

**INDIAN**  
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charcoal. But if you really want an authentic Tandoor oven, the folks at Namaste Plaza in Farmington Hills can help. Sandhu opened Shan-E-Punjab five years ago. It's popular among business folks and families. Often ordered dishes are ones tedious to make: Chicken Masala, and spicy vegetable bowls called Malai Kofta. Those dishes are eaten with Naan or white basmati rice and sweet drinks called Lassi, which consist of mango, yogurt,

milk and sugar. The Lassi balances the spice that isn't as hot as some might expect it to be. Many Indian dishes are related by spices. All along the northern plain, from Punjab through Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, a variety of flours are used to make chapati, Naan and other closely related breads. In the northwest regions of the north-eastern area, there are authentic ways to prepare meals, and some modern shortcuts. The recipes can be prepared in any standard kitchen. A Tandoor isn't required.

**Exotic spices key to many Indian dishes**

**MALAI KOFTA**

Minced vegetable croquettes deep fried and left to simmer in a creamy sauce

**For the Kofta:**  
1/2 pounds potatoes  
2 tablespoon each of crumbled paneer, khyra and thick cream (fried cheese from Indian grocers)  
4-5 cashew nuts, chopped  
1 tablespoon raisins  
2/3 finely chopped green chilies  
1/4 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon coriander powder  
1 teaspoon cumin powder  
1 teaspoon red-chilli powder  
1/2 teaspoon cardamom powder  
Salt according to taste  
3 tablespoon cooking oil or ghee (clarified butter from Indian grocer)

**Oil for frying the koftas**  
2 medium onions, chopped  
3 garlic pods, crushed  
1 teaspoon ginger, crushed  
3 large tomatoes, pureed  
1 teaspoon red-chilli powder  
1/2 teaspoon garam masala powder (from Indian grocers)  
1/2 teaspoon coriander powder  
1/2 teaspoon cumin powder  
2 tablespoons powdered poppy seeds  
1 tablespoon ground peanuts/cashew nuts

The koftas should be put into the gravy just before eating. Boil the potatoes till tender. Peel, mash and add salt. Set aside. Mix other ingredients for the kofta into a paste. Make rounds of the potato dough and place a little of the prepared mixture in the center of each round. Seal the edges and shape into koftas. Deep fry each kofta till golden brown. Drain and keep aside. Blend

onions, ginger, garlic and the poppy seeds and fry in 3 tablespoons of oil until brown. Add the pureed tomatoes, peanuts and masala powders. When the gravy will begin to thicken, add some Malai (cream) to thicken it some more. Mix in some water if necessary. When the gravy comes to a boil, add the koftas. Heat through and serve.

**Recipe from:**  
<http://www.ruchiskitchen.com/reference.htm>

**TANDOORI CHICKEN**

12 Chicken drumsticks and/or breast pieces (skin removed)  
1 cup plain yogurt or 2 cups Buttermilk  
1 1/2 tablespoon red chili powder  
1 tablespoon ginger powder  
2 tablespoon coriander powder  
1 tablespoon garlic powder  
1 tablespoon cumin  
1/2 tablespoon Garam masala  
Meat tenderizer (optional)  
2 tablespoons salt (use less if tenderizer contains salt)  
Lemon juice, (optional)

Prick the chicken pieces with a fork all over. Apply the tenderizer to the chicken pieces and let it stand for an hour or so. The marinade: Take a wide and deep bowl deep enough to hold all the chicken pieces.

Add the yogurt plus one-cup water or the buttermilk with no water into the bowl. Add all the spices from now, three through eight into the bowl and stir. Now add the chicken pieces into the mixture, so that they are all covered with the paste/mixture. Cover the bowl with a lid and let stand for 6 hours. To grill the chicken, apply melted butter to the chicken pieces with a brush or spoon all over and you are ready to grill the chicken on the

barbecue in the normal fashion. Turn over the chicken pieces when they look brownish red in color. Lemon juice sprinkled on the cooked pieces also adds to the flavor, if you wish.

**MATAR PANEER**

Paneer and green peas cooked in onion-tomato gravy  
1/2 pound cubed paneer pieces  
1 cup green peas  
1/4 cup cut (plain yogurt)  
1 teaspoon coriander powder  
1/4 teaspoon red chili powder  
1/2 teaspoon Garam Masala  
4 tablespoons oil  
Salt according to taste  
A handful of chopped coriander leaves for garnish  
Ground to paste:  
2 medium onions  
1 small piece ginger  
3 tomatoes  
1 Big cardamom (a spice found at Indian grocers)  
3 cloves

Serve with Hot Chapatis. Fry the paneer pieces to a light brown color. Drain and keep it aside. In a pan heat oil and add the ground paste and cook till thick and dry. Cook on a slow flame till the oil separates. Add the curd and cook again till the oil separates. Add the red chili powder, coriander powder, green peas, salt and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add enough water to make a thick gravy. Now add the paneer pieces and Garam Masala once the green peas are cooked. Cook on low flame till the oil separates, then serve garnished with chopped coriander.

Recipes from [www.thekolath.com](http://www.thekolath.com)

**SAMBHAR**

South Indian preparation to be accompanied with rice dosas or bhajantia rice. You'll need

a pressure cooker for this dish.

1 cup Tuar (yellow lentils) dal (washed and soaked for 30 minutes)  
4-5 strips tamarind soaked for 5 minutes (paste or pulp may also be used)  
1 tablespoon jaggery (molasses) or sugar  
2 tablespoon sambar masala  
1/4 tablespoon turmeric powder  
1/2 tablespoon dhanla (coriander powder)  
1 teaspoon red chili powder  
1/2 teaspoon each cumin and mustard seeds  
3 whole red chilies  
1 stalk curry leaves  
4 onions  
1/2 cup boiled mixed veggies  
1 large tomato  
1 tablespoon chopped coriander leaves  
2/3 cloves garlic  
Salt according to taste  
2 tablespoons oil

Add tamarind, 1/2 tomato & one onion chopped, to the dal. Pressure cook till dal is done very soft. (Approx. four whistles) Remove dal and beat with a whisk till smooth.

Grind to a paste, one onion, 1/4 tomato, jaggery, garlic, all dry masalas. Chop the remaining onion and tomato to medium pieces.

Heat oil, add cumin and mustard seeds, curry leaves and allow to simmer. Add onion, mixed veggies, tomato and stir-fry for two minutes. Add paste, and cook for further two minutes. Add lentils and bring to a boil on high.

Add enough water to get a gravy-like consistency. Check and adjust masala as required. Simmer 12-15 minutes on low, till the aroma exudes. Add chopped coriander leaves before serving. Recipe from <http://www.mil.edu>

**Best Cookie**

Bakers from all over the metro Detroit area have taken on the challenge of competing for the title of favorite cookie for the fourth annual "Cookies N' Dreams" event, 5-8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24 at the Somerset Collection in Troy. Proceeds benefit the Camp Mak-A-Dream Michigan chapter, a cost-free camp for children and young adults with cancer. Bakers, including Jackie Schler of Schler Delights

in Southfield, can compete in seven categories - Best Decorated, Best Chip, Best Chocolate Chip, Best Bar Cookie, Best Chocolate Cookie, Most Unusual Cookie and Best Cookie overall. The event will feature a milk and coffee bar, children's entertainment and simple dinner fare. Tickets are \$65 for adults, \$200 for patrons. Children under 17 pay their age. For information, or tickets, call (248) 540-1768.

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Here is a complete glossary of Indian spices and foods

- Garlic - Lasun
- Red chili pepper - Lal Mirchi
- Mustard seeds - Raj/Sarson
- Tamarind - Imli
- Mustard oil - Sarson ka Tel
- Cardamom - Elaichi
- Dried coconut - Kopa
- Turmeric - Haldi
- Coriander - Dhania
- Cloves - Lauki
- Corn - Makai
- Red lentils - Masoor (dal)
- Green peas - Matar
- Salt - Namak
- Spinach - Palak
- Cottage cheese - Paneer
- Potato - Aloo
- Chickpea flour - Besan
- Yogurt - Dahi
- Cinnamon - Dalchini
- Coriander - Dhania
- Nutmeg - Jangam
- Cumin seeds - Jeera
- Cilantro - Hara dhania
- Turmeric - Haldi
- Sesame - Rawa
- Bay leaf - tej patta
- Cumin seeds - Jeera
- Ginger - Adrak

- DISH DEFINITIONS**
- Chappati:** Unleavened Indian flat-bread made with wheat flour, water, oil and salt. Cooked on a "tava" or thick griddle and brushed with "ghee," a dairy product.
- Chut:** Indian tea usually black or green with cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and sometimes honey. Steamed with milk, rice milk or soy milk.
- Curry:** Means gravy or sauce. Arguably, the most famous is Chicken Curry. Americans tend to think "curry" is a thick yellow sauce or any dish seasoned with a curry-powder blend.
- An authentic Indian curry dish is a combination of a stir-fried vegetable mixture of onion, garlic, ginger, and tomatoes, various spices and seasonings with either meat, vegetables or chicken mixed to make a stew-type meal.
- Chutney:** Fresh relishes made with fruits, vegetables, and herbs used top samosas or other fatty dishes or dip Naan (bread). Dum: A way to steam foods in a pot with a tightly covered lid. A popular spiced vegetable dish is "Dum Aloo" meaning "steamed potato."
- Dosa:** A popular delicacy from southern India made with rice and "urad" dal. Dosa are thin and pancake-like and sometimes filled with a spiced potato mixture. Served with chutney and "sambhar."
- Kachumber:** Indian salad with cucumber, tomatoes, and onions flavored with salt, sugar and lemon juice.
- Koftas:** Spiced meat or vegetable balls. Lassi: A cool drink made with yogurt and water. It can be sweet or salty, and mango may be added.
- Masala:** Spices, herbs and other seasonings mixed together. When wet ingredients like water, vinegar, yogurt etc. are added it's called a "wet Masala." Dry spice mixtures are also called "Garam Masala" or "Curry powder."
- Murgh Masalam:** Curried chicken.
- Pakoras:** Popular crispy, spicy snack served hot with coriander chutney, slices of potato, onion, chilies, okra, eggplant, etc. dipped in chickpea flour batter, topped with spices and deep-fried.
- Tandoor:** The traditional Indian clay oven is the "Tandoor," a clay pot usually sunken deep in the ground. Charcoal is put on the flat bottom of the pot. The heat generated by charcoal in and on the sides of the clay pot is used for cooking. Long iron rods to reach the bottom of the pot are used in the cooking process.
- Sambhar:** Lentil curry from the south of India. Served with "dosa."

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**WINE PICKS**  
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should discover.

For more information on the wine, and to book a tasting in the area, call the San Luis Obispo Vintners & Growers Association, (805) 541-5869 or e-mail [sanluiswines@nol.com](mailto:sanluiswines@nol.com).

The Web site - [www.sanluisobisowines.com](http://www.sanluisobisowines.com) gives brief background sketches of the wineries.

The Cliffs oceanfront resort hotel in Shell Beach (800) 826-7827 is an excellent base from which to explore the area. It's slated for refurbishing this fall, so check on any inconvenience this may cause before you book.

Lunch or dinner at vintner Joe Difronzo's Giuseppe's Cucina Italiana at 891 Price Street in Pismo Beach gives you the feel of eating in an authentic Italian trattoria.

The Santa Ynez town of Los Olivos has the low-key charm of the Napa Valley before it became rich and famous.

There you can visit several tasting rooms including our favorites: Au Bon Climat, Fiddelend, Daniel Gehrs, Jaffurs, Longoria, Andrew Murray and Qupe. Lunch or dinner at Los Olivos Cafe & Wine Merchant on Grand Avenue is a first-rate way to assuage hunger after tasting.

North of San Luis Obispo, the Santa Lucia Mountains shoulder the awe-inspiring Hearst Castle with four daily guided tours.

Once the home of publisher William Randolph Hearst, it is one of the largest of approximately 6,000 historic home museums in the U.S. Call (800) 444-1445 or check the Web site [www.hearstcastle.org](http://www.hearstcastle.org).

**RED WINE HEAVEN**

If you like cabernet sauvignon, zinfandel and syrah, Paso Robles will seem like red wine heaven. More than 60 wineries and over 200 vineyards dot the oak-lined rolling hills.

Not to be missed on a trip are: Bonny Doon, Eberle, EOS, Garretson, J. Lohr, Justin, Le Cuvier, Meridian, Peachy Canyon, Tablas Creek, and Wild Horse.

For more information, check the Web site [www.pasowine.com](http://www.pasowine.com). After a day of wine tasting in the region, schedule a dinner in Templeton at McPhee's Grill, 416 Main Street (805) 434-3204. If chef/owner Ian McPhee is in the kitchen, you're in for a treat in an atmosphere reminiscent of the Old West.

The Healds are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 18644.