

# A Highly Spiced Stew. The Australian Women's Weekly and Curry

September 2025

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1933 a new magazine hit newsstands across Australia – the *Australian Women's Weekly* (called the *Weekly* from hereon).

Lauren Samuelson writes of the *Weekly*:

It's hard to imagine in our modern world of fragmented food media, that one publication could have been as influential and ubiquitous as the *Australian Women's Weekly*. ... But between the 1930s and the 1980s the *Weekly* reigned supreme.<sup>1</sup>

One of my abiding interests in cuisines at the Australian table is how they are presented. This is for South Asian cuisines - that of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Curry has been the most common face for these cuisines. I wondered how a magazine that 'reigned supreme' in food media presented curry to its readership.<sup>2</sup> I took as my time frame the first fifty years of its publication 1933 – 1983 corresponding with its reign.

The *Weekly's* curry did not appear out of nowhere. It was building on a hundred plus years of curry in Australia in a generic dish called Curry. The designation 'Indian' appears first in 1942 in a recipe for Curried Eggs.<sup>3</sup> It then disappears until 1968 with the Indian Curry and Rice Book.<sup>4</sup> It was one of three South Asian cuisines in a feature article Curries ... With Authentic Flavour.<sup>5</sup> The designation Pakistani first appears in Curries ... With Authentic Flavour.<sup>6</sup> The designation Ceylonese/Sri Lankan also first appears in Curries ... With Authentic Flavour.<sup>7</sup>

My approach in the article is to treat the generic curry, the Indian Curry and Rice Book, and Curries ... With Authentic Flavour as a single entity.

I take a combination of a thematic and a portrait approach in what follows.

I have noted in [brackets] South Asian cook books published in the time frame.

## Curry Described

Over the years the *Weekly* described curry as having spicing at its core.

In India, where the curry originated, it is used as a highly seasoned and pungent sauce to accompany the inevitable bowl of rice.<sup>8</sup>

Curry is a highly spiced stew served dry or moist according to taste.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Samuelson, Lauren, *A Matter of Taste*, Monash University Publishing 2024 p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 800,000 in 1965,

<sup>3</sup> Indian Curried Eggs, Buffet Style For Busy People, *Australian Women's Weekly* (AWW) 18 April 1942 p.30

<sup>4</sup> Indian Curry and Rice Book, AWW 1968

<sup>5</sup> Curries ... With Authentic Flavour, AWW 29 August 1973 p.71

<sup>6</sup> Curries ... With Authentic Flavour, AWW 29 August 1973 p.69

<sup>7</sup> Curries ... With Authentic Flavour, AWW 29 August 1973 p.73

<sup>8</sup> These Curries are Delicious and Economical, AWW 9 September 1933

<sup>9</sup> Curry. AWW 3 February 1965 p.13

The exotic, tantalising aromas and unique tastes that come from subtly-blended spices have brought (South Asian dishes) world-wide culinary acclaim.<sup>10</sup>

(The) true flavour of a good curry is in the subtlety of its spicing.<sup>11</sup>

The *Weekly* also described the form and nature of a curry.

There are only two basic types of curries - moist and dry. Moist curry is cooked with an added liquid, and in dry curry the slowly simmering ingredients provide sufficient moisture for cooking. The moist method is especially suitable for curries containing precooked or leftover ingredients.<sup>12</sup>

Curries, which an Indian maharaja once called "India's gift to mankind," do not necessarily have to be very hot in flavor; many are very light and delicate.<sup>13</sup>

All curries contain a sweet and sour element, which are accomplished by the blending of lemon juice or vinegar with sweet chutney.<sup>14</sup>

Curry it was said 'has this big advantage: it can be prepared well in advance of any meal, and slowly reheated just before serving. ... In fact, curry can quite easily become "to-morrow's special dish", for standing-over seems to draw out the more its pungent, tantalising flavor.'<sup>15</sup> (That curries are better the day after remains a myth)

It was also recommended as 'a very practical and economical dish. It can be made with raw or cooked meat, poultry and rabbit, or any leftovers, all types of seafoods, a variety of vegetables, and many of the tinned, frozen, and packaged foods.'<sup>16</sup>

### **Curry Powder<sup>17</sup>**

The majority of recipes under study used curry powder which was commercially available over the years covered by this article.. The earliest mention of commercial curry powder I found was in 1814 when J. Laurie advertised that he had canisters of curry powder for sale.<sup>18</sup> In 1844 Joseph Keen manufactured the first locally made curry powder - Keen's Curry Powder – which went on to find itself in every kitchen cupboard across Australia.<sup>19</sup> Kinkara Tea advertised Curry Powder in 1937.<sup>20</sup> In 1943 Tandaco advertised curry powder.<sup>21</sup> In 1969 the *Weekly* carried an advertisement for Vencat Curry Powder.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Curries ... with authentic flavour, *AWW* 29 August 1973 p.69

<sup>11</sup> Indian Dimer Party For Six, *AWW* 28 October 1981 p.82

<sup>12</sup> Cookery Course, *AWW* 2 August 1961 p.36

<sup>13</sup> Indian Curry and Rice Book, *AWW* 1 May 1968

<sup>14</sup> Indian Curry and Rice Book, *AWW* 1 May 1968

<sup>15</sup> These Curries are Delicious and Economical, *AWW* 9 September 1933 p.35

<sup>16</sup> Cookery Course, *AWW* 2 August 1961 p.36

<sup>17</sup> 'Curry powder' is used by the *Weekly* over the years as a flavouring in all kinds of dishes. That is not my concern here. I look specifically at curry as a type of dish named so in its recipe which may or may not have curry powder, paste or sauce as an ingredient. I look also at dishes that are part of a curry meal i.e. rice and accompaniments.

<sup>18</sup> J. Laurie, *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 5 November 1814 p.2

<sup>19</sup> van Reyk, Paul, *True To The Land. A history of food in Australia*, Reaktion 2010 p.91

<sup>20</sup> Kinkara Tea, *AWW* 4 May 1935 p.29

<sup>21</sup> Tandaco, *AWW* 18 December 1943 p. 24

<sup>22</sup> Vencat Curry Powder, *AWW* 14 May 1969 p. 87

There were cautions about its use.

‘Some think that a curry to be good must be "hot." Nothing of the kind.’, *the Weekly* said in 1936 of curry powders. ‘Indiscriminate use of curry powder in inexperienced hands has been responsible for many a spoilt dish—and life-long aversions.... It should be carefully made, its sauce rich, well-flavored, and of the right thickness. Therefore, use only the best brand of curry. It may be expensive, but will be the cheapest in the end. And use it sparingly!’<sup>23</sup>

Flavoring should be done carefully, as individual tastes require different quantities of curry powder. Too much does spoil the flavor.<sup>24</sup>

There was always the let out: ‘Some do not like too hot a curry so less powder can be used without spoiling the flavor.’<sup>25</sup>

How much to use was the subject of discussion. In 1961 the *Weekly* published ‘a guide to the newcomer to curry cookery’ which gave the amount of curry powder to be used for different dishes:

- to suit yourself or your family's taste.
- 2 to 3 teaspoons per pound for meat,
- 1 to 2 teaspoons per pound for fish.
- 2 to 3 teaspoons per cup for sauces.
- ½ to 1 teaspoon per pound for vegetables.<sup>26</sup>

In 1967 the *Weekly* suggested ‘Commercial powders can be used a "starter" in making curry. You can supplement it with several of the spices that go into most blends of curry powder (cumin, coriander, ground or fresh green ginger, cardamom, etc.), adding or subtracting until you have the blend which suits you best.’<sup>27</sup>

In 1961 the *Weekly* gave recipes ‘for ambitious cooks who wish to make their own curry powder and paste’. It recommended that the spices be ground using an electric blender or mortar and pestle.<sup>28</sup> Recipes for curry powder, paste and sauce were given in succeeding years. In 1981 the *Weekly* gave a lesson in making curry powder and paste at home.<sup>29</sup> In 1960 the *Weekly* published the first recipe I found for a Curry Paste<sup>30</sup>.

The first time whole spices were used in a curry was in a recipe for Quorrma in Jane Nutta Singh’s 1968 feature in the *Weekly* the *Indian Curry and Rice Book*.<sup>31</sup> In 1979 in the *Curry Cookbook* 18 curries used whole spices.<sup>32</sup>

Curry powder and whole spices continued to be published in cookbooks over the years to 1983, sometimes both in the same book

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<sup>23</sup> Know How To Make Delicious Curries, *AWW* 9 May 1933 p.51

<sup>24</sup> Concerning curry, *AWW* 26 June 1948 p.33

<sup>25</sup> These Curries are Delicious and Economical, *AWW* 9 September 1933 p.35

<sup>26</sup> Curries, *AWW* 14 June 1961 p.45

<sup>27</sup> The World’s Best Curries, *AWW* 8 March 1967

<sup>28</sup> Curry Cooking Course Lesson 21 *AWW* 2 August 1961 p.36

<sup>29</sup> Make Your Own Curry Powder and Paste, *AWW* 30 September 1981 p.87

<sup>30</sup> The World’s Best Curries, *AWW* 8 March 1967

<sup>31</sup> Quorrma, *Indian Curry and Rice Book*, *AWW*

<sup>32</sup> *Curry Cookbook*, *AWW* 1979

## Availability of Ingredients

Recipe makers assured the home cooks that ingredients they gave in the recipe could be bought in Australia.

A variety of ready-mixed curry powders and pastes can be bought in Australia as well as a wide selection of spices for those who prefer to make their own. The flavor of the spices deteriorates when exposed to the air, so it is wise to buy small quantities and keep these in tightly sealed containers.<sup>33</sup>

The spices for these recipes are available in food sections of big department stores, or from health food stores. Maldivian fish and tamarind are the only two ingredients which may be hard to get in some areas. These are obtainable from specialty spice stores. The sweet mango pickle and lemon pickle, which are traditional accompaniments to curry, are imported into this country and are available in jars. Poppadams, thin wafers made from rice flour, shown in the picture, are not yet available here.<sup>34</sup>

Appendix 1 is a list of the first reference in print media for a spectrum of spices.

## Curries In General

‘Everything but the kitchen sink’ could describe perhaps the list of ingredients that could be used to make a perfect curry.<sup>35</sup>

### *Nomenclature*

The majority of recipes simply say they are a curry e.g. Beef or Chicken Curry, Curry, Curry of Mixed Vegetables, and Curried Prawns.

There is mostly no differentiation of Vegetables but there are also exceptions e.g. Curried Potato Salad, Dhal With Spinach.

Sometimes the title identifies a way of cooking using a South Asian style e.g. Cabbage Kofta Curry, Seeni Sambal. Others use Western ways of cooking e.g. Fritters, Pies, Soups.

The titles of dishes sometimes identify a particular town or region e.g. Bombay Mutton Curry, Madras Prawn Curry .

Some use their vernacular name e.g. Ekna Zarda, Moglai Hoosaini Kabobs, Fish Ambul Thial, Beef Dopiazza.

### *Main Ingredient*

There is a wide variety of main ingredient e.g. Brains, Choko, Rabbit, Bream, Rockmelon, Oyster, Chipolata, Avocado.

### *Spices*

There are a wide range of spices used across the dishes. Those most commonly used were these:

Cardamom, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander, Cumin, Fenugreek, Ginger, Black Mustard Seed, Pepper, Sesame Seed and Turmeric.

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<sup>33</sup> Cookery Course, Lesson 27, AWW 2 August 1961 p.36

<sup>34</sup> Curries . . . with authentic flavor, AWW 29 August 1975 p.69

<sup>35</sup> A Perfect Curry, AWW 4 June 1958 p.49

Other flavourings used in curries were: Salt, Tamarind, Garlic, Lemongrass, Pandanus Leaf, Asafoetida, Lemon, Lime, Goroka, Chilli and Cayenne.

### *Breads*

South Asian flatbreads are ideal for eating curry - Puri, Paratha, Chapati, Naan, and Roti.

### *Rice*

While others had previously described how to cook rice – How to Cook Rice<sup>36</sup>, Cooking Rice For Curry<sup>37</sup> - Jane Nutta Singh in the *Indian Curry and Rice Book* gave the most comprehensive discussion about rice.<sup>38</sup> She gave recipes for cooking rice: boiled, oven steamed, fried, and pearly; two for pilau; and the sweet rice preparations rice balls and Ekna Zarda. 'Most people', she wrote. 'prefer to use the long grain rice for savory cooking; the medium grain is a good all purpose rice for savory or sweet cooking. The short grained rice, sold in bulk, is used in all types of rice puddings and lovely rice desserts.' She gave four methods for reheating rice: the Indian method which involves re-boiling the rice; reheating with steam: reheating in an oven; and reheating in a frypan.

She went on to list ingredients that could be added to the rice 'For additional flavor' ranging from stock cubes to chopped hard boiled eggs.

### **Accompaniments, Side Dishes and Sambals<sup>39</sup>**

In 1958 the *Weekly* first published a list of accompaniments with curry but they were far distant from more traditional curry accompaniments.<sup>40</sup>

A variety of accompaniments, among which are salted peanuts, cashew nuts, raisins, shredded coconut, chutney, hard-boiled eggs, guava jelly, and crystallised ginger, can be served with any of the following recipes.

In 1967 the *Weekly* published an extensive list of sambals including the first I came across for the very commonly used Mint Chutney and Coconut Sambal.<sup>41</sup> It published another in that year giving recipes for Fried Chillies and Ground Chilli Sambal.<sup>42</sup>

Connoisseurs like to combine contrasting flavors, mixing a little of each condiment with the curry and rice. Chutney, lemon slices, and shredded coconut are essentials.<sup>43</sup>

In 1979 it published recipes for making Dhal, Toasted Coconut and Pappadams. It also suggested onion; slices of banana; chopped hard-boiled eggs; pieces of papaw rolled in coconut; raisins; peanuts; slices of cucumber; yoghurt, served alone or with sliced cucumber in it.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> These Curries are Delicious and Economical, *AWW* 9 September 1933 p.35

<sup>37</sup> Cooking Rice For Curry, *AWW* 9 May 1936 p.51

<sup>38</sup> Rice - how to cook and use it, *Indian Curry and Rice*, *AWW* 1 May 1968 p.3

<sup>39</sup> Side Dishes Or Sambals, *AWW* March 1967 p.12

<sup>40</sup> A Perfect Curry, *AWW* 4 June 1958 p.49

<sup>41</sup> Side Dishes Or Sambals, *AWW* March 1967 p.12

<sup>42</sup> Desserts ... to serve after curry, *AWW* 8 March 1967

<sup>43</sup> Cookery Course, Lesson 27, 2 August 1961 p. 36

<sup>44</sup> Sambals, *AWW* 25 April 1979 p.85

## Desserts & Sweets

In 1948 the *Weekly* missed an opportunity to give recipes for desserts and sweets that would be welcome after a rice and curry meal. It had three menus each of which had a dessert. The desserts were standard Western fare - Lemon Marshmallow Cream, Orange Meringue Pudding, Sago Plum Pudding, Custard.<sup>45</sup> It could have had recipes for Gulab Jamun, Ras Malai, or Barfi. They took no interest in publishing South Asian desserts and sweets.

## Chillie

The first instance of chilli being used was in a 1958 recipe for Special Curry Sauce<sup>46</sup>. Singh uses it in all her recipes as do the contributors to *Curries with authentic flavor*.<sup>47</sup> There was advice on how to take the heat out of the chilli - scraping away the seeds – and reconstituting dried chilli. Prior to this cayenne was used to give the curry 'heat'. Both continued to be used from hereon. There was also some dubious characterising: 'Curries appear to follow the climate in degrees of heat – the nearer to the equator, the hotter the curry. So Sri Lanka curries are the hottest of all, while those of India and Pakistan are somewhat milder'.<sup>48</sup>

## Fruit

Continuing a practice long established recipes in this period had fruit - fresh or dried – as an ingredient as late as 1983. Apple is the most common but also raisins, bananas, and sultanas. Chutney is intermittently called for as is sugar. Jam is rarely called for. Pineapple was often used. In 1948 a recipe for Bombay Curry called for one apple, one sliced banana, ½ teaspoon of sugar, dessertspoon of chutney, and two tablespoons sultanas.<sup>49</sup> The apple got the curry all to itself with Curried Apple.<sup>50</sup> In 1936 the *Weekly* gave a recipe for a Fruit Curry which turned the tails of fruit in curry.<sup>51</sup>

## Coconut

The earliest use of coconut was for grated coconut in a recipe for Curry Sauce in 1933.<sup>52</sup> Coconut was recommended for thickening sauces: Sultanas, slices of bananas, coconut, chutney can be added if a richer sauce is required.<sup>53</sup> The method for making coconut milk was described in 1958.<sup>54</sup>

## Curry Soup<sup>55</sup>

This was the first soup recipe I came across. It's unusual in that its main ingredient is curry powder. There were other soups after this but there were other ingredients along with the curry powder curry.

## Curry Pie<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Concerning Curry, *AWW* 26 June 1948 p.33

<sup>46</sup> Special Curry Sauce, *AWW* 19 February 1958 p.45

<sup>47</sup> Curries ...with authentic flavor, *AWW* 29 August 1973 p.69

<sup>48</sup> Curries ...with authentic flavor, *AWW* 29 August 1973 p.69

<sup>49</sup> Bombay Curry, Concerning Curry, *AWW* 26 January 1948 p.33

<sup>50</sup> Curried Apple, *AWW* 27 May 1939 p.7

<sup>51</sup> Know How To Make Delicious Curries, *AWW* 9 May 1936 p.51

<sup>52</sup> These Curries are Delicious and Economical, *AWW* 9 September 1933 p.35

<sup>53</sup> Go Satisfy Hearty Winter Soups, *AWW* 14 May 1938 p.

<sup>54</sup> A Perfect Curry, *AWW* 4 June 1959 p.49

<sup>55</sup> Curry Soup, Good Hot Soups For Winter Appetites, *AWW* 27 June 1936 p.55

<sup>56</sup> To Satisfy Hearty Winter Appetites, *AWW* 14 May 1938 p.38

In 1938 a recipe was published for Curry Pie. The recipe is markedly different to the curry pies of today, having sultanas and carrots and of course it isn't a pie to hold in one's hand as is its modern equivalent. But it's interesting to see the continuity and change of this way of presenting curry. It also gave the earliest recipe I found for a Cold Meat Curry, that is, one that uses leftovers or meat let get cold.

### **Pasta and Curry**

In 1936 the *Weekly* published a recipe for Curried Macaroni. Pasta and curry would meet again on a number of occasions. There was a recipe for Curried Eggs and Macaroni in 1942.<sup>57</sup> There was a recipe for Madras Curry With Spaghetti.<sup>58</sup> In 1952 there was a recipe for Curried Beef With Noodle.<sup>59</sup> A recipe for Curried Steak And Spaghetti was published 1957.<sup>60</sup> A latecomer to this section was Pasta With Curried Fish in 1981.<sup>61</sup>

### **Curries<sup>62</sup>**

In 1955 the *Weekly* published this article.

A dish of curry is easy to prepare and serve. It is manageable with a fork, and it can be kept hot for a long time without spoiling. This makes it a good dish not only for entertaining but for weekends, too, when meals often become buffet affairs.

A notable recipe here was Creamed Fish In Curried Rice which overturned the practice till then of having a curry in a ring of rice.

### **Indian Curry Dinner<sup>63</sup>**

What is important about this set of recipes from 1967 is that the meal is being eaten in the setting of a dinner party and not simply dinner with the family. Curry breaks a glass ceiling here. It also brings two traditional accompaniments to the table – Pappadums, Bombay Duck.

'Curries are a wonderful way to feed large numbers of guests. Curries are easy to make in large quantities and are equally easy to eat – a spoon is the correct utensil.'

The meal was served as a buffet. There were recipes for Moglai Biriani With Pilau Rice and Vindaloo. Each of these called for whole spices and not curry powder. The Vindaloo recipe used chillies.

### **The World's Best Curries<sup>64</sup>**

In 1967 the *Weekly* published *The World's Best Curries*.<sup>65</sup> This was the first venture from the *Weekly* to deal exclusively with South and South East Asian cuisines. There were recipes from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Mr. A. E. ("Tiger") Ady, who with his wife Doris Ady managed a spice shop - The Burra Bazaar – provided descriptions of the country or region from which particular kinds of curries came.

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<sup>57</sup> Curried Eggs and Macaroni, Every one a Winner, *AWW* 12 September 1942 p.26

<sup>58</sup> Madras Curry With Spaghetti, Second Service *AWW* 28 June 1947 p.49

<sup>59</sup> Curried Beef With Noodle With Noodles, *AWW* 9 March 1952 p.57

<sup>60</sup> Curried Steak And Spaghetti, *AWW* 27 June 1956 p.74

<sup>61</sup> Pasta With Curried Fish, *AWW* 24 November 1982 p.108

<sup>62</sup> Curries, *AWW* 17 August 1955 p. 65

<sup>63</sup> Indian Curry Dinner (20 to 25 guests), *AWW* 27 November 1963 p.48

<sup>64</sup> The World's Best Curries, *AWW* 8 March 1967 p.1

<sup>65</sup> The World's Best Curries, *AWW* 1967

The article described ghee and gave a method for making it from butter. It offered more ways to make coconut milk, using fresh or grated desiccated flesh.

Seven out of 16 South Asian dishes call for curry powder. Ten out of 16 called for chillie. None called for any substitute for chillie like cayenne.

Of the dishes that call for whole spices just one calls for the spices to be ground.

### **Indian Curry and Rice Book<sup>66</sup>**

Jane Nutta Singh provided recipes for this 1968 feature the first recipes to focus solely on one of the cuisines of South Asia - Indian. The recipes were drawn from a book she had recently published.<sup>67</sup> Singh was a former prize-winner in the *Weekly's* Pineapple contest. She and her husband had run a restaurant - the Taj Mahal.

She gave a comprehensive guide to cooking rice (See above). She introduced Quoorma and Kabas and Khagina an Indian Omelet. She gave recipes for curries for specific vegetables and not just the all-encompassing 'Vegetable' – Beans and Aaloo (Potato) Curry, Cabbage Foogath. She gave recipes for a suite of Sambals. She used both curry powder and whole spices. She used chillie in five recipes.

[In 1968 Doris Ady published *Curries from the Sultan's Kitchen. Recipes from India, Pakistan, Burma & Sri Lanka*<sup>68</sup>]

[In 1971 Charmaine Solomon published *The South East Asian Cook Book*<sup>69</sup>]

### **Curries ...with authentic flavor<sup>70</sup>**

In 1973 the *Weekly* published *Curries ...with authentic flavor*. The article contained curries from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It was the first time the *Weekly* had published Pakistani cuisine and gave more attention to Sri Lankan cuisine also. Each of the cuisines were presented by a woman national: Mrs. Qamar Malik gave recipes for Pakistani dishes, Mrs. Sudarshan Mahajan gave Indian recipes, and Mrs. Lalini Fernando gave Sri Lankan recipes. Unfortunately we learn very little about the women other than from where they came, a minimal statement about their cuisines, and identifying each one as being a hostess for dinner parties and such entertainment. We also don't learn how the women were contacted and why they were chosen. It's like the *Weekly* waved a magic wand and the three women appeared. So to the recipes. They drip authenticity.

The first thing that is noticeable is that only one recipe calls for pre-made curry powder. Spices are used either whole or in curry powder made at home using a blender or mortar and pestle and not a grindstone. Mrs. Fernando gives her recipe for curry powder. The ingredients are many. As there will be a lot of curry powder made, she recommends storing that which is not used in a screw-top jar. Mrs. Sudarshan Mahajan gives her recipe for garam masala, the traditional spice ingredient in Indian curries.

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<sup>66</sup> Indian Curry and Rice Book, AWW 1 May 1968 p.1

<sup>67</sup> I have been unable to find this.

<sup>68</sup> Ady, Doris, *Curries from the Sultan's Kitchen. Recipes from India, Pakistan, Burma & Sri Lanka* A.A. & A. W. Reid, 1968

<sup>69</sup> Solomon, Charmaine, *South East Asian Cookbook*, Hamlyn 1972

<sup>70</sup> Curries ...with authentic flavor, AWW 29 August 1973 p.69



The second thing that is noticeable is that many of the recipes call for chilli powder. The amounts are generous – 1 to 2 teaspoonfuls. Fresh or dried chillies are not called for. None asks for cayenne, only one uses paprika.

Mrs. Qamar Malik gives her recipe for parathas, one of the South Asian breads. Mrs. Sudarshan Mahajan gives the recipe for making pooris, another South Asian bread.

Mrs. Lalini Fernando gives recipes for Seeni Sambal, an essential accompaniment for a Sri Lankan meal. Ditto the Mixed Pickle for which she gives a recipe. She also gives instructions in making coconut milk, a common liquid in which to make curries.

Mrs. Sudarshan Mahajan, also gives a recipe for garam masala the Indian mixed spice.

[In 1976 Charmaine Solomon published *The Complete Asian Cookbook*<sup>71</sup> ]

[In 1978 Charmaine Solomon, published *Indian Cooking for Pleasure*<sup>72</sup>]

[In 1980 Charmaine Solomon and Reuben Solomon published *The Complete Curry Cookbook*<sup>73</sup>]

### **Some Firsts**

1936 the *Weekly* published first recipe for Curried Eggs.<sup>74</sup>

1939 the *Weekly* published the first recipe to use garlic - Garlic Curry for Prawn Loaves.<sup>75</sup>

1939 the *Weekly* published the first description on How To Eat Rice And Curry.<sup>76</sup>

[In 1976 Charmaine Solomons published *The Complete Asian Cookbook*<sup>77</sup> ]

### **Reader Recipes**

Readers regularly sent in recipes to the food pages of newspapers hoping to win a monetary prize and also a moment of fame. These are some of the more interesting of what they sent in. Iced Curry in Cucumber Cases<sup>78</sup>; Lemon Curry Sandwiches<sup>79</sup>; Mushroom And Curry Butter<sup>80</sup>; Cheese and Curry Biscuits<sup>81</sup>; Curried Rabbit In Grapefruit Cases<sup>82</sup>; Curried Prawns Mexicana<sup>83</sup>.

All called for curry powder and none for whole spices. Later recipes called for chilli.

The predominance of curry notwithstanding these recipes show that home cooks were engaging with curry and producing innovative recipes with it.

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<sup>71</sup> Solomon, Charmaine, *The Complete Asian Cookbook*, Paul Hamlyn 1976

<sup>72</sup> Solomon, Charmaine, *Indian Cooking for Pleasure*, Ure Smith 1978

<sup>73</sup> Solomon, Charmaine, and Reuben, Solomon *The Complete Curry Cookbook*, Paul Hamlyn 1980

<sup>74</sup> Know How To Make Delicious Curries, *AWW* 9 May 1936 p.51

<sup>75</sup> Side Dishes Or Sambals, *AWW* March 1967 p.12

<sup>76</sup> Curry for Prawn Loaves, Now You Can Bottle Fruit, *AWW* 21 January 1939 p.8

<sup>77</sup> Solomon, Charmaine, *The Complete Asian Cookbook*, Paul Hamlyn 1976

<sup>78</sup> *AWW* 2 February 1934 p. 35

<sup>79</sup> *AWW* 3 July 1937 1937 p.36

<sup>80</sup> *AWW* 30 April 1938 p.5

<sup>81</sup> *AWW* 3 May 1941 p. 42

<sup>82</sup> *AWW* 7 August 1948 p. 33

<sup>83</sup> *AWW* 2 September 1959 p.48

## Summing Up

I set out to see how the *Australian Women's Weekly* presented curry over 1933 - 1983. With 800,000 readers in 1964 it was in a unique position as an influencer particularly in the domestic Curry space. There was an abundance of recipes offered to the home maker ranging from Oyster Curry to Quoorma, curry powder to whole spices, sauces to sambals, which speaks to the versatility of curry as a dish and to that of the recipe makers. There were recipes for making Curry Powder, Curry Paste and Curry Sauce at home with assurances that ingredients could be bought in department stores or speciality shops. The *Indian Curry and Rice Book (1968)*, and *Curries with authentic flavour* both were breakthrough articles by women nationals for their cuisines - India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. All in all the *Weekly* well-presented curry to the Australian table.

## **Appendix 1. List of ingredients for Asian cuisines and their first appearance in Australian records**

Pepper – 1803  
Cloves – 1806  
Chilli – 1806  
Chilli powder – at least by 1960  
Tamarind – 1808  
Nutmeg - 1808  
Mace - 1813  
Ginger – 1816  
Cinnamon - 1816  
Coriander - 1821  
Cayenne – 1822  
Saffron - 1822  
Mustard seed – 1823  
Garlic – 1823  
Turmeric – 1824  
Fenugreek -1824  
Cardamom - 1825  
Cumin - 1826  
Fennel – 1832  
Coconut - 1837  
Chillies dried - 1838  
Paprika – 1882  
Amchur - 1883  
Desiccated coconut – 1876  
Tamarind - 1887  
Rosewater – 1890  
Asafoetida - 1890  
Fenugreek - 1894  
Besan/Lentil flour – 1920  
Creamed coconut - 1940  
Atta flour - 1948  
Curry leaves – 1964  
Garam Masala - 1964