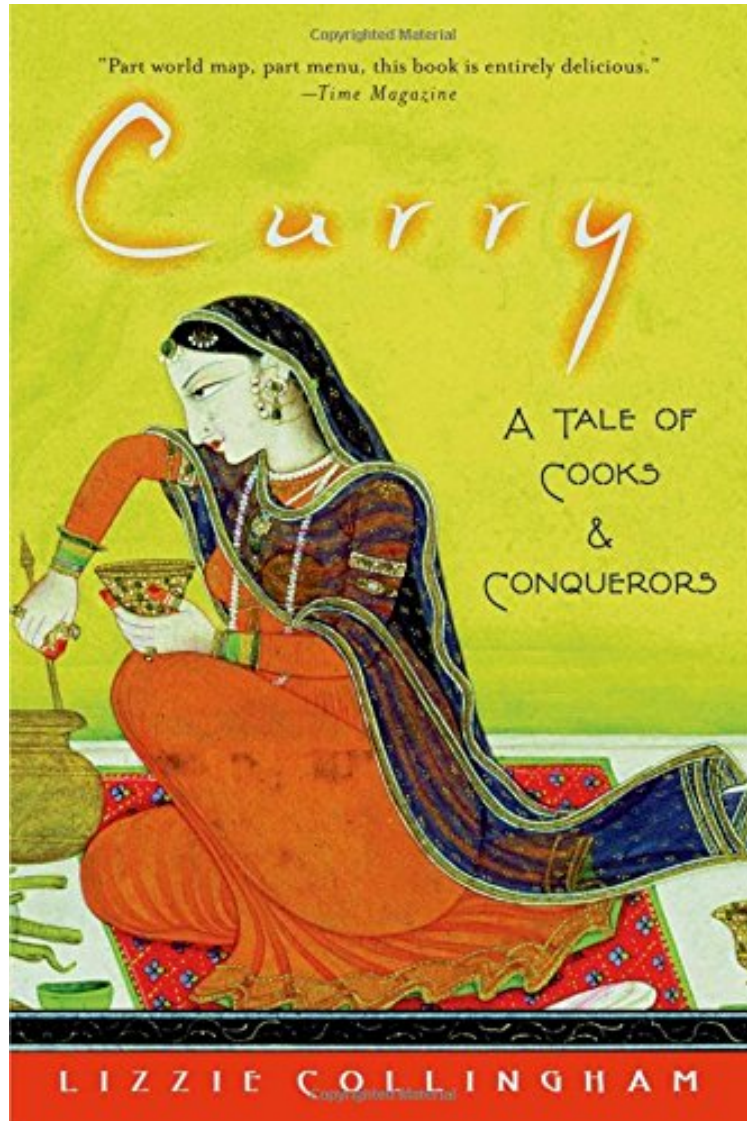


(Mobile book) Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors

Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors

Lizzie Collingham

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Lizzie Collingham : Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Well-researched and informative. By Kriti Godey A lot of the non-fiction that I've been reading lately has been about food and "Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors" by Lizzie Collingham is the latest in that trend. It describes the history of Indian food and how it was influenced by various invaders and immigrants. Collingham makes the argument that "authentic" Indian food has never really existed and

shows the evolution of various Indian cuisines, both in cooking styles and use of ingredients. I thought that this book would have a lot of speculation and conjecture, but it is actually meticulously researched - almost every paragraph contains a citation or two. Consequently, the book is a little bit prosaic, although it flows quite well and the wealth of information that it contains certainly makes the dryness excusable. The book starts off with a description of Indian cooking as described in early Ayurvedic texts, and then talks about how the Mughals, Portuguese and British, in particular, changed these methods. It's amazing to think about how many common Indian foods (potatoes, tomatoes, cauliflower, corn, custard apples, pineapples, chillies) are from the New World or Europe and were introduced to India in the seventeenth century or even later. I was especially surprised that chillies weren't always part of Indian cuisine (although apparently chillies were adopted by Indians so quickly, that by the time they spread to some parts of Europe - Germany, Hungary etc. - they were believed to be indigenous to India.) Another thing I found astonishing that the British had to set up a marketing campaign to get Indians to drink tea, given that India is currently the world's largest producer and consumer of tea. They set up an Indian Tea Association, that among other things, went door-to-door demonstrating the proper preparation of tea, and during the Second World War, had "tea-vans" that provided Indian soldiers with tea and letter writers to keep in touch with their families while at war. The book also details the culinary lives of the British living in India ("Anglo-Indians") and to a lesser extent, other cultures. I found the change in British fashions absolutely fascinating - from authentically prepared curry, to the excesses of burra khana, to tinned salmon. The influence of Indian food all over the world (the West Indies, Pacific Islands, Japan) was also something I didn't know much about, and I am glad it was included. A couple of minor nitpicks - the notion of not eating food prepared by (or even come into contact with) an "impure" person (i.e. of a lower caste/different religion) seems incredibly archaic to me, but seems to have been pretty prevalent, according to Collingham. As an Indian, I would've liked it if she had been clearer that it is a relic of the past. Perhaps I'm just being too touchy, considering that this is a book dealing with history. I also found the mention of the British divide-and-rule policy annoying, since it was only talked about in one paragraph, and I would have liked to hear more about the "apparently benign acts of cultural accommodation" by the British with regards to segregating food service by religion.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Dishes of India By M. A. Newman The development of India cuisine, not unlike the evolution of the Indian nation is not without many twist, turns and unexpected developments. In "Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors: Lizzie Collingham begins with the premise that India developed a national cuisine that was warped beyond all recognition by western imitators and ends up with a totally different conclusion, that as a living thing, Indian food has evolved over the years, taking on new influences from the Persia, Central Asia, Portugal, the British (both in India and later in the United Kingdom) and finally America. Purists of all stripes maybe appalled at the central thesis, but proponents of the strength of pluralism will rejoice. To begin with there is no single type of food that typifies Indian cuisine. It is a country of several different climates, range of foods, and ethnic traditions. Food from Kashmir is different from that from the Punjab, from that of the Bengal region. In many respects, Indian food resembles in its range and array of influences, both foreign and domestic that of the United States. The first significant influence to affect Indian food came from the Mughals who brought a Central Asian palate and a Persian sensibility to food. While this influence had an affect on all aspects of Indian food, perhaps the greatest impact was in the attitude the Mughals had toward food, as a source of unalloyed pleasure. This attitude puzzled and shocked the next great influence on Indian food, the Portuguese, who from their trading port of Goa provided New World ingredients like chilies and tomatoes to the range of possibilities in Indian cooking. Vanderloos, long the staple of late night drinking sessions in the UK and elsewhere could not be possible without the range of ingredients provided from the Western Hemisphere. The impact of the British was both lasting and profound. First, during the period prior to the 1858 Indian Mutiny of 1858, the members of the East India Company tended to go native, take Indian mistresses, and adapt to local customs and local food. After 1858, when the British sought to demonstrate exceptionalism, the colonial officials tried desperately to pretend they were still in rural Kent or Suffolk or the Midlands by their actions and food choices. English food and especially tinned food was preferable because though tasteless, demonstrated the Britishness of the colonial officials who lived very separate lives from the native population. Some of these ingredients were incorporated into Indian cuisine. Back in Britain, an appetite for the exotic tastes and smells of the Raj influenced the way the British prepared food, leading to the creation of Indian restaurants throughout the larger cities at first (mainly by people from what eventually became Bangladesh) until it became possible to buy curry in any local pub. While the impact of Indian food has been most profoundly felt in Britain, post World War II America, where other Bangladeshi immigrants brought the experience of Indian food to the United States.

Ms. Collingham's book is both informative and entertaining and provides much in the way of understanding. She does include a number of recipes, some old and difficult to follow due to the arcane units of measurement employed. The lack of modern equivalents are one of this book's few faults, limiting the adventurous cook to roughly half the recipes listed. However the story told is an interesting one and the author does her best to keep her narrative both lively and fascinating.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great little book with some interesting revelations By Keeper of the Bunny A very interesting history of curry and where it came from. Lots of good recipes, of curries and other Anglo-Indian dishes. If you don't know much about curry you will find this an interesting and enlightening book.

Curry serves up a delectable history of Indian cuisine, ranging from the imperial kitchen of the Mughal invader Babur to the smoky cookhouse of the British Raj. In this fascinating volume, the first authoritative history of Indian food, Lizzie Collingham reveals that almost every well-known Indian dish is the product of a long history of invasion and the fusion of different food traditions. We see how, with the arrival of Portuguese explorers and the Mughal horde, the cooking styles and ingredients of central Asia, Persia, and Europe came to the subcontinent, where over the next four centuries they mixed with traditional Indian food to produce the popular cuisine that we know today. Portuguese spice merchants, for example, introduced vinegar marinades and the British contributed their passion for roast meat. When these new ingredients were mixed with native spices such as cardamom and black pepper, they gave birth to such popular dishes as biryani, jalfrezi, and vindaloo. In fact, vindaloo is an adaptation of the Portuguese dish "carne de vinho e alhos"--the name "vindaloo" a garbled pronunciation of "vinho e alhos"--and even "curry" comes from the Portuguese pronunciation of an Indian word. Finally, Collingham describes how Indian food has spread around the world, from the curry houses of London to the railway stands of Tokyo, where "karee raisu" (curry rice) is a favorite Japanese comfort food. We even visit Madras Mahal, the first Kosher Indian restaurant, in Manhattan. Richly spiced with colorful anecdotes and curious historical facts, and attractively designed with 34 illustrations, 5 maps, and numerous recipes, Curry is vivid, entertaining, and delicious--a feast for food lovers everywhere.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . There's nothing like trying to represent the food of India on a two-page menu to raise tricky questions about authenticity and mass taste. Isn't curry really a British invention? Does chicken tikka masala have anything to do with Indian food? Fortunately, Cambridge-trained historian Collingham supplies a welcome corrective: the cuisine of the Indian subcontinent has always been in glorious flux, and the popularity of chicken vindaloo on London's Brick Lane or New York's Curry Row (and beyond) is no simple betrayal of the cuisine. (As far as charges of cultural imperialism go, if it weren't for the Portuguese, the chilli pepper never would have had its massive impact on the region's delicacies.) Easy stratifications wilt in the face of fact: Hindu and Muslim culinary traditions have been intertwined at least as far back as the 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar, and even caste- and religion-derived gustatory restrictions are often overridden by traditions tied to subregion. Collingham's mixed approach is a delight: it's not every cookbook that incorporates an exhaustive (indeed, footnoted) culinary history, and few works of regional history lovingly explain how to make a delicious Lamb Korma. Collingham's account is generous, embracing complexity to create a richer exploration of the "exotic casserole" that conquered the world. Illus., maps. (Jan.) Copyright © 2003 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Like a fragrant biryani studded with bits of sweet and savory relishes, every page of this history of Indian cuisine offers some revelation about the origins of Indian food and its spread to the West. Historian Collingham traces how successive invasions of the subcontinent contributed new ingredients and novel cooking techniques that transformed indigenous cooking into what we now recognize as classic Indian cuisine. Early invasions from the northwest brought rice, and Persian pilau became Hindustani biryani. Portuguese sailors imported pork and Brazilian chili peppers to create vindaloo. Collingham describes how the regal courts of the various Indian states elaborated on all these foodstuffs to produce what may have been the most sumptuous banquets the world has ever known. Most surprising of all, Collingham's ruminations address the role of tea in India. Although it is a commonplace that today's India is the world's leading producer and consumer of tea, Indians drank very little tea until the British introduced it scarcely a century ago. Recipes, both contemporary and antique, supplement the text. Mark Knoblauch Copyright © 2003 American Library Association. All rights reserved. "A superb combination of culinary, cultural, and political history."--Books Culture "Part world map, part menu, this book is entirely delicious."--Time Magazine "Cooks should relish Curry."--USA Today "A lively study of Indian cooking from the Mogul Empire of the 1600s to Utsav in 21st-century Manhattan, one of the 'new breed' of Indian restaurants. It's a long but tasty journey, made easily digestible by Collingham."--Alison McCullough, New York Times Book "Fascinating.... Collingham skillfully weaves her way through the complex cultural transactions that yielded a specialized Anglo-Indian cuisine based, in large part, on mutual misunderstanding.... One of her goals, in tracing the evolution of curry and the global spread of Indian cuisine, is to pull the rug out from under the idea that India, or any other nation, ever had a cuisine that was not constantly in the process of assimilation and revision. The very dishes, flavors and food practices that we think of as timelessly, quintessentially Indian turn out to be, as often as not, foreign imports or newfangled inventions. That includes chili peppers and tea."--William Grimes, The New York Times "Her research and personal ruminations take the reader on an intriguing, colorful journey, dispelling any notion that curry as we know it is fixed, immutable or, for that matter, completely Indian.... She convincingly demonstrates that the foods of a country or region are inextricably linked to the historical, cultural and economic forces that shaped it and the people who ruled it."--Judith Weinraub, Washington Post Book World "Collingham tells the story of how the culinary habits of conquerors and conquered got jumbled up in India with great flair, drawing on historical records and local lore to color her tale."--Time Magazine, Asia "This delightful book is liberally sprinkled with colorful historical facts and anecdotes, adding spice to the fascinating story of one of India's signature gifts to the world."--Seattle Times "Collingham is a diligent researcher with an eye to a compelling or amusing detail or quotation. Her book is therefore packed with information,

and perhaps best read in small portions, so each can be savored.... Her recipes are alluring. They come at the end of the chapters, and the history therein makes them all the more enticing. They are adapted to Western kitchens, so this is a book that serious cooks will enjoy, as will anyone interested in the many regions with their varied climates, histories and cultures that make up modern India."--Claire Hopley, Washington Times "Scholarly, accessible and above all utterly original, Curry is one of the hottest and most mouth-watering books of non-fiction about India to appear for many years. Lizzie Collingham has shown herself to be a major new talent in the field."--William Dalrymple, author of *White Mughals* "An interesting story that's 5 parts history, 1 part culinary, and wholly entertaining to read.... Collingham couples excellent story telling with exhaustive research. 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Lizzie Collingham has woven a fascinating culinary cruise that also enlightens us about India's history through its most popular export, the curry." --Mira Advani Honeycutt, Food and Wine Writer "Lizzie Collingham's Curry is a spicy tale, well researched and deliciously told. She unveils the secrets behind one of the world's most important yet mysterious condiments. It's a great read with plenty of tasty recipes." --Andrew F. Smith, Editor-in-Chief, Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America "Lizzie Collingham's love and passion for Indian food and flavors is well depicted in the book. It seems that she painstakingly researched the origin, history and lore of Indian food. I was very captivated by the stories and discovered that they tied into many of the lessons I have learned from the cooks I had worked with in India during my culinary profession. I think that this is a definite read for all Indophiles and will be one of the books I will recommend to my cooks and guests interested in food from the subcontinent."--Executive Chef Floyd Cardoz, Tabla Bread Bar "Finally a book that does justice to the complexity of curry and the diaspora that carried it around the world. Curry is rigorous and yet playful about a cuisine that belongs to everyone in all its hybridity and yet cannot be traced back to any one place. It does not shy away from the topography of imperial British power that shaped the curry in its dispersal through indentured servitude and the British merchant marine, while at the same time acknowledging that curry is how the empire strikes back." --Krishnendu Ray, author of *The Migrant's Table* and Associate Professor, The Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park "What this smart little book does is unpick some of the pathways by which various meats, fish, fruits and rice came together at particular moments in history to produce, say, a lamb pasanda or even our own particular favorite, chicken tikka masala ('curry,' it turns out, is a generic term that Indians themselves would never use)."--Kathryn Hughes, Guardian "A superb combination of culinary, cultural, and political history."--Books Culture "A lively study of Indian cooking from the Mogul Empire of the 1600s to Utsav in 21st-century Manhattan, one of the 'new breed' of Indian restaurants. 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