

# WHAT'S FOR DIN?

## THE INDIAN FEAST IN ITALICS

**"My most confusing menu yet" - Liam**

Having spent most of my life around food, I have become familiar with the hushed tones used around Italian food. A true pizza must only have san marzano tomatoes from pompeii, mozzarella di bufalla, etc. I often find the snobbery surrounding italian food stuffy and boring, which is a shame, because italian food can be so creative, vibrant and bombastic.

So I've decided to spice up the way we see italian food. I'm going to give you food that is italian and indian at the same time. I'm doing this because I want to challenge our conceptions of what a cuisine is. Is indian food just curry, or is it possibly as delicate and intricate as italian food? Does italian food deserve a pedestal, when it shares so many similarities to other world cuisines, such as indian? I hope this menu helps people to ask some of these questions, along with the way they view and value different cultures.

A little guide to the menu: It is a four course menu, but each course is written twice. Once in what the course would be called if it was indian food, and twice if it were italian. So paneer kofta with saag is the same as ricotta gnocchi with basilico genovese. Each course combines italian and indian flavors and textures.

Cheers,  
Liam

### **FIRST COURSE: "RICOTTA GNOCCHI WITH BASIL" AKA "PANEER KOFTA WITH SAAG"**

Did you know Indians make gnocchi too? They call it paneer kofta, little dumplings made of the Indian cottage cheese called paneer. This is very similar to an Italian ricotta gnocchi. We take these cheesy dumplings and put them in an Indian vegetable curry called saag. My saag has lots of basil in it, giving things an Italian touch.

Instructions: Take gnocchi out of bag and separate pieces (they may be stuck together), drop into a pot of simmering water, cook for 7 minutes or until it's no longer gooey in the middle. Drain gnocchi and toss in heated saag. Feel free to garnish with parmesan.

## **SECOND COURSE: "GARBANZO BEAN AND GORGONZOLA RISOTTO W/ CAPONATA"** **AKA "CHICKPEA BIRYANI WITH BHEL PURI"**

Biryani is a one-pot dish with vegetables, meat, rice and spices all in one dish. This is a vegetarian version with roasted vegetables and garbanzo beans flavored with yoghurt and blue cheese. I add the blue cheese since it is a shout out to the classic gorgonzola risotto from northern Italy. The dish is garnished with "caponata." This is a southern Italian eggplant salad. I added strawberries, cilantro, and bhel puri (a crispy Indian snack) to mine. I did this because it's customary to serve cilantro and crunchy bits on top of your biryani in India.

Instructions: Heat biryani in microwave or stove-top, and serve with "caponata" on top. You may find a few stray black cardamom pods (they look like giant raisins) and bay leaves. If so, remove them.

## **THIRD COURSE: "EGGPLANT AND MOZZARELLA CALZONE"** **AKA "PANEER SAMOSA"**

The classic Italian calzone stuffed with Indian flavors: spicy braised eggplant, cauliflower, smoked mozzarella, cilantro and cumin. + a raisin and tamarind chutney dip.

Instructions: Pre-heat oven to 420 degrees F, place calzone on an oiled tray (preferably olive oil), bake calzone in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown on the outside. Serve with chutney.

## **D-SERT: MANGO, CARAMEL AND MACADAMIA PANNA COTTA** **WITH CARDAMOM RICE CRISPY CAKE**

Indian desserts are often milk based, so I thought the most similar Italian dessert is panna cotta! Here I make a caramel and macadamia base for the panna cotta with a mango sauce. Topped with Holi-inspired rice crispie cake. Holi is a springtime festival in India where the participants throw colors over each other. I attempted to make the cakes just as colorful. We have a blue, yellow, and pink cakes. The blue is from Thai pea flowers (please do not consume if pregnant), the pink from beetroot, and the yellow from turmeric. The cake is flavored with a cardamom oil.

Instructions: we recommend eating the panna cotta straight from the cup and crunching on the crispy cakes as you spoon your way through.