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DESCRIPTION

One of the beautiful things about all Sri Lankans and their food is that they can rarely agree on the details of any recipe. Most are handed down through generations and each has its own very special preparation method and flavour. I hope to have captured these recipes from my family's kitchen, and I also hope to encourage other Sri Lankans living far from their ancestral homes to get back into their kitchens and share this rich and diverse culinary tradition with their families and friends.

KEY SELLING POINTS

- Beautiful location photography brings the recipes to vibrant life.
- Authentic Sri Lankan food, simply prepared and described.
- Historical detail and fascinating family memories.

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Serendip

PETER KURUVITA MY SRI LANKAN JOURNEY



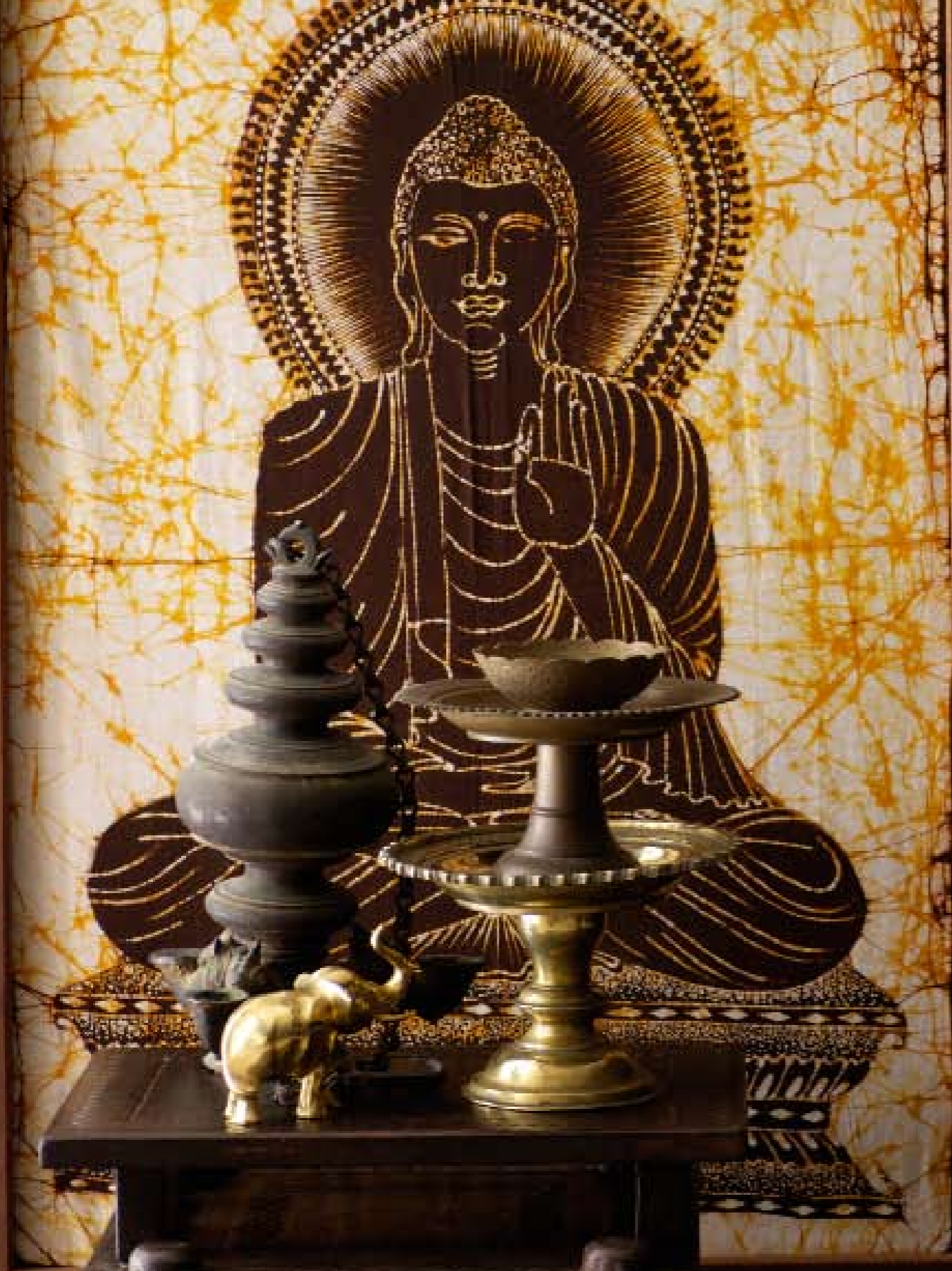


Serendip

Peter Kuruvita

PETER KURUVITA
MY SRI LANKAN JOURNEY

MURDOCH BOOKS



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Preface

THE HEART OF EVERY SRI LANKAN HOUSE IS ITS KITCHEN AND THAT IS THE ROOM I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DRAWN TO.

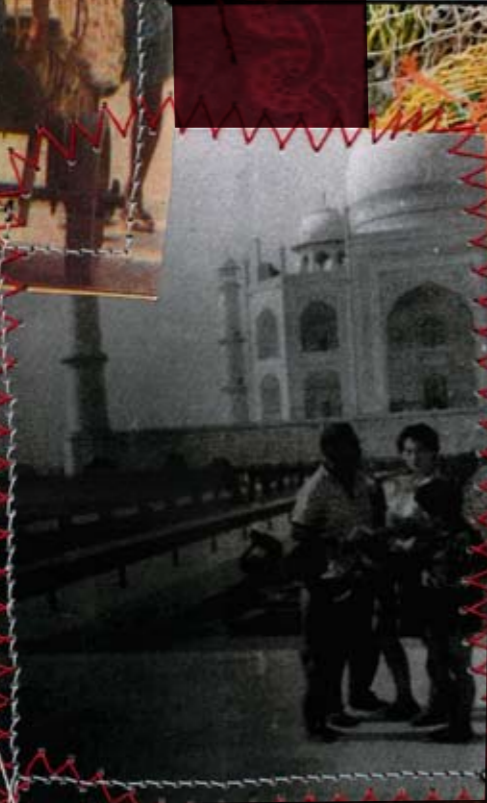
To write this book I started returning to Sri Lanka on a regular basis, visiting numerous kitchens in my search for recipes across this beautiful country. It quickly became clear that many of the recipes were easier to find than I had anticipated — I didn't need to travel all over to get them: they were right there in Dehiwala, our ancestral home. Once I had my recipes, I went to the markets with my cousin Manori and then had a massive cook-off with all the ladies of the Kuruvita clan. They told me it was the first time in years they have been together like this, just like the old days. And I had to laugh, because they still argued about every single dish. One of the beautiful things about all Sri Lankans and their food is that they can rarely agree on the details of any recipe. Most are handed down through generations and each has its own very special preparation method and flavour. I hope to have captured these recipes from my family's kitchen, and I also hope to encourage other Sri Lankans living far from their ancestral homes to get back into their kitchens and share this rich and diverse culinary tradition with their families and friends.

As well as mining my family's rich kitchen history, I have sought out the best recipes for some of the most everyday Sri Lankan foods. People will travel kilometres for the perfect egg hopper, for example, or coconut sambal. In Sri Lanka, some of the best meals are still bought from small roadside shops and boutiques. I think these recipes need to be shared. And, if you ever visit Sri Lanka, don't expect restaurants with fans and air conditioning—most are little shacks.

In January 2007 I was in Galle for a literary festival and heard some local ladies talking about the lack of a good reference book for Sri Lankan curries. I hope this helps.

Peter Kuruvita, Sydney 2008





CHUTNEYS, SAMBALS AND PICKLES

No curry would be complete without being served with a condiment or two. There are so many, and they all have different qualities—some add heat, some are cooling and others add a little extra flavour. The following are my favourites.

Lime pickle

Tear off a little lime pickle and eat it with every mouthful of curry. Chopped lime pickle can also be combined with chopped fresh tomato, lime juice, Maldive fish flakes, onion and black pepper to make a fresh tomato and lime chutney.

Ingredients

20 limes	400 g (14 oz) caster (superfine) sugar
250 g (9 oz) rock salt	1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes
20 whole black peppercorns	
500 ml (17 fl oz/2 cups) white vinegar	FILLS TWO 1 LITRE (35 FL OZ/4 CUPS) JARS

Method

Using a sharp knife and working from the top to the bottom, cut the limes into quarters, making sure not to cut all the way through. Reserve any juices. Combine the salt and peppercorns, then stuff this into the limes and stand them upright on a tray.

Combine the remaining ingredients in a wide heavy-based saucepan, add any reserved juices and bring to the boil. Place the limes in the pan, cut-side up, return to the boil, then cover and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes or until limes become yellow in colour. Remove pan from heat and allow it to stand until cool.

Loosely layer the limes into two sterilised 1 litre (35 fl oz/4 cups) capacity jars and pour the cooking liquid over them. Don't worry if the limes are not covered with liquid, this will happen in time. Stand the jars in a cool dark place for at least 2 weeks before using the pickles.





Miris malu

Also known as chilli fish, this curry is best when eaten with freshly grated coconut and freshly boiled cassava.

Ingredients

2 trevally, about 200–300 g (7–10½ oz) each, cleaned	3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon chilli powder	2 pieces Goroka
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper	2 cm (¾ in) slice ginger
1 teaspoon ground cumin	1 onion, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons ground coriander	1 sprig curry leaves, leaves picked
4 green cardamom pods, bruised	5 cm (2 in) piece of pandanus leaf
1 cinnamon stick	1 small green chilli, halved lengthways
1 teaspoon fenugreek seeds, lightly roasted	

SERVES 6

Method

Using a cleaver or large knife, chop each fish into 6 pieces and, if using the heads, split each in half.

Roast all the dry spices (apart from the already-roasted fenugreek) until golden.

Place the garlic, Goroka, fenugreek, ginger and roasted spices in a mortar and pestle and grind until a fine paste forms.

Place the fish, spice paste and remaining ingredients in a heavy-based saucepan. Add 1 litre (35 fl oz/4 cups) cold water, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 10 minutes or just until the fish is cooked through, then remove from the heat and season to taste with salt.

Beetroot curry

Deep pink in colour and retaining that unique beetroot flavour, this curry makes a stunning addition to a selection of dishes. While there is an urban myth that says beetroot leaves are poisonous, I have been making beetroot curry for years and I always incorporate the stems and leaves.

Ingredients

350 g (12 oz) small beetroots, washed, trimmed, stems reserved if desired	1 cinnamon stick
50 g (1 ¾ oz) ghee	1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 large onion, finely chopped	1 teaspoon chilli powder
2 small green chillies, finely chopped	3 teaspoons white vinegar
3 cm (1 ¼ in) piece pandanus leaf	1 teaspoon caster (superfine) sugar
1 sprig of curry leaves, leaves picked	200 ml (7 fl oz) coconut milk
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced	
	SERVES 6

Method

Cut the beetroots and stems (if using) into 1 cm (½ in) pieces.

Heat the ghee in a heavy-based saucepan over medium heat and cook the onion and green chilli for 6–8 minutes or until translucent. Add the pandanus leaf, curry leaves and garlic and cook for another 3 minutes or until fragrant.

Add the remaining ingredients, cover, and simmer over very low heat, stirring occasionally for 15–20 minutes or until the beetroot is tender. Season to taste and serve.

