

Teaching the British how to cook fish better

It's like teaching ducks to take to water, but an Indian chef is intent on teaching the British how to cook fish.

There's more to the traditional battered fish and mushied peas if you use Indian spices, celebrity chef Atul Kochhar advises his countrymen. And he has gone on to write a book about it.

Kochhar, the first Indian chef to be awarded a Michelin star, who shot to fame in Britain as a finalist on the BBC's 'The Great British Menu', has taken a whole new approach to fish by marrying it with Indian spices and says it's been a revelation.

'I've discovered the marriage of British fish and Indian flavours is one of the best there is,' he says.

The chef is hoping his discovery will spark a revolution in the way we cook and eat fish because, as he points out, 'fish cookery is so under-exploited' in Britain.

'This country is surrounded by ocean, yet we shy away from the wealth of seafood available to us despite the fact it's some of the best in the world and sometimes even free,' he says.

'Also, although we'd all benefit health-wise from including fish in our diet more often, many people lack confidence when it comes to buying and cooking fish,' the Manchester Evening News quotes him as saying.

Similarly, he says his homeland of India, despite its long coastline, generally doesn't make the most of seafood.

'Fish tends to be cooked in curries, which mask the qualities that make it special - its colours, textures and aromas. But fish is a wonderfully versatile ingredient and, as long as you take care not to overwhelm it, makes a perfect canvas for spices and herbs.'

Some of his favourite dishes include Kentish oysters, scallops from the Isle of Man and Scottish herrings.

In his new book, 'Fish Indian Style', he has incorporated some signature British ingredients, along with many others, and the elements of the cookery he grew up with in East India.

The result is a range of fish dishes with unique flavours such as Kentish oyster fritters with cumin and chilli-apple jelly, crisp fried whiting with Jerusalem artichokes and sea bass in coconut milk and ginger sauce.

One of his quirky favourites is [Mumbai](#) fish pizza. He jokes: 'This recipe is a cheeky dig at the stylish folk of Mumbai (Bombay) who regard themselves as trend setters. Italian food is all the rage there now.'

And Kochhar, who runs London's renowned Benares restaurant, has also given a fresh spin to the classic treat of battered fish and mushy peas. His version is deep fried John Dory with garlic and cumin peas.

He says: 'My interpretation of Britain's national dish is easy to make at home and has proved immensely popular with the customers at Benares.'

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