

# A 'Health Happy' *Indian* kitchen

By Pamela Tosh  
Images by Rob Piper Photography

**W**ith the current wellness movement making us all think twice about the next bite, restaurateurs can expect a more frequent response to a delicious dish on the menu being, 'my doctor said I shouldn't eat that!', 'my nutritionist would kill me!' or 'it's not part of my diet!'

Having to consider the options of providing a healthier or alternative menu can be challenging and should in most cases be left to the experts, after all it's more than just putting a fresh salad on a plate. The over talked 'holistic' lifestyle, environmentally friendly and green phrases can be daunting and even stifle kitchen creativity but for many cooks that are endeavoring to explore the spices it'll be surprisingly refreshing to note that you can sensationalise the nutritious aspects and amazing effects these dried out herb particles offer every dish.

When it came time for the introduction Yash Bir Singh, Head Chef of the Bihari Group and Sue Visser, Health Researcher, product developer and the author of 'Healthy Happy Eating' hit it off with much enthusiasm – the general idea was to produce a wellness alternative for Bihari Restaurant's North Indian menu. Sue's research is part of an ongoing passion campaign that has taken her teaching and consulting at workshops nationwide. Sue embraces the concept of WELLNESS FOR ALL, a Western Cape initiative starting at local government level that will encourage and inspire department heads of state and schools in the coming months to follow a more nutritious eating regime. Creating awareness and changing perceptions about the food we consume daily can help to solve some of the countries culturally bad eating habits that are inflicting illnesses and disease.

With all the talk about heart healthy eating it may seem like we're trading flavour for health, however, that doesn't have to happen if you know what spices to use with different types of foods. Aromatic curry spices all have medicinal uses. Spices like ginger, cloves, coriander and turmeric have served as medicines to mankind for thousands of years. Using spices to flavour foods and make them taste delicious is proof indeed that medicine does not have to be such a bitter pill to swallow. Ironically, a sick person is usually told to stay away from curries and spicy foods, but, learning more about these 'kitchen' remedies that make our food taste so good might make for a more agreeable diagnosis.

South Africa is a melting pot for its many cultures and Bihari Indian Restaurants bear testimony to the magical experience of Indian dining amongst the mother city's diverse locals. With the opening of 4 venues across the Cape's Northern and Southern Suburbs since the launch of their first restaurant in August 2007, owner Dr David Ross, a dental practitioner by day, has undoubtedly found a winning recipe – an extension of his undeniable passion for people and food. 🌿  
Credit Sue Visser [www.naturefresh.co.za](http://www.naturefresh.co.za)

