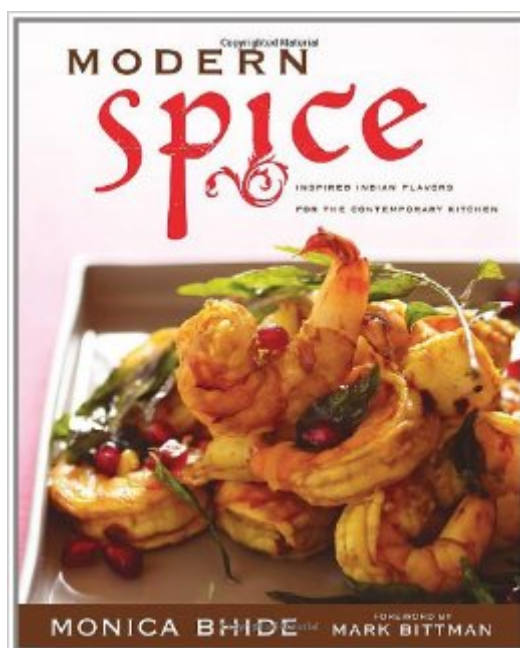


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Modern Spice: Inspired Indian Flavors For The Contemporary Kitchen



Synopsis

Born in New Delhi, raised in the Middle East, and living in Washington, D.C., acclaimed food writer Monica Bhide is the perfect representative of the new generation of Indian American cooks who have taken traditional dishes, painstakingly prepared by their Indian mothers and grandmothers, and updated them for modern American lifestyles and tastes. Respectful of the techniques and history of Indian cuisine but eager to experiment, Bhide has written simple but deeply flavorful recipes. *Modern Spice* takes the vibrant tastes of India into the twenty-first century with a cookbook that is young, fun, sassy, and bold. Dishes like Pomegranate Shrimp, Paneer and Fig Pizza, and Coriander-and-Fennel-Crusted Lamb Chops are contemporary and creative. Bhide pours Guava Bellinis and Tamaritas for her guests, and serves Chile Pea Puffs and Indian Chicken Wings; instead of Chicken Tikka Masala, she serves Chicken with Mint and Ginger Rub. Make-ahead condiments such as Pineapple Lentil Relish and Kumquat and Mango Chutney with Onion Seeds add a piquant accent to the simplest dish. There are plenty of options for everyday meals, including Butternut Squash Stew with Jaggery, Indian-Style Chili in Bread Bowls, and Crabby Vermicelli, along with plentiful recipes for elegant dishes like Tamarind-Glazed Honey Shrimp and Chicken Breasts Stuffed with Paneer. For an original and effortless finish, spoon Raspberry and Fig Jam Topping over tart frozen yogurt or a store-bought pound cake, or if you have more time, tempt guests with exotic sweets such as Saffron-Cardamom Macaroons or Rice Pudding and Mango Parfait. As Mark Bittman says in his foreword, "there is not a cuisine that uses spices with more grace and craft than that of India," and Bhide's recipes do so, but without long and daunting lists of exotic ingredients. In keeping with its local approach to global flavors, *Modern Spice* includes a guide to the modern Indian pantry and Monica's thoughtful, charming essays on food, culture, and family. Eight pages of gorgeous color photographs showcase the recipes.

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Customer Reviews

First, I must admit that the author is a friend, and that I worked with her on this book. But please don't let that make you think that any praise I give the book is unearned. Believe me, if this book had fallen out of the sky into my kitchen I would also love it. Why? Reason #1: The recipes WORK. I'm lucky enough to know that Monica tests her recipes, and has people with all different levels of cooking skill test them, too. And she won't let a recipe go until everyone can make it. So even if you are a novice cook, you *can* make these dishes. And if you are already skilled in Indian cooking, you just might find a simpler way to make something you love. Case in point: the recipe for Cream of Wheat and Paneer Pancakes (page 200). When I read it, I recognized it immediately as idli. But where is grinding the grains for it? Where is letting the batter sit overnight (or longer) to ferment? Gone! But what you get is a delicious pancake that works as a side, as a bread, as the basis for a meal. Reason #2: She is there to guide you through things that might be new to you. It might be a bit much to call this a "Mastering the Art of Indian Cooking," but there is very helpful information about ingredients and techniques that might be unfamiliar. And again, even if you think you know all about them, you just might learn something. Reason #3: This really is a book for *modern* cooks. Who has time to grind spices, and make complicated multi-day recipes? Very few of us. But even the simplest, quickest recipes are so full of flavor, you'll almost feel guilty at how easy they are. There is no such thing as a recipe that is too simple, as far as I'm concerned, not if the people I serve it to eat up every last bit!

Modern Spice: Inspired Indian Flavors for the Contemporary Kitchen Monica Bhidé is quite possibly one of the brightest rising stars in the Indian culinary horizon. She is as much at home rubbing shoulders with culinary giants such as Jose Andres & Sanjeev Kapoor as she is fielding questions and comments from a slew of over enthusiastic bloggers via her facebook page and her website. An engineer by academic training, she is the author of three successful books and writes extensively about food, traditions & culture for major publications. Modern Spice is one of those books that takes its time to sink into, and when it does, completely enchants you into falling in love with the stories and recipes contained within. It's a beautifully balanced set of essays and anecdotes from the author's life, interspersed between a collection of about 120 unique recipes. At first glance, some of

the recipes may well elicit a comment of "oh this, c'mon its so simple/humble, I make it practically every week" . And yet, it escapes us that this very simplicity is what makes it so delicious & memorable. The recipes contain a collection of day to day simple yet memorable dishes that we live on & look forward to at an intimate family dinner or a gathering of friends. The thoughts and words and (some) recipes are those of a wife, a mother, a nervous graduate student rather than an established author, and Ms. Bhide excels at communicating this in the book.

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