOUGH, GARLIC NAAN

SCARLETT LINDEMAN

One of the infinite pleasures of Indian food is mopping up the sauces with buttery, garlic-heavy, hot naan. It's hard not to eat it directly off of the cast-iron pan, dripping with butter and burning your fingers. This recipe makes twelve naans and can be doubled, if needed. Julia says two per person. Anna says you can't have enough naan. I say best make one naan per person—that's my Protestant restraint rearing its head, so you have room for other tasty things.

- 1 t active dry yeast
- 1 t sugar
- ½ t baking powder
- 3 T plain yogurt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour + more for rolling
- 1 t salt
- 2 t nigella seeds
- 3 T extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 T butter, melted
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed to a paste with salt
- coarse sea salt

In a large bowl, dissolve the dry yeast and the sugar in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup warm water. Let it sit until frothy, about 10 minutes. Then add the yogurt and olive oil, whisking to combine. In a separate bowl, sift the flour, salt, and baking powder. Add the yogurt mixture into the dry ingredients and the nigella seeds. Mix the dough together, kneading with your hands until a soft, homogeneous dough forms. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and let sit out for 2 to 4 hours.

When the dough has almost doubled in size, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Portion the dough into 12 similar-size sections and roll each into a ball. The dough will be extremely soft and sticky. Let your balls relax while you warm a large cast-iron pan over high heat and add oil. Place a platter next to the stove. This will be the landing pad for your naan. In a coffee mug, combine the melted butter with the smashed garlic and set aside. Have a bowl of coarse salt close by. Roll one of the dough balls into a flattened oval, stretching the dough out with your hands, like you would pizza dough, then gently drape it into the cast-iron pan. The dough should start to puff up. After a minute or so, flip the naan to the other side. It should be nicely charred. Transfer the naan to the platter, brush with garlic butter, and sprinkle with coarse salt. Continue rolling out balls of dough and cooking them one by one, stacking the naan up on the plate and basting each with garlic butter.





LAMB CURRY

KATE HULING

Andrew and I started cooking Indian food because we wanted to welcome those flavors, smells, and spices into our home. We started out throwing dinner parties that we called Indian Banquets, and we would make a number of different meat dishes, vegetable dishes, rice dishes, chutneys, raita, and chapatis. Below are the dishes that made the list every time. I love all three of them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 8 T butter, room temperature | 1 head garlic, chopped |
| 1 T turmeric | 3-inch piece ginger, peeled and grated |
| 3-inch piece ginger, peeled and grated | 1 T ground cumin |
| 1 T ground cumin | 1 T garam masala |
| 1 t ground coriander | 1 t ground cardamom |
| salt | 1 t ground coriander |
| pepper | 1 T turmeric |
| 2½ # lamb shoulder or belly,
cut into 2-inch cubes | 1 can crushed peeled tomatoes |
| 3 purple onions, chopped | 2 cups water |
| | 1 can coconut milk |

In a bowl, combine all butter, turmeric, ginger, cumin and coriander and season well with salt and pepper. Add the lamb and using your hands, mash everything together until the lamb is thoroughly and evenly coated with the spiced butter. Let sit, covered in the fridge, overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Brown the lamb pieces on all sides in a large Dutch oven, transferring to a platter when they brown. Add the onion, garlic, and ginger to the pot and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the cumin, garam masala, cardamom, coriander, and turmeric and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, to bloom the spices. Return the lamb and any accumulated juices to the pot with the tomatoes and water. Bring to a simmer, check the seasoning, and add more salt and pepper, if needed. Transfer the braise to the oven and cook for 2 to 3 hours, or until tender, checking and stirring the lamb occasionally. Remove from the oven and let cool. Refrigerate the lamb overnight, or up to three days, to let the flavors meld. Reheat the braise, uncovered on a stove top, then add the coconut milk and braise for 20 more minutes, or thereabout, to combine and thicken.

LAMB KEBABS

KATE HULING

2 # lamb leg or belly, cubed
2 cups yogurt
2 T ground cumin
1 T ground coriander
2 t ground caraway seeds
2 t cinnamon

1 T honey
salt
pepper
olive oil
½ lemon
crunchy salt

Add all the ingredients, save lemon and crunchy salt, in a bowl and mix to combine. Let marinate overnight. Thread chunks of lamb onto metal or wooden skewers. Grill over high heat, 3 to 4 minutes on each side. Let rest for a bit before serving. Drizzle with olive oil, lemon juice, and crunchy salt.

GREENS

KATE HULING

This greens recipe is excellent to have up your sleeve because it takes two seconds. You can make it with any green or even cabbage.

2 T coconut oil
2 T black mustard seeds
2 garlic cloves, grated using a Microplane
1-inch piece ginger, peeled and grated using a Microplane
2 # pea shoots
salt

Heat the coconut oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the black mustard seeds and cook until they pop, about 1 to 2 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger to the pan and swirl the oil to help the flavors bloom. Add in the pea shoots, stirring and folding the greens around until just wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat, season well with salt, and serve immediately.



RASMALAI

SCARLETT LINDEMAN

In Los Angeles I lived down the street from a shop called Indian Sweets & Spices. This happens to be the name of half a dozen Indian shops throughout the city; there's one in Canoga Park, one in Culver City, and one in Mid-City—with different logos and different owners—and they all happen to smell the same, a perfume of years of spices and aromatic sedimentation. One was next to my Laundromat, so while I waited for my clothes to dry, I would walk next door to peruse the dry goods, which were well-stocked but dusty—the place was usually empty of people. I would stare at the bags of mung beans, read the labels on jars of pickles, and finger the racks of Bollywood VHS tapes and local Bengali newsprint. They had an exceptionally cheap lunch deal which got you a Styrofoam tray filled with rice, a curry, and various chutneys cordoned off in their little compartments for \$4.99. The dessert counter was of particular interest. I liked looking at all of the unfamiliar treats: the syrup-saturated curlicues of jalebi, that look like neon-orange straws; the caramel-colored golf balls called gulab jamun that leaked sugar water; and my favorite, rasmalai, the sweetened paneer dumplings in a cold, syrupy milk. Everything there was foreign and captivating to me, like peering into a miniature Willy Wonka factory of sweets. Each one offered a new experience that could be had for pocket change. I would ask the counterman the names of the sweets every time I came in, trying out each selection and trying to keep the strange syllables in my head for the next time. I blushed at my naïveté and my continued tripping up of my tongue. I must have ordered the dish half a dozen times before it stuck. I would repeat its name rasmalai, rasmalai, rasmalai, softly, out loud to myself, as I left the store and headed home. Into the hazy Los Angeles summer I went, the ivory patties cold in a plastic clamshell against my hand.

2 cups paneer (make the paneer using the recipe on page 9)
1 cup sugar + ½ cup
4 cups water
3 cups milk
pinch salt
1 t cardamom pods, crushed
1 T pistachios, chopped

Once the paneer has drained and been pressed for an hour or so, turn it out into a bowl. Mash the paneer with the heels of your hands, kneading it until it is smooth. If the paneer doesn't stick together, add a couple drops of water and keep working it to form a dough-like consistency. Divide the dough into 12 portions, roll into balls, and then press down on each to form little patties. Mix 1 cup of the sugar and the water in a heavy pot with a lid. Bring to a boil. Slip in the paneer dumplings and put the lid on. Turn the heat down and simmer for 20 minutes. They will expand in volume. Meanwhile, boil the milk in a sauté pan on medium heat until it is reduced to 2 cups, stirring often (the milk will scorch easily). Once the milk has reduced, whisk in the remaining ½ cup sugar, the cardamom, and a pinch of salt. Transfer the milk mixture to a shallow container. Remove the paneer dumplings from the syrup with a slotted spoon and slip into the milk mixture. Sprinkle on the pistachios, then chill until very cold.



SWEET SEEDS

LEAH CAMPBELL

I was going for yellow and pink, so I also tried this with beet juice, but the liquid changed it and made for slick and chewy seeds, and I think you need a little crunch. It was better with turmeric. If you had beetroot powder, I think that would work great. You could also add sunflower and sesame seeds.

2 cups fennel seeds

1½ T ground turmeric

1 t powdered sugar

½ cup plain yogurt

1½ cups white granulated sugar

1 t light corn syrup

2 t butter

Toast the fennel seeds gently until they're fragrant, then let them cool. In a medium bowl, toss the seeds with powdered sugar and turmeric, until coated. Set aside.

In a large, heavy saucepan, stir together the yogurt, sugar, and corn syrup. Place over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils and reaches 223 degrees on a candy thermometer, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Add the butter and stir until melted.

Add the fennel seeds and mix quickly until well coated. Pour the mixture onto your butcher block covered with parchment paper. Continuing to work quickly, using wooden spoons to separate the seeds into clusters. Let them cool thoroughly. Store in an airtight container.



IT'S A PICKLE

MILLICENT SOURIS

Who are we without condiments? How can we eat? How can we live? My favorite element of Indian food is the condiment—more pickles please. Lime pickle is essential when I order Indian food. And let's cut to the chase here; this is how I eat Indian food—I order it.

I wouldn't call myself a pickler, although my grandfather had a spot-on bread-and-butter pickle recipe that he passed down through his Lutheran church. I do believe in pickles, as both a cook and an eater. We need the tang, the acid, the crunch, and the highs to the protein's lows. The first thing I pickled from scratch was ten pounds of jalapeños that were going to turn. And that is the ultimate motivation in pickling: turn it before it turns on you.

Pickled citrus is a revelation, the marriage of the two things can so swiftly change and improve your food. Preserved lemons are a classic, the Moroccan standard that demands faith in lemon juice and salt as curing agents. It's an important recipe, one that offers a method of preservation that is translatable.

Kumquats appear during the great citrus crush of wintertime, when you start to see blood oranges, Cara caras, and pomelo grapefruits on menus. We cannot live by root vegetables alone. More than any other citrus, the kumquat is entirely edible; just pop one in your mouth. The rinds are edible but still offer some resistance. Popping a kumquat in your mouth is like huffing the memory of sunshine. The first and only time I pickled kumquats I chose to because there weren't enough of them to run on a dish, but there were too many of them to just roll over and accept their certain death. Making jam seemed, well, a little underwhelming with such little yield.

I bastardized a lime pickle recipe by mixing its spices with the Morocco method of preserving lemons, since I was familiar with that technique. I didn't want to change their flavor through heat. I wanted to change their flavor through salt, lemon juice, and spices.

KUMQUAT PICKLE

Flavor Mountain, right? You don't have to use all of these dried spices. I always use peppercorns because, well, I always use peppercorns. Coriander I love for its lemony feeling. Mustard seeds are magic and seem to be in every culture's pickle spice. Asafoetida has a powdered onion and garlic flavor, and I want to utilize anything also known as **Devil's dung**. Fenugreek brings a lovely earthiness to the mix. A lot of star anise can really ruin whatever party it's attending, but one single beautiful piece looks great in a jar and mingles well with others. Cardamom is expensive, aromatic, and almost medicinal in its scent, like eucalyptus. Chiles, well, you know, lend a little heat. Bay leaf is probably in your kitchen, but a lime leaf is more harmonious with this family. Everything has a role, and you can omit what you are missing. The world will not end.

I'll tell you how the world will end here, and that is if you don't have enough salt or lemon juice to cover your kumquats. It is imperative when you do a treatment like this to have a full box of kosher salt at your side and some extra lemons, because I am not a wizard and I cannot tell you for certain how much lemon juice you are really getting from every lemon. The salt and lemon juice combo is your one-two punch for preserving.

I say to buy a pound of kumquats, but really what I am telling you to purchase is the proper volume to really cram into a Mason jar. There should be no air in there. The more kumquats you can squeeze into the jar, the smaller amount of lemon juice you require to fill the space. This is also a long process; you need time and patience so make as much as you can.

- 1 # kumquats, but buy more than that
- 4 lemons, more if they are small or dry
- kosher salt, an unknowable amount—deal with it
- 1 T black peppercorns
- 1 T coriander seeds
- 1 T yellow mustard seeds
- 1 t fenugreek seeds
- 1 t asafoetida
- 1 star anise
- 4 cardamom pods
- 3 small dried chiles or 1 t red chili flakes
- 1 bay leaf or lime leaf, or both

Cut the kumquats in halves lengthwise, making sure to keep the end intact so they keep their shape and do not split apart. If they are very large, cut them into quarters, carefully. Sprinkle the cut sides with salt, then close them up. Cover the outside with salt also. Be liberal. Squeeze the lemons and reserve the juice.

Toast the peppercorns and seeds so they just begin to become fragrant. Add the asafetida on top when they finish toasting. Put a layer of kumquats in the jars and start adding the spices. Toss in the chiles, star anise, and whatever leaf you have. You are essentially making sand art. Stagger the spices with the kumquats so they appear spread out. Pour the lemon juice over the kumquats. Add more lemon juice, if necessary. The kumquats need to be covered. Put the lid on and place in a cool shady area in your kitchen. Every once in a while, turn the jar upside down. Check them out after a month.

Pull a kumquat out of the jar, cut off a piece, and taste it. If the salt is oppressive, rinse it off. Is it done? Does it taste like a pickle, that is, has it achieved its pickle potential? The longer the kumquats sit, the more the flavor will evolve. Refrigerate after opening. These should keep forever. Shelf life: eternity.



COCONUT LIME CHUTNEY

ANNA DUNN

Not Green Lantern green. Not milk-toast green. Not lime green. Brighter than that. Many moon green? Perhaps.

1 bunch mint

1 bunch cilantro

1 cup dried coconut, unsweetened

2 serrano peppers, or more or less if mild or full of fire

4 plump limes + more, just in case

salt

coconut oil

Smell your herbs and taste your peppers. Pick the mint leaves off the stem. Give the cilantro leaf stalks a rough chop, discarding about an inch off the bottom. Slice and taste your peppers. (Jalapeños could work here also, but raw, I sometimes find they impart a green bell pepper flavor I'd like to avoid. Serranos can be hot and grassy.) This is all to taste but be careful. They can be hot and the oil can stay on your fingers longer than you'd expect. Deseed and chop your peppers and set aside. In a food processor combine herbs, coconut, and some of the serrano peppers. You will want to add more peppers as you go, checking for heat. The lime juice and oil will mellow the peppers, so go a little further than you're comfortable with. Add oil and lime juice and blend again. Add salt and adjust to your liking. Let sit for a while before serving. You want the pooling oil to take on the bright light-green color. Serve over beans, toss with grilled zucchini, mix with yogurt, or spoon over roasted meats.

TURMERIC TONIC

ELIZABETH SHULA

This tonic is as bright and refreshing as it looks.

2-inch knob fresh turmeric, grated fine or 2 t dried turmeric
3 cardamom pods, crushed
¼ cup lemon juice
2 T honey

In a small saucepan, combine turmeric and cardamom with two cups water and bring to a boil. Simmer for ten minutes, then remove from heat. Strain the liquid through a fine sieve, and add 2 more cups water.

In a small bowl, whisk lemon juice and honey to combine, then add to turmeric mixture. Chill. Serve over ice.

CHAI TEA

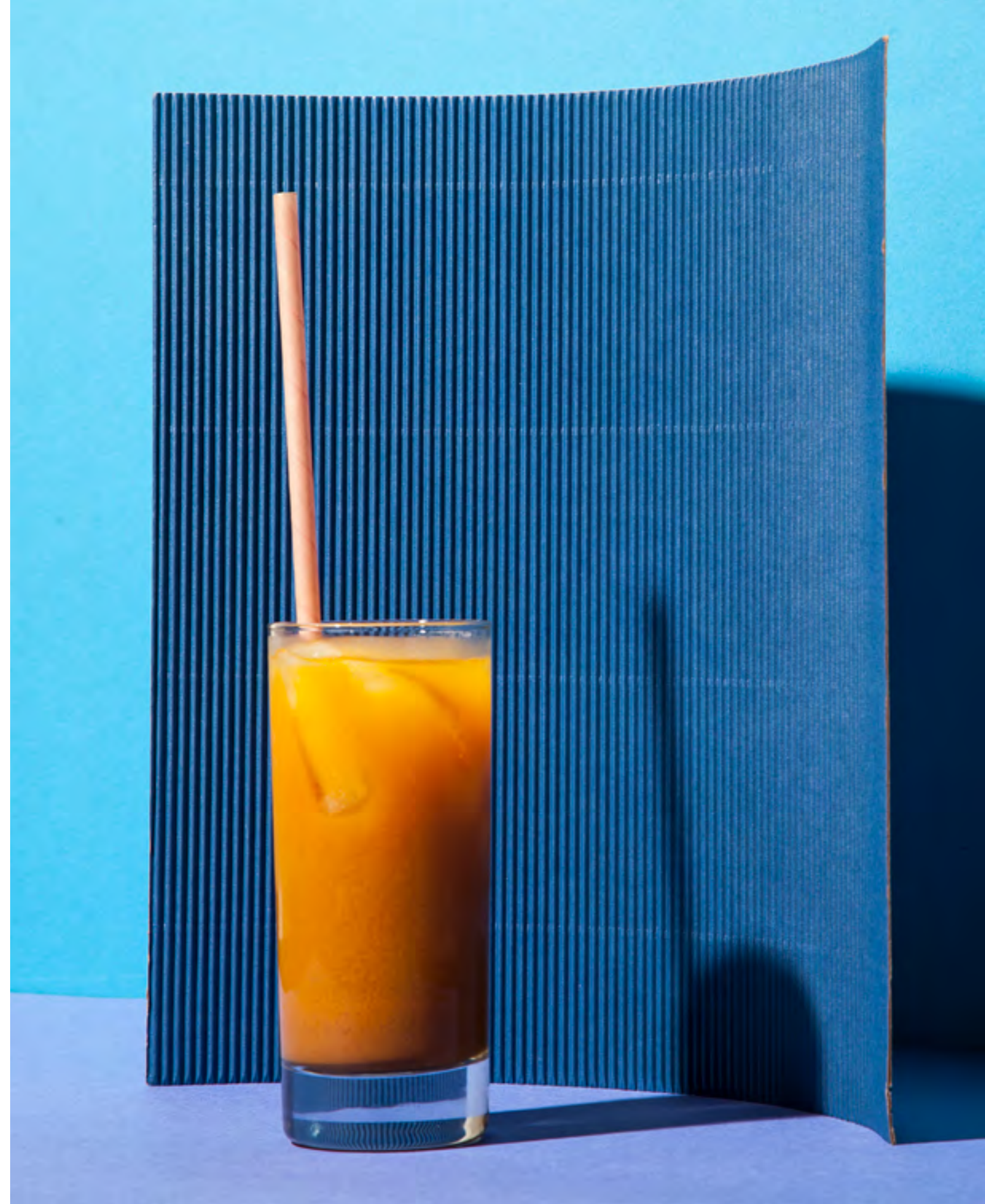
MIKE FADEM & CATHERINE McBRIDE

Ideally you're in a large city of the subcontinent when you experience your first street chai. It's been brewing for hours in the largest pot you'll ever see. Each cart serves hundreds a day. There are so many carts, but always trust the one surrounded by a crowd.

Spending a month in India changed my feelings about chai. Being a barista in Brooklyn for ten years, I was an anti chai-latte single-origin espresso loving purist. But real chai drinking culture is something else completely. It is the daily ritual of over a billion people. Much like espresso in Italy, it starts the day and is revisited throughout in small amounts. Recipes change from household to household and street stand to restaurant. It is sweet and spicy, and boiling on the warmest day of summer, often served with an extra cup so you can pass the scalding hot beverage between the two to cool it down. Use this recipe as a guide and alter to your taste. Try using only milk and no water. Maybe add a savory spice or two, tumeric or fenugreek perhaps. With such strong spices, every chai is unique.

2 cups water	½ cinnamon stick
1 T sugar	1 T fresh ginger
3 cardamom pods	½ T black tea
2 cloves	¾ cup whole milk

In a saucepan bring the water to a boil. Add sugar. Once the sugar has dissolved add the cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and ginger. Cook the spices in the water for 5 minutes, and then add the tea. Allow to simmer for another 5 minutes. Add the milk and bring back to a boil. Simmer for 5 to 8 more minutes. Strain into cups.



HEMOCHROME

PETER MILNE GREINER

RITUAL BLOODGAZING CAN BE TRACED BACK to the human species' first vestiges of civilization; to the frond hut, the carven tusk, to the ochre antelope on the cavern wall. Residue of madness and revelation, blood for the ancients spilled from the body like a spiral arm of stars from the core of the Milky Way—that is, into death, silence, or perhaps what in statistics is called miracle. It had many names, for it was many things. Our ancestors in their biological narcissism looked into the primordial soup and saw there a warped reflection. That complex puddle of unlikelihoods answerlessly transfixed them—us. We have never recovered. Iron, accident, snow of asteroid: it was a witchy physics indeed that placed upon us the long hex of knowing.

Human beings and their colors exist, with beatific irony, outside of nature; namegathering and namegiving. Science: light and nature are the same thing, like space and time. Origin: color is a daughter and son of sentience. Weird Habit: living with sight. The red most intimate to the psyche, blood still confounds and convolutes the mind with its unforgiving trinity: pulse, no pulse, fast pulse. All of the reds are embedded there, in living with lifespan.

Shortcut red and hubris red, land red and eon red, patience red, condemnation red. Every red not blood is a remove red. After red and before red, perverse red and obscure red, crave red and birth red and oops red and reason red and reprisal red and cheater red and holy red and Inca red and predator red and prey red and algebra red and displacement red and dead dad red and cold unforgiving vacuum of space red and desert galaxy red and sixth extinction red and futility red and deserver red and the red I am and the red you are and the red we were and the red we refuse and the red we regift and the red that remains and the red we have left that is the last thing we have to lose.

SUNDRESS WARSHIP

EVAN DUNN

As a blonde, I don't really like to wear yellow, or "jonquil." I feel like it's too much—basically, like an assault on the eye of the poor innocent stranger, who, when simply trying to gape at my beauty (as one does), instead suddenly finds himself (or herself) instinctively desiring a Twinkie or feeling overwhelmed and maybe inexplicably sunburned.

In this aversion to associated yellow, or jonquil—the color of my hair—I imagine I have more in common with the USS Jonquil than would at first be apparent. Both of us were born into this world branded by our appearance and held back by the biological predetermination of our bodies: I, unable to accessorize with the full color palette, due to my hair color; the USS Jonquil, unable to wear anything because it was a giant metal ship.

Perhaps the USS Jonquil would have liked to feel sexy dressed all in white, like a big cruise ship casually schmoozing around the ocean, just as I would love to someday be able to put on a cute little sundress and see how the yellow of the dress interacts with the blue (foreshadowing) of my eyes, without looking like a monochromatic monstrosity. But the world is not a fair place, and I will continue to rot in my blue tones and my all-black work outfit until I expire with only the color jonquil blaring through my mind, but never reaching the exoskeleton.

I crawl towards death with more haste every day knowing that jonquil is not my color, entreating the Devil to place hexes upon all other blondes with the courage to wear yellow, though they may be blissfully ignorant of their plight—the possibility that one blonde could be sentient enough to understand his folly is unforgivable. The Devil generally ignores me, or flatly reminds to get back to doing his work.

The USS Jonquil was sold at an auction in 1865, which begs the question, Who is buying old warships? Which then begs the question, Where can I buy an old warship, and is the one chance I have to finally get away with yellow one hundred miles out in the ocean waters, where mainland style laws have no merit and the fashion police have no merit? Alone in my beautiful jonquil sundress, maybe with a topaz necklace to accentuate my eyes, dancing on my own private warship to the sound of Satan's cackles?

In my father's attempts to wow me with the inadequacy of the human brain and its capacity to understand an objective reality (Dad's right), he once asked me to imagine a new color. Or maybe that was an acid trip. The point is, apparently some people did such a thing. Prussian blue was the first modern synthetic pigment. Like me, the color is "famously complex"; unlike me, the color has a Wikipedia page that hasn't been deleted yet. Like me, the color is also a drug; unlike me, it can cure metal poisoning. But enough about me, the whole other color was really just an excuse to talk about my hair, which isn't even jonquil, but more like champagne blonde.

CONTRIBUTORS

Andy Alexandre is a chef from Haiti whose profound love for cooking and sharing food originated in early childhood while spending time with his grandmother in the kitchen. In 2005 he attended the Culinary Academy Of Long Island. Later in 2007 worked as an intern at CookShop and shortly after went to practice and learn under chef Floyd Cardoz of TABLA. Before starting to work at Marlow & Sons he also worked at Falai, and as sous chef at North End Grill.

Carolyn Bane owns Pies 'n' Thighs with Sarah Sanneh and is married to Dan Ross-Leutwyler, chef/owner of Fritzl's Lunch Box. She loves the hand-drawn cookbooks of the 1970s and '80s and is slowly stealing her mother's collection.

With the help of a wife, business partner, and cat, **Rebecca Collerton** is able to cook and live in Brooklyn.

Lee Desrosiers returned to New York to become the butcher for Reynard, after experiencing life on a farm for a year. He is now the chef of Achilles Heel in greenpoint.

Mike Fadem works at Romans.

Patty Gentry has been a professional cook for over 25 years. Her desire to bring organically grown, highly diversified produce to hard working chefs everywhere led her to the fields. She now owns and operates Early Girl Farm in Brookhaven, Long Island.

Peter Milne Greiner was born in the valley and raised in the hills. He is the author of Executive Producer Chris Carter (The Operating System 2014), a collection of poetry and science fiction. His work has appeared in Fence, H_NGM_N, NightBlock, BORT Quarterly, Coldfront, and elsewhere.

Neale Holaday is the Pastry Chef at Marlow & Sons and Diner. When not working, her favorite things include drinking too much coffee, watching bad reality TV, eating food, drinking wine, daydreaming about being far far away on a beach, and trying to convince Ross that they need a dog.

Kate Huling is the mystic behind Marlow Goods.

Jake Lindeman has a bone to pick. jakelindeman.com

Dam Markson loves to eat food on his free time and is otherwise finishing his masters program for industrial

design. He is often zipping throughout Brooklyn on his bike carrying a camera and drawing pad, chasing countless dreams. He lives in Park Slope with his new husband, and their spirit guide Babbette the cat, and Geordi the cat, the newest addition to the family.

Catherine McBride is an Italian/Irish American from Delaware. She spends her days at the Red Hook Initiative, working with the young people of the community. She is obsessed with her dog named Penny.

Kim McNally works at Saveur, makes excellent pie, and enjoys chasing raccoons out of her Brooklyn apartment. Rabies free since 1984!

Sara Moffat is the founder of an art school called LDBA, and has lived in Brooklyn for 10 years. She currently enjoys painting, traveling, cooking, making things, and riding motorcycles in India, where her papa started the first Himalayan motorcycle tour company in 1992.

Anjuli Munjal grew up in Tennessee and lives in Brooklyn. She learned how to flip chapatis from her mom and bhangra from her dad.

Nick Perkins is a man of many t-shirts but none of them are whole.

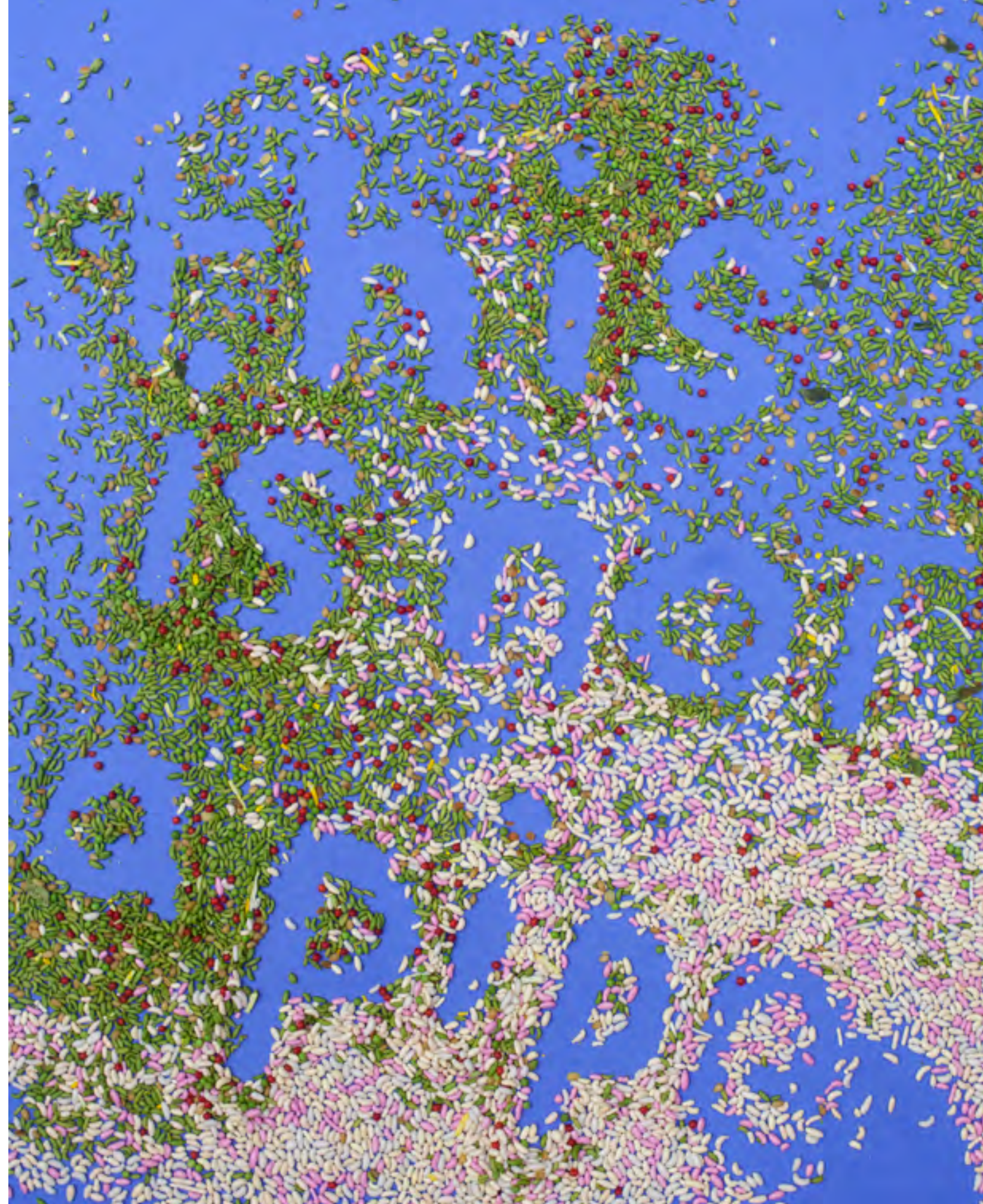
Katy Porte lives and sells houses in Brooklyn. She makes drawings and collages at her kitchen table and enjoys baking.

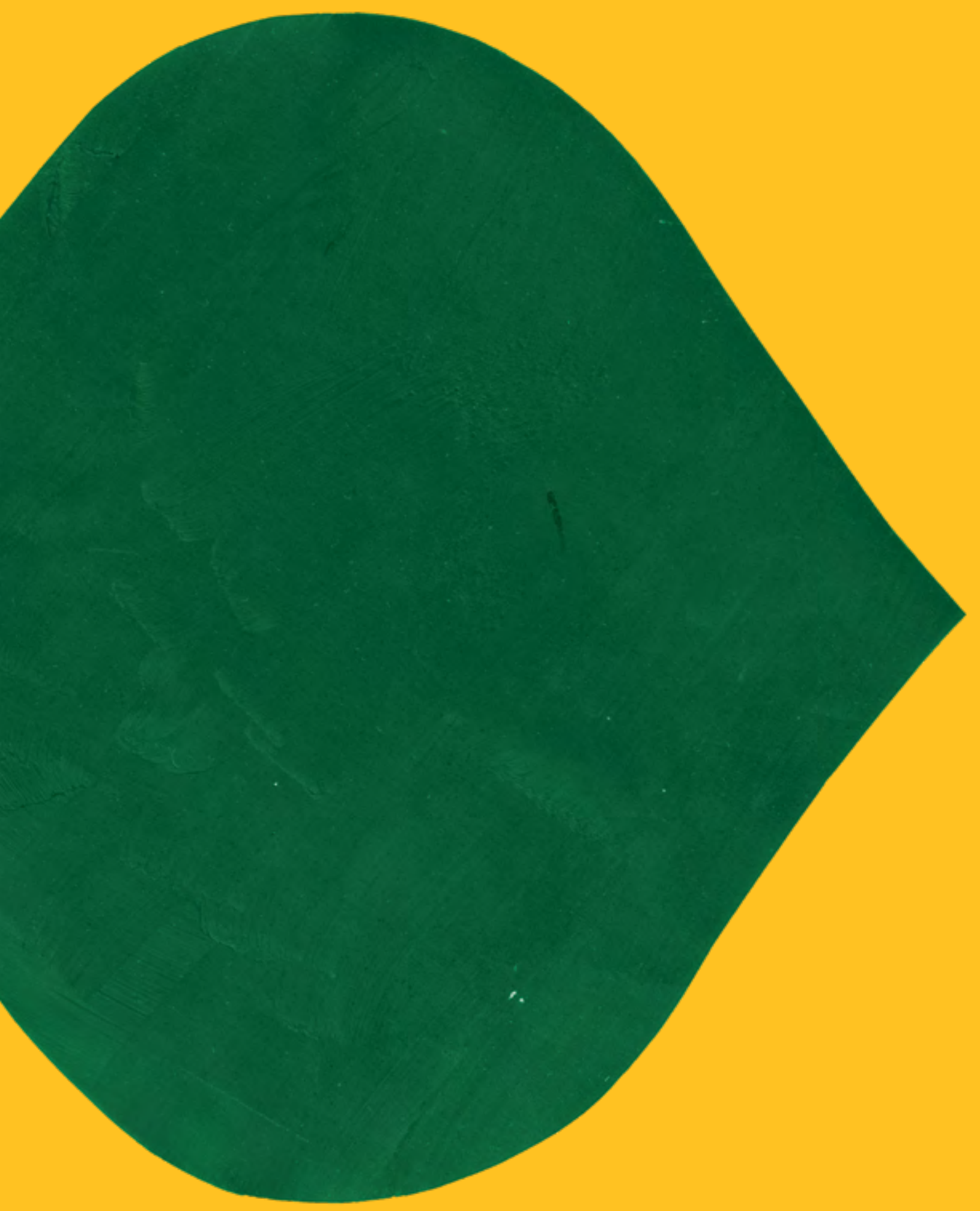
Kelly Reid grew up in New Zealand with visions of becoming one of the Solid Gold dancers. However, she was as clumsy as she was enthusiastic and subsequent Ballet lessons showed no improvement. These days she lives in Brooklyn and has switched tights and tutus for a pair of boxing gloves, practicing left hooks on day old miche and unsuspecting co-workers alike.

Sarah Suarez has managed other people's restaurants for years. Now she owns her own with her husband Nick. It's a nice little place called Gaskins, in Germantown, NY.

Elizabeth Schula opened Saltie and now lives amongst the wild herbs.

THANK YOU!!! Marley Freeman, Sara Magnheimer, Michael Lenic, Lareysa Smith & Saltie.





tangled up in bloom