

Patel's new *Guide to Indian Cooking* takes the stress out of the kitchen

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Brooks Bulletin

Former Brooks resident Dr. Neetash Patel has found himself busy outside his Calgary chiropractic practice in the last year working on the conception, publication and now promotion of his first cookbook, *A Guide To Indian Cooking*.

The book, which has been out since December of 2007, features a treasure trove of Indian cooking recipes and is accompanied by an instructional

DVD with 26 recipes.

Patel says the genesis of the book came from a handful of personal sources - his own family's recipes and his catering and bartending experience during post-secondary years.

"I have always been familiar with the process of how to cook and I have always truly enjoyed it," he said.

But it was upon his return to Canada and subsequently starting up his chiropractic practice that patients began encouraging him to get into

the food business in addition to medicine.

"I came home, started my practice and a lot of patients asked if I taught classes or catered events. So I started teaching classes because the demand was there."

He says the increase in popularity of Indian food and restaurants around the world and in Calgary made the decision even easier.

The cookbook is littered with personal anecdotes about Patel's love of Indian food, travel and

family. The informal nature of the book was a balance Patel wanted to achieve.

"It was partly a personal journey really - but I wanted to share what our story was and is. The book is a nice coffee table book, it can be read for some laughs but it is also useful because it can be laid flat, followed and cooked to as well," he said.

"The personal anecdotes add a personal quality to the book but also keeps it informal."

An informal mind, says Patel, is something that is needed if one wants to delve into Indian cooking.

"That's the thing with Indian food - there are no exact recipes."

While Patel expects that anyone new to Indian cooking will certainly be in for a learning experience, it was a learning experience for Patel when it came to the publishing of his first book.

"My world is health care and I have developed a bit of a business sense, but publishing the book was certainly a learning process for me. A lot of my inspiration comes from patients," he said.

Everything from the cooking to the food photography to the design and eventual layout was all done in Calgary.

"The book is truly a home grown project," he said.

In the end, Patel just wants to share his love of food with as many people as he can.

"I want people to know that there aren't too many tools you need - a kitchen is the main thing."

He says the feedback from the public about the book has been great thus far.

"It has honestly been fantastic. I'm a bit overwhelmed and hopeful. It has been out four months and over 400 copies have moved with little promotion," he says.

"One of the best comments I've gotten is they just love the 'Keep in Touch' portion at the end of the book and the personality comes through the pages."

Patel says he has a few other pots on the publishing stove as well, with plans for a combination recipe/travel journal book culled from his travel experiences as well as more motivational life guide.

Patel's *A Guide to Indian Cooking* is available on-line at www.inacurry.com or in Brooks at the Quilted Garden.



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REALLY THAT EASY - Dr. Neetash Patel's cookbook, *A Guide to Indian Cooking* takes the stress out of standing over a recipe and provides readers with fun and interactive anecdotes and recipes about Indian food and its preparation.