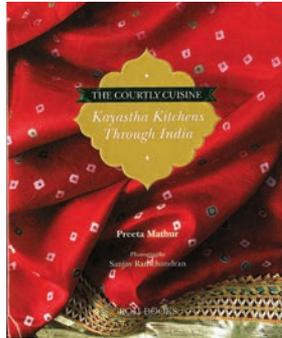


books & cooks

The lowdown on this month's top foodie reads

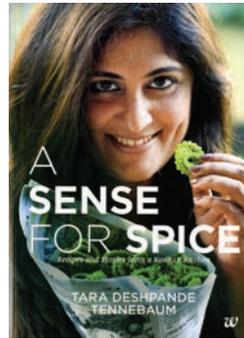
Words KHORSHED DEBOO



Kayastha Kitchens through India by Preeta Mathur

This compendium brings together heirloom recipes collected from the once aristocratic Kayastha community famed for its food. Traditional methods such as slow cooking, broiling and grinding spices to make masalas form the basis of Kayastha cooking, which varies significantly in different parts of India. The author simplifies these methods while still retaining classic flavours. We tried the Badami Murgh, a wonderfully creamy gravy with the added crunch of almonds. Although Kayastha cuisine leans heavily in favour of meat, the author includes a smattering of interesting vegetarian gems like Dum Karela and spiced yoghurt yam.

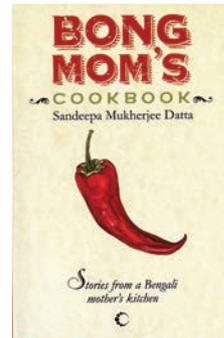
Available from Roli Books for ₹ 695



A Sense for Spice by Tara Deshpande Tennebaum

In this meticulously crafted book, the author nimbly interweaves tales of her childhood and travels with the flavours of the Konkan kitchen. The introductory chapter reveals lesser known facts about the Konkani community. (Did you know, for instance, that the Konkan is the birthplace of the dosa?) The author's account of her grandma's culinary skills is particularly endearing and lends a rustic appeal to the book. Spanning 12 chapters, the recipes are so remarkable, we almost overlooked the rather tepid photographs. However, the comprehensive glossary of Konkani cuisine is what deserves high praise.

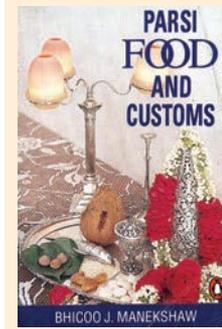
Available from Westland for ₹ 495



Bong Mom's Cookbook by Sandeepa Mukherjee Datta

This book is proof of how little non-Bengalis know about traditional Bong food. The recipes in the book have travelled all the way from the author's grandmother's home in Kolkata to her own home in New York. Datta's debut book is dotted with amusing anecdotes like exchanging recipes with her mum over Skype; eating *ilish* during Saraswati Pujo and musings about *paanch phoran*. Most of the recipes are easy to follow, though the *maachher chop* didn't turn out as crispy as promised. By the end, we had also lost count of the number of times *chorchori* (mixed vegetables) is mentioned in the book.

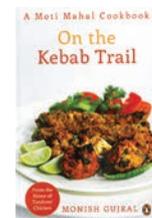
Available from Harper Collins for ₹ 350



Parsi Food and Customs by Bhicoo J. Manekshaw

This unpretentious book authored by the first Indian to study at London's Cordon Bleu is a window into Zoroastrian culture. The late Manekshaw expounds on customs and religion and how food takes centre stage at every ceremony in the Parsi way of life. The recipes are divided into sections, featuring everything from classic *dhansak* to John's Byculla soufflé and from *topli* paneer to an unusual ash gourd *murabba*. Her unerring instinct on what's good to serve guests makes this book exemplary.

Available from Penguin for ₹ 499



On the Kebab Trail by Monish Gujral

In this collection of over a hundred kebab recipes, Turkish Yogurtu Kebabs and West

African Suya Kebabs share space with classics like *galouti* kebabs, *tabak maas* and Amritsari fish kebabs. We tried our hand at the Pistachio Chicken Kebab, savoured with a fiery red garlic chutney and the Sesame Potato Kebabs that were unfortunately a plateful of disappointment. Nonetheless, the book is sure to find resonance with those looking to assemble an eclectic kebab platter for their next party.

Available from Penguin for ₹ 299

Try this recipe!

Gulabi kheer

Serves 6-8 ■ 40 minutes + freezing ■ EASY ■ V ■ J

Heat 1 tsp ghee in a wok and fry 200g soaked basmati rice. Boil 1 1/2l milk and pour over the rice. Cook until the milk is reduced to half its quantity and keep stirring. Add 300g sugar, a pinch of saffron dissolved in 2 tsp rosewater and 1/2 tsp cardamom powder. Simmer. Mash the rice well, then add 12 chopped almonds and 12 rose petals. Chill.



Recipe courtesy KAYASTHA KITCHENS THROUGH INDIA
Photograph SANJAY RAMCHANDRAN

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