

AN ASSORTMENT
OF CRAZY CURRY'S
CURRIES AND SAUCES



Curry and Spice

CRAZY CURRY IS A LITTLE FOOD STAND WITH A LOT OF FLAVOR BY BEN RICKER

Padma Prakash worked as a prep cook at the Oregon Electric Station for more than three decades, she says. It was a hard pill to swallow when management changed in 2014 and slashed her pay.

Unsure what else to do, Padma Prakash—with help from her youngest son, Jayant Prakash—opened Crazy Curry, the bright yellow Indo-Fijian food cart on the lonely corner of River Road & Thomas Lane.

“I’ve eaten a lot of Indian and Fijian food,” Jayant Prakash says. “Nothing compares to my mom’s cooking.”

Across the street from a run-down smut shop and surrounded by a sea of broken-down cars, Crazy Curry keeps things simple, offering only a small handful of dishes Padma Prakash learned watching her father cook when she was a little girl growing up in Suva, Fiji’s capital city.

“We’re Lane County’s first and only Indian-Fijian place,” Jayant Prakash says. “We’ve got a good head start.”

The location is a little odd, Jayant Prakash admits, but it hasn’t kept customers away. Their loyal following seems to grow steadily each week. As word spreads, Padma and Jayant Prakash struggle to stay a step ahead of ever-increasing demand.

Dressed in habañero curry mayonnaise and tucked inside toasty naan, the lamb wrap is their most popular item. Rich in flavor and balanced with crispy vegetables, customers who order the lamb are instantly hooked, Jayant Prakash says.

Even after recently doubling their order of Australian grass-fed lamb, Padma and Jayant still tend to run out by early afternoon.

Aside from its location, the only thing that feels out of place is Crazy Curry’s name; Padma Prakash’s recipes aren’t “crazy” spicy but perfectly seasoned every time to complement the flavors of her fresh ingredients.

Padma Prakash’s overachieving vegetarian curry, for example, shows off a wider variety of veggies in one bite than what you’ll find on most Indian buffet lines. Carrots, bell peppers, green beans, onions, zucchini, mushroom, cabbage and loads of garlic: all grilled perfectly to accentuate the natural flavors and keep textures crisp.

The key to it all, Padma Prakash says, is the dark masala she imports directly from Fiji. The masalas for sale on grocery store shelves in Eugene, she says, don’t hold a candle to the real thing.

What’s more, Fijian recipes don’t call for dairy, Padma Prakash says. As a result, the plates on Crazy Curry’s menu taste brighter and healthier than most westernized Indian food.

Padma Prakash says she feels a sense of fulfillment seeing customers enjoy Fijian food for the first time.

“People can’t get this food anywhere else,” Jayant Prakash adds. ■

Crazy Curry is open from 11:30 am to 3 pm Tuesday to Saturday at 102 Thomason Lane. For more information, see icravecrazycurry.com

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