



## LEARNING TO COOK LIKE A PRO WITH THE CURRY LOUNGE

It was strange walking into The Curry Lounge when the restaurant was closed. With the lights up and tables neatly set, it bore only a passing resemblance to the lively and bustling restaurant where I had previously enjoyed many a good night out with some amazing food.

I was a tiny bit nervous, as before now, the nearest I had got to a professional kitchen were the numerous shows on TV. So as I entered the kitchen, I was glad that no one shouted at me, or voted me out. I was given an apron and off we went.

In fact, the chefs in the kitchen were all very welcoming and keen to teach me. They asked what I would like to cook and having had a previous bad experience attempting to cook Saag Aloo Paneer in my own kitchen, I suggested they help me with that. They also recommended having a crack at Onion Bhaji to start.

As I tried to slice a white onion as finely as I could, I noticed how spotless the kitchen was. And, as Chef Imran Quraishie pulled out tubs of aromatic herbs and spices, throwing a teaspoon of this and a tablespoon of that onto my onions, I noticed how organised and efficient the kitchen was too. The team were professional and experienced and only laughed a little as I tried to squeeze my spicy onion mix into a rough bhaji shape!

The Saag Aloo Paneer came together colourfully and smelled delicious, as Imran helped me mix spinach, potato and paneer – an Indian cheese, which takes on the flavours of what you cook it in – in a pan, with the customary blend of exotic spices.

In my final task, I discovered the fine art of making naan bread. I rolled out the dough and threw the circular portion from hand to hand, the technique they use, similar to pizza makers, to

get the dough to increase in size. Unfortunately, it didn't and I needed to enlist a little help from Jhangair (affectionately nicknamed Harry Potter by Gordon Ramsay as the wizard of the Tandoor oven).

After using a special domed tool to slap the raw naan onto the side of a burning hot, cauldron-shaped oven where it cooks in only seconds, my meal was ready. It was accompanied with the other five budding chefs' creations, such as the tiger prawn-based Karahi Jingha. We shared the entire feast with a couple of Kingfisher beers each and I was proud to say it was utterly delicious.

So without boasting too much, my skills and knowledge have vastly been improved in the wonderful world of Indian cuisine. I learnt how to cook Indian food the traditional way and I've certainly been educated in the array of different spices available on my doorstep.

The master class was great fun and a real eye-opener - I will definitely be recommending it to friends and family. And I will of course be cooking the dishes again to create the authentic 'Indian restaurant' taste at home.

**To book a table reservation or a place on a one-day cookery course at The Curry Lounge, please call 0115 941 8844 or visit [www.currylounge.co.uk](http://www.currylounge.co.uk) for more information.**



**FHP readers have a chance of winning one of five meals for two at The Curry Lounge this month, so what better way to experience the authentic cuisine first hand? Simply email your contact details to [info@currylounge.co.uk](mailto:info@currylounge.co.uk) for your chance to win! (Terms and conditions apply. Winner will be notified via email).**

