



PUJA MEHTA'S INDIAN MEAL KIT

Simplifying Home-Cooked Indian Cuisine

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Photos: Jason Stuempges

Indian Meal Kit is the perfect introduction to cooking Indian cuisine for people looking to try something new, and for established lovers of Indian food, it serves as a convenient resource.

Described as "Indian food made simple" by owner Puja Mehta, Indian Meal Kits contain all the ingredients needed to make a healthy and delicious vegetarian meal for two to four people, including vegetables, spices, and cooking directions.

Mehta started Indian Meal Kit in 2016, after teaching some Indian cooking classes at the People's Food Co-op in La Crosse. "People kept asking me where they could get ingredients," says Mehta, "so I ended up putting together collections of spices for people to take home with them."

Drawing inspiration from popular meal prep delivery companies such as Hello Fresh and Blue Apron, Mehta realized there was no option for something similar based around Indian cuisine. So with the help of family and the encouragement of friends, she started one. Now, Indian Meal Kits

are available at Woodman's and Festival in Onalaska, People's Food Co-op in La Crosse, and at the company's website, www.IndianMealKit.com.

Mehta, who grew up moving around India as a result of her father's work, feels lucky to have gotten the chance to see the different regions of her native country and try the different foods. Now she incorporates that experience into her business. "In Indian restaurants, you mostly see foods from northern India, but there are so many other regions that have their own unique foods as well," she says.

While the responses to Indian Meal Kits have been generally positive, a common misconception is that Indian food is very

spicy. "Indian food doesn't have to be spicy," Mehta says. "It's just like any other cooking—you control how spicy you want it to be."

Indian Meal Kit also offers kits for chutneys, Indian desserts and beverages, including chai tea. Mehta will be discussing the history of chai as one of two guest presenters at the Franciscan Spirituality Center's Tea & Hospitality event on January 27, 2018.

go:

Tea & Hospitality
Jan. 27, 2018, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Franciscan Spirituality Center
920 Market St., La Crosse
Tickets \$45 at <http://www.fscenter.org/event.php?id=3558>

more:

www.indianmealkit.com