



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

Chutney and cheese—very good and very British

Chutney. The very word conjures up visions of an exotic, mysterious India. Men wear turbans. Women dress in flowing saris, faces covered with veils. Strange-sounding words like Punjabi and Untouchables are recalled from a seventh grade geography class.

It is a world created by Grade-B movies. Crisp British officers in cork helmets sip tea out of the noon-day sun while swarthy-looking native servants plan the soldiers' demise in a plot to overthrow England. It is the setting for countless romantic novels from "A Passage to India" to "The Far Pavilions."

Even its food is exotic, never having become Americanized as have so many other national cuisines. The closest we usually come to Indian food is a dash of canned curry powder in an occasional chicken dish.

The complexity and subtlety of Indian cooking remains largely unexplored in this country. Perhaps this is because so many of the spices are, to our palates, overwhelmingly hot. The few times I have experimented with Indian curries, the accompanying chutneys have provided a welcome contrast to these hot spices.

This sweet contrast is exactly what the chutney is intended to provide. For many years this was my only contact with chutney as an accompaniment to an occasional curry dish. I operated on two assumptions during this time: that this was the only use for chutney and that it was only available from Major Grey.

EVENUALLY I discovered two recipes which used chutney in an entirely different guise. The first was a grilled sandwich filled with sharp cheddar cheese and chutney—delicious!

The second was a similar combination—this time appearing in an omelet rather than a sandwich—equally delicious! The combination is actually a classic one—fruit and cheese. In this case, however, an unusual twist is given by the spices which characterize the chutney.

I enjoyed these dishes for several years and thought of them as novel if not extremely peculiar—until I described them to Yvonne Gill. She proceeded to inform me that this provocative combination of cheddar cheese and chutney is not at all unusual. It is, in fact, very British.

I should have known. It must go back to the era when the sun never set on the British Empire. The British must have emerged from all those years of colonial rule with something to show for it.

Yvonne further recognized chutneys as condiments for meat and poultry, even suggesting serving chutney as an alternative to the traditional cranberry relish for Thanksgiving dinner. It would be fun to experiment with an unusual side-dish like that in the midst of all the comfortable, familiar foods that make up holiday meals.

HAVING DISCOVERED that chutneys have a great diversity of uses in addition to serving as a foil for curries, I also found that my second assumption was incorrect. Chutney does not just come out of a Major Grey jar. It can easily be made at home using fruits which most people find themselves possessed of in super-abundance at certain times. An excess of summer tomatoes can make up a tomato chutney. A windfall crop of apples could be the basis for an apple chutney.

Once you have a few jars put aside, you will be ready for almost any occasion or mood. Try inviting a group of adventurous friends

over some evening for an authentic Indian dinner. Everyone could contribute one dish, providing a variety of foods for a real feast.

Some chilly fall evening you might rather be alone at home. Simply grill a cheddar-chutney sandwich, pour a mug of stout or porter and curl up with a good English novel, preferably in a paneled library.

Slip a dish of chutney onto the table to spice up the turkey at your next family gathering. Make a simple piece of grilled meat or poultry something special with the addition of chutney as a garnish. Experiment. Enjoy.

APPLE CHUTNEY

1½ lbs. cooking apples (or combinations of peaches and pears.)
1 medium clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. chopped ginger root
½ cup orange juice
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. cloves
1 tsp. salt
1 cup honey (more to taste)
1 cup cider vinegar
Cayenne to taste

Coarsely chop the apples. (You needn't peel them.) Combine everything in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Cool before storing in a jar. Allow a minimum of several hours to ripen. Makes about 1 quart.

GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

2 lbs. green tomatoes
2 tbsp. freshly chopped ginger
2 cloves minced garlic
½ tsp. mustard seeds
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. ground coriander
2 tsp. salt
1 cup honey
1 cup cider vinegar
Cayenne to taste

Chop the tomatoes. Combine everything. Bring to a boil, then simmer one hour, stirring now and then. Cool before packing. Allow a minimum of several hours to ripen. Makes about 1 quart. (Both chutney recipes are from "Moosewood Cookbook" by Mollie Katzen).

GRILLED CHUTNEY CHEESE SANDWICH

Thinly sliced Swedish lympha bread, firm white bread cut ¼ inch thick, or firm-textured French sour-dough bread cut ¾-inch thick.

Cheddar cheese

Softened butter or margarine

Hot mango chutney or Major Grey's chutney or chutney of your choice

Curry powder

Spread chutney on half of bread slices. Spread slices of cheese on the other half of the bread slices. Sprinkle curry powder over the cheese. Put sandwiches together. Butter the outsides. Saute until golden.

CHEESE AND CHUTNEY OMELET

¼ lb. fresh white farmer cheese
4 tbsp. preserved chutney
4 to 5 eggs
Salt to taste
Fresh-ground black pepper to taste
Butter

Crumble the cheese coarsely. Spoon out the chutney (you can use a little more or less, depending on how spicy it is), and if it has particularly large pieces of fruit in it, cut them into smaller bits.

Make a plain omelet using remaining ingredients. When the eggs are nearly set, but still moist on top, sprinkle the crumbled cheese over one side of the omelet, and spoon the chutney on top of the cheese.

Fold the other side of the omelet over the filling and leave it in the pan over low heat for another minute as the cheese and chutney warm up. Serve immediately on warmed plates. Serves 2. (From The Vegetarian Epicure Book Two by Anna Thomas).

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Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Fruits are so abundant in the markets now that the colorful mounds seem to be jostling each other for space in the display cooler. Attractive and appealing (low calorie, too!), the fall harvest of berries, plums, our own state's famous apples, and many others, stir appetites to visions of sweet, juicy salads, main dishes and desserts. The possibilities are endless.

An all fresh-fruit salad might include pale-green grapes, blueberries, strawberries (THE favorite berry in this country), apples, orange sections, pineapple chunks, and whatever else you fancy.

An unusually attractive combination is kiwi and pomegranate. Carefully peel the kiwi and slice the fruit crosswise. It has an attractive black design in the center and slicing shows this off. Make a pleasing arrangement of the slices on a plate. Remove the (pomegranate) seeds and sprinkle a few on top of the kiwi slices. Top with a brief squeezing of lime juice. Anyone with a fondness for tart fruit flavors will enjoy this.

Peaches are deliciously versatile. They can be used to add a different texture to the first fresh-fruit salad above, or can be baked and served alongside roast or broiled beef, lamb or pork.

Peach pie and cobbler are delightful desserts which have been savored by Americans since the colonists arrived here. The Baked Fresh Peaches below have slightly different ingredients but will delight just the same.

A main dish of Sausage and Coconut Fritters can be added to your collection of Oriental recipes. These tasty meatballs should be served with rice and soy sauce. Add an easy stir-fry of fresh vegetables and the result will be an inexpensive change of menu.

BAKED FRESH PEACHES

Serves 6

6 large ripe, firm peaches
¾ cup almond macaroon crumbs
½ cup finely chopped mixed gace fruit
12 whole blanched almonds
¼ cup white wine
Plunge the peaches into boiling water for a minute or so and peel them. Halve the fruit and discard the pits. Enlarge the hollows in the peach halves with a teaspoon. Arrange the halves in a buttered baking dish. Set aside. Combine the macaroon crumbs and gaceed fruit. Fill the hollows of the peaches with the mixture. Arrange one almond on top of each. Sprinkle the top of each half with a few drops of the wine. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until they are tender but still hold their shape. Serve hot or cold.

SAUSAGE AND COCONUT FRITTERS

½ lb. pork sausage meat
1 cup grated fresh coconut, or 1 cup dried coconut, steeped in 1 cup hot water and drained
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 egg
½ tsp. brown sugar
½ tsp. ground coriander
¼ tsp. lemon juice
¼ tsp. ground caraway seed
Salt to taste
vegetable oil

Mix the ingredients well and shape them into small balls. Sauté the meatballs in enough vegetable oil to cover the bottom of a skillet until they are brown and the sausage meat is cooked through. Serve with rice.

Bill Cosby, blood donor, talks to L.C. Vaughn, two-gallon blood donor.

Bill Cosby: "Why donate so much blood, L. C.?"
Two gallons!"

L. C. Vaughn: "Honestly, I like doing it. In the end you could say it's for a selfish reason. Helping save lives makes me feel good. And let's face it: the need for blood is continuous. Every type is needed every day. That's why I donate on a continuing basis."

Bill Cosby: "You said it all, L. C."

Vaughn. Except for one thing. Tell everybody how they, too, can donate blood."

L. C. Vaughn: "Simple. Just call your American Red Cross Chapter... and make an appointment."

