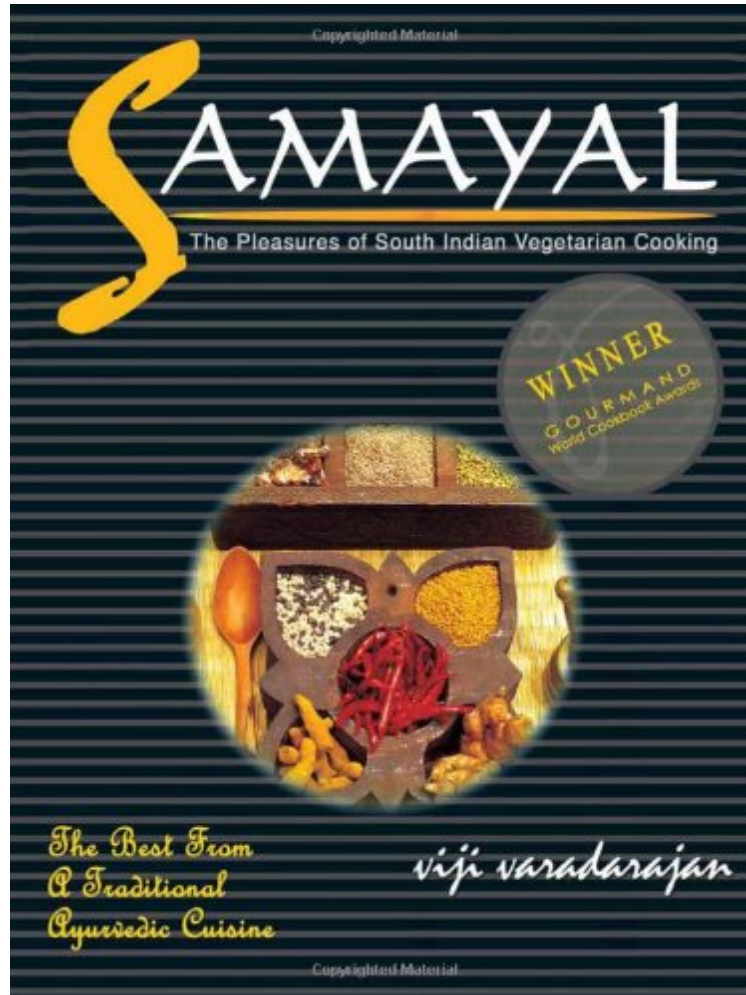


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Samayal - The Pleasures of South Indian Vegetarian Cooking.

Viji Varadarajan

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Viji Varadarajan : Samayal - The Pleasures of South Indian Vegetarian Cooking. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Samayal - The Pleasures of South Indian Vegetarian Cooking.:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Good Eats South Indian Style!By MKI bought the book Samayal - The Pleasures of South Indian Vegetarian Cooking because I love Indian food and want to expand my horizons beyond the typical dishes available at most of the nearby Indian restaurants.The recipes from this book that I've tried so far have been delicious, nutritious, and easy to prepare and probably pretty hard to sample outside of South India. The spices are well-balanced and compliment the flavors of the main ingredients without overwhelming them and I'm looking forward to preparing many more recipes from Samayal.Incidentally, I had questions about some of the cooking instructions in the book so I contacted the Author by email and she got back to me quickly with the answers.

She's become a friend and great source of valuable information and advice about all things "Tam-Brahm", especially the cuisine, even going so far as to send me additional recipes and providing an alternate Veganized version of Avial using tamarind instead of yogurt! And speaking of yogurt, you will find a separate cookbook of various recipes with yogurt as the featured ingredient included with Samayal. I'm sure those who eat dairy will enjoy it just as much as Samayal itself. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. My mother's recipes By Gaya Laflamme Being a South Indian Brahmin by heritage this is the food I grew up with. For the past 25 years, I have lived in a small semi rural community in Canada away from my family and with little contact with people from my sub culture. When my mother passed away a few years ago, I was despondant at the thought that I had lost any chance of learning how to cook the amazing food of my childhood. I then stumbled across this book. It is filled from cover to cover with authentic recipes that are so particular to Tamil, Brahmin sub-culture. One would be hard pressed to find dishes such as Paal Poli and pidi kuzhakattai in the thousands of other Indian cook books which tend to repeat the tired favourites. The author has insisted on maintaining the integrity of not just the ingredients and the cooking methods but also the terminology and the names of the dishes (as opposed to anglicising them for popular appeal). Most South Indian dishes are wheat and dairy free making it ideal for those who have intolerances to these foods. I thank Viji Varadarajan from the bottom of my heart for putting this book together and I thank .com for making it available. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Simply the best book for South Indian Food (vegetarian) By Now I Know I own several popular books specifically on South Indian Cuisine (Dakshin, Curried Favors, Healthy South Indian Cooking)... While the others are not bad, this is the first book I reach for if I am cooking South Indian food. The recipes use basic indian ingredients (unlike some of the other south indian books - Dakshin is way too elaborate; uses a lot more ingredients for the same recipe); The instructions are easy to follow and the measurements listed generally work fine. The book also has good color photos (but Dakshin's photos are better). My biggest complaint is the lack of detailed organization of the book... There is some organization based on broad, sensible categories (helps me to look for recipes I need). But each of these categories contain tens of recipes and you have to browse through the pages to find what you are looking for. I just noticed a new book by the author that seems to have more detailed table of contents, but I don't own it yet. Also, it would have been nicer had the author devoted a few pages on explaining the basic ingredients. So, if you already don't own an Indian cookbook, you may need to google some of the terms used, but the process is fast and works well. If you need more help in this department, "The Indian Grocery Store Demystified" by Linda Bladholm might be a good place to start. Please note that this book also suffers from some organization problems! In an ideal world, I would have given it four stars for its lack of table of contents and the absence of an index, but the recipes are simply great (and hence, the five stars). I cannot believe that I can make such great "vengaya sambhar" and "tomato rice" among others. In my opinion, the main strength of this book - simplicity without compromising authenticity. Now, if only I could find a similar book for South Indian Non-Veg...

World Gourmand Award winning author Viji Varadarajan offers some interesting facets in the life of the ancient Tamil Brahmins of South India. The food cooked in a Brahmin home was sathvic paying special attention to the balance and nutritive value of the dishes prepared. The ladle of plain rice with cooked dhal served over the steamed rice and the topping of a dollop of homemade clarified butter/ghee; the balance of plain and spicy food, and the benefits of yogurt as a final course to set right any imbalance in the food eaten for the day. Different spices played an important role in the dishes; fenugreek as a digestive aid, cumin for its multiple usages, dried legumes and beans as nature's tiny capsules of proteins, pepper for colds and coughs, turmeric as a healer of wounds in fact, every ingredient used in the Tambram cuisine has a purpose that goes beyond taste and texture. The word curry is originally derived from kari a Tamil word for a preparation of a dry vegetable with spices. Gradually the British added water and meat to curry and hence it came to be known as the Madras Curry. Hence curry/kari is basically a brahmin word for a vegetable stir fry. First published in 2001 this newly formatted book comes with a complimentary yogurt cookbook that won The Best Single Subject in India and The Best Health and Nutrition Book in the world. Her unique Samayal book has already won her The Best Vegetarian Book in India.

Tamil Brahmin food relies more on the taste of individual vegetables, cooked gently with carefully matched seasonings, which fits in comfortably with the Japanese culinary ethos. The fact that Kurumi and her friends having travelled all the way from Tokyo are in the kitchen of Viji, learning how to make a perfect semiya upma is indicative of the fact that we are poised at the beginning of a new wave: foodies travelling the world to learn cooking from individual households, recipe hunters leaving no page unturned in their quest for something new, cooks tracking down each other to swap techniques. Thanks to the Internet, with blogs, you-tube and websites, all this knowledge is quickly available to everyone. Whoever thought a vendaikkai thayir pachadi could travel so far, so fast, so flamboyantly --The Hindu Newspaper - 2009 About the Author Besides writing cookbooks for which she has won World Gourmand awards, the author is extremely fitness conscious. She has learnt 3 classical dance forms of India, reads historical fiction and has a love for languages. She also loves listening to classical Indian music. Visit - vijisamayal.org