

# SEASONING STORIES

A Regent Park  
Cookbook

Created by Fatom Alghanmi, Arden Irish, and Zane Silk





# CONTENTS

Preface	03
<b>Gail:</b> Fred Sour	04
<b>Amanda:</b> Soul Cakes	06
<b>Nasreen:</b> Beef Biryani, Piyaju & Chhola Boot	08
<b>Ines:</b> Beef Empanadas	12
<b>Mary Ann:</b> Pan de Coco	14
<b>Veena:</b> Gajar ka Halwa	16
<b>Afiya:</b> Mandazi	18
<b>Fatom:</b> Malawah	20
Diversity Statement	22
Acknowledgements	23
Bios	24
Behind the Scenes	25



Photo: Dawar Naeem

Embark on a flavorful adventure where every dish tells a tale. Seasoning Stories beckons you to savour the essence of culture, community, and connection woven into each recipe.



# Welcome to our storytelling cookbook

In this collection of recipes and stories from Regent Park residents, you will get a taste of the central role that food plays in the social and familial worlds of Regent Park.

We were gifted the idea to make a cookbook by our peers, Mishika and Jackson. As we were all brainstorming together, we mused about how a cookbook could highlight the importance of accessible cultural food and the significance of generational recipes.

This journey from that initial conversation to finalizing this cookbook has been a ride full of bumps and wondrous discoveries.

After a couple of interviews, we noticed a theme—sharing food has helped residents form connections with those from other backgrounds and walks of life. In our first interview with Fazlah, she shared that she cooks for the Regent Park Women’s Circle to help other women feel emotionally supported and cared for. In our second interview, Ines told us that without her empanadas she wouldn’t have built the community she’s made in the neighbourhood. This got us curious about how food facilitates connections across the many different cultures in Regent Park.

The purpose of our cookbook really emerged when we decided to centre our mission around the role of food in fostering relationships.

During our interviews, we started asking how food has helped people bond with their families, friends, and new connections in Regent Park. In the following pages, you will find the vibrant, and scrumptious, answers to these questions.

We hope you will not only try your hand at making these delicious recipes but also take inspiration from our contributors to share food with your neighbours and see where that leads you. As you will find from these stories, sharing food is almost always a recipe for good conversation and new friendships.

To complement our physical cookbook, we have added a crowdsourced component online. You can find Fazlah’s recipe for chai tea there, as well as contributions from Sumaya, Naimo, and Lisette. We hope that by including this element, our project can live on past this course.

Food is a way to share in celebration and learn together. The people in our book tell a story of how food is a way to take pride in culture, make new and meaningful connections, care for people, and express ourselves.

We hope you enjoy!

-The Seasoning Stories Team



Scan this QR code to see our crowdsourced cookbook

# Gail

RESIDENT SINCE 2010

The most difficult thing for Gail to find upon her move to Canada from Barbados was a village culture. A tight-knit community was something that she felt was missing in her life for the 20 years that she spent living in different neighbourhoods in Toronto. However, after moving to Regent Park nearly a decade ago, Gail can finally say she has found her village.

During the pandemic, Gail decided to try her hand at making non-alcoholic cocktails. With Daniels Spectrum being mostly deserted, it was the perfect place for her to practice. Slowly she built a menu for her new business, Zero Cocktail Bar. As the city came back to life, Gail was soon serving her cocktails at events across the city.

One of Gail's favourite cocktails to make is her Fred Sour: its subtle bitter notes of orange, clove and rosemary make for a delicious treat. She knows that rosemary and clove are familiar scents and flavours that people from all over the world gravitate to.

"Whether you're from the Middle-East, Caribbean, or Africa, rosemary and clove is something you know."

Despite Gail's booming business, she wanted to stay connected to the place where she had started. In the early days, when she was still practicing in Daniels, residents would occasionally stop to talk with her and try her new recipes. This gave her the idea that the space should be a place where people can relax with a drink or grab a bite to eat, while helping local food entrepreneurs like herself.

The Regent Park Cafe took lots of work behind the scenes to come to fruition and finally opened in January of 2024 on the first floor of Daniels Spectrum. Gail gives back to her community by taking on a mentorship role and sharing her business knowledge with the other vendors to help them succeed.

Among the other businesses featured at the Cafe are EdibleBliss by Amanda, GarciaEats by Ines, and Ruma's Cuisine by Nasreen. In the following pages you can find their wonderful recipes and stories as well.

The Regent Park Cafe can be found on the first floor of Daniels Spectrum, which is located at 585 Dundas St E. The Cafe runs most days of the week. To keep with the weekly schedule, follow the Instagram [@regentpark.cafe](https://www.instagram.com/regentpark.cafe)



To order drinks from Gail, go to <https://www.zero-bar.ca/> or follow her on IG [@zero\\_cocktailbar](https://www.instagram.com/zero_cocktailbar)



# Fred Sour

A Fred Sour is Gail's rendition of a classic Sour cocktail. She seamlessly blends flavours of rosemary, clove, and citrus in this recipe to create a refreshingly tangy, sweet and bitter flavour profile.

## Ingredients for 1 serving

2oz Wilfred's Aperitif

½oz Lime juice

½oz Passion fruit syrup or sugar cane syrup

½oz Egg white

Rose petals

Gold leaf

Bitters

## Instructions

Pour the Wilfred's, lime juice, syrup and egg white into a cocktail shaker. Fill the shaker with ice and shake hard for 30 seconds.

Strain over ice in a cocktail glass to serve.

Garnish with rose petals or gold leaf, and add two dashes of bitters.



# Amanda

RESIDENT FROM 1980–1997

It all started at 248 Sackville, in the heart of Regent Park, where Amanda would watch her mom cook, and relish in the wonderful smells and tastes that would come out of the kitchen. Amanda grew up attending St Bartholemew's Children Centre, playing ball with her friends in the park and attending dance classes at the Community Centre. She's proud of being a born and raised Regent Parker.

"I know Regent Park has a lot of stigma, but for me growing up in Regent Park was a lot of fun."

Growing up, Amanda was connected to her West Indian background through the food her mother made. By the time she was 11, Amanda was asking her mom to teach her how to cook her favourite dishes, like Guyanese Pepper Pot. While her mother taught her the fundamentals, Amanda learned how to experiment with food when she moved out at 17, and started living with her friend from Laos. They would play music and cook together, making their own delicious recipes like beef citrus mint stew.

Cooking soon became Amanda's way of expression. She refined her technical cooking skills working in the kitchen at the Sheridan Hotel, and at culinary school at George Brown. Her catering company, Edible Bliss, takes the essence of her mother's cooking to fuse Caribbean flavours with the tastes of Toronto. Her signature sole cakes are a dish that she makes to celebrate her West Indian background. Although she's allergic, she loves to cook with fish because it reminds her of her mother and Caribbean culture. She gets the spices she needs for her recipe at the Danforth Market, a West Indian shop in Toronto's east end.

Although she no longer lives in Regent Park, Amanda is happy to share her cooking with a community that means a lot to her. She knows she will always see familiar faces in Regent Park, and that this community



will always support her. Nostalgic of her past, she now cooks for the children at St Bartholemew's Children's Centre, "I'm grateful to them because they can go and source any other catering company, but they choose me." She also is one of the vendors at the recently launched Regent Park Cafe at Daniels Spectrum.

To order food from Amanda, go to [www.ediblebliss11.com](http://www.ediblebliss11.com) or follow her on IG [@edbiblebliss11](https://www.instagram.com/edbiblebliss11).





# Soul Cakes

Soul Cakes are Amanda's creation, made to honour her mother's cooking and her Caribbean culture. Sole fish is native to the Caribbean Sea, and is often cooked for holidays.

## Ingredients for 18 servings

- 5 Fillets of sole fish
- 2 Medium potatoes
- ½ Tsp lemon zest
- ¼ Cup mayo
- 3 Tsp soul seasoning
- 2 Tsp dried parsley
- 3 Tsp lemon pepper spice
- 2 Eggs
- Salt to taste
- 1 to 2 Cups panko crumbs
- 1 Cup flour



## Instructions

Peel potatoes and chop them into medium-sized cubes. Boil potatoes until tender.

Season sole fish with lemon pepper, salt and black pepper. Bake at 350F for 10-15 minutes.

Mash fish and potatoes together and let cool.

In a bowl, combine fish, potato, mayo, parsley and more lemon pepper spice if needed. Mix well.

Put all-purpose flour in a small bowl. Beat two eggs in a separate bowl. Put panko crumbs in a third bowl.

Use a ¼ measuring cup to form your fish mixture into round cakes, then coat them in the flour, dip them in the beaten eggs, and coat them with panko crumbs.

Bake at 350°F for 10 minutes.

# Nasreen

RESIDENT FROM 1994–2005  
AND 2015–PRESENT

When Nasreen moved to Canada from Bangladesh in 1990, all she knew how to make in the kitchen was tea. Needing to feed herself and her husband, she had to learn how to cook right away! However, she was a fast learner and it was soon clear she made delicious food.

When Nasreen and her family moved to Regent Park in 1994, she met new people through sharing food. She would bring food to all of her neighbours, and they would share with her in return. She's learned how to make daal and 50 different kinds of kebab from the people she's met in Regent Park.

Life became more difficult for Nasreen when they were relocated to Scarborough in 2005, due to the revitalization effort. Living there without a car was difficult– the grocery store was a long walk away. She felt lonely in her new suburban environment; there was no close-knit community to share food with like in Regent Park.

In 2015, Nasreen and her family decided to move back to Regent Park, and food has been the foundation of her community ever since. "Here, I'm not so lonely. There's lots of people supporting me. My neighbours are so nice, I always have someone to talk to if I want to talk," she says.

If it were not for her daughters, she would never have thought to start a catering business. However, they convinced her that her delicious food was worth paying for. Once Regent Park Cafe was launched, it provided an opportunity for her to sell her traditional Bangladeshi fare to those from the neighbourhood and beyond.

Immediately after her shifts doing prep work for a local school cafeteria, Nasreen comes to Daniels Spectrum to serve her Bangladeshi food. Nasreen believes food should be shared and sees the Cafe as a home where members of the community can gather together and feel cared for. As you can imagine, her love for giving has made it difficult for her to prioritize profit-making in her business.



"Just give me the minimum price. I don't like to take money, I just love to cook."

To make sure that she's selling her food at the right value for her work, her children help her budget and set price-points. However, Nasreen will never stop sharing food with her neighbours, family, and friends at no cost, because for her giving is the true meaning of food.

To learn more about Nasreen's business, Ruma's Cuisine, follow it on IG @[rumas.cuisine](https://www.instagram.com/rumas.cuisine)





# Beef Biryani

Biryani is a South Asian rice dish served during special occasions.

## Ingredients for 6-8 servings

- 1 Kg (5 cups) basmati rice
  - 1 Kg beef chunks with bone
  - 1 Tbsp Papaya paste
  - 1 Cup Yogurt
  - 3 Medium Potatoes
  - 5 Onions
  - 3 Green cardamom pods
  - 1 Black cardamom pods
  - 2 Cinnamon sticks
  - 2-3 Bay leaves
  - 4-5 Cloves
  - 1 Tbsp coriander powder
  - 1 Tbsp chilli powder
  - 2 Tbsp ginger paste
  - 1 Tbsp garlic paste
  - 1 Cup oil
  - 1 Tbsp Salt
  - 5-6 Green chillies
  - 5-6 Dried red chillies
  - ½ tsp Saffron (soaked in 2 tbsp of water)
  - ½ Tsp kewra water
  - ½ Cup milk
  - 1 Tbsp ghee
- Moshla powder for marinating beef**
- 5 Green cardamom pods
  - 2 Cinnamon sticks
  - 2 Bay leaves
  - 4 Cloves
  - 5 Black peppercorns
  - ¼ Tsp nutmeg
  - ¼ Tsp Mace
  - 1 Star anise
  - ½ Tsp shahi jeera
  - 1 Tsp cumin
  - 1 Tbsp dried coriander



## Instructions

Rinse the rice. Strain and let soak for 1 hour.

Roast the species for the moshla powder, and then grind into a fine powder. Use to marinate the beef. Mix yogurt and papaya paste and place beef in mixture.

In a pan, heat up ½ cup oil. Cut potatoes into quarters and cook at medium heat. Remove from pan and set aside. In the same pan, heat a ½ cup of oil. Add sliced onions on medium-high heat and cook until golden brown, then set aside half the onions for garnish.

To the pan with the onions, add green cardamom, black cardamom, cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, cloves, coriander powder, chilli powder, ginger paste, and garlic paste. Mix and cook for 2-3 minutes

Add the marinated beef and stir continuously for 5 minutes on high. Add ½ cup of water, and cook covered for 5 minutes. Then, turn heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes, or until fully cooked. Then, turn off heat and let it rest.

Bring 10 cups of water to a boil and add the rice. Stir in salt and cook for 10 minutes on high. After 10 minutes turn the heat to low and cover with a lid and cook for 10 more minutes.

Remove half the rice, and start to assemble the biryani in the pot in layers. The layers, from bottom to top, are: half of the rice, half of the beef, half of the potatoes, a quarter of the rice, half of the beef, half of the potatoes, quarter of the rice. Once assembled, garnish with whole green chillies, dried red chillies, fried onions, kewra water, saffron water, milk, and ghee.

Cover the pot with a lid and place a cloth on top, tying it tightly to prevent steam from escaping. Cook on low heat for 10 minutes.

# Piyaju

## LENTIL FRITTERS

Piyaju is a popular street food and family recipe in Bangladesh that is particularly popular during Ramadan. Its crispy texture makes for a delectable snack to be enjoyed as an appetizer or on its own.



Four piyaju on with Chola Boot in the ramakin

### Ingredients for 12 buns

- 1 Cup red lentils
- 2 Medium onions, thinly sliced
- 2-3 Green chillies
- 2 Tbsp fresh coriander
- 1 Tsp salt
- ½ Tsp turmeric
- ½ Tsp chilli powder
- ½ Tsp ginger paste
- 1 Tbsp gram (chickpea) flour
- 1 Cup cooking oil (for deep frying)

### Instructions

After rinsing the lentils until the water is clear, soak them in 2 cups of water for 2-3 hours. After soaking, drain the lentils and then blend into a slightly chunky paste.

Add sliced onions, green chillies and coriander leaves to the lentil paste. Add turmeric, chilli powder, ginger paste, gram flour, and salt. Mix well.

Heat 1 cup of oil in a pan, and keep it on medium heat. For each fritter, add 1 tbsp of the mixture to the oil, flattening it slightly. Flip every 3 minutes until golden brown. Place on a paper towel to absorb excess oil.

Serve with ketchup or chutney.



# Chhola Boot

## CHICKPEA CURRY

Chhola Boot is a staple vegetarian dish in Bangladeshi cuisine, commonly made and enjoyed as an everyday meal. It is known for its versatility, as it can be altered to suit anyone's favourite flavour profile, whether that be salty, spicy, or seasoned.

### Ingredients for 4 to 6 servings

- 2 Cups raw chickpeas
- 2 Medium potatoes
- 3 Tbsp cooking oil
- 1 Medium onion, chopped
- ½ Tsp chilli powder
- ½ Tsp turmeric
- ½ Tsp garam masala
- 1 Tsp coriander powder
- 1 Tsp cumin
- 1 Tsp tomato paste
- 1 Tsp ginger paste
- 1 Tsp garlic paste
- 1 Tsp salt
- 3-4 Green chillies
- 2 Tbsp fresh coriander, chopped
- Crispy onions

### Instructions

Soak raw chickpeas in 6 cups of water overnight. Then, strain and rinse 2-3 times. Place the chickpeas in a large pot with 6 cups of water. Boil for 1 hour, then strain and set aside.

Boil the potatoes until soft, and then mash them slightly.

Heat up oil in a pan on medium heat. Add chopped onion and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add ginger and garlic paste, chilli powder, turmeric, garam masala, coriander powder, cumin, salt and tomato paste. Add ¼ cup of water and cook for 2-3 minutes at medium to low heat.

Add the chickpeas and potatoes to the pan. Mix and cook for 8-10 minutes or until the curry thickens.

Serve and enjoy with fresh coriander and crispy onions on top!

**Note:** If using canned chickpeas, you do not need to boil them. Just rinse them before adding them to the pan at the same time as you add the potatoes.

# Ines

RESIDENT SINCE 1991

“Empanadas are for breakfast, lunch and dinner, or even for a little snack” exclaims Ines. Ines started making empanadas during the pandemic. Since moving to Canada, eating empanadas has been a way for her to connect with her Ecuadorian culture. Her favourite take-out place for empanadas closed down during the COVID-19 lockdown, so she decided to learn how to make them for herself and her family.

Ines got her infamous empanada recipe from her mom. Ines moved to Regent Park 33 years ago to take care of her mother. They live in the same building, just a couple of floors apart, and she pays her frequent visits to share food and keep her company. The first time she made the empanadas, her mom directed her and watched as she rolled out the dough, and made the filling. Ines’ empanadas are a testament to her mother and Ecuador.

After she mastered her mother’s empanada recipe, she taught her children how to make them too. Eventually, Ines’ kids encouraged her to sell her empanadas. They started an Instagram account for her, called Garcia Eats, and soon enough people started ordering from her. In addition to catering, she now sells her empanadas at the Regent Park Cafe. She wakes up at 3:30 am every morning to make fresh beef, veggie, shrimp, and chicken empanadas. She arrives at the Cafe at 8:30 am and doesn’t leave until she’s completely sold out.

“Some mornings I don’t want to get up early to make my empanadas. But I remind myself that I gotta get up and go, because when I’m not here, people ask me, ‘where were you? How come you weren’t there?’ ”

Though she’s been a long-time activist in Regent Park, the Cafe has allowed Ines to make all sorts of new friendships. You can always find her laughing and smiling with people behind the Cafe counter while



Latin music plays in the background. The connections she’s made keep her motivated.

Ines is very grateful to her empanadas for how they have helped grow her community in Regent Park and for providing a way for her to share her culture.

“Without my empanadas, I would not be here.”

To order food from Ines, go to <https://garcia-eats.square.site> or follow her on IG @garcia.eats





# Beef Empanadas

Empanadas are a classic versatile Ecuadorian street food. They can be filled with different meats, potatoes, or fruit and topped with icing sugar. Make sure you thank Ines for sharing her secret recipe!

## Ingredients for 10 servings

½ Lb ground beef  
1 Yellow onion chopped  
1 Green pepper  
1 Red pepper  
½ Tsp garlic powder  
½ Tsp salt  
2 Eggs  
Romina empanada dough



## Instructions

Sauté the ground beef in a pan at medium heat until browned. Remove the beef from the pan and set aside.

Sauté onion until translucent and set aside.

Chop up the red and green pepper into small pieces and sauté them until soft.

Combine the beef, onion and peppers in a bowl. Add garlic powder and salt and stir.

Roll out the dough into small circles.

Place two tbsp of filling in each dough centre. Fold the dough over and seal the edges, crimping them with a fork.

Whip eggs to make the egg wash and gently brush over empanadas.

Bake for 20 minutes or until golden.

# Mary Ann

RESIDENT SINCE 2008

Mary Ann fell in love with Pain Decoco as a young child, growing up in the Philippines. Her grandparents ran a bakery out of their house, and she adored eating the delicious coconut buns fresh from the wood fire oven. She began to make the filling during elementary school, always sneaking in little bites when no one was looking. However, Mary Ann never learned the whole process, so when she arrived in Canada in 2005 she couldn't eat her favourite pastry.

Mary Ann wanted to complete the baking education she had begun at her grandparent's bakery. After moving to Regent Park, she enrolled in George Brown's pastry apprenticeship program. Soon, Mary Ann had the skills needed to fulfil her craving. Now, anytime she makes coconut buns, the aroma that emanates from the oven brings her back to her tropical childhood.

Initially, Mary Ann was not very involved in the Regent Park community, something she says is common among Filipino immigrants, "Filipinos work, work, work. Don't get involved in the community a lot." However, in 2015, she saw a flyer from Friends of Regent Park inviting residents to learn how to use the neighbourhood's community bake oven. Finally, she would have a chance to use a wood-fired oven like the one in her grandparents' bakery!



Mary Ann with her pinacolada bread in front of the oven. Courtesy of Friends of Regent Park.

Mary Ann discovered a welcoming group of fellow bakers from different backgrounds, who taught her how to make everything from bannock bread to naan.



She was soon teaching others how to make her beloved coconut buns. They were an instant hit, and the appreciation she received led to a renewed sense of pride in her culture: "We cannot just copy others," says Mary Ann, "we have to showcase our culture and share to the world who we really are."

In 2018, she was a coordinator for the annual Taste of Regent festival. She worked with local women everywhere, from Jamaica to Afghanistan, and sampled all their options.

"It's like I got to travel the world"

As these cross-cultural connections blossomed, she learned how to make dishes like basmati rice, tandoori chicken, and chickpea stew.

It saddened Mary Ann that she was often the only Filipino person at these community events, so she founded the Filipinos in Regent Park Community Group. The group connects Filipino immigrants to the resources available and hosts Filipino cultural events that are open to all.

These days, Mary Ann spends less time baking at the community oven, but the bakers she has taught make sure that Pain Decoco remains a staple on Taste of Regent's menu.



# Pan de Coco

## COCONUT BUNS

Pan de coco blends Indigenous and Spanish culinary influences. The delicious coconut pastry is a staple in Filipino bakeries. They are often eaten with coffee, for breakfast or a midday snack.

### Ingredients for 12 buns

2 Cups all purpose flour	1/2 Cup brown sugar
1/3 Cup sugar	1 1/2 Cup grated coconut
1/4 Tsp salt	1 Tsp vanilla extract
1 Tsp instant dry yeast	1 Egg
3/4 Cup lukewarm milk	1 Tbsp water
1/4 Vegetable oil	
1/2 Cup water	
2 Tbsp butter	

### Instructions

Mix the flour, sugar, salt, and instant dry yeast in a bowl. Add the milk and vegetable oil. Mix until it forms a dough. Knead dough and place in a greased bowl covered with a kitchen towel. Leave to rise until it has doubled its size; about 30 minutes to an hour.

In a pan, bring the water to a boil. Add butter and brown sugar and simmer over medium heat until it starts to thicken. Add the coconut and vanilla extract and cook until the syrup is fully absorbed. Remove from heat and let cool.

After the dough has risen, shape it into a rectangle and cut it into 12 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball and cover with a kitchen towel. Let them rest for 5 minutes.

Flatten each dough ball into a circle and place 1 tbsp of coconut filling in the centre. Pinch the corners together to enclose the filling and roll the bun between your palms to make it round. Arrange the buns on a baking sheet with parchment paper 1 inch apart. Press the buns to flatten them slightly. Using a fork, poke small holes in the centre of each bun. Cover with a clean kitchen towel and let them rest until they double in size, about 25 minutes.

Combine the egg and water and beat until frothy.

Put the buns in a preheated oven at 325°F for 10 minutes. Take the baking pan out and brush the buns with egg wash. Return them to the oven for another 5 minutes or until golden brown. Serve while still warm.



# Veena

RESIDENT SINCE 2000

Veena has been a firsthand witness to Regent Park's transformation over the course of nearly two decades. Her story unfolds from her early days on Oak Street to her relocation to Sackville Street, and eventually settling into a new building on River Street. Originally from North India, Veena carries with her a rich tapestry of flavours and traditions.

Veena learned how to cook from her older sister in Delhi. As the youngest child in her immediate family, she looked up to her siblings. She always wanted to know what they were making in the kitchen.

"I would see my sister cooking and I'd always ask to cook with her. She'd include me and ask me what I wanted to add to the dish."

Her sister's influence encouraged Veena to see food as a way to make people feel comforted and cared for. Now, Veena wears her role as a nurturing mother with pride. Her kitchen is a haven where her children are pampered with homemade delights—each request met with care and culinary magic. Cooking isn't just a chore for Veena; it's a joyful pursuit that she wholeheartedly embraces.

Gajar ka halwa is Veena's daughter Mishika's favorite dessert. Although she was a picky child, anytime she smelled the sweet aroma of the carrots and milk melting she would run to the kitchen, grab a stool, and help her mom add ingredients. She would taste it, of course, to ensure it was just right. Now, Gajar ka Halwa is Mishika's present at every birthday.

"It's become something that gives me a sense of comfort and nostalgia," Mishika says. "I hope to one day learn to make it the same way my mom does, to continue the traditions and memories this dish brings to my family."

Veena's dishes are infused with love, and she revels in sharing them with family and friends. Through food, Veena creates lasting memories—one delectable bite at a time.





# Gajar ka Halwa

## CARROT PUDDING

Gajar ka halwa is a traditional Indian dessert usually served during the winter. The sweet mixture of carrots, milk, and nuts create a comforting and rich flavour during the colder months. It is often served during festivals and celebrations, like weddings, Diwali, and Eid.

### Ingredients

3 Pounds carrots

3 Tbsp ghee

1 Litre milk

1 Cup sugar: (adjust to taste)

1 Tsp cardamom powder:

A large handful of chopped Nuts  
(almonds, cashews, pistachios)

A handful of raisins

Saffron (optional)



### Instructions

Peel and grate the carrots finely. Set aside.

In a heavy-bottomed pan or kadai, heat the ghee. Add the grated carrots and sauté them on medium heat for about 5 minutes.

Pour in the milk and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat and let the carrots simmer in the milk until they soften and absorb most of the liquid. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Add the sugar and continue cooking. The mixture will thicken as the sugar dissolves. Keep stirring to avoid burning.

Once the mixture thickens and the carrots are cooked, add the cardamom powder. Mix well.

Finally, add the chopped nuts and raisins. Stir to combine. Serve warm or chilled with saffron placed on top.

# Afiya

RESIDENT SINCE 2010

Afiya has been a Regent Park resident from the moment she moved to Canada in 2010. She grew up immersed in Swahili culture in Kenya, and has ancestral roots in Somalia and Yemen. Mandazi holds a special place in her heart because it was a staple breakfast as she was growing up. Her favourite mornings always started with a warm, freshly fried treat, enjoyed with a cup of tea.

“Back home we cannot function in the morning without [Mandazi] and tea.”

When Afiya first arrived in Regent Park with her young son, she made mandazi often to remember fond mornings in Kenya. She missed home and mostly kept to herself. Canada was unfamiliar, full of people from different cultures she'd never interacted with before. However, she eventually decided that she needed to go out to learn about her new country and meet people from different backgrounds. She made connections with fellow mothers who were dropping off their kids at school. Soon she was having potlucks with friends from countries including India, Pakistan and China, introducing them to the flavours of her cultural heritage by sharing her beloved mandazi.

“I don't know why, but whenever we meet we discuss what kind of food we're going to make. It makes the gathering special for us,” she says

Afiya's enthusiasm is contagious, and she eagerly invites everyone to explore the wonders of Swahili cuisine. More recently, she has become a part of the Regent Park Women's Social Circle, through which she's formed bonds with residents from all walks of life.

Afiya's story is a testament to the power of food in connecting people and preserving memories. Whether it's a simple pastry or a complex dish, the act of sharing food transcends borders and brings communities together. Afiya's mandazi recipe is more than just a culinary delight; it's a bridge that spans continents and cultures.





# Mandazi

Mandazi is an East African sweet hollow pastry, which you can find in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. It also goes by the name Mahamri.

## Ingredients

- 3 Cups flour
- ½ Tsp baking powder
- 1 Tbsp yeast
- 1 Tsp cardamom powder
- 1 Cup coconut powder
- ¾ Cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp plain yogurt
- 1 Cup milk
- Vegetable oil for frying



## Instructions

Mix dry ingredients in a bowl.

Add the yogurt and milk and mix until it forms a dough.

Knead the dough well until it becomes soft.

Divide the dough and shape it into balls. Each ball should be about the size of your palm. Cover with a cloth and let it sit and rise for about 45 minutes,

Take a ball of dough, and sprinkle lightly with flour. Using a rolling pin, roll out each piece of dough into a flat circular shape until it is about a quarter inch thick. Slice each piece into 4 pieces.

Pour oil into a deep frying pan or wok and set it to medium-high heat.

Put the pieces into the oil and they will puff up quickly. When they do so, flip them. After about a minute, the bottoms will turn golden brown. When this happens, flip them again. Once they are golden brown on both sides, take them out of the oil and serve.

# Fatom

RESIDENT SINCE 2015

Fatom's mom would make malawah every morning. Anytime she smells it now, she is brought back to the mornings in Sana'a, Yemen, when she'd wake up in her childhood bed to the sound of her mom, Aisha, making malawah and eggs for breakfast.

"The smell of malawah is so amazing, it reminds me of my mom. Every Eid I hope to wake up and smell the bread and eggs in the air, to remember her."

At seven, Fatom began begging her mom to let her cook. However, Aisha would resist, nervous that working over the stove was too dangerous for her young child. Eventually, they compromised, and she and her mother would do the last step of a recipe together. Fatom would stand on a chair and add the final spices, or stir a simmering pot, as her mom held her hand.

Fatom started cooking by herself when she came to Canada in 2006 to be with her sister. Fatom would make malawah every single day while her sister was pregnant. She would make big batches, sometimes over a dozen pieces, to share with her sister and nieces, as it was their favourite, too.

Fatom spent a year travelling between Canada and Yemen to visit her mom. She lived in multiple neighbourhoods in Toronto, from Thorncliffe, Don Mills, Finch and Yonge, and Bleeker Street, working and caring for her daughter Aisha, named after her mom. She finally settled in Regent Park in 2015. Regent Park was the first place she could have an apartment alone with her family, and the close sense of community felt like a fresh start.

"Everything is around me, just a step away from my home."

Fatom is part of the Regent Park Women's Social Circle and believes that food is vital to the connections she's formed.



"When we get in line to get food we start talking together. It's a chance to get to talk alone with someone you haven't seen in a while," she explains.

These days, Fatom spends less time cooking and more time making resin and laser art that she sells in markets such as the Ramadan Bazaar being held in Daniels Spectrum. However, she will make malawah for her family for Eid this year. She is excited to be reminded of her young self in her daughters' delightful smiles as they break fast together.



# Malawach

## FLATBREAD

Malawach is a traditional Yemenite bread which consists of a thick crepe of thin layers of dough that are quickly fried.



### Ingredients for 12 pieces of Malawach

3 Cups flour

1½ Cup warm water

1 Tsp salt

¾ Cup ghee (clarified butter), melted butter or margarine

Black sesame seeds (optional)

### Instructions

Start by mixing the flour, salt, and warm water in a bowl to form a dough.

Knead the dough until it becomes smooth, then cover and let it rest for about 30 minutes.

Next, divide the dough into small balls and roll each ball into a thin circle.

Spread butter over the rolled-out dough, then fold it into a square shape.

Roll out the square dough again into a thin sheet.

Heat a skillet over medium heat and cook the malawach on both sides until golden brown and crispy.

Serve the malawach hot with honey, cheese, or any other topping of your choice. Enjoy this delicious Yemeni treat.

# Diversity Statement

This cookbook is a celebration of Regent Park's multicultural population. Each page is a tribute to a different culture and experience of Regent Park that contributes to the diverse fabric of the community.

Due to our short time-frame for creating this cookbook, we have not been able to assemble a fully representative collection of recipes for the many cultures of Regent Park. While there are numerous different cultural groups that call Regent Park home, the largest for which we are missing recipes and stories are the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Ethiopian communities.

The late 1970's was a period of increasing East Asian and African immigration into Regent Park. It has since become a popular destination for Chinese, Vietnamese, and Ethiopian immigrants. Of all immigrants in Regent Park today, 10.7% are Chinese, 6.7% are Vietnamese, and 3.1% are Ethiopian (source?). Additionally, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese are the third, fifth, and sixth most spoken languages in Regent Park, respectively (City of Toronto, 2016).

To recognize the influence of these cultures on Regent Park's culinary landscape, we have compiled a list of Chinese, Vietnamese and Ethiopian restaurants in the neighbourhood.

## Chinese Restaurants



China Gourmet Takeout,  
235 Carlton St

## Vietnamese Restaurants



Saigon Pai,  
482 Parliament St

## Ethiopian Grocers & Restaurants



King Solomon & Queen of  
Sheba, 360 Queen St. E



Peking Express,  
217 Parliament St



Phosome Restaurant  
446 Parliament St



Ethiopian Spice & Grocery  
Store, 368 Gerrard St. E

## Works Cited

City of Toronto. (2016). *Neighbourhood Profile: Regent Park*.

Statistics Canada. 2021. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population [data table]*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001.



# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, this cookbook would not have been possible without our fantastic contributors. We thank them for not only providing their recipes and stories, but also for making their dishes for us to photograph.

We would also like to thank:

The team at Focus Media Arts Centre: Dawar, Dimitrije, and Kedar for teaching us how to use equipment, and Tyrone for guiding us with the layout.

All our fellow classmates who gave us advice; especially to Mishika for inviting her mother to contribute and for connecting us to Mary Ann and Roya for her willingness to help us with the website on the drop of hat.

Aditi Mehta, for the invaluable guidance you have provided us throughout this journey.

We would also like to acknowledge the following departments at the University of Toronto for their funding and academic support: School of Cities, Centre for Community Partnerships, the Urban Studies Program and Innis College.

## IN CLOSING

As we bid farewell, let us carry forward the spirit of community, cultural celebration, and connection that permeates every dish. May these pages continue to inspire shared meals, laughter, and cherished memories for years to come. Bon appétit and happy storytelling!

# Bios



**Arden Irish**  
U of T Student

I learned how to cook from my dad. He collects cookbooks, and taught me that the best recipe is always the one with the messiest page. The first dish I ever learned to make was fish sticks. I remember him showing me how to dip the fish in flour, then egg, and panko crumbs. Once we had finished cooking and eating, and I decided I liked it, we wrote up the recipe on a Q card and added it to a folder my dad had made for me to start collecting my favourite recipes. The Q card is now splattered with batter and is yellow with age. I took this folder with me when I first moved out, and I still reach for it anytime I'm feeling nostalgic.



**Fatom Alghanmi**  
Regent Park Resident

The smell of food woke me up from sleep and pulled me toward the kitchen to find my mom cooking delicious food. Day after day, I would find myself drawn to the kitchen, compelled by an unspoken desire to observe and learn from my mom. Watching my mother's deft hands move with grace and precision, I absorbed each subtlety of her technique, every hidden ingredient that elevated her creations to culinary excellence. Then came the day when opportunity knocked, and my mother stepped out briefly, leaving behind a mound of dough destined to become lahoh, a Yemeni delicacy. In a moment of spontaneous daring, I seized the chance to surprise her, diving into the culinary adventure. With determination fueling my every move, I embarked on the task at hand, channelling my mother's teachings and guidance as I worked to bring the dough to life. I took pride in my creation, which served as a testament to the woman who had sparked my interest in cooking and provided me with inspiration and guidance. Despite its simplicity, that was a significant turning point in my culinary journey. This joyous moment validated my love for cooking and the priceless lessons I had learned from my cherished mother.



**Zane Silk**  
U of T Student

Zane wishes he had a story of daring like Fatom or of whimsy like Arden. Alas, his earliest memories of cooking are mostly of him being told off by his mother. Over time, his mother softened and he got better, and soon he was cooking on his own. Though Zane's mother passed away, she left him meticulously detailed recipes for all the family favourites. He wishes he had the time to make more of her elaborate dishes, such as her much loved Chicken Biryani. Zane has rediscovered his love for photography and photo editing during this cookbook journey. He just wishes he could afford to keep Photoshop after his trial expires!



# Behind the Scenes



Zane sets the scene for shooting Fatom's Malawah



Arden with Amanda, the owner of Edible Bliss, after she has been interviewed.



Arden pins up the flyers for the crowdsourced cookbook in Daniel's Spectrum



Zane looks on as Fatom takes photos of Veena's Gajar ka Halva.

