

Tiffin: Memories and Recipes of Indian Vegetarian Food

Rukmini Srinivas



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As I dug into my memory for those snacks or tiffin, I recalled the many anecdotes and narratives about the people and places associated with these recipes, My replies grew into lengthy stories and my girls loved them. 'Amma, send us more recipes for tiffin,' they wrote, Those stories were rambling and multifaceted and they are all here in my book.

'Tiffin', derived from 'tiffing', a historical British term for small meals or snacks to accompany a drink, is a staple meal in most Indian households. A popular television chef on the local Arlington cable network, Rukmini Srinivas or 'Rukka', regularly whips up mouth-watering delicious tiffin for her viewers with an ease and prowess befitting a seasoned epicure.

In this delightful memoir-cum-cookbook, Rukka shares the memories and recipes of delectable food that she has cooked and eaten over many decades. Having travelled extensively- from Poona, Madras and Delhi to Berkeley, Stanford and Boston- she realized, at a very young age, the indispensability of authentic home-cooked food. She records here her emotional and deeply personal bond with food- from Chitappa's masala vadai and Appa's vegetable cutlet to bondas on Marina Beach, Narayana's bajji and Amma's Mysore pak. Alongside, she shares stories from her childhood in British Poona, of making vegetable cutlets with a Victorian meat grinder, college days in the Madras of a newly independent India, cooking for author R.K. Narayan and her travels around the world with her husband, the renowned social anthropologist, M.N. Srinivas.

Like the traditional metal tiffin box, which has found its way into modern food, Rukka's pure-vegetarian recipes are an interesting amalgamation of old-school cooking techniques, with innovative twists. Including charming anecdotes and over a hundred easy-to-follow delicious recipes accompanied by evocative photographs, Tiffin is a richly satisfying feast for all those who believe in food, family and friendship.



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