



The Ultimate Spice Experience

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## NEWSLETTER

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What kind of meal do you think of when you hear the word “**curry**”? The origin of our English word is Kari, meaning a spiced sauce. The English took the idea back home from the colonies, and the classic Madras curry – well-balanced and flavoursome – became a staple in the English household. The French, meanwhile, had colonized the Pondicherry area on the south-eastern coast of India, and their eating experiences resulted in the Vadouvan curry – mild in chilli heat, but rich in onion and curry leaf – being taken back to their homeland. Indian migrants took their delicious spicy food with them to Africa, east to the South-East Asian countries, and to Fiji. Local versions such as Massaman, Rendang and Laksa evolved. Even Japan eventually opened up to curry flavours, making their Katsu mild and sweet, based on a roux and thickened with sweet pureed carrot. The distinctive lightness of Thai food was not compromised when curry arrived on the menu – the robust Indian flavours were modified to make the Red and Green curries that are still so very distinctly Thai.

Curry's chance of world domination stopped at the shores of America, the original home of chillies, where curry is still regarded with some suspicion.

There is a wide belief that a curry is hot with chilli, which is not necessarily the case. There are many flavour elements from other spices that go to make up a curry masala (mix). We've made a sort of **heat ladder** to help you work out which curry might suit you best, starting with the mildest at 1 and growing to the hottest at 10. Anything from 1 to 3 is perfect for small children, and Vindaloo at 10 will delight and satisfy. Chilli lovers can always add extra chilli if they wish.

- 1 Mild Curry, Vegetable Curry
- 2 Yellow Curry, Katsu
- 3 Butter Chicken
- 4 Rogan Josh, Laksa
- 5 Medium Madras, Malay
- 6 Curry Mix, Massaman, Vadouvan
- 7 Red Curry, Green Curry
- 8 Chettinad
- 9 Kashmiri
- 10 Vindaloo

It is tempting to think of a curry as something distinctly Indian or Asian. If that's the case, what about your good old curried egg sandwich, surely as British as a cucumber sandwich? Because of the clever blending of spices, a curry blend can be used to enhance many foods that don't need to be categorized into a country of origin. The other night, we seasoned some chicken thigh fillets with **Chettinad spice mix** and barbecued them with excellent results. It's always good to keep an open mind when approaching your spice blends.

Speaking of blends, the availability of flawless seasonal cauliflower led to a batch of soup recently, which was flavoured with our dual-personality spice mix known both as **Balmain-Rozelle Spice** and **Sydney Spice**. Wanting a bit more *oomph* in the flavour, we added **Tempero Baiano**, which has some of the same ingredients as Sydney Spice, but with stronger base notes to give a little more importance to the final flavour of the soup. The result was delicious!

All around us are **labels** telling us what is not in various products ... gluten-free, GMO-free, dairy-free, salt-free, sugar-free, fat-free, artificial additive-free, etc. A label could be full of statements of what is *not* included while not actually saying what *is* in the product! We believe that we should tell you exactly what you *are* getting, and let you deduce what is not there, so on our labels you will find a **complete list** of the spices used to make a blend. Did you know that the ingredients listed on a label are required by law to be in descending order by weight? When you see blends whose first ingredient is salt, it should be an alarm bell, especially if a generic mention of “spices” is the last on the list!

**What’s new at Herbie’s?** It is time to discover our **Yellow Chilli Flakes**, which give you even more choice and flexibility when it comes to cooking with chilli. Particularly sought-after in north Indian and Himalayan cooking, the heat rating is a piping-hot 9 out of 10. We are sad that we have been **unable to continue the beautiful Black Garlic** bulbs which had us so excited very recently, due to a quality issue that we’re working on. We are going to leave the recipe for the amazing black garlic marinade on our website, so that when you find some of this magic ingredient elsewhere, you can still make this marinade which is enhanced by Herbie’s Spices Urfa Biber, porcini powder, coriander and sweet paprika.

Also brand new is a fabulous barbecue rub that we’ve called **American Spicy BBQ Rub**. Featuring the rich earthiness of Urfa Biber, as well as porcini, smoked paprika and onion, it’s immediately jumped to the top of the list of favourites in our household.

This season’s **Spring Box of Ideas** continues our mission of increasing your spice vocabulary with products that may extend your repertoire with pleasing results. Our pretty spring-green box contains Cajun spice mix (possibly an old favourite), as well as Fennel Pollen, Korean Red Pepper Flakes, and Turmeric Chai. We’ve had fun creating recipes for this season – our gloriously golden Turmeric Chai panna cotta is a winner!

We are watching the price of **star anise**, waiting for price rises and shortages. The reason? Star anise is the source of shikimic acid, the key ingredient in the anti-flu drug we know as Tamiflu. According to Dr Ian Musgrave, Pharmacology Senior Lecturer at University of Adelaide, around 90% of China’s star anise production is going into making Tamiflu. So hoard your culinary star anise while you can, but don’t fool yourself that you can self-medicate to prevent the flu – it’s a very complicated scientific process.

Earlier this year, we promised to re-think our ever-popular **Barbecue Spice Kit**. A complete makeover was timely, given so many of our splendid new products, and this kit now contains: American BBQ, Bill’s Steak Rub, Chermoula, Aussie BBQ, Creole, Sydney Spice and Smokey BBQ. There are recipes included, as always, but really, it’s so simple – just add the spice, cook and enjoy! Just in time for Christmas, this will make a bloke in your life very happy.

Happy Spicing,

*Herbie and Liz*