

Title:

Regional Cuisine Of India: North Indian Flavors

Word Count:

547

Summary:

India, one of the most populated nations in the world, has rich and varied culinary traditions, many deeply enmeshed with spiritual traditions that are thousands of years old. Other culinary styles arrived throughout India's long history with those who wandered into the land from afar and settled here and there, as well as with those who invaded its territories, overtaking native populations. Still others have been shaped by the natural forces climate and geography. These man...

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Article Body:

India, one of the most populated nations in the world, has rich and varied culinary traditions, many deeply enmeshed with spiritual traditions that are thousands of years old. Other culinary styles arrived throughout India's long history with those who wandered into the land from afar and settled here and there, as well as with those who invaded its territories, overtaking native populations. Still others have been shaped by the natural forces climate and geography. These many culinary styles can be generally divided into four regional cuisines, with North Indian flavors and style standing out distinctly from the rest.

The northern part of India, it is said, is part of India in which the influence of the early light-skinned Aryan invaders can still be seen, in the cuisine, culture, and language. This is the part of the world in which Sanskrit is thought to have evolved. North Indian cuisine encompasses the culinary traditions of the various northern countries, including Punjabi, Kashmiri, Awadh, Rajasthani, Marwari, Gharwal, and Pahari. Due to climate and growing conditions, wheat plays a stronger role in North Indian cuisine than in other areas of the country. Tandoori cuisine comes from the north.

Spices are an essential element to Indian cuisine, and they use some of the most aromatic and beautiful spices on earth. Historically, however, in addition to serving to add delectable flavors and attractive aromas, the spices were chosen

for their food preservation and medicinal properties. While many spices are common throughout most Indian cuisines, the methods and ratios of usage differ in each region, with some spices being much more common in some areas and other flavors being more specific to certain areas. North Indian cooks tend to use their spices in freshly ground powder form.

Chili peppers are common to Indian cuisine, and in the north, the Degchi Mirchi, or Kashmiri chili pepper are especially popular. Ground red chili powder is important North Indian flavor, as is turmeric, cumin, coriander, sweet bay or laurel leaves, black and green cardamom, cassia tree bark, for which cinnamon is often substituted, cloves, nutmeg, saffron, black and yellow mustard seeds, fennel, fenugreek, asafetida, curry leaves, tamarind, and fresh cilantro leaves and mint leaves.

Garam masala is a spice mixture used extensively in North Indian cuisine. This is a blend of spices, which is loosely built upon a set of common spices, but varies widely from region to region, even from family to family. In the north, a basic garam masala would consist of raw cardamom seeds, cinnamon, cloves and black pepper. Ghee, or clarified butter, is particularly important to the flavor of northern cuisine.

Flat breads of various types, including roti, puri, chapattis, different types parantha, and tandoori baked breads, such as nan, are a part of most north Indian meals. Showing the religious influence of the Vaishnava Hindus, the northern states, Uttar Pradesh in particular, have created some of the finest vegetarian cuisine in the world, built upon a wide variety of pulses, or legumes and fragrant Basmati rice.

North Indian flavors have become an important part of international cuisine, spreading throughout the world's metropolitan centers and into the food cultures of many countries. Beloved especially for its specialized tandoori dishes and vegetarian creations, North Indian cuisine continues to expand and flourish globally.