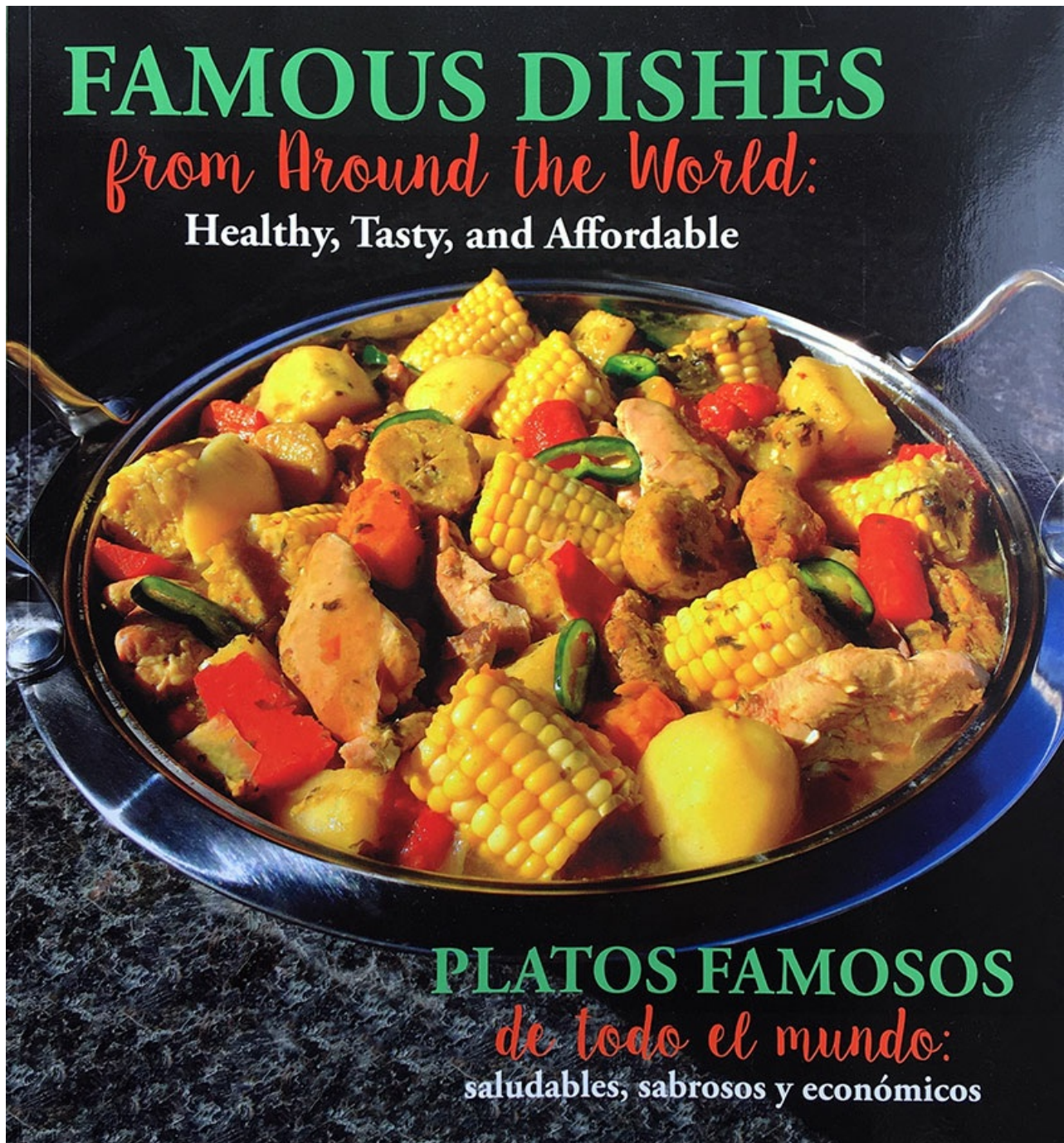


Famous Dishes from Around the World

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Any book about food I love to read. Especially when it is about food that brings people together. This American cookbook '**Famous Dishes from Around the World**' is an homage to American heritage and their melting pot. These are (as the introduction states) 'dishes introduced to the United States by generations of immigrants'. The dishes are part of American food culture but are also 'a symbol and cultural identity with the country of origin'. The publisher has sent me a copy to review it.

Famous Dishes from around the World

When you read 'Famous Dishes' the book takes you immediately on a journey across the world. It is written in Spanish on the left side of the page and English on the right. It starts with an **American chili with Turkey**, a **Brazilian Feijoada** and a **British Shepherd's Pie**. But also features a recipe for a **Chinese Kung Pao** or a **Spanish Paella**.

The book is budget-conscious (every dish is under 18 dollars) and has a nutrition list next to every recipe.

Dutch – Indonesian – Norwegian

While going through the cookbook I immediately notice a delicious looking **Indonesian Satay** served with a homemade **peanut sauce**. The Swedish Meatballs look very interesting too. Both these dishes are well known to me and I am curious what the American flavors have done with the dishes.

Me, my husband and daughter are Dutch. We live in the city of Haarlem (next to Amsterdam) in the Netherlands. Indonesia used to be a Dutch colony for over 300 years. A lot of Dutch have Indonesian heritage like me and my husband (we both have Indonesian roots from fathers side). My mother is from the north of Holland and my husband's mother is Norwegian. In Norway, meatball dishes are famous and are made in the same way as 'Swedish' or 'Danish' meatballs.

Wikipedia says:

Frikadeller are flat, pan-fried meatballs of minced meat, often likened to the Danish version of meatballs. The origin of the dish is unknown. The term frikadeller is German but the dish is associated with not only German but Danish cuisine specifically or Scandinavian cuisine in general.

And further down the page...

Frikadel are also known in Indonesian cuisine through Dutch cuisine (of the frikadel, which is historically similar to the frikadaller) influence and called *perkedel [...]*.

Frikadel or Perkedel

Indonesian perkedel are meatballs filled with potato. Perkedel are seasoned In Indonesia just like the Swedish meatballs in this book, with **nutmeg**. So this meatball recipe has traveled and influenced a lot of dishes that people call their heritage.

Turkish

Next, to every recipe, the author explains something about the dish. I like these interesting inserts in the book. It gives the recipe more depth and adds to the authenticity of the recipe.

The book states that the recipe for Swedish Meatballs (kötbullar) is 'based on an 18th-century Turkish recipe of spiced köfte meatballs brought back by King Charles XII of Sweden from Turkey during the Ottoman Empire'. It says that 'Swedish meatballs are often made with reindeer meat as well as ground lamb or beef'. The recipe in this book is made with Turkey meat.

I have to try the Swedish Meatballs and the Peanut Sauce recipe immediately.

Swedish Meatballs



The recipe for the meatballs uses minced Turkey meat and white bread that is soaked in milk. It makes the meat tender and sturdy thus easy to form into balls.

I like my balls spiced up more though. I would double the amount of nutmeg and cumin in the recipe and I think I would add some all-spice too. But that is me. I like strong flavors.

Because of the turkey meat, the flavor of the complete ball is basically different than when it is made with beef or pork. That was the first thing my husband notices about the flavor. For him it was not 'the real' meatballs because of the Turkey meat.

I **love the dill** in the recipe. I am used to use parsley with Scandinavian balls, but dill is a great idea. The creamy sauce is made extra tasty with some Dijon mustard; a delicious depth in flavor.

Want to try it yourself. Here is the recipe from the book.

Swedish Meatballs Ingredients

For the meatballs:

- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 2 slices of white bread, soaked in milk
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg, ground
- 1/4 tsp. cumin, ground
- 1 small onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil

For the Gravy:

- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1/2" cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup fresh dill

1. Remove the bread from the milk and squeeze it dry. Combine it with the meat, nutmeg, cumin, onion, and egg. Season with salt and pepper and shape the mixture into about 20 small balls.
2. In a large frying pan, heat the oil and slowly brown the meatballs on all sides. Set aside.
3. For the gravy, melt the butter in the pan, and whisk in the flour until the sauce is light brown. Slowly add in the water or broth, cream, and seasonings, and let the sauce simmer until it thickens.
4. Stir the meatballs into the sauce, add the dill, and let them simmer for another five minutes.
5. Boil the egg noodles and set aside.
6. Serve over egg noodles with lingonberry or cranberry sauce.

Serves 6-8



Overall I think it is a delicious, creamy meatball recipe that features low fat meat. I like Swedish meatballs made with a mix of minced pork and beef meat better.



Satay Sauce

A great satay sauce is not easy to make. Of course, it is always about the balance of flavors. Because you add acidity to fatty ingredients the sauce can curdle. But not this sauce. I love this peanut sauce recipe from Famous Dishes from Around the World! It is easy, tasty and done in 15 minutes.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup peanut oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tbsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1/4 cup water

- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tsp vinegar
- 2 tbsp low sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon, ground

1. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until softened.
2. Add the curry powder and all other ingredients.
3. Bring the mixture to a boil, then turn down the heat.
4. Let simmer for about 5 minutes until the sauce thickens.

Homemade Curry Powder

I always make my own curry powder because curry powder is a mix of different spices. You can make your own signature powder but I like [this recipe](#) made by the 'minimalist baker'.



I have to say this peanut sauce does taste more Indian than Indonesian to me (because of the curry powder), but there are so many different ways of making peanut sauce, everywhere in the world, it does not matter.

Acidity

I like this version because to me a great peanut sauce is about acidity. If it is not sour enough it tastes like yesterday's sauce. I like the fact that this recipe uses the **juice of one lemon** and **two teaspoons of vinegar** too. It uses peanut butter and coconut milk as a base. Because of dried pepper flakes, the sauce is slightly spicy. I like the color of the sauce. The yellow shine is because of turmeric (yellow root).

Conclusion

Overall and having tried two recipes following the instructions meticulously, this book works to me as a delicious inspiration to make healthy food inspired by people from around the globe. Because of the extra information about the origin of the recipe, it is a pleasure to work from this book and encourages me to explore the world even more.