



# Will evangelize for food

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**H**ave you ever considered how dining together can break down walls? The meal, as a social endeavor, can transcend whatever differences divide us and can help relax our guards. Important business meetings often take place over lunch. Nervous couples meet for a first date at a nice restaurant. When you want to break the ice with a new neighbor, you invite them to dinner. Even Jesus knew he could win souls and open hearts by dining with sinners and tax collectors. Yes, Jesus used food in a very important way: to evangelize.

## Tandoori chicken

8-10 **chicken thighs or breasts**, skin removed

1 cup **plain yogurt**

1 **medium onion**, finely chopped

3-4 cloves of **garlic**, minced

1-2 tablespoons **vegetable oil**

Juice of ½ **lemon**

¼ stick **butter**, melted (for basting)

1 tablespoon **paprika**

2 teaspoons **cumin**

1 teaspoon **coriander**

1 teaspoon **chili powder**

1-2 teaspoons **salt**

1 teaspoon **garam masala**

1 teaspoon **ginger**

1 teaspoon **turmeric**

¼ teaspoon **cayenne pepper**

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>> For the marinade: Blend the yogurt, onion, garlic, oil, lemon juice and dry spices. Set aside. Cut 2-3 one-inch slits in each piece of chicken and place in large airtight container. Pour marinade over chicken and mix so all pieces are coated. Cover and store in fridge for 4-6 hours.

Remove chicken from marinade and cook one of the following ways: On a grill for 8-10 minutes (or until cooked through) on each side basting very lightly with melted butter, or place on a baking sheet and cook in a 425 degree oven for 35-40 minutes. Serve with Basmati rice.

## Channa masala

Two 15 ounce cans **chickpeas** rinsed and drained

2 **medium onions** finely chopped

4-6 cloves of **garlic** minced

3-4 tablespoons **butter**

2 tablespoons **tomato paste**

Juice of ¼ **lemon**

1 cup **chicken broth**

2 cups **water**

2 teaspoons **cumin**

1 teaspoon **paprika**

1 teaspoon **coriander**

1 teaspoon **salt** (or to taste)

½ teaspoon **garam masala**

½ teaspoon **chili powder**

½ teaspoon **turmeric**

½ teaspoon **ginger**

pinch of **cayenne pepper**  
4-6 **whole cloves**

>> Blend all dry spices and set aside. In a large saucepan, combine chickpeas, water, chicken broth and tomato paste and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to simmer. In a medium sauté pan with butter, cook the onions on medium heat for 6-7 minutes.

Add garlic and cook for an additional minute. Add lemon juice and dry spice mixture and stir until combined and fragrant. Add the onion, garlic and spice mixture to the chickpea mixture and stir until combined. Continue to simmer (uncovered) for 45 to 50 minutes or until thickened (stirring occasionally). Remove cloves and serve over Basmati rice.



My husband and I were all over the idea of exchanging good eats with our new neighbors down the block. We met them and their young son on a walk one day and totally hit it off. Not only was I imagining play dates in the park and occasional walks with our children, I was salivating at the thought of maybe having dinner with them. Specifically, at their house. They happen to be from India. And I love Indian cuisine. Well, “love” isn’t a strong enough word. When it comes to the aromatic and savory flavors of the south-Asian subcontinent, it’s more like “passion.” Indian food is my favorite.

So, with enough hinting, it was arranged. The seven-course spread they prepared exceeded our wildest dreams. Exotic spices and unique ingredients opened our senses to completely new sensations. We shared food, compliments, stories and laughter. But that wasn’t all. We also shared culture and, yes, faith.

My husband enjoys foreign cultures and loves to converse about theology. His innate curiosity about their Hindu faith was welcomed and we each learned something about our respective beliefs. Now, we had no specific intention of converting souls for Christ at that moment. But there is nothing wrong with letting others see how happy and affirmed

we are in our faith. And that night, they were visibly moved by our convictions.

Since then, they have raised additional questions about our faith and culture, and I like to believe that some walls were eroded during that first dinner. Perhaps a gentle and respectful curiosity was born in a way that might help lead some very good people to the Lord who loves them so much.

So what was it about food in particular that helped bring us together? For me, it is more than the enjoyment of tastes and textures. It is about sharing the flavors of cultures, history and community. On the evenings I make Indian at home, I think of our friends down the street. The fragrant aroma of distinct spices reminds me of our friendship. It also make me salivate. If you want to try for yourself, a couple of tasty recipes follow. Enjoy them – with friends! ☺