



# Curry classroom

with Bob Arora

Saturday afternoons mean a feast of crisps on the couch but that's Alan Shearer's only food vice. The football man gets to grips with a pan for a curry masterclass

## On the menu: Chicken Sheerah

Curry leaves and yoghurt are key players in this easy Punjabi curry sauce.

**What it's got going for it:**

A nice healthy curry, especially if you use chicken or fish as the base.

**The trick**

A puree of garlic and ginger add some punch at the start and it is worth getting hold of fresh curry leaves which add a nice fragranced touch.

**Ingredients**

**Serves 2**

- 3 onions, chopped
- 2 1/2 tsp oil
- 5 fresh curry leaves
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 2 1/2 tsp garlic and ginger puree blended with a pinch of salt and a little oil and water
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp chilli powder
- 1/4 tsp garam masala
- 1 chilli if you want more heat
- 1 tomato
- 1/2 pint water
- 3 tbsp natural yoghurt
- 1 tsp tomato puree

**Method**

Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the onion, garlic and ginger puree followed by the spices and gently cook down for five minutes. Add splashes of water if the mix looks too dry. You should have a thick sauce.

Chop the tomato and add to the spice mixture and cook until it is soft and blended into the sauce. Add fresh chilli at this point if you like extra heat.

Add cubes of diced chicken to the pan and heat through on a low heat, mixing until the chicken is cooked through and has taken on the colour of the spices and flavour. Remove from the heat.

Mix the natural yogurt and tomato puree together. This needs to be added to the hot pan and stirred in - you should not heat the mixture now or the yoghurt will separate.

Garnish with fresh coriander and serve immediately with rice and naan bread.

## Does he hit the motorway services for a Krispy Kreme doughnut or sneaky takeaway?

in Knightsbridge. When he is at home he's had the luxury of a restaurant come to him - with Terry Laybourne and his right-hand man, Nick Shottel cooking and hosting a dinner after he bid for their services in a charity auction. "Works both ways - it is something great for charity and we have good food and company." That's when he dips into the wine cellar. He's a big wine fan, has a decent cellar and loves malbec and sauvignon varieties. He doesn't really rate the North East's restaurants compared with places like Manchester or London - apart from this curry favourite. "I love it when Bob just brings over a plate of



It's fair to say that Alan Shearer and a frying pan are not natural companions. As much as he loves a curry the reality is that in general it is brought to the table by someone else rather than a home-made labour of love from his own kitchen.

But he's up for the idea of a curry masterclass with his good pal Bob Arora at Sachins in Newcastle.

Alan and his family have been regulars at the restaurant for years, "Lamb makahani and chicken dhal are their favourites", pipes up Bob.

However, this is the first time the footballing

god has gone anywhere near the ingredients himself, you can tell by the way he gingerly holds the spoon and stirs the sauce - and the way he doesn't attack the sauce mixture that gathers around the sides of the pan.

Still, he is an enthusiastic amateur. We meet on a Monday after one of Alan's busy TV weekends. His working life involves much to-ing and fro-ing up and down the nation's motorway.

Weekend television for Match of the Day happens in Manchester and he usually gets back home to Newcastle in the early hours of Sunday to be able to watch son Will play football.

Tuesday or Wednesday Alan might head back

down to London for more punditry on Al Jazeera TV. Is that when he hits the motorway service stations for a sneaky burger takeaway or Krispy Kreme doughnut? Funnily enough no. He is no junk food junkie.

"I have never had to worry about how much I eat but I do like curry, quite spicy - Italian and Chinese food. I am lucky that I travel a lot and eat out at good restaurants - places in Doha and Dubai stand out.

"Saturday afternoon it is a case of lots of cups of tea, chocolate and crisps but that's the only time I eat rubbish", he laughs.

Alan is a fan of fish - blackened cod a favourite. He is fond of Asian style of cooking and a favourite restaurant is Zuma Japanese



## At the stove Alan is an enthusiastic amateur - a big fan of Indian food and keen to learn

starters - it might be monkfish, lamb chops, salmon - it's always great." We get on to the subject of memorable meals. Alan recalls when he was a boy their house was one where dad's tea was on the table, 'five minutes after he got home from work'. He loved his Sunday lunch and even today that remains a favourite. But his most memorable meal was also the most nerve-wracking.

"I had lunch with the Queen and I was petrified", he laughs. "It was certainly memorable - although I can't remember the food - it was a charity lunch for the military and I was there with Lesley Garratt and others - I will never forget it and would never be blasé - it was certainly memorable."

**fq** Bob Arora owns Sachins, Forth Bank, Newcastle [www.sachins.co.uk](http://www.sachins.co.uk)

## in the mix



Clare Armstrong heads up the pastry team at Terry Laybourne's

21 Hospitality Group where baking and pastry production has stepped up since the opening of Broad Chare pub in Trinity Gardens.

She leads a team producing desserts - from cakes, biscuits, chocolate, sorbets and ice-creams to a range of breads from sourdoughs and baguettes to burger buns, walnut and raisin bread and focaccia - for the group's restaurants that include

Café 21, Café 21 at Fenwick, The Broad Chare pub, Caffè Vivo and Bistro 21 in Durham.

**A childhood food memory:** Sunday afternoon bake days - real afternoon tea, loads of homemade cakes scones and plate pies.

**A favourite family dish:** Mam's Sunday roast dinner.

**A meal that inspired you:** Le Louis XV Alain Ducasse Monte Carlo - the desserts blew me away.

**A wine that inspires you:** Sauternes - great to drink and for using in summer fruit desserts.

**A restaurant wine list you return to time and again:** New Rendezvous in Ponteland.

**An inspirational chef:** The late, great professor John Huber, King of Pastry.

**The last food you ate:** Seven year-old Havana rum Bratwurst sausage.

**Your last food and wine would be:** Melted raclette cheese on toasted sourdough and crispy onions.

**Favourite food and wine city:** It has to be Melbourne - so much to choose from and so diverse as well as with great local wines.

**Favourite ingredient:** Good quality dark chocolate.

**The wine or dish you would pass on to your children:** Traditional Sunday roast: great for quality family time together.



Clare Armstrong  
21 Hospitality Group

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