



پرورش nourish/nyam



Join us as we celebrate and honour the stories as part of Memories Kitchen. A shared understanding of the legacies that help preserve the diverse cultural heritage and identity of Wandsworth.

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📍 @on_the_record_stories

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Forward

Welcome to the Memories Kitchen community feast!

This booklet contains the menu for the feast you will enjoy today, and so much more! It is a time capsule, full of rich stories, recipes and recollections between generations – all of which are infused into this menu.

The word nourish means to supply with food and drink, to bring up, promote the growth or development. It stems from the latin nurture, meaning to foster, support and preserve. When thinking about how these meanings relate to Story Catchers & Memories Kitchen– a project capturing Wandsworth's Global Majority community's lived experiences through food– it highlights how multifaceted its purpose is for us all. Food is survival. Food is memory. Food is belonging. Exploring this topic through collecting oral histories did not leave anyone involved short of things to talk about! The Story Catchers came with questions about how and when people learned to cook, what their favourite or most nostalgic dishes were and the various ways that migrating to the UK drove them to adapt some of their traditional ways of cooking and eating. The interviewees shared stories, recipes and cultural practices inspired by their individual roots, which span Afghanistan, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan. For many, moving away from home was more than just a change of scenery. Limited access to certain delicacies and ingredients also added to the culture shock. Although most people's cooking journeys began from necessity, like stepping up after a relative has passed away or newlywed homelife, their stories demonstrate how food not only continues to feed individuals, but also fosters, supports and preserves culture and community. This booklet brings you snapshots of the diverse, lived histories that flavour our borough's heritage. We hope you enjoy.

Laura Khan Mitchison & Kemi Akinola





Community Feast Menu



COURSE I

date, chickpea and carrot salad
jerk oyster mushroom
roti

COURSE II

tarka dal
trini chickpea curry
guyanese veggie chow mein
rice n peas
salad
sauce trio

COURSE III

coconut festival with mango sauce

DRINKS

sorrel and ginger
mango lassi



Introduction

We are a group of nine 18 to 25 year-olds living and studying across Wandsworth, collectively known as Story Catchers! What we do is in our name, “we catch stories” in our diverse local communities through asking questions, listening and recording. We are passionate about giving a voice to the voiceless: the ones that are too often left behind dominant narratives and collective consciousness. We approach Wandsworth residents to record their memories, thoughts and lived experiences, so that their stories, traditions, wisdom, culture and knowledge are neither at risk of disappearing without a trace, nor a chance to inspire, inform and change others. Story Catchers is a heritage programme funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and brought to you by Wandsworth Council’s Arts and Culture Service as part of their London Borough of Culture legacy.

We see fellow Wandsworth locals as “walking books”. Just like books, if you do not open them, the stories they contain remain trapped, dead and distant. As Story Catchers, we open, read and preserve our communities’ stories and memories to build understanding, empathy and connection between us and future generations. To fulfill our mission as Story Catchers, we were professionally trained as young oral historians by Memories Kitchen which is led by On the Record CIC, a not-for-profit community history organisation. Memories Kitchen is a programme

about recording memories of food and cooking, by exploring its deeper meaning and power in our survival and in forging our individual/collective identities and sense of belonging. It was originally piloted by Laura Khan Mitchison and Kemi Akinola in 2017.

This iteration of Memories Kitchen began in November 2025 with a series of four carefully crafted oral history training workshops and outreach work to recruit interviewees led by oral historian Tania Aubeelack from On the Record, with executive production by Laura Khan Mitchison and the generous support of their intern, Lola Stamboulia. We investigated the principles underpinning the practice of oral history and its similarities and differences with oral traditions. We learned about interviewing spaces, key interviewing skills, various types of questions and the importance of ethics in oral history.

In December 2025, we recorded a total of nine oral history interviews, some with individuals, others as group interviews, over four community visits located in Tooting, Balham and Clapham. Altogether, we interviewed sixteen residents living or working in Wandsworth including on the Roehampton Estate and in Wimbledon. Our interviews inspired this menu booklet and a feast for our community.



About

Tania Aubeelack

Oral Historian

In 2018, Tania joined On the Record, a community history organisation co-founded in 2012 by Laura Khan Mitchison, as a young person.

She worked on one of their youth-led heritage projects looking at the history of the "SUS" law and its impacts on Black and Asian working-class communities in London from the 1980s onwards. She recorded memories of elders, took part in a live theatre performance and contributed spoken word poetry to a published booklet.

Tania trains young people in oral history and delivers workshops in schools, universities and youth clubs. She was mentored by Oral Historian, Rosa Schling, for 8 years.

Her community outreach work to recruit interviewees for young people to interview drew on best practice learned at On the Record.

She spoke about Memories Kitchen to a diverse group of people from all walks of life in Wandsworth and did so where they usually meet: at a library and a church. She kept interviewees and young people well-updated about the progress of the booklet and community feast.

Tania professionally archived all nine oral history recordings at Wandsworth archives, Battersea Library, for future generations to access and use for educational purposes.



Happy Homes

Outreach Day

It is Wednesday the 12th of November 2025. Outside is freezing cold with spells of winter sunshine looming ahead. I, Tania walk from my exit from Clapham Junction station to York Gardens Library. I arrive feeling nervous and uncertain but when I step inside, a warm feeling emerges. The library is a friendly, intimate, communal and wholesome space. One precious life-line for building colourful human bridges and connections. I can see a spacious ground floor and a large meeting room on the left-hand side of its reception.

Happy Homes, a community organisation that supports South Asian women of predominantly Pakistani heritage, are now in the large meeting room. Fozia is their fierce, renowned and unbreakable leader. She kindly introduces me and the project in Urdu. I gently approach the group members with my notepad and flyers; a friendly stranger in the room. Though English is not their mother tongue, they listen, take my words and embrace our spotlight conversations. A talented lady shows me her breath-taking craftwork displayed on a big table. She speaks with confidence and pride. The home-made dishes and sweet desserts on an adjacent table look stunning, a mosaic of colours. I get a generous paper plate of home-made briyani. Everyone urges each other to eat. My stomach is already full.

By the end of my outreach day, I have the names and contact details of five women interviewees from Happy Homes. I asked them to bring their favourite snack on interview day. I'll be in touch soon. I leave with no nerves, but still unsure.



People don't know that we are all artists!

Fozia Riaz

Founder and Community Champion, 2025

Interviewing Day

It is Wednesday 3rd December, 2025. We, Story Catchers, are at York Garden Library: a safe, practical and familiar space for the rallied interviewees. Outside, the weather is bearable and quite bright.

Our confirmation phone calls with Hina, Amtul, Fareeda, Naheed and Habiba earlier in the week brought a ripple of positive, encouraging energy ahead of today's interviews. Although we initially feel tension and nervousness floating around, the energy in the room gradually settles and flourishes in the right direction. We have two wonderful, trusted women leaders on our side, Fozia Riaz, as well as community translator Hina Hanif who will interpret Urdu to English for us. The ladies arrive on time. They are bouncing up and down, excited to be interviewed. Home-made food keeps coming our way. There is an incredible feast on the table. Fareeda is ill, but she left some food for us and is very keen on being interviewed at a later stage.

We set up our interviewing room for the day. It's a fairly small, intimate space. We look at our questions. The interviewees are sitting across from us, on the opposite side of the table. Homemade dishes are next to the recorder. Paperwork forms are prepared, explained and signed. The recorder is set-up and we finally press the record button.



Hina Hanif and Amtul Karim



[My favourite] is one of those dishes which is meant to be one of the lower class dishes in Pakistan and India. You don't need many ingredients and you don't need much money for that. I chose dhal because it's still one of the best dishes we have traditionally in Pakistan.

Hina

Hina and Amtul are regular attendees to their women's group, Happy Homes.

Before we start the interview, we witness the comfortability and trust between them. Amtul listens to Hina explaining the paperwork forms with great attention and respect. Hina is entering her forties and is much younger than Amtul who is in her mid-fifties. The dynamics of this generational gap shine in the interview.

Hina learned to cook after entering marriage at 23. Growing up, she blended her German upbringing with the traditional tastes of a typical "desi" Pakistani eater like her husband. She found cooking painful to begin with and currently quite stressful. She likes to please her children with their favourite dishes.

In Sargoda, Pakistan, Amtul cooked with her mother using wood as there was no gas or electricity and mastered cooking at age 10. She cooks out of pure joy and can cook all day without getting tired now that she runs a side cooking business.

Hina and Amtul mastered recipes including samosas, pakoras and halwa through trial and error and by experimenting with new ingredients.



We have Samosa and Pakoras. These are very traditional snacks in Pakistan and India. [What you can taste today] is my home recipe. I experimented, learned and now I am a professional. It went wrong three to four times and then I found the recipe, which worked. [The traditional pakora recipe] usually has no beans in it. It has chickpeas, but this one has beans as well.

Amtul





listen to the
full interview
here

Rukshana Sandhu and Khumsa Ahmed



66

Pakora is a traditional [vegetarian tea time snack] recipe, but [we] modernised and added a little bit of twist [to it]. [The recipe] is passed on from back then when we were [children] and we are gonna give it to our children as well. For the pakora, the twists come with adding different vegetables and the batter on chicken, fish, aubergine or cauliflower.

Rukshana and Khumsa

Rukshana liked being photographed next to the dishes brought on our interview day. She shared how she misses her mother's "cooking hands", her okra and meat dish cooked from fresh, raw, healthy and organic ingredients from the countryside.

Khumsa is an artist who loves making Urdu calligraphy. She admires her grandmother's simplicity in cooking. She learned to cook in year 6 in the Pakistani countryside. Growing up, she woke up to the sounds of chickens and goats on an open roof. Her grandmother made her fresh, healthy yogurt drinks every morning for gut health and to keep well-hydrated in a hot country.

66

My grandma cooked with very little and simple ingredients. [She didn't use] packets or anything [like that]. It was five [or] six basic ingredients [that] she added together. I miss it a lot.

Khumsa

Both Khumsa and Rukshana learned how to cook carefully prepared traditional meals from their mothers or grandmothers, but both admit that they can't quite replicate their exact recipes despite trying to cook them at home.

66

My mom taught me when I was a child how to cook courgette with meat. That's still what I make very well.

Rukshana

Cooking in their childhood was a pleasurable experience as it allowed them to contribute to the community and make their elders happy.





Naheed Malik



I brought two dishes today. One is called chicken pulao. It is a salted dish or spicy dish [depending on your taste]. You use rice and lots of spices [to make it]. We use cinnamon, long cloves, coriander seeds, ginger and garlic. Add the chicken to make a soup chicken puff. Then, fry the red onion a little bit, make the colour of the rice, add water and altogether cook everything.

Naheed

Naheed speaks confidently. It's in the way she looks up at you and connects. She shares her knowledge of various traditional dishes with staunch conviction and passion with all of us.

Growing up, Naheed watched her mother, sister and aunts cook. She started cooking after marrying a supportive and encouraging husband. She adapts her dishes and cooking style depending on her family's preferences. She likes to experiment by fusing British food with Pakistani spices. She watches videos on YouTube to try new recipes such as lasagna. Today, she cooks by memory rather than using written recipes.

She thinks that traditional dishes in the UK taste different than in Pakistan due to ingredients such as carrots being less sweet. Unlike Pakistan, England's main meal is served quite late in the evening when everyone is at home from work and school and can then join in to eat.

Naheed's comfort food is Daal Chawal: a universally loved meal she finds to be affordable and easy to make.



Habiba Khan and Annamullah Khan



When I cook, I feel very happy.

Habiba

Habiba and Annamullah are a couple born in the early nineties in Kapisa, Afghanistan. They moved to the UK in the 2010's and 2020's. The smell of chicken and rice in their kitchen always brings them back to their childhood. On our interview day, they brought a traditional dish that they had prepared together.

Five years after marrying, Habiba and Annamullah attempted to cook Kabuli Pulao: a traditional Afghan rice dish with meat, carrots, and raisins. This first attempt did not turn out well, but through practice, they perfected the recipe. As teenagers, they learned to cook from their mothers and older sisters. Habiba is the main chef at home while Annamullah helps with the preparation of dishes notably by cutting vegetables. They find cooking together joyful and comforting. It is an important tradition to cook and serve a variety of special dishes for family and friends during Eid celebrations. They occasionally visit an Afghan restaurant on Tooting High Street where the community gathers. Beyond Afghan cuisine, they both love Iranian food for its healthiness as well as British fish and chips for its simplicity.



When I was young, [for my first dish] I cooked eggs. I put oil [in the pan], and when it boils I put onion [and] tomato. Then, I put [the] eggs. Mixed it and unfortunately it was bad.

Habiba



Balham Community Centre

Interviewing Day

It is Wednesday 10th December, 2025. As we step inside this long building, we see trophies and photos of sporting events on the right-hand side on display on the wall. In a large spacious hall in front of us are tables and chairs lined up against the side walls. We bring out two tables, join them together in the far-end of the hall and surround them with eight chairs.

The two interviewees, Horace and Lurleane sit closely together opposite us with small mics on. With interviewing questions at hand we press the record button and the interviewees dive right into it. Horace and Lurleane, speak as if they have known each other since they were children. It's in the way they joke, turn their heads left and right energetically, bounce and laugh. It's in the way they are agreeing with, connecting through and sharing past memories openly. The tone of our interview is set. They are open and vulnerable, allowing us to connect, laugh and share like grandparents looking back on their lives. Everyone is grabbing their chance to speak with largely no interruptions. Their hand gestures symbolise a whole generation's strength, passion, and power.

In the background, we hear the kettle boiling and the plastic sounds of donut boxes brought by Hyacinth Parsons, the vice-chair of the Balham Community Centre. She cuts the chocolate and strawberry donuts into pieces and lays them out meticulously in a basket. She tells us not to forget to have a break; some sweet treats and a cuppa are ready for everyone.

66

I've met this lady for the first time [and]
we seem to have a lot in common.

Horace



listen to the
full interview
here

Lurleane Johnson

Lurleane was born in 1952 in Jamaica. Growing up, Lurleane's mother cooked at home. Her grandma hosted Saturday night parties with curry goat and loud music until dawn.



66

One in a million, [my]
grandparents made
me who I'm today. My
grandparents made
me the woman I'm
today. Certainly not my
mother and father.

Lurleane

Lurleane started to cook after marriage by initially experimenting. Her 53-year marriage is a partnership where household duties are equally shared with her husband, contrasting to her parents' generation. She makes fresh seasonings from scratch, loves fresh mangoes as well as oxtail and mutton and refuses to eat takeaway or fast food.



In the morning you had yam, green banana, ackee and saltfish, dumpling, stew beef. That is breakfast [in Jamaica]. I found it difficult to adjust my mind, when I went [to Jamaica] for the first time, that this was breakfast. [In the UK] I was used to egg, bacon and sausage. But in the Caribbean, that is not your breakfast. Your breakfast is food as people [in Jamaica] call it.

Lurleane



You see, mine [favourite smell] is a mango because mangoes here [in the UK] are totally different. I went to Jamaica and I smelled mango. They smell different to a mango smell here. I wish I could tell you. [My neighbour in Jamaica] had five trees in that yard. I used to go in the morning and pick them up off the ground.

Lurleane



Our [Caribbean] food was important. As soon as we could get it [in the UK], we certainly made the most of it.

Lurleane

Growing up, it was a traditional requirement for Lurleane to drink boiled bush tea leaves. It was a "routine" to cleanse each other as a community using natural herbs and remedies.



We drank lots of bush tea leaves. They were boiled leaves and every holiday they used to clean us [our internal body and community] out.

Lurleane

Unlike her children, Lurleane's grandchildren aged 10 and 8 are showing strong interests in learning about heritage, visiting Jamaica and reconnecting with their grandparents' cultural traditions.



If you invite somebody or somebody comes to your house and you cook but you don't cook enough, you take a little bit out of each person's portion and give it to that person. That is a black culture, that was.

Lurleane



listen to the
full interview
here

Horace Smith

Horace was born in 1955 in the UK but he moved to Jamaica at age 6. He helped his Jamaican grandfather, a farmer, in the early hours of the morning and recalls eating huge amounts of dumplings.



Well, a lot of us here, we don't talk about our parents, we talk about our grandparents. Because once our parents have to pick up work, our grandparents are really looking after us.

Horace

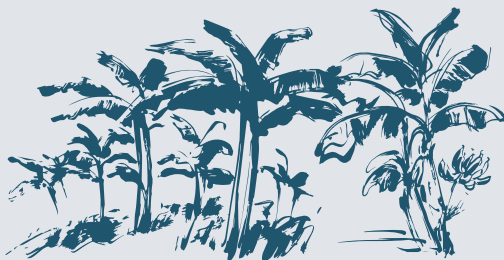
His childhood was shaped by strict rules and harsh discipline. For instance, children were required to ask their parents for permission before accepting food and were expected to eat until they were full before leaving the house so as not to buy or eat anything outside. Sunday communal gatherings at his Jamaican aunt's house were a tradition. Food was cooked in surplus and everyone was welcome. It was also common to have that one specific family to visit to eat dishes with pork, lamb and more.



We got natural seasoning with onion, ginger, thyme, and garlic. We never use powders.

Horace

Horace was shocked when he returned to the UK around the age of 14, because he realised that without money, someone could starve, unlike what he experienced back in Jamaica. The abundance of fruit trees that he used to climb on and the strong ethic of caring and sharing food with each other meant that going hungry was an alien concept in Jamaica.



When I was in Jamaica, I could climb a tree to pick up an orange, pick up a banana, pick up a starfruit, pick up a pear, pick up a soursap. There were so many [fruits].

Horace

As years went by, Caribbean foods such as cow foot, seen as "cheap food" and once readily given away for free, became expensive delicacies. Horace is a pensioner and mostly cooks at home with his wife. His children use air fryers to cook, something he is adamant he will never do.

The third interviewee, Leonard, joins in mid-way into the interview with a set of ingredients: a salt fish, a cho-cho, a scallion, a pumpkin and a coconut in a blue plastic bag. He lays them out one by one on the table. It is good timing. He slots into the interview quite well. At one point, he opens a coconut and starts grating it. As he explains how to grate a coconut, he wants us to remember this moment clearly.



66

That's a coconut which I just broke. The grater, we're going to use it, you grate [the coconut], then you throw water and you freeze the juice. You strain it. When you do that you'll get all the water out. You put it into a pot and you boil it down and you [have] oil. Just like sugar cane as well.

Leonard

With flour, Leonard makes dumplings, roti and fritters. He grates green bananas and plantain to make porridge and loves a good, ripe jackfruit. Leonard explains the laborious, menial and traditional cooking techniques behind making coconut milk and coconut oil.

66

You get the flour [and] baking powder, but you don't put a lot, you put a bit of plain flour. Then you get the saltfish. You boil the saltfish [to get] the salt out of it. You get the onion and you put it [in], and then you mix it up, [but], don't make it too watery. Take it out using a spoon and get your pop fry bun. Make the oil very hot. Take a spoonful of it and just put it there. And then you take another [spoon] and you put it there. You allow it to fry. You think it's frying up, you turn it over and then you do the other side. And that's how we make the fritters.

Leonard



listen to the
full interview
here

Leonard Wilson

Leonard was born in 1961, Jamaica. His formative childhood years emphasised respect, politeness and good manners towards elders and families. On Sundays after church, the main food was rice and peas. The strong sharing culture in Jamaica means that if one person grows crops, its bearings are generously shared amongst every family surrounding them.

66

That is Jamaica National Dish, ackee and salt fish.

That's Jamaica. So you don't like certain things, but at least you see what [the] items are. So you know exactly [what to get from the shops]. If you need to go out and get it, you know what to look for. More than I tell you what [the items] are [and look like].

Leonard



By the end of the interview,
we all felt connected to each
other and took a beautiful
photo on the outside steps,
in front of the entrance of
Baltham Community Centre.





BALHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE



“

My childhood has always been in
the Tooting area, so this is home

Sajal



Be Enriched

Outreach Day

It is the afternoon of Friday the 21st of November 2025. I, Tania, arrive at Tooting United Reform Church at 12:30pm on the clock. The church is located on Rookstone Road, an alley way off Mitcham Road on its left. You cannot miss it.

I walk through the corridor and bump into a group of volunteers helping the kitchen chef by cutting vegetables and organising tables and chairs for their soon-to-arrive hungry guests. The space is relatively small with a spacious dining space at the end of the church. The guests gradually start making an appearance. I am told that they tend to arrive at the church around 12:30pm every Friday for their three-course community meals, served at 1pm. There is enough space for everyone to sit down and anyone can join in to eat. I hear tea and coffee pouring into mugs along with crunching delicious biscuits.

I introduce myself with a warm, generous smile. The guests look dubious, intrigued and slightly distant as to why I am walking towards them with flyers and a pen. The first lady I come across introduces herself as Blessings. Blessings has a strong and enticing Guyanese accent. She is charismatic and makes everyone on her table laugh with jokes. She has a shopping trolley by her side, giving the impression that she is continuously on the go. She makes sure that people feel acknowledged as they grab a seat at her table. After a short encouraging chat and a willingness to help, she gives me her contact details with a gentle, precautionary reminder that people ought not to glance at my sign-up sheet as I walk about talking to people in the space. She tells the volunteer to give me food and reminds me to sit down and eat.

I noticed a lovely lady sitting by her mother's side eating. I hesitated, unsure if I should interrupt their meals. However, when our eyes met, I knew I could speak to her. She introduces herself as Sajal. She is a warm, peaceful and friendly lady with a beautiful smile. Her words are generous. I am happy to have met her. Our first conversation touches on topics like cooking, childhood and marriage. I think that the young people will absolutely love interviewing her and her mother, Virbala. They will learn so much for their project.

I later stumble across two South Asian, Hindi-speaking elderly women sitting next to each other. They welcome me by their side. I introduce myself and they introduce themselves as Pushpa and Krishna. The interaction is sweet and very brief, but they are convinced enough to give me their contact details so as to fix an interview date and time.





Interviewing Day 1

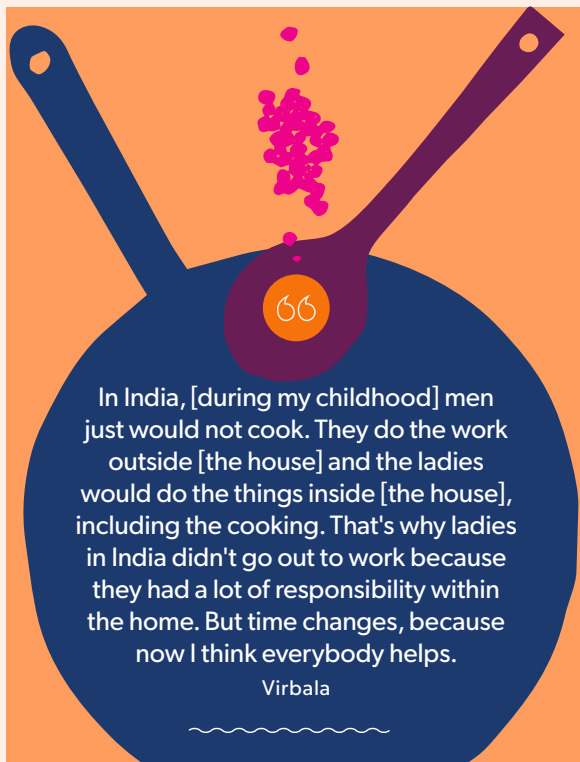
It is 10am on Friday 5th of December. Us Story Catchers arrive at the United Reformed Church and settle in a medium-sized room on the right-hand side of the corridor. When time comes to start interviewing our community members, we feel slightly anxious. Sajal and her mother, Virbala slowly enter the room with intrigue and curiosity. They are warmly welcomed by us, Enable's social media team and our professional photographer, Jeremiah Brown. Sajal pushes her mother's wheelchair forward to find a suitable space for them on the opposite side of our table where we are setting-up the recording equipment.

We offer our interviewees some water and double-check that the recorder is working properly. Sajal and Virbala sign the paperwork after carefully explaining to them our heritage project. They seem happy with everything as we finally begin this interview. Our anxiety suddenly vanishes, almost as if it never existed. We're reminded of why we joined Memories Kitchen to begin with. It is for the treasured love of people's stories and what they can teach us about ourselves and others.



listen to the
full interview
here

Sajal Patel and her mother, Virbala Patel



Virbala Patel, the eldest of her siblings, was born in India in 1941. When her mother left for America, the responsibility of feeding her family fell on her shoulders. Before leaving, her mother taught her how to make the most important dish that she calls DBSR: Dhal, Bhat, Sabzi and Roti.

In India, buying your groceries was convenient, merchants brought a cart filled up with vegetables in front of your house. You could also go to the market and smell the freshness of ingredients.

Sajal Patel, Virbala's daughter, was born in Tooting in 1978. She learned how to cook with her mother and found it challenging without her guidance once she got married. She often tried to recreate her mother's recipes but Virbala didn't use any measurements and relied on her experience and intuition.



[When mum cooked dhal], it's the oil, when it's hot enough to put in your spices. You put in your poppy seeds then cumin. It's always in that order. Mum says you've always got to put the lid on because otherwise [the oil] goes everywhere. Then you add your cinnamon cloves, so you've got that really warming smell [coming through the kitchen].

Sajal

Before a local grocery shop opened, Sajal went to Wembley in her childhood with Virbala to buy non-perishable ingredients. Their grocery shopping turned into a full day out where they returned home with large quantities of food carried back on the tube. Sajal finds cooking therapeutic.



If you cook with love, you can always taste the difference.

Sajal



listen to the full interview here

Blessings Springer



If you cook it, it's my favourite.

Blessings

After an hour and a half, we welcome our third interviewee, Blessings. She enters the room with a strong, commanding and fun aura that instantly boosts the energy in the room.

Blessings Springer was born in 1957 in Guyana and moved to the UK years ago. She carries a strong connection to her Guyanese culinary heritage and emphasises her appreciation of the diversity of the country's food traditions, influenced by Caribbean, South Asian and even East Asian cuisines. Despite not liking cooking, she loves and knows every ingredient of her favourite dishes.



We used to like chicken foot in the cook-up rice. I can remember one time my brother said to my mom, 'there's something walking in my food', but it was chicken foot and that's very nice [to eat].

Blessings

She talks with passion about cook-up rice, made with coconut milk, vegetables and various meats as well as garlic pork which Guyanese people really appreciate in December and at Christmas. Even though ingredients and products are accessible here in the UK, she misses smelling the aroma of garlic pork, infused with garlic and thyme. Blessings remembers the community feeling and joy of being alive in Guyana where every night could possibly turn into a party. After a good laugh with Blessings, we end her interview on time for the delicious food being served at 1pm.



Interviewing Day 2

It is 10am on Friday 12th of December. Orode arrives at the church early in the morning wearing a beautiful, colourful headband. She waits patiently and chats with us in the room as we set up the recording equipment.

Orode runs the Alton Community Centre in Roehampton where she brings people together during community cook-out days. Everyone is welcomed at these events, whether to cook, eat, meet others or discuss. What she values the most about these gatherings is that people from various cultural, generational or social backgrounds participate and are themselves. Her interview stands out for touching on the cultural and political context that is critical to understanding the narratives we have recorded so far. Her overview of Wandsworth, her life story leaves us in awe of her work; many of us want to keep in touch with her.

Orode joins us for lunch at the church. She loves that custard with apple crumble is being served for dessert. It is a nice opportunity to exchange more thoughts, ideas and knowledge beyond our interview.



listen to the
full interview
here

Orode Faka



My love to cook is my love language. If I am not happy and I've cooked something that doesn't taste well. I know that's the reason behind it.

Orode

Orode Faka was born in London in 1977 and grew up in Battersea. As a student, she worked for the Loot newspaper in Kilburn, north-west London. She is currently a cultural producer and artist who founded the organisation ROCKS, which stands for Responsibility, Ownership, Community, Knowledge and Sustainability. She runs the Alton Community Centre on the Roehampton Estate where communities attend "cook-out" days, bringing their traditional dishes along to eat and share.

Coming from a Nigerian family, she gradually learned to cook from the age of 10 with her mother and aunt. By being the only girl in her family, she quickly took on the responsibility of cooking for her household. However, she never viewed this as a burden. Cooking is a form of stress relief and a way to connect with her Nigerian heritage. Orode became fully vegan in 1999 and expresses her creativity in cooking by incorporating Indian and Caribbean cuisines together.



I don't use meat substitutes when I'm making Nigerian stew. I'd rather just play with vegetables to make the efo riro - a Nigerian stew with lots of green leaves. If I make okra soup, I add the okra chunks into it, because they give me that kind of bite that I'm missing from not having the meat or fish.

Orode

Indian chefs fry aromatics such as onions and garlic first before ingredients are added to cook their dishes. Orode uses this method to concoct her authentic Jollof recipe alongside the skills she was taught by her Nigerian aunty.



There was an Indian takeaway across the road in Kilburn [in north-west London] where I had chicken briyani for the first time [as a student] and I was like ‘wait, this is just jollof [rice] but with chicken pieces in it’ and it was so good.

Orode

Before joining Orode for lunch, we interviewed Krishna and Pushpa. They sit close together, sharing smiles and clarifying questions for each other. You can tell the two have been good friends for a long time. Pushpa brings chocolate pastries and a bombay mixed snack into the room to share them with us. The bombay snack is delicious. They proudly speak about their lives and the reasons for their relationship with food today. It nonetheless feels bittersweet as their interview is our last interview for Memories Kitchen.





Krishna Patel and Pushpa Sharma



Every Asian, we suffered the same things [when we came to the UK]. Slowly, [our community's food] came up and we were alright. There's enough to eat now. It's too much now.

Krishna

Krishna was born in 1940 in Kenya into a Punjabi family and has lived in Tooting, south London for the past 35 years. She learned to cook at the age of 14 by observing her sister.



It's the way we were brought up. Being in a big family you got to eat whatever was cooked in the house.

Krishna

The passing of her mother combined with her married sister living outside of their household required Krishna to learn to cook Indian and Kenyan dishes through observation and picking up techniques from elders in the community and whilst visiting her sister. Krishna enjoys puris, pakoras and jalebi. She speaks about her daughter caring and cooking for her, often preparing Italian dishes such as lasagna. However, she prefers Indian food.

Pushpa was born in India in 1940 and helped with household tasks such as cutting vegetables and adding spices. She only learned how to cook after getting married and believes that she is not a very good cook and is limited to cooking basic Indian dishes.



[Outside of Indian dishes], I can cook pasta. I learnt from my children. I can cook pasta and lasagna by [adding] all the vegetables and cheese and putting it in the oven.

Pushpa

She arrived in the UK in 1966, when Indian grocers were almost non-existent. In Clapham Junction, she opened a supermarket alongside her husband selling items such as washing machines, radios and television. It lasted for about 13 to 14 years before they sold the business.



I'm a very savoury person. I don't like sweet things. I always eat something with my tea. I have to have a Bombay mix or savoury biscuit, cheese biscuit or a crisp with my cup of tea.

Pushpa

Her children enjoy meat dishes such as lamb dum with chapati, samosas and pakoras; however, as a vegetarian, Pushpa prefers dhal or subji. She likes when her children order a pizza from time to time and is proud to have passed down her mother's recipes to them.





Reflections by Story Catchers

As Story Catchers, we saw how memories associated with food can powerfully shape and change our perspectives and understanding of daily life. We realised that food is political whether it sparks a debate on gender, race and class dynamics, or is simply enjoyed and shared. Through our community heritage and oral history work on this project, we identified common themes from our residents and elders in Wandsworth.

Food is comfort and familiarity.

Comfort foods such as tadka dhal, mangoes, samosas and pakoras are beloved and cherished dishes, fruits and snacks amongst our interviewees and across many regions in India, Jamaica and Pakistan. This shows our shared humanity and interconnectedness through the lens of food. Nostalgia and a sense of loss emerged in evoking childhood memories of not being able to freely pick up fruits from trees when hungry and reckoning with the idea that a lack of money can result in starvation in a world of plenty.

Food serves as a means for survival, adaptation and functionality within everyday life.

Many traditional dishes such as Guyanese cooked-up rice and India's DBSR (Dal, Bhaat, Shaak, and Roti) were originally constructed from readily available, seasonal and locally produced ingredients. To this day, they are popular because they are sustainable, affordable and nutritious. When our elders arrived in the UK, not only did they adapt to a new culture to survive, but also adapted their cooking practices using ingredients available in Wandsworth at the time.

Food is a caring responsibility.

Whilst cooking can be loved and treasured, it can also be tiring and time-consuming. For some, life's challenging situations meant there was no choice but to learn how to cook. In many cultures, sharing is a pillar value encouraging a sense of responsibility and solidarity. Bearings of fruitful trees are enjoyed by the whole community.

Community feast in March 2026

By creating fusion dishes and a new dining experience for guests, we encouraged a shared understanding of the legacies we captured and helped to preserve the diverse cultural heritage and identity of Wandsworth. There were so many rich flavours all on one plate. **Enjoy! Je gbadun! Lutuf uthao! Bom proveito! Bon appetit!**



Spoken Word by Story Catchers

Inspired by Dean Atta



I Come From

I come from indentured labourers and a paradise island

I come from a melting pot and strong community

I come from a place that did it all even when we were given nothing I come
from concrete blocks facing greener pastures

I come from naturally creative space growing up to find time to keep it alive
I come from a creative line of magnetic ground-breakers

I come from tales of golden sands, hummingbirds and mango trees; from
tales of country walks, muddy shoes and autumn leaves.

Written by
Sophia, Elliott, Tyreek, Tania, Naarah, Lola and Iqan.



Memories Kitchen

It is about senses,

It is about living together,

And creating memories as a group.

With a common history and tradition,

They depict joy, culture and connection.

The food and music bring people together,

A language of belongingness.

How is there dancing in the middle of a restaurant?

What a wonderful blend!

Don't play with your food they say,

What about around it?

Flowing skirts, plates of food, initiating activities amongst groups,

These are symbols of a culture.

History isn't always in the books but in the meals that we share together,

The songs that we hear together, the moments that we live together.

Hands reaching for a shared plate, drinking, eating, sharing recipes,

Talking about how your mum makes it better.

Flavours, Traditions, Family,

Dancing, Smiling, Laughing,

Celebration, Community, Culture.

The past is created by the experiences we had

But the future is planned by the people we meet.

Written by

Sushmitha, Elliot, Iqan, Sophia, Amaan, Naarah, Lola and Diogo.



Recipes

Amtul Karim's Suji Halwa

Ingredients

- > 100g semolina
- > 100g sugar
- > 80g oil or ghee
- > 300ml water
- > Cardamon (optional)
- > Raisins (optional)
- > Nuts (optional)

Serving

2 people

Preparation time

5-7 minutes

Cooking time

12 minutes

Method

1. Warm up the ghee and add the semolina until it turns golden brown.
2. Once the semolina turns golden brown, add the water and sugar and stir for about 2-3 minutes until it thickens.
3. Keep stirring on low heat for a couple more minutes until the consistency is like porridge.
4. Serve with preferred toppings such as cardamon, raisins or nuts.





Hina Hanif's Tarka Dhal

Ingredients

- > 500g red lentils
- > 2 tablespoons olive oil
- > 1 onion, thinly sliced
- > 4 cloves of garlic, crushed
- > 6cm piece of ginger, peeled and finely grated
- > ½ teaspoon chilli powder
- > ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- > ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- > 1 teaspoon salt
- > 1-2 vegetable stock cubes
- > 20g fresh coriander (garnish)

Serving

4 people

Preparation time

1 hour, 10 minutes

Cooking time

30 minutes

Method

1. Rinse the lentils in a sieve until the water runs clear, then leave them soaking in water for 1 hour.
2. Drain the lentils and transfer them into a deep, lidded saucepan.
3. Add 1 litre of cold water and bring to a boil over medium to high heat.
4. Add the stock cubes, cover, and simmer gently for 10-15 minutes until thoroughly cooked. The lentils should be tender throughout, without a raw, chalky bite.
5. While the lentils are cooking, heat the oil in another deep, lidded saucepan over medium heat.
6. Stir-fry the onion for around a minute until aromatic and cook it for 8-10 minutes until golden.
7. Don't skimp on time with the onion, garlic, or ginger as they provide essential flavour.
8. Add the garlic and ginger to the onions and stir-fry for another 4 minutes.
9. Add the chilli powder, ground coriander, turmeric, and salt.
10. Stir well and garnish with fresh coriander.
11. Cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 8 minutes.



Amtul Karim's Pakistani Pakoras (fritters)

Ingredients

- > 1 ½ cups chickpea flour (aka gram or besan flour)
- > 1 teaspoon coriander seeds, crushed
- > 1 teaspoon paprika
- > 1 teaspoon salt
- > 1 teaspoon chilli powder (optional)
- > ¼ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- > 2 onions, sliced
- > 2 potatoes, diced into 1cm cubes
- > 1 green chilli, finely chopped
- > A handful of spinach
- > A handful of fresh coriander

Serving

4 people

Preparation time

10 minutes

Cooking time

30 minutes

Method

1. Place chickpea flour, crushed coriander seeds, paprika, salt, chilli powder (if using), and bicarbonate of soda in a bowl. Sieving the flour is recommended. Ground coriander can be used, but crushing seeds in a pestle and mortar is worth the effort.
2. Gradually add cold water to the bowl, mixing thoroughly with your hands until the batter reaches the consistency of a thick milkshake. Using a low running tap can help achieve this.
3. Add the sliced onions, diced potatoes, chopped green chilli, spinach, and fresh coriander to the batter and mix well. Let the mixture rest while you heat the oil.
4. Heat the oil on medium heat and test with a small drop of batter. It should start cooking immediately if the oil is at the right temperature.
5. Use a tablespoon to drop servings of the batter and vegetables into the hot oil. They should hold together and start bubbling. Continue adding more servings until the oil becomes crowded.
6. After a minute, start turning the pakoras over in the order you added them. They should be golden brown on both sides after about 5 minutes. Test one to ensure they are cooked through and not gooey inside.
7. Place the cooked pakoras on kitchen paper to remove excess oil. They will stay hot for a while, so you can cook the entire batch before serving.
8. Serve on their own or with tamarind sauce, and enjoy with a cup of tea! They are delicious cold too.





Habiba and Annamullah Khan's Kabuli Pulao

Ingredients

- > 3 cups basmati rice
- > 500 g lamb or beef (on the bone or boneless, cut into medium pieces)
- > 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- > 2 carrots, cut into thin matchsticks
- > ½ cup raisins
- > ½ cup slivered almonds or pistachios
- > 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- > 1 tsp ground cumin
- > 1 tsp ground coriander
- > ½ tsp ground cardamom
- > ½ tsp black pepper
- > Salt to taste
- > 1 tsp sugar (optional, for carrots)
- > About 5 cups water

Serving

4-6 people

Preparation time

30 minutes

Cooking time

1 hour

Method

1. Wash the rice and soak it in cold water for at least 30 minutes.
2. Heat oil in a large pot and fry the sliced onion until golden brown.
3. Add the meat, salt, pepper, cumin and coriander. Fry for a few minutes until browned.
4. Add enough water to cover the meat and cook on medium heat until the meat is tender (about 40–45 minutes).
5. In a separate pan, lightly fry the carrots with a little oil and sugar until soft, then add raisins and nuts and cook for 2–3 minutes. Set aside.
6. Remove the meat from the broth. Measure the broth and add water if needed (you need about 1½ cups liquid per cup of rice).
7. Bring the broth to a boil, add drained rice and cook until the water is absorbed.
8. Place the meat back on top of the rice, add the cardamom, cover with a lid and steam on low heat for 20–25 minutes.
9. Serve topped with the carrot, raisin and nut mixture.







Habiba and Annamulah Khan's

Afghani mantu

(steamed dumplings)

Ingredients

- > 1 pack round dumpling wrappers (or wonton wrappers)
- > 400 g minced beef or lamb
- > 1 medium onion, very finely chopped
- > 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- > 1 tsp ground coriander
- > ½ tsp black pepper
- > Salt to taste

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

- > 1 tbsp oil
- > 1 small onion, finely chopped
- > 1 can chopped tomatoes
- > Salt and pepper to taste

FOR THE YOGHURT SAUCE

- > 1½ cups plain yoghurt
- > 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- > Salt to taste
- > Dried mint (optional, for garnish)

Serving

4 people

Preparation time

45 minutes

Cooking time

30 minutes

Method

1. In a bowl, mix the minced meat, onion, garlic, coriander, salt and pepper.
2. Place a spoonful of filling in the centre of each wrapper, fold and seal firmly.
3. Steam the dumplings for about 25–30 minutes until cooked through.
4. For the tomato sauce, heat oil, fry the onion until soft, add tomatoes, salt and pepper, and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Mix yoghurt with garlic and salt to make the yoghurt sauce.
6. To serve, place mantu on a plate, pour tomato sauce over them, then drizzle with yoghurt sauce and sprinkle with dried mint if using.



Leonard Wilson's Jamaican Sesame Salmon

Ingredients

- > 520g 4 salmon fillets
- > 300ml Self Raising Flour
- > 300ml Self Raising Flour
- > 2.5ml Smoked Paprika
- > 2.5ml Chilli Powder
- > 5ml Grace Jerk seasoning
- > 5ml Corn flour
- > 2.5ml Garam Masala
- > 5ml Baking powder
- > 2 medium lemons
- > 5ml Dunns River Season All
- > 1 medium clove of garlic
- > 2.5ml Sesame seeds
- > 200ml of Sunflower /
Corn oil
- > 2.5ml Garlic powder/
granules
- > Medium non-stick frying
pan

Serving

4 people

Preparation time

15 minutes

Cooking time

25 minutes

Method

1. Remove the skin from the salmon with a sharp knife - either from the end or at the middle, cutting each piece in two.
2. Put the salmon fillets into a medium sized bowl and wash with the juice of one lemon, water and a touch of vinegar.
3. Add 1.25m of Season All, Garlic granules, Paprika, Chilli powder, Jerk seasoning to the salmon and mix liberally.
4. In a separate bowl, combine all the dry ingredients and mix well with a spoon.
5. Add the salmon and cover each piece, turn until it is covered in the coating, leave it in the coating until ready to fry.
6. Pour the oil into the frying pan and put it on a medium heat
7. Add the clove of garlic to the oil and as it starts to sizzle begin to add your coated salmon pieces.
8. Fry on both sides for 2-4 minutes until golden brown.
9. Transfer each piece to a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper.
10. Place the baking tray in a warm oven gas mark 4/ 177C/350F for 10 mins.
11. Remove from the oven and enjoy!





Contributor Biographies

Amaan Khalid was born outside of London, however he is connected to the community of Wandsworth through Memories Kitchen. He loves telling stories in many forms: from writing history podcasts, directing shows in London theatres, and working as a TV script editor. As a foodie himself, he is fascinated in how we connect to culture through food.

Diogo Barroso strongly stands for “energy”. He believes that not only does food create energy it brings it into the room and the people you share meals with. Diogo is bilingual and he thinks that speaking in other languages comes with its perks, however by trying other national foods a brand new language of flavours emerges and comes to life.

Elliot Murray is a recent Graphic Communication graduate, whose creative practice often explores themes of identity, place, and memory. With a strong interest in storytelling and its power to captivate audiences, he saw Memories Kitchen as an ideal opportunity to uncover and amplify untold, underrepresented stories, while building confidence in forming meaningful intergenerational connections within his community.

Iqan Hussain is a third year Zoology student born and raised in south London. Growing up trying generations of family recipes, she recognises the importance of preserving our heritage. She believes that just cooking and eating together, and learning from each other, can be an act of rebellion - we remember and honour our ancestry with every bite.

Juliet Coker is newly an oral historian. She is chair of a youth board at Providence and an artist. Her journey started with On the Record at the end of 2025. She has enjoyed this experience and learnt so much ever since. She loves to perform musical theatre, read new books, attend music and dance shows and take part in new opportunities wherever they arise.

Lola Stambouliau is a master's student in heritage and archaeology, contributing to the Memories Kitchen project as an intern. Her interest in intangible heritage and alternative narratives encouraged her to explore the role and importance of oral history in today's world. She enjoys reading, painting and visiting Armenia, where she can connect with her culture and enjoy its cuisine.

Naarah Bonti-Asamoah is a 3D animation graduate developing as a multidisciplinary artist. She has a passion for culture and storytelling which has inspired her to begin developing her own animated media on forgotten mythologies to inspire, educate and entertain.

Sophia Parks is currently occupied with studying business administration in college, where this project was encountered through recommendation. Beyond academics, she is a writer and artist with a continuous curiosity for languages, cultures and exploring the world through cooking from diverse traditions.

Sushmitha Srivatsava Tadepalli is a psychology graduate with a strong interest in community well-being, storytelling, and cultural connection. She is passionate about creating safe, reflective spaces where shared memories, lived experiences, and everyday stories bring people together across generations and backgrounds.

Tyreek Edwards is a tenacious graduate using his Journalism degree and interviewing skills to participate in the Memories Kitchen Project. Driven by his initiative to seek, research and decipher, Tyreek enjoys bridging gaps of misunderstanding through conversation and interviewing. Memories Kitchen gave him the opportunity to develop skills further, also doing something purposeful in his degree that holds true value.



Glossary

Ackee is a delicate, tropical fruit originating from West Africa. It looks like a pear and is only safe to eat when it is ripe and yellow. Ackee is commonly found in Caribbean savoury dishes and breakfasts. It is a key ingredient in Jamaica's national dish, "ackee and saltfish".

Dhal Chawal is a popular South-Asian comfort dish consisting of lentils or pulses (dhal) and rice (chawal). The dhal is flavoured using cumin, turmeric, coriander and garlic. The final step is to pour a mixture of ghee or oil, cumin seeds, garlic, onions and dried red chilies called tarka on top of the dhal.

Chapati is a soft, thin flatbread. It is a staple food in many households across Asia, the Caribbean and East Africa. It is cooked with ghee or oil, water, salt and flour and is eaten alongside a curry, a vegetable dish or a daal. You need to use a hot, flat pan called tawa to cook it.

Chicken Pulao is an aromatic rice and chicken dish cooked in one pot. It originates from ancient Persia with records going back to the 4th century BC. Its poignant smell comes from mixing cumin seeds, cloves and cinnamon, onions, garlic and green chilies together using oil.

Cook-Up Rice is a traditional one-pot Caribbean dish made with rice, coconut milk, legumes and meat or vegetables. It is rooted in West African heritage and emerged out of colonialism and enslavement. It is popular in Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica and is eaten during special occasions such as New Year's eve.

Culinary Heritage is the traditional foods, cooking practices and social customs passed down the generations. It strengthens community, knowledge and identity.

Curry Goat is a popular Caribbean dish made with goat meat marinated with onions, garlic, thyme, salt and pepper and simmered in a rich curry sauce. It was brought to the Caribbean by indentured Indian labourers after the abolition of slavery in the late 19th century.

Dhal, Bhat, Sabzi, and Roti (DBSR) is a traditional South Asian "comfort" meal made of lentils, rice, vegetables and flatbread. It has deep roots in Nepal as Dhal Bhat is their national dish. Its origin goes back to sustaining rural farmers throughout the day as they worked intensely to harness fields and walked long miles.

Desi Eater is a person who enjoys traditional home-made and authentic South Asian foods, items and flavours. They may prefer eating with their hands as opposed to using cutlery. They love spices and some of their favourite foods include dhal and biryani.

Efo Riro is a Nigerian spinach stew cooked with peppers, palm oil and sometimes meat or fish. In Yoruba, efo means spinach and riro means to stir. It is a rich, savoury dish where the vegetables are added last and it can be served with rice or plantains.

Egusi Soup is a type of thick soup or stew prepared with egusi seeds, which are dried seeds from gourd plants like squash, pumpkin or courgette. It is particularly popular in West Africa.

Garlic Pork is a savoury dish of Portuguese origin from the 19th century. It was introduced in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago by indentured servants. The pork is marinated in garlic, thyme and vinegar over several days and it is eaten alongside bread or pepperpot during celebrations such as Christmas.

Halwa is a sweet dessert made from either semolina, flour or nuts mixed with sugar, ghee and fruits. This dessert originates from ancient Persia and the Middle East. It is shared widely during celebrations such as Diwali, the Hindu festival of light.

Jalebi is a deep-fried South Asian sweet soaked in sugar syrup and is known for its spiral shape and crispy texture. It was introduced to India by Persian traders and artisans around the 15th century. It is given out at weddings as well as Diwali and Ramadan.

Kabuli Pulao is a fragrant rice dish made of spiced meat, raisins, carrots and nuts. It originates from Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and was initially linked to upper classes, wealth and luxury. Now, it is widely eaten during special occasions.

Lamb Dum is a slow-cooked marinated lamb where the lamb is sealed in a container and cooked in its own juices, a technique originating from Persia and was used to feed the masses. It was then perfected by royal chefs during the Indian Mughal Empire in the 16th century.

Pakorاس are deep-fried fritters made of vegetables coated in spiced chickpea flour batter. They originated thousands of years ago in Punjab, northern India, and were influenced by the introduction of potatoes by the Portuguese. Today, they are widely enjoyed as a snack with tea.

Puris are deep-fried, puffed flatbreads served with curries or sweets. They originated in India in the late Bronze Age (1500-500 BC) and became a famous light meal/snack under British colonial rule in the 19th century. Other variations of puris such as 'Dhal Puris' are found on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.

Roti is a flatbread made from wheat flour, water, salt and oil. It is commonly eaten in South Asia and the Caribbean. It became a staple food for many Indians during The Mughal Empire in the 16th century. It was introduced to the Caribbean in the 19th century by indentured Indian labourers. Roti is now an integral part of many Caribbean cuisines.

Saltfish is Atlantic codfish that was originally salted for preservation when imported by slave owners to the Caribbean. At the time, saltfish was a key source of protein especially for enslaved people. The dish has now become a staple to almost all Caribbean cuisines. It is for example the national dish of Jamaica and is considered to be a healthy breakfast. It also symbolises the Jamaican resistance and resilience of its enslaved population against slave owners in the 19th century.

Soursop is a tropical, spiky green fruit with a soft, creamy white flesh. It is eaten fresh and used in desserts, ice-cream, smoothies and traditional remedies. Its seeds are toxic and are to be avoided. The fruit grows in hot, tropical countries such as India and central America.

Subji is a South Asian vegetable dish usually served with rice, roti or chapati. Some of the most common vegetables used are carrots, potatoes, beans, cauliflower and broccoli. Spices such as cumin and turmeric as well as ginger, onions and garlic help to add flavours and fragrance to the dish. Because ingredients were grown locally, Subji became a practical meal to have in South Asia.



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With gratitude also to Tania Aubeelack, oral historian, and Laura Mitchison, Director of On The Record. On The Record is an award-winning oral history arts and community archive organisation. Memories Kitchen was conceived in 2017 as a wellbeing initiative bringing together older and younger neighbours. Laura is grateful to the Wandsworth Borough of Culture for the chance to reimagine the project in 2025–2026.

At On the Record, oral history is a shared process of recording and archiving people's lived experiences. Before anything else, we listen. We ask, "What was it like to be a stay-at-home dad then?" "What is it like to be a hospital cleaner now?" Each person's account is, in its own way, unique. We collaborate with the people we record and whose stories we tell. Our projects often bring together different generations or groups of people who have something to learn from each other, to connect 'what has happened' with 'what could be'.

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