

# CHENNAI CHARMS THE COOKERY WORLD!



Women from Chennai are cooking up a storm at the World Gourmand Awards in London with their cookbooks packed with unique recipes. Also, Rashmi tells you where you can learn to make cheesy wheels or crackling spinach in the city!



## TASTY TALES

Rashmi Uday Singh

**S**top press! Chennai charms Londoners and comes out a winner. It's a treat to be in London at the prestigious World Gourmand Award ceremony and applaud talented authors from Chennai receiving awards and doing cooking

demos at the London Book Fair.

It's a great feeling to be recognised for your work and The World Gourmand Awards has been doing this path-breaking work for over a decade. Selecting cook-books from around the globe, short-listing the best in the World and then honoring the winners, is what Edouard Cointreau, along with Bo Masser and his team, have been doing with great panache and style. It requires great foresight, vision and plenty of hard work to put this together and I am happy to report that last year it was Jigyasa and Pratibha's *Cooking with Pedatha*, which won the award and this year it is the turn of Viji Vardarajan with her four books.

*A Healthy Taste of Indian Culture - Cooking With Yoghurt*, is a unique compilation of recipes based on yoghurt from the Tamil Brahmin kitchen. It chronicles dishes from starters to side and

main dishes, tiffin snack varieties and desserts and has won The Best Health and Nutrition Book in the World 2007 in the Gourmand Cookbook Awards.

*Samayal - The Pleasures of South Indian Vegetarian Cooking* (finalist Best Vegetarian Cookbook 2007) *Festival Samayal - An Offering To the Gods*, painstakingly describes the festivals and religious events in a Hindu calendar year and all the dishes cooked for each celebration. This was a finalist in the category: Best Local Cookery Book 2007.

Content provider and co-author with Viji, is Padmini Natrajan, an actress, free-lance journalist and blogger and both have done a great job with the fourth book *Classic Tamil Brahmin Cuisine - Pure Vegetarian South Indian Samayal*. The USP of this book is that it provides recipes that were considered orthodox cooking. The onion and garlic do not feature at all in the recipes.



## FOOD FIT

Interestingly, these books outline the different spices that played an important role in the dishes. Fenugreek as a digestive aid, cumin for its multiple usages, dried legumes and beans as nature's tiny capsules of proteins, pepper for colds and coughs, turmeric as a healer of wounds - in fact, every ingredient used in the Tambram cuisine has a purpose that goes beyond taste and texture. To promote understanding and to appreciate a vegetarian diet, the vegetables have been analysed from the point of view of nutrition and health and recipes that are perfectly balanced - low in fats and cholesterol and yet protein and vitamin rich.

