

Title:

Regional Cuisine Of India: Tasting East India

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Summary:

East India, with a complex history that includes long periods of European colonization, has developed culinary traditions that reflect centuries of tradition and a variety of cultural influences. In addition to the various cultures that have been assimilated into the cuisine of the region, the geography also has influenced the development of the culinary traditions of East India, as has the climate.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

East India, with a complex history that includes long periods of European colonization, has developed culinary traditions that reflect centuries of tradition and a variety of cultural influences. In addition to the various cultures that have been assimilated into the cuisine of the region, the geography also has influenced the development of the culinary traditions of East India, as has the climate.

Portuguese and Spanish explorers first brought the spices of India to widespread European use in the 15th and 16th centuries, inspiring European political and economic colonization of the area. The famous British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company, both established in the 17th century, were companies specifically created for the production and sale of a variety products from the region, including spices. Naturally, as the native populations interacted with the European peoples, including through forced service in their homes, a European influence came to affect local cuisines.

The coastal area ensures that seafood is an important part of the East Indian diet. The wide variety of fish is served in many ways. Naturally, the area is well known for delectable fish curries, but seafood is also served steamed and delicately spiced, fried with spices that serve to enhance rather than to mask flavors, and is used to created snacks and appetizers like pakora, served with

chutneys and other dipping sauces. Because of the prominence of seafood in the cuisine, and a climate conducive to the growth of a variety of vegetables and fruits, as well as the culinary influences of past Portuguese and British colonization and the Muslim population, the food of East India tends to be of a lighter sort. Spices are used with a lighter hand, preferred cooking methods are often of the sort that enhance natural flavors and encourage the subtle blending of flavors, such a stir frying, steaming and boiling. A moist, rainy climate allows for the production of rice, which functions as a basic element of most meals.

In addition to savory fish dishes, East Indian cuisine is known throughout the world for the quality of its sweets, with many of its confections having deep roots in Hindu culture. Many religious ceremonies and celebrations have specific confections associated with them, and include ritual offerings of sweets to gods and to the poor. As with many East Indian dishes, the sweets of this region tend to be less dense, lighter, making them a bit more appealing to westerners than some of the very heavy, ultra-sweet confections of other regions in India. In addition to candies and other similar dessert style sweets, the region is known for its fine cakes, which have a distinctly European influence, as does the preference for tea as a beverage.

East Indian cuisine has a distinct character that sets it apart from the cuisines of other parts of India. With coastal areas that made seafood a staple and a climate that made a variety of fresh foods readily available, came a tendency towards letting the natural, fresh flavors of foods take center stage in the cuisine. European explorers who were attracted to Eastern shores contributed their own culinary style to the region, as did Muslim settlers, resulting in the amazing combination of cultures that created the unique flavors of East Indian cuisine.