COMMUNITY ACROSS
CUISINES,
COOKING ACROSS
CULTURES:
FLAVORFUL STORIES AND RECIPES

William J. Clinton Fellowship
for Service in India, 2018-19
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Edited by Daniel Soucy
Illustrations by Molly Ann Morrison
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About the American India Foundation
The American India Foundation is committed to catalyzing social and economic change in India, and building a lasting bridge between the United States and India through high-impact interventions in education, livelihoods, public health, and leadership development. Working closely with local communities, AIF partners with NGOs to develop and test innovative solutions and with governments to create and scale sustainable impact. Founded in 2001 at the initiative of President Bill Clinton following a suggestion from Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee, AIF has impacted the lives of 5.6 million of India’s poor. Learn more at www.AIF.org

About the AIF Clinton Fellowship Program
William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India builds the next generation of service leadership committed to lasting change for underprivileged communities across India, while strengthening the civil sector landscape to be more efficient and effective.

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Conversion Chart: U.S. Measurements to Metric Measurements
Glossary
Contributors List
We are delighted to present you with “Community Across Cuisines, Cooking Across Cultures,” a cookbook authored by AIF Clinton Fellows from the class of 2018-19. It includes a range of exciting recipes and inspiring stories, making it as much a nuanced memoir as it is a culinary guide. Fifteen AIF Clinton Fellows share their favorite recipes from the host communities where they have lived, worked, and cooked during their ten months of service.

Compiled by Daniel Soucy, AIF Clinton Fellow 2018-19, this book features a diverse selection of recipes from across India, ranging from Ladakhi Sku, Nepali-style Momos, Hyderabadi Biryani, Bihari Sattu ka Sarbat, and Chhattisghari Laal Bhaji. The recipes offered here are rich in stories, shedding light on the cross-cultural understanding and the friendships developed between Fellows and their host communities through the act of sharing a meal. Weaved into these stories are the illustrations created by Molly Ann Morrison, AIF Clinton Fellow 2018-19, bringing to life a cookbook that is visually pleasing as well as reflective of the spirit of the AIF Clinton Fellowship.

It is a powerful testament to our shared humanity and an exciting opportunity to experience inspirational stories from the ground. We hope it encourages you to redefine what food can do to build bridges.

In Service and Gratitude,

NISHANT PANDEY
CEO
American India Foundation

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Country Director
American India Foundation

June 2019, New Delhi
After landing in the J.F. K. Airport back in August, I remember anxiously trying to find the other AIF Clinton Fellows who I would be serving and working with throughout India. I figured they would not be too difficult to spot given both the size of our group as well as the fact that there tend to be certain similarities in how one dresses and packs when embarking on a ten-month fellowship in India: sturdy sandals, large duffel bags or frame packs, maybe a life straw awkwardly sticking out of a side pocket. Sure enough, I found a large gathering of our cohort getting ready to check their bags. They were easy to spot and seemed shockingly calm about embracing the new adventure on the horizon.

After many long hours in the airport and in the sky, we finally reached our Delhi hotel and excitedly met the Indian Fellows who were patiently waiting. We all awkwardly mingled and eventually were saved from small talk by a shared need to sleep. The next morning, we shared our first meal: a delicious breakfast buffet. Quickly, savory poha and sweet chai broke the awkwardness, instead ushering in shared conversations about our individual travel journeys, about our professional interests in and expectations for our projects, even about our fears and anxieties. Just a few short days later, we left the comfort of the hotel and found ourselves in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, learning about life in rural India. We laughed together as we rolled...
rotis and asked questions as we saw how food was cultivated in our homestays. Preparing and consuming food immediately played a critical role in fostering our budding relationships.

This trend did not stop after those first conversations in September. Sometimes our cohort of Indian and U.S. nationals bonded over learning and teaching new food names while other times we bonded over a mutual craving for our favorite Indian dishes. Preparing and consuming food immediately played a critical role in fostering our budding relationships. This trend did not stop after those first conversations in September. Sometimes our cohort of Indian and U.S. nationals bonded over learning and teaching new food names while other times we bonded over a mutual craving for our favorite Indian dishes. Preparing and consuming food immediately played a critical role in fostering our budding relationships.

During a beautiful trip to a Co-Fellow’s home for Diwali, her father insisted that I take one more plate of pakora (a fried vegetable fritter). As we crunched on this comfort food and watched the setting sun, he nostalgically recalled eating this very same pakora with his children when they were much younger. He was so proud of the continued strength of his relationship with his family. I saw that food connected me, an outsider, with a greater understanding about my new friend’s past. Through food, I learned more about what mattered to people from these culinary interactions than I could ever hope to learn from any book or interview. As I pondered this during our Fellowship Midpoint conference, I decided that a Fellowship cookbook could offer a unique way to reflect on, document, and compare our cohorts’ experiences diving head-first into the unknown and embracing change. Although I sometimes worry that food might occupy too much of my mental space and time, working on this cookbook has reminded me that I spend time caring about food because it matters outside of a physical sense. Food has enormous power because it guides our most profound human relationships and experiences: a fact that is especially true of those people and experiences that feel most unfamiliar. Even if it is challenging to relate in other ways, we can all find ways to relate through food.

I hope that you enjoy reading the recipes and stories in this cookbook as much as I did when I was editing them. The stories, as you will find, are inseparable from the delicious recipes that accompany them. And where the stories and recipes are unable to fully do justice to the experiences bound in these pages, I am confident that the beautiful images will shine light on the communities that were built and challenges that were overcome during our ten months of service.

To that end, I would also like to thank Molly Morrison who spent her year impressing us all with her artistic talents, knowledge of the development sector, and incredible sense of humor, for creating each and every image by hand. I will forever remain impressed by this artistic feat!

-Daniel Soucy, AIF Clinton Fellow 2018-2019: Partnered with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative

Cookbook illustrator Molly Morrison and Editor Daniel Soucy
SNACKS

1) Kadalai Urundai 14-15
(a sweet peanut brittle)

2) Hara Bhara “Falafel” Kebab 16-17
(chickpea and vegetable fritters with fresh herbs)

3) Chouk 18
(fresh citrus and roasted flax seeds)

4) Banana Bread 19
(ripe bananas baked into a sweet bread)

5) Pani-Puri 20-21
(crispy fried dough and cooked chickpeas served with sweet and sour condiments)
Kadalai Urundai
A crunchy-sweet snack made from peanuts and palm sugar

This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Tessa Romanski Partnered with Kattaikkuttu Sangam in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu

This is a traditional sweet that can be found in almost any tea shop or snack store in Tamil Nadu, the state I worked in as an AIF Clinton Fellow. Using jaggery (a sweetener made from date or palm sap) in sweets is common across India due to the ease with which residents are able to grow date and palm trees in the warm climate. It has taken me a long time to appreciate the unique taste of jaggery—a combination of honey and molasses with a toffee-like undertone—and to this day, I still cannot eat it as a standalone. However, many of the children that I worked with during my Fellowship service with Kattaikkuttu Sangam would often snack on jaggery plain.

The second food item that my colleagues and students gave me when I arrived at my host site (after filter coffee, of course) was a big tin of kadalai urundai. Having already experienced the overwhelmingly tooth-aching sweetness of ghee and milk sweets that are common across India, I was hesitant to try something new. I worried that it might also be too intensely sweet. However, I quickly found that the crunchy texture and savory flavor of the peanuts balanced beautifully with the sweetness of the jaggery. In fact, this absolutely perfect combination quickly became one of my favorite snacks. And the sweetest part? The way in which the taste of kadalai urundai reminds me of my first welcome to Tamil Nadu in September 2018.

Ingredients
Makes 14, golf-ball sized snacks
1 cup of raw, skinless peanuts
½ cup of jaggery
¼ cup of water
1 tablespoon of ghee (clarified butter) or regular butter for greasing your hands

Instructions
1) In a heavy-bottomed pan, roast the peanuts over medium heat, stirring constantly until golden brown.
2) In a separate pan, add the jaggery to the water and boil until it is dissolved. (Make sure not to stir the jaggery mixture too much once it starts to boil.)
3) Filter the jaggery syrup through a metal strainer, then continue to boil the syrup over medium-low heat until the syrup bubbles and thickens.
4) Test the syrup’s consistency by adding a few drops of the hot syrup into a bowl of water. You should be able to roll the syrup drops into a shiny ball that holds its shape.
5) Turn off the heat and add the roasted peanuts to the jaggery syrup. Mix well.
6) Grease your hand with ghee to prevent the mixture from sticking when you form it into balls. Take a small portion of peanut mixed with jaggery from the pan. Shape it into a ball. (If you want to do this as it is done in Tamil Nadu, make sure to only use your right hand! Then open and close your hand quickly, squeezing it to form a ball.) Repeat until the jaggery nut mixture is finished.

Tip: By the time you finish, you may find that some of the nuts dried to the pan. Simply reheat the pan, and the syrup will melt enough to loosen the nuts.
Hara Bhara “Falafel” Kebab
A chickpea fritter with lots of fresh herbs

This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Daniel Soucy Partnered with the Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative in Delhi

One of my first meals in Delhi was with my host organization. I had not yet met my supervisor nor visited my placement. However, as part of my Fellowship Orientation experience, I shared a magnificent meal with the other Fellows that, surprisingly enough, was prepared by women from Zaika-E-Nizamuddin: one of the Self Help Groups that my host organization has developed in the Nizamuddin Basti. My favorite dish from this feast was the ever-so-humble, but incredibly delicious hara bhara kebab, a vegetarian spin on the famous lamb kebabs that are quintessential to Delhi’s Mughal heritage. Paired with a spicy but ever so refreshing cilantro chutney, these kebabs made me excited to learn more about my organization. They also facilitated some fabulous conversations with the other Fellows in my cohort. This is what I view as the real beauty of this recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Daniel Soucy Partnered with the Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative in Delhi. Living in Delhi has been a series of constant adjustments. From using a water filter, to haggling vegetable prices. My recipe for ‘kebabs’ is one such adjustment. During my fourth week of service as an AIF Fellow, I met with the community teachers to implement the first heritage-focused lesson in the classroom. Our communication was challenging as I struggled to rekindle the Hindi skills I had developed over the past few years. It was an awkward first meeting. I knew that the objective of my outside presence was not entirely clear to these teachers who have worked tirelessly serving their students and community.

To relieve my stress, I experimented with my favorite falafel recipe. It reminds me of summer in New Hampshire cooking with my family and friends. I also decided to bring some for the teachers. Although they love meat, they were impressed with the Angrez’s (foreigner’s) dish which very much reminded them of Nizamuddin’s kebabs. I think that the simple gesture of offering food opened up a connection with them. We were able to move past the awkwardness and recognize the mutual effort we were making to better serve the students of the Nizamuddin Basti.

This recipe therefore takes the inspiration I garnered from my experience eating Zaika’s Kebabs and combines it with my nostalgia for home. The fusion reminds me of the many ways I adjusted and adapted to be effective and happy working in a foreign environment. As Fellows, we seek to integrate into communities. We also seek to bring our authentic selves to these communities. This recipe pays homage to that and at its core, represents the learning and change I am so grateful the AIF Clinton Fellowship provided me.

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Ingredients
Makes 8-10 small kebabs
1 cup of fresh chickpeas, soaked overnight and boiled for 10 minutes
1 cup of spinach, packed
½ cup of fresh cilantro, packed
1 cup of parsley, packed
¼ cup mint, packed
1 onion, roughly chopped
2 green chillies, roughly chopped
4 cloves of garlic, smashed and roughly chopped
½ teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon cilantro

Instructions
1) Add enough oil to a large pan to coat the bottom with a thin layer of oil.
2) Add the onions, garlic and chillies and cook until they are fragrant: about 2-3 minutes. Add the spinach. Cover and cook until wilted, about 2 minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the cilantro, parsley and mint.
3) Once the herbs have wilted slightly, add the mixture to a food processor with the chickpeas.
4) Form disks or patties and shallow fry them in the oil until brown on both sides (about 2-3 minutes). Again, the mixture should still have some small chunks of chickpeas but should also stick together in your hand. Process until roughly chopped and combined. The mixture should still have some small chunks of chickpeas but should also stick together in your hand. Add the chickpea flour in small spoonfuls. Add it as needed to ensure that the mixture can form a 2 inch wide, ½ inch tall disk without falling apart.
4) Form disks or patties and shallow fry them in the oil until brown on both sides (about 2-3 minutes). Once they are finished, place the kebabs on a paper towel. If you prefer, you can also bake the kebab at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about 20 minutes, flipping halfway through. Again, the kebab should be brown on both sides.

Process until roughly chopped and combined. The mixture should still have some small chunks of chickpeas but should also stick together in your hand. Add the chickpea flour in small spoonfuls. Add it as needed to ensure that the mixture can form a 2 inch wide, ½ inch tall disk without falling apart.

I prefer to serve the kebabs with a cilantro chutney, lemon tahini or hummus. However, I have found that ketchup is also a popular pairing.
Chouk A healthy, fresh citrus salad
This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Aayush Malik
Partnered with: Alap in Champawat, Uttarakhand

This recipe is meaningful to me because I learned it from the community I lived with in Uttarakhand. As I struggled to adjust to the extremely cold winter temperatures, my colleagues advised me that the best way to deal with the cold in the Himalayas is to eat hemp seeds. Everyone seemed to eat so many hemp seeds and believe so strongly in their warming powers that at first I was apprehensive. But when I realized that the seeds were a wonderful part of the local diet. Although I was surprised at how helpful this dish is during the cold months, I am extremely thankful for my colleagues’ small suggestion as it made those months spent in the cold Himalayas much easier.

Whether you live in a cold region or are just looking for a nice snack, breakfast or healthy dessert, chouk is a wonderful option. Ever since trying it, as soon as someone mentions chouk, my brain immediately shuts off and all I can think about is this wonderful combination. Enjoy!

Ingredients
Serves 3-4 People
4 chouk fruit (if chouk is not available, any ripe citrus fruit like oranges, clementines and grapefruit will also work well)
Finely ground sugar or honey to taste

(2 teaspoons is a good starting place)
½ cup of yogurt
1 teaspoon of salt
4-5 large spoonfuls of roasted hemp seeds
1 tablespoon of fresh cilantro, roughly chopped for garnish

Instructions
1) In a large bowl, mix or whisk the sugar, salt and yogurt until the sugar and salt are incorporated into the yogurt. Taste the yogurt and add additional sugar and honey based on your own preferences. I recommend starting with 2 teaspoons and adjusting accordingly.
2) Remove the peel from your citrus. Break apart the individual pieces and add them to the yogurt mixture.
3) Stir aggressively so as to release some of the juices from the fruit. However, try not to break the fruit. Add roasted hemp seeds and mix until incorporated.
4) Once fully mixed, top with fresh cilantro and serve.

Banana Bread
This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Anecia Evans
Partnered with: Avani in Berinag, Uttarakhand

When I first arrived at my host site, I was very optimistic about my Fellowship experience. What I did not realize was the extent to which food would play an integral role in helping me remain optimistic. My host site, Avani works to create sustainable livelihoods through conservation of natural resources and traditional skills. In order to do so, Avani has set up a campus with work spaces, a school and even living accommodations for community members from distant places. By living in such an intimate environment, the members of this campus became a second family to me. Whenever I was having a difficult time adjusting, my supervisor would invite me over to her house (on campus) to make a banana cake. When I was new to the campus, many families extended a warm welcome by inviting me over for dinner. When it was freezing during the winter time, these same families invited me over for a warm cup of chai. I celebrated many holidays with my community. At each of these special events, I gained a new perspective of my community. In the United States we call this “breaking bread.” Through the process of “breaking bread” with my community, I gained more confidence in my position as a foreigner and tried some tasty desserts. These food experiences were intimate, special, and a learning experience without which my Fellowship experience would not have been the same.

Ingredients
Makes one loaf
2 cups of all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup white sugar
1 cup mashed bananas (2 large bananas)
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/3 cup yogurt or sour cream

Instructions
1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit or approximately 180 degrees Celsius.
2) Prepare a large loaf pan: butter all the edges and sprinkle flour in an even coating.
3) In a large bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda and salt.
4) Using an electric mixer, beat together the white sugar and mashed bananas. Add the eggs individually as well as the vanilla and mix until fully incorporated.
5) Add the yogurt or sour cream and gently fold it into the batter with a large spoon or spatula.
6) Bake in the loaf pan for about one hour or until you can poke the bread with a toothpick and remove it from the loaf cleanly. Allow the pan to cool completely before removing the bread.

Top: Anecia Evans in the snowy Himalayas
Left: Aayush Malik holding a bowl of chouk
In the first week of my Fellowship I was invited to film a special fundraiser. The orchestrators of the event - young people involved in the Life Skills education programs of my host organization - were budding chefs eager to share their recipe for pani-puri with their community in order to raise money for the programs that had inspired them in the first place. With my camera in-hand and my lens as my guide, I dove headlong into the mint, cilantro, and green chilis of the pani and played among the potatoes and chickpeas of the masala, my first experience with homemade chaats.

In every culture around the world, people gather to share food. For many, their communities are synonymous with the meals they share. It was appropriate, then, for the chance to come to commune with my host city at the time when I needed it most - having never before been in India, the whirlwind of flavors matched the whirlwind in my head, and when the world stopped spinning, I found I had come to appreciate this roadside snack as a symbol of my community, the one with and for whom I served for ten months.

To me, well-made pani-puri is like a good street photograph: both are bursts of textures and flavors, singular moments in time conveyed through the mastery of a medium. Unique to the moment in which either is enjoyed, both stand as the sum totals of the senses. The sting of the salt is the flash of the camera is the blare of a truck horn. The crunch of the puri is the crackle of the marigold garland is the coarseness of film grain. The kiss of the mint is the sparkle of light is the splash of the Ganga. They examine the fabric of place with an undeniable awareness of the present.


Christopher Carpenter capturing the assembly of a refreshing plate of pani-puri

Pani-Puri
Fried, crunchy round puffs filled with cooked potato, chickpeas and served with the perfect combination of sweet and spicy sauces

This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Christopher Scott Carpenter Partnered with Dream a Dream in Bangalore, Karnataka

In the first place. With my camera in-hand and my lens as my guide, I dove headlong into the mint, cilantro, and green chilis of the pani and played among the potatoes and chickpeas of the masala, my first experience with homemade chaats.

To indulge in pani-puri is to swallow a city, electric and alive, one moment at a time.

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To indulge in pani-puri is to swallow a city, electric and alive, one moment at a time.

Ingredients
Makes approximately 30 pieces

About 30 small puris (ready-made)
1 medium onion, finely chopped (optional)
1/4 cup date-tamarind chutney (optional)

Instructions

1) Add the mint leaves, cilantro leaves, green chilli, ginger and lime juice to a blender. Blend it into a thin sauce.
2) Transfer the sauce to a bowl and add sugar, chaat masala powder and 4 cups water. Stir with a large spoon and mix. Taste for the salt and add as required.
3) Combine mashed potato, black chickpeas, red chilli powder, cumin powder, chaat masala powder, cilantro leaves and salt (add only if you have not added while boiling the potatoes and chickpeas) in a bowl.
4) Take each puri and gently poke a hole with your thumb on one side for stuffing.
5) Fill puri with the masala mixture first, then top with tamarind-date chutney, pani sauce and fresh cilantro. Enjoy!
MEALS

1) Ladakhi Sku 24-26
(vegetable stew with homemade noodles)

2) Hyderabadi Biryani 27-29
(tender chicken and spiced rice)

3) Baingan ka Bharta with Bati 30-33
(smokey eggplant with soft dinner rolls)

4) Nepali-Style Momos 34-37
(vegetable stuffed dumplings)

5) Vegetable Pulav 38-39
(pan-fried vegetables and rice)

6) Mixed Vegetable Stew with Seasoned Oil 40-41
(simple, boiled vegetables with spicy, tempered oil)

7) Laal Bhaji 42-43
(sauteed red spinach)

8) Crepes with Vanilla Extract 44-45
(slightly sweet, extra thin pancakes)

9) Sarson ka Saag with Makki ki Roti 46-49
(mustard greens and corn flatbread)

10) Simple Daal 50-51
(a hearty lentil soup)
Ladakhi Sku
This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Alexandra Barteldt
Partnered with the Snow Leopard Conservancy, India Trust in Leh, Ladakh

The best part of my day during my time living and working as an AIF Clinton Fellow in Leh, Ladakh, is the time I spent with my Ladakhi host family every evening. During the Fellowship experience, this time was extremely special to me and gave me the chance to learn about Ladakhi culture, traditions, language, and best of all, food. Every evening I helped my host lady, Chorol, prepare and serve dinner for the family as well as any guests that may be passing through. No matter if I was coming back from a difficult or exhausting day, these precious hours always put a smile on my face, warmed my heart, and reminded me to appreciate the short time I spent in Ladakh. I’ve learned many different dishes with Chorol, and even conquered my fear of pressure cookers, a critical utensil in almost all Indian kitchens.

Of everything I learned to cook from Chorol, my absolute favorite meal remains the traditional Ladakhi dish, Sku. Due to the harsh winters and high altitude, Ladakhi cuisine features many root vegetables that are able to survive the climate. Sku is an excellent stew-like dish of root vegetables, and it is a frequent meal at my office and home. I typically don’t like the feeling of being full and know when to stop eating when I know I’ve had enough. With that said, this is totally not the case when I eat Sku. Chorol even learned to nearly double the serving amount when I was eating with the family as I could never get enough! I filled and refilled my plate several times, and would always be sad when it was over. Throughout the Fellowship, I looked forward to sharing this meal with my family and friends back home, and I hope that you enjoy it as much as I do!

Ingredients
Serves 4-5 people

Ingredients for the Noodles
2 cups of whole wheat flour plus more to prevent sticking
½ cup of cold water
1 teaspoon of salt

Ingredients for the Stew
3 tablespoons of mustard oil
2 onions, diced
2 tomatoes, diced
4-5 carrots, peeled and chopped into bite sized pieces
5-6 small potatoes, peeled and chopped into bite sized pieces
½ cup of peas
1 teaspoon of turmeric
1 teaspoon of sabji (vegetable) masala spice mix
½ teaspoon of chilli powder
salt to taste
¼ cup of cilantro leaves, finely chopped

Alexandra Barteldt sharing every last bite of hot Sku with her host siblings
Meals
Community Across Cuisines, Cooking Across Cultures: Flavorful Stories and Recipes

I will stand firm and unwavering when exclaiming that Hyderabadi Biryani is the best biryani variety out there. I’ve tasted many biryanis all over India: from Mumbai (tragic) to Kolkata and Rajasthan. I have been a part of many passionate discussions detailing why Hyderabadi Biryani is better than any other variant.

Disclaimer: In case you did not already catch on, I am yet another one of those self-proclaimed biryani experts.

Hyderabadi Biryani

Perfectly cooked Basmati rice, fragrant spices and tender chicken

This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Nithya Vemireddy Partnered with Prajwala Sangham in Hyderabad, Telangana

Despite the passionate disagreements regarding the best biryani variety, the one thing I have found everyone to agree on is that the best biryani is not available at restaurants — not even at the expensive, five-star fine-dining establishments. Great biryani is made at home; great biryani is based on a family recipe passed down through the ages, with modifications made by every generation.

The highlight of my childhood, teenage years, and even adulthood was and is smelling the aroma of chicken biryani from the kitchen.Hovering over a big metal pot, my mother would be stirring the rice with the spicy marinated chicken while trying to defend the prized possession from the wandering hands of my brother and me. My mother learned this recipe from her mother who had learned it from her mother. This went on and on until I eventually received the recipe you will find on the next few pages.

Instructions

Noodle Instructions

1) In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt. Add the water and mix until incorporated. Knead the dough for a few minutes or until it has a springy consistency. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes.
2) Dust a metal, stone or wood surface with flour. Once the dough has rested, roll it out until it is about 1/2 inch or 1 centimeter thick.
3) Using a metal cup or round, cut the dough into 2 inch circles. Re-roll and cut circles into the dough until there is no more dough remaining. If the air is very dry, you may also want to cover the circles with a damp towel to keep them from drying out.
4) To make the cappelletti shape, fold the circles in half. Gently pinch the edges into a half-moon shape and then bring the two ends together. Pinch them together in order to form a shape similar to a Chinese fortune cookie! Set aside and cover with a towel.

Stew Instructions

1) Put the mustard oil in a large pot and heat it over a medium flame until the oil is shimmering but not smoking.
2) Add chopped onions and let them simmer until translucent and soft. Add the diced tomatoes and cook an additional 2-5 minutes.
3) Add the turmeric, chilli powder, and sabji masala. Stir and let the mixture cook until it is fragrant: about 2-5 minutes.
4) Add the potatoes. Let them cook for a few minutes before adding the carrots and peas. Add a sprinkle of salt and stir everything together. Let the mixture simmer together for an additional 2-5 minutes.
5) Add 1 cup of water and and cover the pot to let it boil. Turn down the heat, remove the lid and let the mixture simmer until it has a slightly thicker consistency and most of the water has evaporated: about 5-8 minutes.
6) Add enough water to cover the vegetables. Then add the prepared noodles. Gently stir until combined. Add salt to taste and let the soup boil for 15 minutes until the vegetables and noodles are fully cooked.
7) Add additional salt and spices based on personal preference. Serve in large bowls and garnish with additional cilantro.

Top: Nithya Vemireddy taking in the aromas of her mother’s fresh biryani.
Meals
Community Across Cuisines, Cooking Across Cultures: Flavorful Stories and Recipes

It’s a perfect, Hyderbad (better-than-all-other-styles) biryani.

5) After soaking the rice, strain it. Pour 8 cups of water into a large, heavy-bottomed pot. Add 1/2 tablespoon of salt and 1/2 tablespoon of oil to the water and bring it to a boil. When the water begins to boil, slowly add the soaked rice and cook for 5 minutes.
6) Drain the rice through a colander or strainer. Set it aside.
7) Heat ¼ cup of butter over medium heat. Once the butter is hot, add the marinated meat and cook until both sides are browned and the center is fully cooked.
8) Remove the meat from the heat and let it rest.
9) Once the meat is cooled, coat a large, thick-bottom rice pot with 2 tablespoons of butter. (Tip: a cast iron dutch oven works great for this recipe!)
10) Spread half of the cooked rice evenly along the pan.
11) Place the cooked chicken evenly on top of the rice.
12) Add the rest of the cooked rice and again spread it evenly.
13) Evenly sprinkle ½ cup of chopped cilantro and mint leaves on top of the rice layer.
14) Pour the milk and the remaining lemon juice on top.
15) Evenly sprinkle the remaining 2 teaspoons of cinnamon powder over the entire top.
16) Melt the remaining 1/8 cup of butter and pour it all over the top layer.
17) Place the lid on top and cook over a low flame for 30 minutes. (Tip: Be sure that the lid to the pot is secure. You can even place some stones or a brick on top to make sure that as much heat and moisture as possible is trapped inside. This will help the flavors mix and meld.)
18) After 30 minutes over low heat, remove the pot and let it sit for 5 minutes before removing the lid.

Ingredients

Serves 6-8 people

2 pounds of chicken thighs (thighs should be cut at least 8 inches in size)
2 cups of Indian, greek or other tart yogurt
2 big onions, chopped

Approximately 1 cup of butter, to be used at various stages
3 tablespoons salt
2 tablespoons of red chili powder
½ teaspoon of black pepper powder
1/8 teaspoon of turmeric powder
1/8 teaspoon of cinnamon powder plus 2 more teaspoons
2 teaspoons of garam masala powder
1 cup plus 1/4 cup of chopped cilantro, chopped
1 full lemon: juiced (half the juice will be used during one step, half the juice will be reserved for a separate step)
5 cups of Basmati rice
¼ cup of milk

Instructions

1) Heat half a cup of butter in a pan over a medium flame. Add the onions and fry until they are dark red. Remove the onions from the butter using a strainer or skimmer and place on a plate. Allow them to cool.
2) MAKE THE MARINADE: Mix together yogurt, 2 tablespoons of salt, ½ teaspoon of cinnamon and the rest of the dried spices in a large bowl. Add ½ cup of cilantro, half of the lemon juice as well as the cooked and chilled onions into the yogurt-spice mixture. Finally, add the chicken and mix, making sure that you completely coat the chicken with the yogurt mixture. Cover the bowl and keep it in the fridge for at least one hour.
3) While the chicken marinates, wash 5 cups of Basmati rice in a colander or strainer under lukewarm water until the water from the rice runs clear.
4) Soak the rinsed rice in 7 cups of water for at least 40 minutes. This will allow the length of the rice to expand as well as reduce the rice’s cooking time, thus improving the texture.

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The crunchy crust but light and fluffy inside of the bati complemented the smoky eggplant, onion, and tomato flavors of the baingan ka bharta perfectly, sending my taste-buds into ecstasy. I must have eaten about eight batis (most people probably had three) that night, and a proportionately massive quantity of baingan ka bharta.

In that beautiful moment, with a stomach filled with Baingan-Bati, I was content. I was satisfied. And I was grateful for the good food and company that my Fellowship experience offered me.

Disclaimer: No one actually calls this pairing Baingan-Bati. I created this play on words from the more commonly known dishes of “baingan ka bharta” and “Bati.” Use my created name at your own risk!

The first day I had baingan-bati was one of my favorite days in Khandar, my placement site. It was the first cool day of the year, back in late October. The pleasant weather had already helped improve my mood. I came downstairs to the kitchen to find an eggplant sitting on the open flame of the gas range. I had no idea what was being made, but I knew that I loved eggplant and that I was extremely hungry. To my displeasure, our office’s usual dinner time of around 8:00 p.m. came and went with no sign of dinner. Little did I know that the reason for the delay was the utter decadence of the meal that was being prepared with great finesse downstairs by Sitaram, our beloved chef de cuisine.

As a cool breeze filtered through the air, signaling winter’s long awaited approach, my coworkers and I talked and laughed. But if we’re being honest, I was mostly focused on the food on my plate!

When the food was finally ready at 9:00pm, everyone but me seemed to know that it was a special occasion. Our office’s field staff all came in and we sat in a circle on the floor; usually it’s just the four office staff who eat dinner together at a table. Then Sitaram brought in a giant bowl of baingan ka bharta, a traditional Punjabi eggplant curry, followed by another giant bowl of steaming hot batis: hard wheat rolls that are the pride of Rajasthani cooking. After serving, we all dug in.

Baingan-Bati
Also known as Baingan ka bharta or a smoky dip made from eggplant with Bati/Bread
This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Kieran Micka-Maloy
Partnered with Udyogini in Sawai Modhopur, Rajasthan

Also known as Baingan ka bharta or a smoky dip made from eggplant with Bati/Bread
This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Kieran Micka-Maloy
Partnered with Udyogini in Sawai Modhopur, Rajasthan

Kieran Micka-Maloy excitedly awaiting the start of dinner with his colleagues

The crunchy crust but light and fluffy inside of the baingans complemented the smoky eggplant, onion, and tomato flavors of the baingan ka bharta perfectly, sending my taste-buds into ecstasy. I must have eaten about eight batis (most people probably had three) that night, and a proportionately massive quantity of baingan ka bharta.

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Partnered with Udyogini in Sawai Modhopur, Rajasthan
Ingredients
Serves 3-4 people

Ingredients for the Baingan ka bharta
1 large eggplant
3 garlic cloves, whole
3 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon nigella seeds (Kalonji)
6 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon grated ginger
1 green chilli, finely chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 tomatoes, finely chopped
1 teaspoon red chilli powder
1 tablespoon cilantro powder
1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
salt to taste
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro

Instructions
For the Bati
1) Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2) In a mixing bowl mix together the flour, sooji, salt and baking soda. Add the ghee and mix with your fingers until incorporated. Add the milk as needed to make a firm dough. Be sure to knead the dough until it is slightly elastic and smooth. Set it aside for about 10 minutes.
3) Divide the dough into 8 equal parts and roll them into balls. They will likely feel dry and have some cracks. This is how the dough is meant to feel. Arrange the batis on a cookie sheet about one inch apart and place the pan on middle oven rack. Bake the batis for 25 minutes. Turn them over and bake for another 30 minutes until they are golden brown all around.
4) Break one bat in half to make sure they have cooked through.

Ingredients for the Bati
1 cup whole wheat flour
1/4 cup fine sooji (semolina) flour
1/8 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup ghee or clarified butter
1/2 cup milk (use as needed)

For the Baingan ka bharta
1) Roasting: Cut each clove of garlic in half. Make 6 small slits in the eggplant and stuff the slits with the halved garlic cloves. Roast the entire eggplant on an open flame for 8-10 minutes, turning it every 1-2 minutes to ensure that it’s roasted well on all sides. The skin should be black and blistered completely and the eggplant should become really soft and watery. You can also prick it with a fork or knife to make sure it is completely cooked inside.
2) Once the eggplant is roasted, cover it with foil and set aside to cool for a few minutes. Peel the skin off and submerge it in water to get rid of any extra burnt bits. Remove it from the water, cut off the stem and chop it finely. Set the pulp aside
3) Cooking: Heat the oil in a pan and add the nigella seeds. After 30 seconds, add the garlic, ginger, chopped chillies and onions. Stir fry the mixture until the onions are soft.
4) Add the tomatoes, chilli powder, cilantro powder, turmeric and salt. Mix the mixture well, then cover and allow it to cook until the tomatoes are soft and pulpy. If necessary, add 1/4 cup of water to help the tomatoes break down.
5) Add the chopped eggplant and mix well. Cover and cook for another 3-4 minutes while stirring occasionally. Add the chopped cilantro, mix and serve hot.

To Serve: If you have baked the batis earlier, reheat them in a 250 degree Celsius oven for about 10 minutes. Break the bati into two pieces and pour hot melted ghee or butter over it. Serve the buttery bati and the baingan ka bharta together.
During my time in Darjeeling, I attended many momo-making parties. However, my absolute favorite momo variety is the squash momo. They are most popular in the remote villages of Darjeeling because there is an abundance of squash on everyone’s farm. From picking the squash to mastering the different dumpling folding styles, making momos brings family and friends together through all the shared work it requires.

Follow this recipe and get started on your very own momo-making party!

(Although there are many different designs and shapes for momos, the half moon is easiest to make. Therefore, this recipe will teach you to make a half-moon momo. Feel free to experiment with any style or shape that appeals to you!)

Nepali-Style Momos
Bite-sized, savory dumplings filled with cooked squash

This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Diana Chavez
Partnered with Broadleaf India in Darjeeling, West Bengal

Have you ever attended a momo-making party? A momo-making party involves a lot of flour, hands, love, and laughter. Momos are dumplings made from all-purpose flour and stuffed with either vegetables or meat.

In the Northeast region of India, you will find various kinds of momos to indulge in. In the hill towns of Darjeeling, you find Tibetan, Nepali, Bhutanese and Chinese styled momos. You will find momos in almost every restaurant and street corner in Darjeeling.

Making momos at home is not as popular as it used to be because momos are now available in many restaurants and are commonly found as street food. Every village, town and community has the well-known “momo lady” or “momo shop.” Although it is certainly easier to buy momos from outside the home rather than make them from scratch, deciding to make momos always turns into a party because it requires many hands and therefore is far more fun and rewarding. This particular recipe was passed along to me by some of the members of my community in Darjeeling.

Diana Chavez prepping for a momo-making party

Momo
**Ingredients**

Serves 3-4 people

**For the Stuffing**
- 4 large squash or 8 small squash (a summer variety, zucchini or any soft squash is best)
- 1 cup of onions (finely chopped)
- ½ cup of refined oil (vegetable oil is best)
- 1 tablespoon grated ginger
- 1 ½ cups water
- ½ tablespoon of monosodium glutamate (I have been told this is the secret ingredient)

**Instructions**

Stuffing
1) Peel and grate the raw squash.
2) After you grate the squash, strain the grated squash through a fine mesh strainer to get rid of the excess water. You may also use a kitchen towel or cheese cloth for this step.
3) Add two tablespoons of oil to a large pan over medium heat. Add the onions and squash followed by the grated ginger, salt and monosodium glutamate. Mix occasionally until fully cooked: about 15 minutes.

**For the Dough**
- 1 ½ tablespoons of salt
- 3 ½ cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 cup water (approximate)

**Dough**
1) Add 3 1/2 cups of flour to a large bowl and slowly add the water.
2) Mix the flour and water very well by hand and keep adding water until you make a smooth ball of dough.
3) Knead the dough very well until the dough is flexible. *Tip: Use your knuckles to knead the dough to make the process easier.*

4) Leave your dough in a pot with the lid on while you prepare the other ingredients.

**Tips**
- Cover the dough with a damp towel to prevent it from drying out.

**Momo Folding**
1) When your dough and stuffing are both ready, it is time to master your momo folding style.
2) Pinch off small pieces of dough and roll each ball in your palms until you have a small ball of dough, about the size of a golf ball.
3) Place the small piece of dough on a chopping board and use a rolling pin to roll it out into a thin circle about 3 inches wide. The dough should NOT be translucent. Rather it should be about the same thickness as a flour tortilla or chapati. Pinch or press the edges in order to ensure that they are thinner than the center.
4) In order to make the half-moon shaped momo, begin by holding the flat circular dough in your left hand and putting a tablespoon of the stuffing in the middle of the dough.
5) Next, fold your circle of dough in half, covering the filling.
6) Press together the two edges of the half circle so that there are no open edges and the filling is completely enclosed in the dough.
7) **Optional:** You now have the basic half-moon shape. However, at this stage you may also make your momo more beautiful by pinching and folding along the curved edge of the half circle! In order to do this, start at one tip of the half-moon, and fold over a very small piece of dough, pinching it down. Continue folding and pinching from the starting point, moving along the edge until you reach the other tip of the half-moon.

**Cooking**

1) Boil water in a large steamer. If you do not have a steamer, a cooling rack covered with the lid of a large pot of boiling water can also work. You want the momos to be exposed to the steam trapped in the pot without touching any of the water.
2) Oil the steamer’s surface lightly before putting the momos in. This will prevent them from sticking to the metal. Place as many as you can while ensuring that the momos do not touch.
3) Once the water is boiling, add the momos. Steam them for about 15 minutes or until tender.

Enjoy the momos while they are still hot with your favorite dipping sauce! Soy sauce mixed with a dash of chilli sauce and a pinch of fresh-grated ginger is an easy option for a condiment.
Vegetable Pulav
Rice mixed with mildly spiced, cooked vegetables

This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Mahir Bhatt
Partnered with Jagori Rural Charitable Trust in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh

Every summer vacation when I visited my maternal grandparents, I used to eat this dish with them for dinner. I learned to prepare it from my grandfather and to this day, I have never made a vegetable pulav as good as his. Nevertheless, whenever I am preparing and eating it I feel like I am with my grandfather and memories from my childhood come flooding back. For this reason, this dish holds a very special place in my heart.

Over the course of my Fellowship experience working in Dharamsala, I thought of this dish as a stress-buster: whenever I came back home from an exhausting field visit, I always cooked pulav. Not only is it easy but it also makes me feel extremely energized and satisfied. During the Fellowship, I also shared this recipe with friends that I met while living and working in the community. I remember meeting two really kind visitors from Spain who were frantically looking for a nice place to stay in Dharamsala. However, they had a really low budget and it was difficult for them to find a place. I happily invited them to come and stay at my place for free. During their stay with me, I cooked vegetable pulav for them and also taught them how to prepare it. They loved the dish and as a thank you, prepared tortillas de patatas: a dish from Spain that I was so excited to learn to cook.

Share this meal with friends and family. Perhaps you will also learn a new recipe or cooking tradition as a result!

Ingredients
Serves 3-4 people

- 2 cups of rice (your preference)
- 2 tablespoons of canola oil, mustard oil or ghee
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 large or 2 small green peppers/ capsicum, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- ½ cup of green peas, removed from the shells
- 3 whole cloves
- 1 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon of cilantro powder
- ½ teaspoon of chili powder (optional)
- Salt to taste

Instructions

1) Cook the rice according to package instructions and set it aside on a large plate. Spread it evenly to allow it to cool. Place whole cloves in the rice as it cools. This will give the rice a subtle but distinct flavor.

2) Add 2 tablespoons of oil to a large pan placed over a medium flame. Heat the oil until it is shimmering. Add the whole cumin seeds and fry until fragrant: about 30 seconds.

3) Add the onions and cook for about 5 minutes until they are light brown.

4) Add the tomatoes and cook them for an additional 3-4 minutes.

5) Add the carrots, green peas, turmeric, cilantro and chili powder. Add ¼ cup of water then cover and cook it for an additional 5-7 minutes.

6) Once the carrots and green peas are cooked, remove the cloves from the rice and add the cooked vegetables. Mix everything together and let it cool. Enjoy!
**Mixed Vegetable Stew with Seasoned Oil**

This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Nishant Gokhale
Partnered with Bhasha Sanshodhan Prakashan Kendra in Tejgadh, Gujarat

I like to cook and I usually do not follow any particular recipes. I try to make the best out of what is available by combination and experimentation rather than trying to source exotic ingredients. Living in Gujarat’s Tejgadh village meant that my food was entirely vegetarian and not having a refrigerator meant that it was mostly dairy-free. The way food has connected me with the community was not so much the process of cooking as much as it was the process of procuring it.

Every Monday morning, a *haat* (market) assembled in Tejgadh. Most of the vendors were tribal women who grew one or two vegetables in their small family fields. The produce was always very fresh and affordable and was not weighed but instead usually sold in pre-prepared lots of 10 rupees. Residents of Tejgadh and nearby villages came to the *haat* and bought everything from fresh vegetables and fruits to clothes, utensils and spices. The vendors and other customers initially found me a curiosity as I bought my groceries for the week. While I was familiar with several of the vegetables, some were new to me. I like to experiment with food and would ask about these odd vegetables using my very limited language skills. After many weeks of trying to explain myself, I became a common sight with the vendors always taking the effort to explain how to prepare unfamiliar vegetables, giving me free samples and urging me to try new vegetables knowing that I take a keen interest.

**Ingredients**

- Serves 3-4 people
- 1 medium cauliflower, roughly chopped
- 2 small sweet potatoes, chopped
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 small eggplants, chopped
- 1-2 tablespoons of a plant-based oil
- 1 piece of ginger (about half the size of your thumb), minced

**Instructions**

1) Fill a large pot halfway with water. Add a handful of salt and bring the water to a gentle boil. Add the chopped ginger as well as any whole spices and allow them to simmer until the water turns a very faint yellow.

2) Add the sweet potato slices into the pot and simmer for 5 minutes. Then add the cauliflower and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Add the eggplant, onions and any other vegetables you enjoy and simmer until they are fully cooked.

   *Tip:* Add the vegetables based on the time they take to cook. Sweet potato takes the longest, therefore it is important to add it first. If you want to add spinach to the vegetables, add it last as spinach does not require very much cooking time.

3) Transfer to a large bowl for serving. Strain as much or as little of the water into the bowl as you prefer.

   *Tip:* Save the excess water for other soups and recipes. Vegetable broth is so flavorful!

4) In a small pan, add the oil, 3 garlic cloves, minced 2-3 green chillies, sliced in half Dried and whole spices like cumin, cloves, pepper, cumin, star anise, tamarind and turmeric and asafoetida Salt to taste Sliced limes for serving Nuts or dried fruits for garnish

wait for it to heat up and then add the garlic, ginger and chillies until they change color. Add the ground spices and cook until they are fragrant. Turn off the heat and sprinkle the vegetables with salt. Pour the seasoned oil on top of the plate of vegetables. Squeeze half a lime on top and stir. You now have a healthy vegan dish to enjoy!

I have tried this with various greens, drumsticks, carrots, coconuts and cabbage. Toppings can include raw nuts, grapes or pomegranate. Different spices like cloves, pepper, cumin, star anise, turmeric and cinnamon, sauteed until give the broth a very different character.

Nishant Gokhale savoring some time with a good book and an unexpected visitor
### Laal Bhaji

**Sautéed, garlicky, mildly-spiced and extremely healthy red spinach**

This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Rachel Aier Partnered with Samerth Charitable Trust in Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Food has always been important to me. I even wonder if it has been too important at times! There is no hiding the fact that I love to eat. For a long time, my diet mostly consisted of meat and rice. This can be attributed to the fact that I am a Naga. Most of the population from Nagaland is also non-vegetarian and really love eating meat. There is often a saying in Nagaland that “if you visit Nagaland and don’t have a bite of Naga meat, then what’s the point of visiting Nagaland?”

However, after joining as an AIF William J. Clinton Fellow, my diet was forced to adjust. I was placed with Samerth Charitable Trust in Raipur (Chhattisgarh), where most of my colleagues were pure vegetarians. Therefore, it became extremely difficult for me to find non-vegetarian food. While I enjoyed eating lunch with my colleagues and having the time to bond with them, there are only pure-veg dishes available. For this reason, I ate a lot of vegetarian food during my time working with Samerth Charitable Trust.

Growing up I never liked vegetarian food. Even during the first few months of the Fellowship, I rarely enjoyed eating the vegetable dishes and didn’t expect to find a favorite food in Raipur. However, this completely changed when I got sick. In order for the doctors to run some tests, I needed to be on an empty stomach without any food for a whole day. After fasting for the test, I was surprised that the only food that I wanted to eat was *laal bhaji* — yes, *laal bhaji*, perhaps the most “vegetable-rich” and healthiest dish available!

This was very surprising for me, too, because I had never craved or even fancied eating a vegetarian dish before. But after that day, *laal bhaji* became my absolutely favorite vegetarian dish. I even tried cooking it on my own and found that it was very easy to make! It makes for a delicious, hearty but quick vegetarian meal.

**Ingredients**

*Serves 3-4 people*

- 4 teaspoons of oil (like mustard or vegetable)
- 1 big bunch of *laal bhaji* / red spinach, thinly sliced
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 3 medium red tomatoes, chopped
- 5-6 big cloves of garlic, smashed
- 2 green chillies, chopped
- 2 dry red chillies
- 1/2 teaspoons of mustard seeds
- 1/2 teaspoons of turmeric powder
- Salt to taste

**Instructions**

1. Heat the oil in a pan until shimmering.
2. Add the mustard seeds as well as the red and green chillies: fry for 10 seconds until fragrant.
3. Add the onions and mix until combined with the spices and chilli.
4. When the onions are translucent and soft, add the turmeric, tomatoes, garlic and salt. Mix well and cover with a lid. Let the mixture cook for 10 minutes, stirring in between.
5. Mix in the *laal bhaji* (red spinach) and again put on the lid. Let it cook until the *laal bhaji* is wilted and soft: about 5-10 minutes.

Enjoy the bhaji with rice, roti or on its own!

Rachel Aier examining her new (and only!) favorite vegetable.
Crepes with Vanilla Extract

This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Kembo Matungulu Partnered with Bempu Health in Bangalore, Karnataka

I wake up on a Saturday morning in excitement as I smell my favorite breakfast food. I immediately run downstairs to the kitchen and find my mom making crepes. I smile and eagerly ask my mom if I can help with putting the crepe batter on the pan and flipping them. Without hesitation, my mom hands me the spatula. For the next hour, I catch up with my mother about how school, my friends, and my siblings are doing. When all the crepes are finally made, my mom and I call my siblings down to eat. I keep my topping simple with just sliced bananas while my siblings top theirs with syrup or Nutella.

Crepes will always remind me of my childhood and my mother. For that reason, I jumped at the idea of making them for a cooking competition group activity during the Fellowship Midpoint conference. My group - consisting of Kieran, Anecia, Niket, and Mahir - was given ingredients for a sweet dish. After some discussion, we decided to make crepes. Just as in my childhood, my main role was preparing the crepes on the pan. Because the competition was time-sensitive, the stakes were high. At the beginning, we had many failed crepe attempts. I hadn’t made crepes in a while, so I was a bit rusty. I kept thinking, “what would mom do?” As time progressed, I started to get the hang of things again, and the crepes started to look good. We topped our crepes to be tasted with banana slices and an orange on the side. All the groups presented their dishes and a chef judged them. I introduced the dish and mentioned its significance to my childhood. The judge tasted our dish last, and to our surprise, we won the contest! My group literally jumped in excitement and cheered because we genuinely did not expect to win.

Ingredients

- 1¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt.
- 1 teaspoon white sugar (optional)
- 3 eggs.
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract (optional)
- 2 cups milk.
- 2 tablespoons melted butter or vegetable oil (plus more for greasing the pan)

Instructions

1) Whisk or mix together the flour, salt and sugar in a large bowl.
2) Whisk or mix together the eggs, milk, butter/oil and vanilla extract in a separate bowl until they are fully combined.
3) Slowly mix the wet ingredients into the dry, making sure that the batter does not have any clumps.
4) Heat a non stick pan over very low heat. Coat the bottom of the pan with butter/oil.
5) Once the butter or oil is hot, add approximately ¼ cup of batter to the pan and rotate the pan over the heat, making sure that the batter thinly coats the entire bottom of the pan.
6) After about a minute, flip the crepe using a large spatula. Cook until lightly brown. Slide the crepe onto a tray or plate.

Continue making crepes until all of the batter is used up! Serve warm with fruit, tree syrup, honey, butter, white sugar OR all of the above!
Sarson ka Saag and Makki ki Roti

Mustardy spinach stew served with corn flat bread

This recipe was generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Daniel Soucy
Partnered with The Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative in Delhi

I was never a big fan of blended spinach. For the longest time, it seemed to me that this lovely, green leafy veggie was best kept fresh. Why complicate things? Even after traveling to India for the first time and trying saag paneer in what will remain an unnamed Southern city, blended spinach seemed unfortunate at best. However, as any Indian national will tell you, sarson ka saag (mustard greens) and even plain saag (green spinach), are a totally different experience in North India. The first time I tried saag in North India, I was living in Jaipur. The spices were pungent. The saag perfectly buttery and smooth. I savored every moment.

With this newfound love for saag, I was blown away to come across yet another variation of this delectable green stew: sarson ka saag and makki ki roti. Let me start by saying that makki ki roti is basically a corn tortilla and I love homemade tortillas. In the United States, one of my family’s favorite dishes in the hot summer are fish tacos with homemade tortillas. A new way to use this delectable and easy-to-make carb product? Sign me up! Unfortunately, sarson is a winter green. In North India, it shows its spicier, mustardy deliciousness for just a few months between November and February. Any other time and your saag wallas may give you a confused smile and shoo you away toward plain old spinach.

For this reason, it was with desperation that I settled into my Fellowship, I continued to bother my coworkers, asking them when we will finally be able to try the famed combination. They kept pushing my mind raced, what will I do before. I desperately called another Indian Fellow who might know more about my predicament. With this newfound love for saag, I was blown away to come across yet another variation of this delectable green stew: sarson ka saag and makki ki roti. Let me start by saying that makki ki roti is basically a corn tortilla and I love homemade tortillas. In the United States, one of my family’s favorite dishes in the hot summer are fish tacos with homemade tortillas. A new way to use this delectable and easy-to-make carb product? Sign me up! Unfortunately, sarson is a winter green. In North India, it shows its spicier, mustardy deliciousness for just a few months between November and February. Any other time and your saag wallas may give you a confused smile and shoo you away toward plain old spinach.

For this reason, it was with desperation that I settled into my Fellowship, I continued to bother my coworkers, asking them when we will finally be able to try the famed combination. They kept pushing me off telling me, “one day Dan, one day.”

Then, one day came in mid November. I returned home from a long, taxing but extremely fun adventure outside of Delhi. I had a long day at work and was eager to get into the kitchen to make some homemade chilli: a comfort food for me. I bought all of my ingredients, soaked my dry beans to make sure they would cook into the chilli perfectly and even made some homemade vegetable broth to really amp up the flavor. This was going to be a perfect evening of relaxation. It had to be. After three months of work, I was tired. I was in need of some comfort. As the onions began to sautee, I put some music. I was happy and content. And then, the sound of sizzling onions seemed to fade. Was the music too loud? They were not crackling and bouncing but just sitting in the pan looking sad and partially cooked.

I looked under the pan and noticed that the gas had turned off. I looked down and saw that the gas tank we use was completely and totally empty. Coming from the States, this is not a difficulty we often encounter. I had only used direct connections to gas before. I desperately called another Indian Fellow who might know more about my predicament. My mind raced, what will I do? No gas means no cooking, no cooking means no chilli. I was mortified. The other Fellow informed me that the gas tank will take a few days to come. I would need to call my landlord. More stress.

As the weight of this situation came down on me and my stomach grumbled, I decided that the only course of action was to go out and grab some food. As the onions began to sautee, I put some music. I was happy and content. And then, the sound of sizzling onions seemed to fade. Was the music too loud? They were not crackling and bouncing but just sitting in the pan looking sad and partially cooked. As the weight of this situation came down on me and my stomach grumbled, I decided that the only course of action was to go out and grab some food. As the onions began to sautee, I put some music. I was happy and content. And then, the sound of sizzling onions seemed to fade. Was the music too loud? They were not crackling and bouncing but just sitting in the pan looking sad and partially cooked.

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Ingredients
Serves 3-4 people

Ingredients for the Makki ki Roti
2 cups of corn flour (fine ground)
1 teaspoon of salt
1 green chilli, finely chopped
One handful of cilantro, finely chopped
1 ½ cups of hot water
Butter or ghee for cooking

Ingredients for the Sarson ka Saag
3 cups mustard greens, washed
3 cups spinach, washed
1/4 cup cilantro plus one tablespoon for garnish, washed
1/4 cup mint, washed
1/2 cup finely chopped red onions
2 green chillies, roughly chopped
2 dried red chillies
2 tablespoons garlic, roughly chopped
1/4 tablespoon of ginger, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon cilantro seeds
1 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1/4 teaspoon asafoetida
1 teaspoon turmeric powder
One fresh lime for garnishing
Salt to taste

Instructions

Makki ki Roti
1) Mix the corn flour, salt, green chilli and cilantro in a bowl.
2) Add the hot water and knead with your hand until the ingredients form a soft dough. It should be firm but sticky. Let the dough sit for at least 30 minutes but up to one day.
3) Take a ball of dough, roughly the size of a plum and place it between two sheets of wax paper. Roll the dough into a 1/8 inch thick round.
4) Place the round on a buttered and hot metal or cast iron pan. Cook until both sides are toasted, even slightly burnt. Repeat until you use all of the dough.

Sarson ka Saag
1) Place one tablespoon of oil or ghee in a hot pan. Once the oil is hot, add the garlic, ginger, whole spices and dried red chillies. Roast until fragrant.
2) Add the onions and cook until soft. Once soft, add the spinach, mustard greens, cilantro and mint. Add ¼ cup of water and cover. Cook until the greens are soft and wilted: about 5 minutes.
3) Remove from heat and add the mixture to a blender or use a hand blender to puree until smooth. The consistency should be slightly thicker than a soup.
4) Return to heat, add remainder of spices and cook for a few more minutes. If the mixture is extremely thick, add more water. Salt to taste and serve with lime, cilantro and Makki ki roti.
In India, the further north you go, the more dependent on daal the cuisine becomes. I spent my Fellowship in Rajasthan where daal is a central feature in most meals. I get a watered-down version of daal in my daily tiffin (lunch box) and I usually order a Punjabi version of daal, called daal makhani (daal with cream or butter), when I go to restaurants. As a person of basic tastes, there is something I find irresistibly comforting about the dish, which is made from legumes, spices, and vegetables. I also like the idea of a legume-based diet because it reduces the need for meat while delivering a healthy serving of protein.

However, there is a bit of a gap between eating something and knowing how to prepare it. As I'm not too fond of cooking, I might have been content never to learn, but a friend wanted to use up some vegetables instead of going out for dinner that night. We decided to try making daal because it seems so simple.

In theory, yes, but a large part of preparing daal is using a pressure cooker. For most Americans, this device may not ring a bell, but the basic idea is that you put everything inside and secure the lid. Then, it heats up and cooks the food extra fast because there is pressure in the pot (as the name suggests). As a concept, it makes sense, but there’s something slightly unnerving about a pot with an immense amount of pressure sitting on your stove.

So, naturally, we looked up YouTube videos about how to properly use the pressure cooker. A cheerful auntie explained how to boil potatoes and we tried to copy her methods and we finally put the pot on the stove. As it heated, we cowered behind the fridge, wondering how we would know when it’s done? How would we know if it was about to explode?

Taking turns sneaking in and out from behind the fridge, we turned it on in a fit of bravery, then panicked and turned it off, then, out of impatience and frustration, turned it on again. Finally after more than an hour of this, we gave up and ate our slightly-too-hard-but-edible daal.

Since then, I’ve made a lot of progress with my pressure cooker. I can now make daal and boil potatoes with the same flourish as the auntie from the YouTube video. I no longer think of my pressure cooker as a bomb, except as a bomb of deliciousness.

### Ingredients

**Serves 2-3**

- 1 tablespoon butter or ghee (or, alternatively, sesame oil)
- 1 cup white onion (finely chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic (finely chopped)
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger (finely chopped)
- 4 cups water (or vegetable broth)
- 1 cup dried red lentils (rinsed and picked over)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground cilantro
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of fresh cilantro

1) Put the ghee in a pressure cooker over high heat. Add the onions, ginger and garlic and saute for 5 minutes.
2) Once the onions are translucent, add the rest of the ingredients, and secure the lid.
3) Wait 20 minutes or 5 whistles from the cooker and tadah! Your daal is ready. Once the cooker has cooled down and released all the steam, remove the lid, garnish with cilantro and serve!

Enjoy with rice, roti or on its own!

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Left: Molly Morrison anxiously fending off the pressure cooker from behind the refrigerator

Right: Molly Morrison prepared the daal makhani that she so lovingly and patiently learned to make.
1) Aam Panna Sarbat 53
(a sweet, chilled drink made from unripened mangoes)

2) Chai Your Way 54-55
(explore new ways to drink your favorite spiced milk tea!)

3) Sattu ka Sarbat 56-57
(a roasted lentil-flour drink with fresh cucumber)

Aam Panna Sarbat
A slightly sweet, chilled drink made from unripened mangoes
This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Ananya Saha Partnered with Quest Alliance in Samastipur, Bihar

Ingredients
Makes 8 servings
- 8 cups (about 2 litres) of water
- 2 medium-sized, raw (green) mangoes
- 16 mint leaves, torn in half plus 8 mint leaf sprigs for garnishing
- ½ teaspoon mustard oil
- 1 teaspoon rock salt
- 4 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon black pepper powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin powder
- 8 mint leaf sprigs for garnishing

Instructions
1) Rub mustard oil over the mangoes and set them aside.
2) Place the whole mangoes over a gas stove (with a grill tray), outdoor grill or fire.
3) Using tongs, turn the mangoes every few minutes until each side is dark with burn marks and the inside flesh has softened. Remove the mangoes and set aside in a bowl. Let them completely cool or place them in cold water to speed up the cooling process.
4) Without also removing the mangoes’ flesh, carefully cut off the burnt mangoes’ peel. If it is difficult to remove the peel by hand, use a knife. You may also cut the mango in half, remove the seed and scoop out the flesh with a spoon.
5) Grind the flesh using a blender, food processor or spice grinder. (Note: If the flesh seems excessively fibrous for you, you may also squeeze out the juice through a thin cloth. However, the drink is traditionally served with the pulp.)
6) Add the rock salt, sugar, black pepper powder and cumin seed powder with the pulp and mix it until evenly combined.
7) Add the water and stir. Tear the mint leaves and add them to the water. Pour the sarbat into individual glasses and garnish them with a sprig of mint.

This is a wonderfully refreshing drink that provided me with a lot of energy during the hot Samastipur summer. If you ever need a refreshing and healthy way to beat the heat, I encourage you to try and make this recipe! Check out my other recipe “Sattu ka Sarbat” on pages 56 and 57 for some more inspiration!
**Chai Your Way**

This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Molly Morrison

Partnered with Frontier Markets in Jaipur, Rajasthan

Before coming to India, the closest I’d come to chai was a chai latte at Starbucks. I was expecting exactly that when I arrived in India and had my first cup of chai. I quickly realized, however, that they only vaguely resemble each other (they are both warm, liquid, and consumed through the mouth).

Real chai is sweet, milky, and flavored with a variety of spices. No combination ever tastes the same. Street vendors offer masala chai at a variety of price points 5 - 20 rupees depending on the size of the cup. In restaurants, you’ll find chai for 60 - 120 rupees depending on the ambiance of the place. While I would never refuse a cup of chai, there’s something unique about stopping at a street vendor and settling down on a stool under a canopy or tree to enjoy a cup of desi chai.

Most places, be it a friend’s home or a workspace, someone will keep you well-plied with masala chai. In my office, there are two chai rounds per day (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). While it doesn’t have the same force as a cup of coffee, the sugar can keep you motivated and on-task. I think looking back at my Fellowship experience, the taste I remember most clearly is the warm, milky taste of masala chai.

### Ingredients and Instructions

Although masala chai (slightly spicy tea with loads of milk and white sugar) is a staple, every home, street vendor and office seems to have a different opinion about their favorite chai. So for this recipe, you are invited to mix and match based on the flavors you’re looking for! Pick ingredients from each category, mix and match combinations and have fun trying new flavors!

**Choose one: Tea variety**
Green / Black / White / Chamomile
Mint / Hibiscus

**Choose 2-4: Herbs and spices**
Lemon grass (1-2 strands per serving)
Freshly grated ginger (1 teaspoon per serving)
Whole cinnamon (1 stick per serving)
Whole cloves (1-2 cloves per serving)
Whole cardamom (1-2 pods per serving)
Fresh mint leaves (5-6 leaves per serving)
Dried ginger (Just a few strands per serving)
Lemon/Limes, cut in slivers (to taste)
Dried, ground Kashmiri pepper (just a little!)

**Choose one: Milk**
Cow milk / Almond milk / Cashew milk
Oat milk / Goat milk / Yak milk

**Choose one: Sweetener**
White sugar / Brown sugar / Honey
Maple syrup / Agave syrup

1) Boil 1.5 cups of water for each serving of chai you want to make. As the water is heating up, prepare your ingredients.
2) Once the water is boiling, add your herbs and spices. Let them simmer in the water for 3 minutes to release the flavors.
3) Add your milk and allow the tea to simmer for 1-2 more minutes.
4) Add the tea and the sugar and stir. Prepare the tea according to package instructions. If you are unsure how long to brew the tea, boiling for 1 minute followed by 3 minutes of steeping off of the heat is a safe option. Strain the tea and enjoy!

If you are unsure what combination you will enjoy most, some trusted combinations include:

1) Black tea, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves and ginger with dairy milk and white sugar
2) Green tea, lemon and fresh ginger with honey
3) Hibiscus tea, mint leaves, lemon grass and dried ginger with agave syrup or honey
4) Black tea, lemon grass and fresh ginger with almond milk

Community Across Cuisines, Cooking Across Cultures: Flavorful Stories and Recipes

Drinks
**Sattu ka Sarbat with fresh Cucumber Chaat**

A refreshing, roasted lentil flour drink with fresh cucumber

This recipe and story were generously contributed by AIF Clinton Fellow Ananya Saha Partnered with Quest Alliance in Samastipur, Bihar

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**Before working in Bihar with the AIF Clinton Fellowship, I was not a lover of sattu flour. To me, it was just a simple, fairly uninteresting staple food. Sattu is made of roasted gram lentils and is a fairly ordinary ingredient in most Indian homes. However, during my time in Bihar, sattu played a surprisingly important role in my life: it helped me to battle against the scorching summer during my Fellowship journey. I am thankful that my friends from my host organization, Quest Alliance, introduced me to this drink.**

Here in Samastipur, sattu ka sarbat is a seasonal drink. Our local sattu ka sarbat seller, Raju Mahto, actually shifts his business in the winter and sells eggs instead of this refreshing drink. However, during the long and hot summer days, people are anxious to get their hands on sattu ka sarbat because it is both hydrating and refreshing. From talking with Raju and spending time at his stall, I learned that he has operated his small business for the past five years. He is happy that people still love this drink and that it has not yet been overpowered by packaged soft drinks. Aside from being less healthy, soft drinks are also more expensive.

In order to continue attracting customers and add some extra flavor to his humble shop, Raju has also kept fresh cucumbers that he serves with salt and lemon. I loved not only staying cool with the sattu ka sarbat but also enjoying the crunchy cucumber after work with my colleagues. It was and continues to be the perfect refreshing drink after long days interacting with my community, collecting data and implementing my Fellowship project. Because sattu ka sarbat is extremely easy to make, ever since spending a year in Samastipur, I have made sure to incorporate it into my diet as an energy drink! I love having it in the morning to kick-start my day.

If you ever find yourself in Samastipur, Bihar, you must try sattu ka sarbat and fresh cucumber. In order to spot it, look for an earthen pot wrapped in red cloth (for mixing the drink) as well as a glass box filled with the yellowish sattu flour. If you never find yourself in Bihar, I still encourage you to try making it at home. I hope you enjoy!

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### Ingredients

- Makes 8 cups
- 8 cups (about 2 litres) of water (cold or warm)
- 8 tablespoons of sattu or gram flour
- 2 teaspoons rock salt
- 1 teaspoon roasted cumin powder
- 1 red onion (finely chopped)
- 4 green chilli (smashed)
- 2 full lemons, juiced
- Fresh cilantro leaves (for garnishing)
- Optional: 2-3 teaspoons of fresh jaggery, honey or white sugar for sweetness

### Instructions

1) Place the water in any serving vessel.
2) Mix in the sattu and stir very well so that it doesn’t form lump. A whisk will work best for this but a spoon can also suffice.
3) Add the rock salt, roasted cumin seed powder, chopped onion, green chilli and lemon juice. Whisk or stir well. You may also add a sweetener of your choice.
4) Garnish with fresh cut cilantro leaves.

### Optional Accompaniment:

- 2 cucumbers, sliced the long way into 4 pieces
- 2 limes
- Salt to taste

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**Cucumber Chaat** Place sliced cucumber on a plate. Rub the cucumber slices with fresh lime juice and sprinkle them with salt according to your taste preferences.
Conversion Chart: U.S. Measurements to Metric Measurements

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<th>Metric Measurements</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Glossary

- aam panna (mildly spiced, raw mango water) 53
- agave syrup (a plant-based sweetener common throughout Mexico and Latin America) 55
- asafetida (hing: a common spice extracted from the Ferula plant) 41, 49
- banana 19 and 44
- baingan ka bharta (smoky eggplant dish) 22, 30-33
- bati (hard wheat roll) 30, 31, 32, 33
- biryani (spiced rice typically cooked with meat) 22, 27-29
- black pepper powder, 28, 53
- butter, 15, 19, 28, 29, 33, 45, 46, 57, 48, 49, 50, 51
- carrot, 25, 26, 29, 41
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- cumin powder 17, 21, 51, 53, 57
- cumin seeds 39, 41, 48
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- eggplant 30, 31, 32, 33, 41
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- ginger 21, 32, 33, 36, 37, 41, 49, 51, 55
- green chili (small, green variety roughly the size of your pinky. Thai green chilies are a close substitute) 17, 21, 32, 48, 49, 57
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- kadai (spicy stir-fry dish) 17-18
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- maple syrup 55
Contributors List

Daniel Soucy (Editor): Hailing from Bedford, New Hampshire, Dan’s studied international relations and Asian studies at Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. He studied Hindi through the U.S. State Department’s Critical Language Scholarship program and conducted research on Pune’s LGBTQ community. Cooking is one of Dan’s greatest passions.

Aayush Malik: Raised in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, Aayush studied social entrepreneurship and statistics. He conducted research on organic processed foods with small and medium sized enterprises. His passion for education inspired him to teach English, Math and Social Sciences to underserved students.

Alexandra Barteldt: Hailing from Mooresville, North Carolina, Alexandra comes with an education in religious studies and a passion for environmental science. A two-time recipient of the Critical Language Scholarship, Alexandra is fluent in Hindi. She worked with communities in Africa in the field of religion and art.

Ananya Saha: Born and raised in the city of Bolpur, West Bengal, Ananya is trained in social work. She launched her career by working towards educational empowerment of children of tea tribes in Northeast India and towards food security of vulnerable tribal groups in Central India.

Molly Morrison (Illustrator): Originally from Grand Junction, Colorado, Molly studied sustainable development and philosophy in the U.S. and the U.K. She served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Burkina Faso and worked in China for several years. In her free time, Molly can be found painting and sketching.

Angela Evans: From Shoreline, Washington State, Anecia first came in India as part of her academic training in international studies, during which she conducted research on famer suicides. Passionate about gender equality, Anecia became a rising community organizer for girls’ empowerment in the Southern U.S.

Christopher Scott Carpenter: Raised in Salt Lake City, Utah, Christopher studied film and TV production, cognitive science and advertising in the U.S. and the Czech Republic. He launched his career by creating a documentary about a Kenyan refugee in Utah, and has worked in Japan, Thailand and China.

Diana Chavez: Hailing from Chicago, Illinois, Diana studied sociology and psychology. She served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand. During this time, she received funding from U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama to organize a gender empowerment and leadership development camp. She also worked as a paralegal and with incarcerated youth.
Kembo Matangulu: From Rockville, Maryland, Kembo is trained in public health. She lived in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Switzerland. She worked on refugee mental health, gender-based violence, and reproductive health of adolescent girls. She first visited India in 2017 to learn about the country’s healthcare disparities.

Kieran McKa-Malloy: A native New Yorker, Kieran studied urban and religious studies. He worked in Indonesia to conduct participatory mapping on informal settlements, and in India to research human-wildlife conflict in the rapidly urbanizing Nilgiris district. Kieran is passionate about sustainability and urban planning.

Mahir Bhatt: Hailing from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Mahir pursued an education in civil engineering before turning to social work. He worked in Russia, Nepal and in rural Odisha to strengthen government schools in remote regions. He served with AIESEC for several years to foster citizen diplomacy across countries.

Nishant Gokhale: Originally from Mumbai, Maharashtra, Nishant studied law both in India and the U.S., with a focus on tribal rights and history. He clerked with the Indian Supreme Court and worked as a litigator with the Centre on the Death Penalty in Delhi. He researched and published on criminal justice issues related to tribal groups in India.

Nithya Vemireddy: From Berkeley, California, Nithya studied psychology and public health science. During this time, she traveled to North India to study traditional medicine and healthcare practices. She later conducted action research in India on the impact of a Gujarat-based social enterprise using technology.

Rachel Ajar: Hailing from Mokokchung, Nagaland, Rachel pursued academic training in development studies and political science. She worked in livelihood development for persons with disabilities in Nagaland, as well as income generation, health and gender related issues in rural Rajasthan and Telangana.

Nithya Vemireddy: From Berkeley, California, Nithya studied psychology and public health science. During this time, she traveled to North India to study traditional medicine and healthcare practices. She later conducted action research in India on the impact of a Gujarat-based social enterprise using technology.

Tessa Romandski: Originally from Monona, Wisconsin, Tessa studied political science, economics, and environmental studies in the U.S. and Norway. She worked on sustainable food production, youth education, and has advised schools on how to implement healthy nutrition into the curriculum. She is a passionate cook and gardener.