

COOKING TREASURES

Family store caters to Indian cuisine

Often I'm asked where the ingredients for Indian cooking can be purchased locally. Last week I paid a visit to our local supplier of Indian foods at the Tansor Convenience Store and Service Station.

The proprietor, Sukhdev Dhaliwal, was busy sorting empty bottles while his youngest son Paul was filling the gas tank of a regular customer's car. Mr. Dhaliwal or Dave as he is known to his customers explains how and when he started in the grocery business.

As often happened in earlier times, his father had come to Canada to find work leaving his wife and family back in Punjab. When Dave completed his village schooling he too left for Canada. Arriving in 1949 where he took a job in a sawmill at Mission B.C. He worked in mills in Mission and Yubou before starting a mill of his own in Richmond.

Indo Canadian

Joan Mayo



When the Richmond mill was destroyed by fire he returned to Vancouver Island where he worked for a while in the mill at Honeymoon Bay. During a period of unemployment he returned to India where he married and fathered the first of his five children. After bringing his wife and son to Canada he worked 21 years in the mill at Honeymoon Bay.

In 1977 he purchased the store known as Tansor Service on Cowichan Lake Road. Now the father of three sons and two

daughters he continued to work in the mill while running the store and renovating the house. After four years he left the mill to work full time operating and expanding his business. Although the mechanic shop attached to the store is leased to a licenced mechanic he and his family operate the gas pumps and the convenience store.

Dhaliwal's store serves not only the residents of Tansor and Sahtlam but is popular stopping place for

tourists travelling to recreation spots on Cowichan Lake. As well he and his family sell all the specialty foods needed for Indian cooking.

Ask him to walk with you down the aisles of Indian food stuffs and he will be happy to explain the various ways they can be used. Hot chillies are what most people ask about. He carries them whole, crushed or finely ground. For those who prefer to grind their own Masala mixture he has all the whole dried Cinnamon Sticks, Cardamon, Cumin, Coriander etc. for you to mix it to your own preferences. For the not so adventurous he has a curry mixture already to use where all you need to add is the salt to taste. He even has a sheet of recipes to follow and enjoys explaining the techniques of Indian cooking.

When I asked if the newer cooks ever come in with comical questions, he said yes, they often ask how to keep the Roti dough from sticking to their fingers. Just rub a little butter on your hands, explains Dave and keep on trying.

He carries three brands of flour for making the unleavened bread called Roti. One brand is whole wheat, another is a special blend of whole wheat and all purpose flours and the third has a little corn flour

mixed in and is a very fine grind. For beginners he does sell it in small packages and encourages his customers to try it when baking their own home made yeast breasts.

He showed me a jar of curry paste which he explained can be added to the food by those who want it a little hotter. This way if some like it hotter than others just put the jar on the table and let them add their own.

He had a newly opened sack of the popular flavorful Basmati rice from Pakistan sitting near the spices and showed me array of canned and bottled pickles and chutneys, mango pickle being the popular choice of East Indians.

For cooking he carries the cast iron griddles used for baking the Roti breads and even had wire racks to place over an electric element to encourage the Roti to puff-up making it light and tasty.

They're was Rose water and Kewra water for flavoring the Indian sweets and to complete the Indian atmosphere for your dinner party, several fragrances of incense.

Dave Dhaliwal, his wife and family share the duties and responsibilities in their convenience store on Cowichan Lake Road and welcome all beginners to the joys of Indian cooking.