

# Food for thought at cook school

Our reporter Hannah Jefferson learns some top culinary tips at a masterchef's classroom

**DRIVING to the** little nervous too it soon becomes clear this is going to be a far cry from a high school cookery class and memories of my hairy home economics teacher begin fading fast.

Local chef, Michael Muir opened his culinary college almost a year ago following a varied career in the catering industry. Delia Smith apparently described: "Michael Muir loves people and loves food" - a comment which proved true after a day in his hill-top kitchen classroom.

He is the perfect host, busying around refilling coffee cups and handing out home-grown apples from his garden.

And he obviously takes his food very seriously too. He has a varied curriculum ranging

from an Aga masterclass day to cookery survival courses for university students.

This is Goan Chef Bosco Santimano's first session as a teacher at the school and promises to be a good one - particularly as it is soon evident that Bosco is going to be doing most of the hard work. I am relieved to find we won't be tested on our knife skills or knowledge of herbs and spices.

On the contrary for Bosco cooking is all about taking it easy. He explains: "If you learn to be a professional chef here in Britain it is all about doing everything very quickly, like learning to chop fast so that you can turn things out in a restaurant."

"Indian cooking and

my cooking is the total opposite of that. It's about doing things slowly. I have to be relaxed to cook. I enjoy it and treat it like a meditation."

He describes how his grandmother would leave a pot simmering in the oven for a whole day. Goan cuisine itself has been a long-time influence that has come together over the last 500 years, incorporating Mughal, Hindu and Portuguese elements together.

And Bosco's recipes are his own take on the traditional dishes of his childhood.

Bosco moved to Peebles in 2002 and after honing his culinary skills he has set up his own catering business, giving

classes as well as cooking meals for unique dinner parties in people's own homes.

He is a self-taught cook and admits that although he watched his mother carefully as a child, he didn't involve himself in the kitchen too much until after moving to Britain, he longed for a taste of home.

Now Bosco is not only keen to share his gourmet knowledge but he is also passionate about health and the effect of food on our physical well-being.

The dishes he is teaching us to cook are markedly different from the curries I have experienced at my local Indian takeaway.

And Bosco points out that much of the Indian food we have here is

adapted to suit British tastes and often uses additives and pastes, which are not typical of traditional recipes.

Although there may be many a time when a Tiger beer has left you grasping your stomach later in the evening, more conscientious students include a host of ingredi-

ents which aid the digestion or help to kill unhealthy stomach bacteria.

Bosco's own interest in sourcing healthy ingredients and being aware of impurities in certain products makes this a cookery class with a difference and as genuine recipes actually include a host of ingredi-

Our only homework is to fill in a feedback form on our experiences - and of course eat up the Beef Baffad and Goan Dhal, which doesn't prove too difficult as the food scores a definite A-plus.

## Try these fantastic recipes at home

### Beef Baffad (for four)

- 400gms Beef (brisket, roasting, silverside or shoulder)
  - 2 large onions
  - 6 cloves of garlic
  - 2" fresh ginger
  - 2 pieces of cinnamon (or 1/2 tsp of powdered cinnamon)
  - 4 cloves
  - 1 tsp turmeric
  - crushed black pepper
  - 2 green chillies
  - 4 large tomatoes
  - 2 peppers
  - stock cube
  - 60ml cooking oil
- Marinate the beef overnight (or an hour at least) with half of the ginger, garlic and 50ml

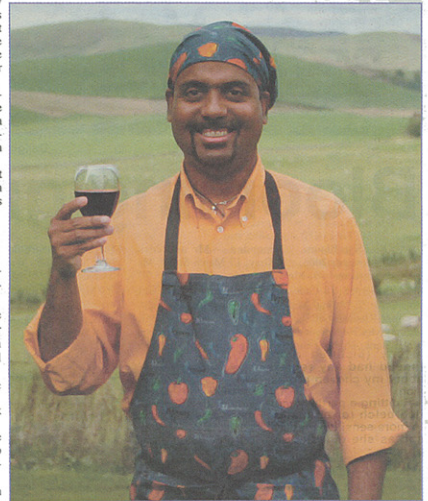
### of malt vinegar.

- Fry the onions in the oil and when slightly brown, add the cinnamon and cloves.
- Add the black pepper and the other half of the ginger and keep stirring.
- Add the tomatoes (chopped) and green chillies (remove seeds as preferred).
- Add the beef and cook for a few minutes.
- Add the turmeric.
- Add the stock cube (optional).
- Simmer on a low heat for at least 45 minutes, adding water as necessary.
- Serve with rice or bread.

### Goan Dhal (for four)

- 200gms split red lentils
  - 1 litre water
  - 2 bay leaves
  - 1 large onion finely chopped
  - 1 tsp salt
  - 60ml cooking oil
  - 4 tomatoes chopped
  - 1 green chilli
  - 4 cloves of garlic
  - 1 tsp of turmeric
  - 1/2 tsp cumin seeds
  - A pinch of fresh chopped coriander
- Wash the lentils thoroughly in running water. Place the lentils in a pot with the water salt and bay leaves. Bring the water to the boil

- then reduce the heat and simmer gently for 20 minutes stirring occasionally.
- Heat the oil in a separate pan. Add the cumin and after five seconds add the onion and garlic and cook until slightly browned.
- Add the chilli, and turmeric and mix well on a low heat.
- Add the tomatoes and cook for a few minutes.
- Transfer the tomato mixture to the boiling lentils and keep stirring until the two are thoroughly mixed.
- Transfer to a serving dish and garnish with fresh coriander.



Goan Chef Bosco Santimano.



Hannah tries some of the excellent dishes made at cook school.



Bosco Santimano passing on some of his skills to Hannah.



Students will learn how to cook delicious but healthy dishes.