

Aarti Sequeira on Tacos, Tadka, and Taking Your Time in the Kitchen

Aarti Sequeira, TV personality, cookbook author, and former winner of *The Next Food Network Star*, chats with Martie Duncan from her North Carolina home. Aarti talks about cooking with her mother, shopping for spices online, and the Indian cooking technique that brings big flavor to everything from rotisserie chicken to sweet potatoes. They also discuss Indian breads, weeknight meals, and taking the stress out of cooking.

MARTIE DUNCAN Welcome to *Homemade* from Allrecipes.com. Hey, I'm Martie Duncan, and on this show, we celebrate good food, the people who make it, and the stories behind the recipes. My guest today has so many great stories. She was born in Mumbai and grew up in Dubai and then moved to the States. She's a star today, 10 ten years ago she was making home cooking videos in her home.

Today I'm excited beyond words to have with me the queen of spice herself and my Food Network Star sister, Aarti Sequeira. Aarti is known for her use of spices, and she is known for so many other things, but to me, she's Aarti Party. I'm Martie with the Party. And ever since I met her, or even heard of her, I knew I wanted to be her best friend. Aarti, welcome to the podcast!

AARTI SEQUEIRA Thank you so much. Yeah, I always think it's so funny that not only do our names rhyme, but we had a similar intention when we went on Food Network Star.

MARTIE You know, it goes a lot deeper than that.

AARTI Like you I had — well, you had many careers before you came to Food Network — but I was a news producer. I worked at CNN and I was long distance with my now-husband. He was in L.A. and I was in New York. And I was like, "Buddy, are you gonna put a ring on it or what?" Because we'd been together for seven years, I think at that point, all through college. We met on the first day of new student week at Northwestern and we were just together ever since.

Anyway, once we got married, I moved to L.A. and I didn't have a job. And I just found that I was sitting on the couch. I watched everything until *The View* was over. And then after *The View*, soap opera time. And I was like, "If I get into the soap operas, I'm over." Like, I will not

get up off the couch until like 2:00 in the afternoon. So, someone had given me the *Joy of Cooking* as a wedding present, and I started working through that.

And I would walk to the store because I didn't know how to drive, get all my stuff, walk the 20 minutes back to my house, and I would make dinner. And sometimes it was great, and sometimes it was awful. But I also would be watching Food Network, and my husband took notice. So then that Christmas, he gave me a gift certificate to a cooking school in our neighborhood, and they had the semi-professional program and I did that. And it was the first time that I thought, oh, I could maybe do this for a living. I could cook 'cause I think I'm pretty good at it.

MARTIE Yeah, ya think?

AARTI Yeah, I staged at a restaurant for a while and a friend of mine said, "You should make your own cooking show." And I said, "Listen, I've just been cooking for a little while. I don't have anything to show people." You know? And she said, "But that doesn't matter because you know more than I do, and when I come to your house, it's about sort of you cooking in the kitchen, me hanging out with you drinking a glass of wine. And it's the hangout portion of it that people love."

MARTIE That's right.

AARTI And so I said, "OK, I'll give it a go." And so I started shooting my own cooking show in my kitchen. My husband would shoot it and direct it. And I would host it, and I taught myself how to edit. And it was a cooking variety show. So whenever anything simmered or roasted, we would have friends come on because they're all performers and actors. Or if we had nothing, we would just make up a skit.

And that led to, you know, someone say, after doing that for nine months, they were like, "You should try out for Food Network Star." So I didn't want to because I thought I had watched a couple of episodes of it — I feel things in my body when I'm watching stuff on TV — and so I felt people's humiliation and their embarrassment.

MARTIE Yes.

AARTI Do you know what I mean?

MARTIE Yes, I do.

AARTI Yes, and I said, "Well, now why would I want to do that, exactly?" But I tried out, and I remember I got a phone call. I just sent in a tape. I got a phone call and I saw the 917 number. And I said, "That's New York. I'm not picking it up." And my husband was like, "Why?" And I said, "Because they're going to say they like it." And then I'm going to be...

MARTIE Then I have to make a decision.

AARTI Right! And then I'm going to be on this path. I can't say no. And I'm going to be stuck on it, and it's just, the only outcome I could see was humiliation. There was no other. But I had to say yes. So then I went to New York and I did the audition and they loved me. And I felt like I wanted to throw up. And I came back home, and I was like, "Oh Bran, I think they're going to ask me to go on this ding-dang show." And they did. And that's how it started. And I never, ever, when I was on that show, felt like a front runner. And yet everyone that I talked to who had watched it since was like, "It was so clear that you were going to win from the very beginning." And I was like...

MARTIE I thought it was clear that you were going to win.

AARTI I didn't know. This is a good lesson, I think, to all of us that how you feel in that moment is not an indicator of the truth.

MARTIE Well, and sometimes what you have rolling around in your head is completely different. Your perception and somebody else's reception.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Of something...

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Can be very, very different.

AARTI Yeah, I like that.

MARTIE You're known as the Spice Queen. I know our listeners really want us to get into the food part of this story.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE You've got a cookbook. Is it An American kitchen with an Indian Soul?

AARTI Yeah, that's exactly right. Yeah.

MARTIE That sounds like — to me, that's the perfect description of you.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Except it should have — well it does, says Aarti Party, because you are sort of a party in a person and a party in your cooking.

AARTI Yeah, kind of.

MARTIE With all these celebratory flavors and things. So fun. But the thing is, I think that's a perfect descriptor. You're so soulful — when you describe your food, when you cook. You're so soulful. And so I really want to talk about your mama's kitchen, things you learned growing up, some of your favorite recipes. And I want you to give us some tips and tricks for how we can upgrade our own Indian food at home.

I love, of course, everybody loves daal. I know. And naan, who doesn't like — it's kind of fried bread, right?

AARTI You have to love naan. Otherwise, I mean, there's something wrong with you.

MARTIE But can we make that at home like using a cast iron skillet?

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Is that possible?

AARTI Yeah. I mean, the thing about naan — so if you don't know what naan is, it's a bread from the north of India, and it's basically pizza dough, except it has yogurt in it, as well.

MARTIE Yogurt?

AARTI Yeah. And so it just sort of tenderizes — the thing about the acid in it — it just tenderizes that dough even further. And then it's cooked like pizza dough in a tandoor oven. A tandoor oven is this sort of clay pit of an oven. It gets to 700, 800 degrees in there. And they slap these rounds of this dough on the inside. I have to — they slap it, like that, on the inside of this oven. And it just blisters and chars, and they pull it out with a hook. And then it's a quick-cooking bread, and so...

MARTIE Ooh, yummy.

AARTI You absolutely can do it with a cast iron skillet. You take that cast iron skillet. You put it in a 400, 500 degree oven and leave it there for 20, 30 minutes until it is hotter than Hades. You pull it out using a glove and you put it back on your stovetop and you slap the dough onto that cast iron skillet and it will blister immediately. The thing that I do is then I flip that dough to do the other side and I put a lid on it. And so it kind of steams and softens that dough. So it's not a cracker.

MARTIE And that's got all those little air bubbles. So, it's light.

AARTI Yeah, it is. And it's addictive.

MARTIE It is addictive. When I used to go to Dubai, there was a place that would make it on these big hot, hot, hot stones right in the center of the room and you could watch 'em make it.

AARTI Wow.

MARTIE So one of the things that we have in common is cooking with our moms and learning a lot about cooking from our moms. What is your favorite recipe that takes you back to your mom's kitchen? The thing that you make together, one of those traditional things. What — tell me about that.

AARTI It's probably chapatis. We have a lot of homemade breads in India, and they all tend to be sort of flat because fuel is very expensive there. So ovens are pretty much non-existent or have been until recently. So a lot of the bread cooking happens on the tava. It's a flat, like a pancake pan, almost, or a crepe pan.

So chapatis are a simple bread. There's no leavening in it. It's whole wheat, really finely ground whole wheat flour, a little bit of oil or ghee, and some water. And that's it.

MARTIE Really?

AARTI Yeah. That's it.

MARTIE No leavening.

AARTI No leavening whatsoever. And so you knead it for a wicked long time. And that kneading kind of puts a little bit of air into it. But it also activates the gluten, and so you have that sort of elastic aspect to the bread. But my mom would make this dough fresh every other day. One day we'd have rice, one day we'd have chapatis. We'd go back and forth. And we would split up the labor.

So either she would roll the chapatis and I would cook them, or I would roll them and she would cook them. And so I just remember her looking over and me rolling them and not being able to get them into a circle. And she'd be like, "What's that? Australia?" And I was like, "Yes, I know. It's terrible." And she's like, "It's OK. You know, you just keep — you have to keep practicing."

And even to this day, she'll make daal, she'll make lentils. And I'll go, "I have made lentils the exact same way that you told me to and it doesn't taste the way that you make it."

MARTIE Isn't that the truth?

AARTI Yes. And I'll say, "What is that?" And she said — she says, "Aru, if you had made this recipe every week for 60 years, then you would make it like this, as well." And that, I think, is the thing about cooking that keeps me going, is that these days we're so used to being able to do something instantly. Order food instantly. You want a book? Order it on Amazon, instantly. You

know, they're even, whatever, coming up with drones so they can drop the book on your face, like right then. You know? So.

But the thing about cooking is, it forces you to slow down. It forces you to practice, because there's something about cooking that is untouchable and unexplainable. That only comes from doing it over and over and over again until you and that dish kind of have a relationship and are having a conversation with each other. You know, because every time you cook it, your onions are gonna be a little bit different. Your heat's gonna be a bit different. And all of those things will teach you about another aspect of that dish.

MARTIE Yeah, a lot of times I'll say to people, they're like, "Your recipes are pretty well-written, but mine didn't turn out like yours."

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE I'm like, because I've made it 452,000 times, and it's a touch and a feel. And my mother would try to tell me that when she'd make biscuits.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE You know, our version of — say it again?

AARTI Chapatis.

MARTIE Chapatis. Our version of that, probably. Similar, except it had buttermilk and, you know, some sort of a fat in there. But she would just say the same thing. I would go to roll them out and they wouldn't roll out right. And she would just say, "It's a touch. You will know when it's ready to cut it because it's the way it feels. It's the way the flour feels. The way the dough feels. The way it responds. You'll know." And now I find myself saying those same words, and it is.

But it is very therapeutic and especially right now. Because we're in the middle of a pandemic right now. People are cooking like they haven't in years.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE They're semi-forced to.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE But it's been wonderful to watch so many friends get in the kitchen and try things.

AARTI Yeah, and especially to try things that I think have always been on people's bucket lists.

MARTIE Right.

AARTI How many people do you know that are making sourdough starters? Like, I'm about to. You know, even though I'm not really supposed to eat that much bread, I'm like, I have to do it. And then I'm going to try to make one out of cassava flour to see if that'll work because, you know, the Cubans make bread out of cassava. So there's gotta be a way to do it.

MARTIE That's right.

AARTI The gift of this time — and you have to find a gift in it or else you're just gonna get depressed — the gift in this time is the total and utter freedom to do that thing that you always said, "If I just had the time, I would be working on this." And so that's what I've been trying to tell myself is, what are those things? One of them that keeps coming up in my head, and you're going to laugh so hard, is macramé.

MARTIE Or macramé.

AARTI Yeah, whatever.

MARTIE As the British say, macramé. I'm like, what? Is that the same thing? Macramé?

AARTI It sounds like a martial art when you say it that way, macramé.

MARTIE We'll have more with Aarti Sequeira after the break.

Welcome back to Homemade. We're talking with Aarti Sequeira, who's teaching us how to put a little more spice in our menu.

Listen, on trying new things at home, what other Indian dishes should home cooks try to add to their weeknight repertoire?

AARTI So I've just started doing a cooking show on Instagram. I started just this week.

MARTIE Oh fun.

AARTI Yeah, I'm calling it Community Table because the idea is — I mean, I love community tables at restaurants. You never know who you're going to talk to. But the idea is to take those ingredients in your pantry and to cook outside of your immediate community and join sort of the larger community that's also doing the same thing as you. So I took a couple of cans of tomato sauce and I made chicken tikka masala this week.

MARTIE My favorite. Tell me, quickly, how do I — I want to make that at home.

AARTI So all you — the big things that you need are a knob of ginger and a couple of bulbs of garlic, because a lot of the flavor here comes from a ginger-garlic paste, and you just need a microplane and you just turn that into a paste or put it in your food processor and make it into a paste. And then you need a few spices. You need paprika, which most people have. And garam masala is one I think everybody — that's an Indian spice I think everybody can get behind. Because it's full of cinnamon and cloves and cardamom.

MARTIE Cardamom, yeah.

AARTI Yeah. It's just a really warm, sort of Christmas-y spice that adds that warmth to Indian cooking. That thing that you can't put your finger on is usually garam masala. So it's super easy. That's something that I make all the time.

MARTIE And what are the Indian spices, the really, the basic ones that we should try to keep in our spice collection? What are things that we could really ramp up and elevate our food if we use those spices?

AARTI So in my cookbook, if you look in the front, I call it the Sacred Seven. There are seven spices that you should just keep on hand. A lot of them you probably already have.

So paprika is one of the chief ones. We call it red chili powder in Indian recipe writing. It's a little bit different. Our red chili powder is not like American chili powder. It's just these red chilies that are mostly colorful and a little bit spicy. So I mix paprika and cayenne to get it just to a heat level that I like.

The other one is turmeric, which now most people have started adding to their cooking. And listen, people always say to me, "How do I add more turmeric to my diet?" And I'm like, "Listen, if you want the same benefits that Indians are experiencing from eating turmeric, you gotta eat a teaspoon a day." On average, that's how much an Indian is eating because it's in every meal. Right? A quarter teaspoon here.

MARTIE OK.

AARTI A quarter teaspoon there. So add it to eggs in the morning. I don't know if you can add it to your bowl of Cheerios, Martie, that you have for breakfast this morning.

MARTIE No, but I know I had a beautiful ginger and turmeric drink at Starbucks that was quite good. And I've gotten a little bit addicted to that pre-quarantine. But I try to make it home with almond milk and turmeric and ground ginger.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE It's really good.

AARTI It is really good. And the only thing I'll tell you to do with your almond milk is add some sort of fat to it because turmeric is fat soluble. The curcumin, which is the anti-inflammation aspect that you want to access, is fat soluble. And almond milk doesn't have a lot of fat. So add some coconut oil or something like that to it.

MARTIE OK. So what other spices?

AARTI Paprika, turmeric, cumin in the form of seeds.

MARTIE OK.

AARTI Because we use them whole. And we also use them ground. And the flavor is just unbelievable if you grind it fresh, or at least somewhat fresh. I'll grind a batch and keep it for a couple of weeks. So you don't have to grind it fresh every time. Same thing with coriander. If you're someone that makes a lot of Tex-Mex or Southwestern. You probably have a fair amount of coriander in your — but don't buy it ground, people. Please, please.

MARTIE You buy the seeds and grind them.

AARTI Yes, because it is night and day. The flavor difference is night and day. So that's four. Garam masala, I said. Five. I like to have some of the whole aromatics. So, I like having green cardamom pods around because I put it in my tea. I put it in my rice pudding.

MARTIE Oooh.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Yum.

AARTI It's really good.

MARTIE I love rice pudding. I'm a giant fan of rice pudding.

AARTI Yeah, and especially at this time of year. It's spring. The berries are unbelievable. The strawberries right now are unbelievable. And strawberries and cardamom are brilliant together.

MARTIE Are they really?

AARTI Yes. Blueberries and cardamom are amazing, too. So it just makes any berry dish that you make taste more berry-ish, if you put just a little bit of cardamom in it.

MARTIE I didn't know that. OK.

AARTI Yes. And then the last one, I would have whole black peppercorns.

MARTIE OK.

AARTI Because — and most people have them in their pepper mill — we use pepper not as a seasoning but as a spice. So if you coarsely grind some peppercorns and you sizzle them in some oil with some whole cumin seeds, then you add some onions to that, maybe a little garlic, that is the beginning of an incredible dish. You can put my least favorite vegetable, okra, in there and it would be delicious.

MARTIE My favorite vegetable. I love okra.

AARTI I know, you're gonna have to make it for me because my mom has tried, tried, tried, and I just can't get down with it.

MARTIE Well, I will just say this. If somebody is going to boil it or stew it. I'm not interested. But if you're going to fry it, that's a completely different story. I'm going to try it your way, though. I'm going to add some seasonings to my oil before I cook my okra.

AARTI Yes, and let me know how it goes.

MARTIE I will do. All right, speaking of children, you have two girls.

AARTI Yes.

MARTIE It's Elijah.

AARTI Elijah, yep.

MARTIE Elijah — and Moses?

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Yeah. And I watch you on Instagram and Facebook and all of that. You're such an engaged mom.

AARTI Oh gosh.

MARTIE Like many of our listeners, I'm sure you struggle with balancing work, travel, family, and cooking. So what are some of your weeknight family meals? Because we have a lot more

time on the weekends, most of us. Weeknights are big challenges. What do those things look like at your home?

AARTI Well, you know, we lived in L.A. until a couple of months ago, so tacos were a big part of our life. These girls are very particular about what kind of tortilla the taco is made of. You know?

MARTIE Really?

AARTI Yeah. So...

MARTIE Well, they grew up cooking, right? And watching you cook.

AARTI Yeah. I think Monday nights, often, I would make mushroom tacos because it was vegetarian. And I wanted to do one night a week that was vegetarian.

MARTIE My mama did that too.

AARTI Yeah? Did she? She was before her time.

MARTIE Well, you know, back then it was a budgetary thing.

AARTI Yes. Yeah. I love it. So usually it's some form of taco. And it's a great way to use up whatever is left in your fridge because a little bit of bell pepper, a little bit of sausage. You know, a whole mess of mushrooms. There you go. That's your taco filling.

MARTIE I never would've thought about mushroom tacos. That's amazing.

AARTI Yeah. It's really good. Especially if you — and then I love chestnuts. And you can buy chestnuts in a bag, you know? And so I'll chop up the chestnuts and cook them in a little bit of butter and then add that to the mushrooms. And it makes them meatier. A little sweet.

MARTIE Oh wow.

AARTI Yeah. It's really delicious.

AARTI And then the other thing that I've just been making now is we've been eating a lot more rice.

MARTIE Oh, I think all of us have.

AARTI Yeah, and so I had leftover, just plain rice the other day. And I made an Indian [fried rice](#) with that. And I browned some peanuts and I put that on top and some scallion and I just went in the freezer and got whatever vegetables were in there. So we had peas. We had some bell peppers. Some carrots. And I just mixed it all together. Oh, I had some pineapple because I love pineapple fried rice, and I thought if I put something sweet in here, they'll think this is —

MARTIE Well, quite frankly, I never thought about putting pineapple in my fried rice. And I also never thought about making mushroom tacos. So you're giving me some new ideas.

AARTI Yeah, I mean, that's the gift of this. I mean, for me, the fact that we're staying with my in-laws, and my mother-in-law loves to cook. And she always has a ton of things in her pantry, but they're not always the things that I would have. And so, that's the cool thing. And I remember even some of the recipes in my cookbook to this day are from staying with my mother-in-law and going through her pantry and making something for dinner.

MARTIE Oh wow.

AARTI And it turning out awesome.

MARTIE So with the Indian fried rice, how would we season that?

AARTI So you start off with some garlic and some cumin seeds. And if you have 'em, some black mustard seeds. That's one of my favorites. They're not spicy. They're just nutty. And I happen to have some curry leaves in the fridge. So I put those in and they sort of have this sort of lemony, cardamom-y sort of flavor. So you start with that, and then I put my vegetables in, added a little bit of turmeric and a little bit of paprika, cooked them until they were almost tender. And then you add leftover rice. And you just sort of sautee that whole thing together, finish it with some lemon, some cilantro, some peanuts, whatever you have on hand. And that's your Indian fried rice.

MARTIE I'm making that.

AARTI Yes.

MARTIE I'm making all these things. I never had that. I've never even thought about it. I'm making that.

AARTI OK, good.

MARTIE You know, it's hard for me. I live way out in the country, and a lot of our listeners may be challenged. Is there a place that you can recommend, like if you are in a spice desert?

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE Is there a place I can go to find these things online where they'll ship 'em to me?

AARTI Yes, yes. I love places like Penzeys. The Spice House is also great. The thing I love about Spice House is you can buy in small amounts. So you can buy two ounces or four ounces or a whole big bag, depending on what you want. And when the box arrives on your doorstep, the postman is gonna be like, "What's in here?" Because it's so aromatic.

MARTIE Really?

AARTI It's amazing. Yeah. So the Spice House is a good one. And then the last one I would say is — oh, there's a place in Seattle called World Spice Merchants. And I went to their store when I was in Seattle once. And they also will ship to you and the same thing, they will do it by amounts. So that's also a really good resource. But yeah, the days of — I wouldn't even buy stuff at the supermarket anymore. I would buy my spices from these people online because they're so fresh. You're getting your money's worth.

MARTIE Listen. There's a recipe that I made on Food Network Star that uses a lot of the ingredients that you've just been talking about, believe this or not.

AARTI Uh-huh?

MARTIE Like it uses fennel seed. It uses coriander seed, mustard seeds, and celery seed.

AARTI Wait. Was it a pickle?

MARTIE Yeah. A Pickled shrimp.

AARTI Yeah. That sounds yummy.

MARTIE It is really good. I'm going to share that recipe with you because you have all the ingredients for it.

AARTI I want to make that.

MARTIE It's really good.

AARTI What do you serve it on?

MARTIE Oh, you don't. You don't serve it on top of anything. It's just all those flavors permeate the shrimp.

AARTI Mhm.

MARTIE I actually cook my shrimp first on a sheet pan in the oven, a little bit of olive oil, salt, and pepper, and cook them just to just done and then transfer them to all the spices while they're still hot.

AARTI Ooh yeah.

MARTIE Right out of the oven. And then they sit in the pickling liquid and they suck up all that yummy flavor. But I didn't ever really think about it before. I always thought of it as a really traditional Southern thing. But it's got some Indian flair to it.

AARTI I love that. And I would put that on maybe like — and so the one other techniques — so next week on Community Table, I'm going to talk about tadka.

MARTIE Tadka.

AARTI Tadka. And I think your listeners will love this technique. So it's an Indian cooking technique where you warm up some oil. You put your whole spices in there. So you could do

your fennel seed, your coriander seed, your celery seed. Let 'em sizzle, and it's gonna release their flavor. And then you take that whole oil and you pour it over your poached shrimp. Or you pour it over some sweet potatoes. You pour it over some rice or just a bowl of yogurt.

Now, that's the Indian version of it. But think about a Western version of it. Think about putting a couple sprigs of thyme and some whole black peppercorns and some garlic and sort of swirling that around and pouring it over to some beef or some chicken or some pork.

You know any of those sorts of things. It's a very quick way to take something even store-bought, some rotisserie chicken, and adding your flavor to it. It's called tadka. T-A-D-K-A.

MARTIE Now, what kind of oil should we use for that?

AARTI I would use something neutral.

MARTIE Like canola if we had it?

AARTI Yeah. Canola, avocado, whatever is sort of neutral. And then if you wanted to enrich it, then you could do coconut oil or you could even do butter or, I mean, the king of all fats — you could do ghee.

MARTIE Well, listen, I'm going to come and visit you, and I want you to make me a chicken tikka masala and show me how to really make the naan.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE I want you to teach me some of these recipes, and then I want you to come back and visit me again.

AARTI Yes, I would love that.

MARTIE We'll spend a little bit more time together, and I'll show you a couple of my little Southern tricks, and I'll make you some okra.

AARTI Yes. OK, I'm ready for that, for sure.

MARTIE The okra that my mama would make was so good, we would fight over it. I mean, fight over it.

AARTI Wow.

MARTIE Like, there's only a scrap left in the bowl. You know, fight over it.

AARTI OK, I want to taste that okra.

MARTIE It's good. Soak it in buttermilk first and then toss it in a little bit of seasoned cornmeal and flour. Like a little bit of cornmeal, a little bit of flour, salt, pepper, a little bit of cayenne. And then toss all that together and then kind of make sure it's not too heavily coated.

AARTI Mhm.

MARTIE And then put it in the oil and fry it up. And boy, is it good.

AARTI Oh, wow, that sounds amazing.

MARTIE But I think also is my mama's cast iron skillet that did some of the —

AARTI Yes, yeah. I mean, the one thing that I think I've learned over the past couple years — I'm really interested in ayurvedic cooking. Ayurveda is the Indian healing science. And so that's where we're getting things like eating ghee and eating turmeric. And I don't know if ashwagandha has come near you yet. But, you know, all these things that — all these things are coming from Indian healing, right?

MARTIE Right.

AARTI From Indian medicine. So one of the aspects of Indian medicine is that the actual preparation of your food is the medicine. So whereas we've gotten to this place where we're trying to make a meal in 20 minutes sometimes and then we're like, "I don't understand why I'm so stressed and why I'm not feeling good." It's like, well, because every aspect of your day is stress-induced, including your cooking.

So if we can turn on some music. If you drink wine, pour yourself a glass of wine. Or for me, I drink day beers. That's what I call those little cans of seltzer, they're day beers.

Just drink something that makes you feel good. And then when you're chopping your onion, chop that onion, honey. Like, just let that be the medicine for your body, and let it be just what you were saying, therapeutic and meditative, and let your breathing slow down. Let your heart rate slow down. These are all things that are meant to help you relax at the end of the day.

MARTIE I've been doing a lot of that. Put on the music. Pour a little something. And then cook. And I think it is. I have time to do it for the first time in forever. And I've done a little a couple little Facebook live things where I've cooked. And it was fun to interact with everybody.

AARTI Yeah.

MARTIE And have some community with me since I'm here by myself. But this has been a great joy for me to get to spend some time with you. I hope we'll be seeing a lot more of you.

AARTI Me too.

MARTIE Thank you for being on with us, on the Homemade podcast here at Allrecipes.com. You're one of our favorites, Aarti. We love you.

AARTI Thank you. Thank you. I love you guys, too. Thank you so much.

MARTIE That was the Spice Queen herself, Aarti Sequeira, aka Aarti Parti. You can find her online at AartiSequeira.com.

Coming up on the next episode of Homemade — if you bumped into him in the grocery store, you probably wouldn't have a clue who he is.

CHEF JOHN You roll up lots of cheese in the crust and you form it into like a boat shape. And the inside will have like a cavity. And then you bake that cheesy bread and then you crack a couple eggs or an egg inside and you finish it off with the egg cooked and then you finish it with a couple pads of butter. And pull off the ends of the boat, the pointy tips, and you dip that in the runny egg cheesy center.

MARTIE He rarely shows his face on video, but millions of YouTube viewers might recognize his hands. Chef John of Food Wishes is my guest! You don't want to miss it.

Subscribe to the podcast right now. It's free, and you won't miss a single episode. And don't forget, you can find thousands of recipes, meal ideas, and cooking how-tos from the world's largest community of cooks at [Allrecipes.com](https://www.allrecipes.com).

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Homemade is produced AllRecipes with Executive Editor Jason Burnett. Thanks to our Pod People production team Rachael King, Eliza Lambert, Tanya Ott, and Maya Kroth.

Thanks for listening. I'm Martie Duncan, and this is Homemade.