

INDIAN COOKERY

AND

CONFECTIONERY

(407 RECIPES)

By
MRS. I. R. DEY.

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HOTEL ADMINISTRATION

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PREFACE.

Human beings are social animals and they more or less love to indulge in some sorts of pleasures and to give the same pleasures to their friends. Cooking gives them the opportunity to indulge in various pleasures of tastes and whenever any one of them tastes something fine he longs to enjoy it along with his friends. In this respect cooking is a fine art and we ought to treat it as one rather than as a means anyhow to fill up the stomach every day, although the vast majority of men and women take the latter view in their daily preparations of food. If by using the same materials or by using a few others in addition which cost but little we can prepare a food more tasteful and at the same time more health-giving, then is there any reason why we should not do so? I have even noticed in some cases that a preparation would have been better had a lesser quantity of spices, fats or some other materials been used.

The present system of cooking in many provinces of India has lost its old reputation having fallen into the hands of some who do not regard cooking as a fine art and of illiterate and stupid professional cooks of different provinces who having failed in every sphere of life resort to cooking as the only source of livelihood. They follow some stereotyped and defective methods in the preparation of every food. They do not and cannot understand that a different proportion or a

different combination gives a better result. Cooking is not a thing to be neglected in this way and it requires as much intelligence and experience as is required to master any other fine art. In some families, though rarely, we find such a good cook in the housewife of the family who maintains a very high standard of cooking and feels heavenly pleasure in feeding her friends and relatives.

Cooking cannot be taught up to the exact details, only the procedure can be given. Every cook should use his or her intelligence and discretion in the preparation of food. None can be a good cook at once and it ought not to dishearten any cook if he fails to prepare any food rightly at first. Varieties of proportions and combinations should be tried and it will generally be found that more than one preparation will suit the taste. The weights given in the book can be increased or decreased in the same proportion. It will generally be advantageous to read the whole chapter before trying any one preparation.

Dhai and chhana are both rendered in English by curd. Therefore to avoid confusion chhana is written chhana in this book and curd means dhai.

Curries taste better if the spices used are fried without oil or any other fat till their scents come out before they are pasted or powdered for use. Care should be taken that they are not burnt up. The properties and scents of the spices are also lost to some extent if they are powdered and bottled for a long time or if they are once pasted and used for several days. The best

thing would be to powder or paste them immediately before their use. Spices are pasted with a little water on what is known as a "Curry-stone". Ghee is also extensively used in cooking. It is prepared by melting butter and boiling it for about five minutes till the liquid becomes perfectly clear. The impurities in the butter are thus burned up and the ghee is then strained through a clean piece of linen. Syrup of sugar is used in the preparations of nearly all the sweets for which Indian Cookery is most famous. To prepare the syrup, boil $2\frac{1}{2}$ powas of water with a seer of sugar and when it boils add a little diluted milk and remove the scum that floats on the surface. Add milk in this way till the liquid is perfectly clear and scum no longer appears on the surface. Generally one powa of milk is enough to clarify a syrup of three or four seers of sugar.

Indian Cookery is regarded by a foreigner as an indivisible whole and it is true to some extent. Cookery practised in the different parts of India e.g. Bengal, Orissa, the United Provinces, Madras, Bombay or the Punjab is the same in the sense that one method is followed. But they differ as to details and therefore produce foods having different tastes. Of all the different parts of India, Bengal is most advanced in the art of cooking. This opinion is shared by nearly all Indians and foreigners, and doubtless all will give the same verdict that the Bengal cooking is worthy of its reputation when they share the foods prepared by a really good cook.

This book is specially meant for the English-speaking people living in or outside India and I shall consider

that my labour is not lost if they can, with the help of this book, prepare and enjoy the recipes, the details of which are given here. If some of the ingredients mentioned in this book are not available outside Bengal or outside India, the preparations requiring them may be dropped altogether and if they are of little importance the preparations may be tried without them. This will not hamper one in his attempt to learn the art of Indian cooking as such ingredients and the preparations requiring them form a very small minority. Nearly all the ingredients mentioned here are produced in nearly all parts of the world or are imported by them.

This is my first attempt in this line and therefore I do not venture to insert the details of such artful preparations as that of a fish which tastes hot on one side and sour on the other. These are so difficult that even experienced and old housewives often fail to prepare them. I shall try to give the details of such preparations in the next edition.

Thanks are due to my brother-in-law Mr. P. C. Dey M. A. who has rendered my versions into English as I am almost ignorant of the language.

Mrs. I. R. Dey.