

Spice girl

Brought up in northern India, chef **Pam Kapur** moved to Ireland 20 years ago, before settling in Bawburgh. A long-term passion for Indian cookery has seen her launch catering company Delhishus.

PICTURE: BILL SMITH



Have you always worked in the food industry?

I worked as a dietician in India, where I gained sound knowledge of basic cooking skills, food and nutrition. However, when I moved to the UK I retrained as a radiographer, specialising in ultrasound. I continued sharing my traditional recipes with friends and now juggle my life as a mother, sonographer and chef.

Why did you choose to become a chef? When we arrived in bleak, arctic (by Indian standards) Ireland in 1990, I had the choice of either spending afternoons alone in front of the TV or rediscovering my passion for cooking in a warm kitchen. I was soon trading curry recipes for cheesecakes at local delis, and now I create home-cooked food for Delhishus.

What is your favourite local ingredient to use? Organic lamb and chicken from Harvey's Pure Meat in Norwich.

What is your earliest food-related memory? Helping my mother cook during a hot Indian summer. The temperature would reach 40C and I wasn't allowed to leave the kitchen until I'd prepared a three-course Indian dinner for our family of six, including perfectly round chapattis.

Have you had any cooking disasters? I overcooked the speciality lentil dish, dal, for an Indian get together. The smell of burnt butter was overwhelming, but there was nothing wrong with the taste. I said it was a new flavour I was trying – barbequed dal – but it has become a joke among my Indian friends.

How would you get children interested in the origins of food? By ensuring that schoolchildren are involved in the science of how food gets from the point of origin to the table. This can be done through simple cooking demonstrations, where children have opportunities to prepare, cook and – most importantly – taste food.

What would your last supper consist of? Vegetarian biryani, a rice-based dish, with dollops of cucumber and mint raita, and my own sticky toffee pudding for dessert.

Who is your favourite chef? Madhur Jaffery, as I can identify with her. She came to the UK to study acting but began cooking traditional Indian dishes. I also came to a foreign land and ended up rediscovering my love of creating original recipes.

What is your favourite speedy supper recipe? Pao Bhaji, a curried potato sandwich, which can be cooked in five minutes using onion, ginger, garlic, cumin seeds, mashed potato and any vegetables in the fridge.

Are there any foods you can't stand? I ate Biltong, a cured meat, on a recent holiday in South Africa and it was very salty – like swallowing oily leather.

Delhishus Catering, 07932 136746; www.delhishus.co.uk