

# of Place Peace

**SATYAGRAHA  
HOUSE** IS A SERENE  
VEGETARIAN  
RESTAURANT  
THAT OCCUPIES  
A HISTORIC  
SPACE IN  
JOHANNESBURG

PRODUCTION  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
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RECIPES  
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Sambals and basmati rice are the perfect accompaniments to the vegetarian cuisine at Satyagraha House.





**O** century ago, the historic Satyagraha House in Orchards, Johannesburg, was home to the famous Indian pacifist Mahatma Gandhi. He spent almost two years there, while developing his philosophy of passive resistance. Known at that time as The Kraal because of its traditional rural design, today it's a guesthouse and events venue, which has been sensitively renovated to honour its famous former resident.

Rocco Bosman was the heritage specialist responsible for all the

restoration work done on the original building and for the structural additions. 'It was a challenge to keep the new architecture very simple so that it did not overwhelm the original architecture. It had to be unimposing and unpretentious,' he says.

The Satyagraha House restaurant – strictly vegetarian in keeping with Gandhi's beliefs – has quickly become renowned for imaginative and delicious food. We asked the chef to share some of the kitchen's tastiest offerings with us...



This spread, clockwise from far left Brinjal beetroot curry; fresh produce, herbs and spices make up the flavours at Satyagraha House; Mahatma Gandhi's former home has been sensitively converted into a guesthouse; buttermut dhal with tarka.





Butternut dhal  
with tarka.



Brinjal  
beetroot curry.

## BUTTERNUT DHAL WITH TARKA

### FOR THE BUTTERNUT DHAL:

• 1 cup of red lentils • 1 litre cold water • ½t ground turmeric • Salt to taste • 12 fresh curry leaves • 1½ cups butternut, peeled and cut into chunks

### FOR THE TARKA:

• 3T olive oil • 2t cumin seeds • 1t fennel seeds • 2 small dried chillies, crushed • 1 onion, thinly sliced • 2 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced • ½ cup chopped fresh dhanía leaves (coriander) • 1t black mustard seeds

■ Rinse the lentils, then add to the cold water and bring to the boil. Use a slotted spoon to remove the scum that rises to the surface.

■ Stir in the turmeric, salt and curry leaves, reduce the heat to simmer and add the butternut chunks. Cook for about 40 minutes, stirring occasionally with the lid slightly ajar. When the butternut is cooked through, turn off the heat and set aside.

■ Heat the oil in a pan and add the cumin, fennel seeds and crushed chillies. As soon as the chilli begins to crisp and darken, add the sliced onion and cook until well browned. Add the garlic, cooking it until it turns golden.

■ Stir the tarka into the dhal and cover with a lid. Just before serving, mix in the chopped fresh dhanía and garnish with the black mustard seeds. Serve with basmati rice and sambals.

**Serves 4 as a side dish or 2 as a main**

## BRINJAL BEETROOT CURRY

### FOR THE MARSALA:

• 2t coriander seeds • 2t cumin seeds • 3t black mustard seeds • 1t fennel seeds

■ Dry-roast all the seeds in the pot you'll be using for the curry. They're ready when the mustard seeds begin to pop. Remove and crush to a coarse powder in a pestle and mortar. If you don't have one, a bowl and the back of a spoon will do. Set aside.

### FOR THE CURRY:

• 2 large brinjals • 1 medium onion, very finely chopped • 1 x 400g can coconut milk • 6 fresh tomatoes or 1 x 400g can peeled tomatoes • 2T fresh ginger, peeled and sliced • 4 cloves of garlic • 1 or 2 chillies depending on how hot you like it • A handful of fresh dhanía leaves, washed • 20 curry leaves • 8 cardamom pods, crushed • 4 star anise • 1 stick cinnamon • 6 medium beetroots, peeled, quartered and cut into thick slices

■ Quarter the brinjals lengthwise and cut into thick slices. Salt liberally and leave to de-gorge in a colander or sieve for about 20 minutes.

■ Soften the onion in oil or ghee (clarified butter) on a high heat. Stir in the marsala crushed spices but leave 2 pinches for the brinjals. As the mixture dries, slowly add small amounts of coconut milk – setting aside the rest of the coconut milk – effectively thickening a gravy base for the curry.

■ In a blender, blitz the tomatoes, ginger, garlic and chilli and half of the dhanía leaves. Use the stalks too – they're nice and sweet. Add this mixture to the onion-and-spice mixture. Add the curry leaves, the whole spices, the beetroot and the rest of the coconut milk. Bring to the boil and then leave to simmer gently with the lid on until the beetroot is cooked through – about an hour. Stir occasionally to prevent it from sticking.

■ While the curry is cooking, rinse the brinjals, sprinkle with the rest of the ground spice mixture and fry in a very hot pan with a generous amount of oil or ghee until just shy of being burned. Add to the curry about 20 minutes before the beetroot is cooked.

■ Serve with basmati rice and fresh sambals.

**Serves 4–6**

## TAMARILLO CHUTNEY

• 6 tamarillos (tree tomatoes) • 1t fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated • ½t black mustard seeds • 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped • 6 curry leaves, finely sliced • Salt and black pepper to taste • A squeeze of lemon

■ Cut the tamarillos in half lengthwise, scoop out the flesh and mix in a bowl with the remaining ingredients. If you can't get fresh curry leaves, you can use dried ones, just soften them in a bowl of boiling water for 10 minutes first.

**Serves 4 as a side dish**

## CUCUMBER RAITA

• 1 English cucumber, peeled and finely chopped or grated • 2 cups plain yoghurt, whisked until smooth • A handful of mint leaves, finely chopped • A handful of dhanía leaves, finely chopped • ½t cumin powder • ½t sugar • 1t black mustard seeds • Salt to taste

■ Mix together the ingredients in a bowl, garnish with the black mustard seeds and chill until serving.

**Serves 4 as a side dish**