

# BC student's Indian food vacation

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Layout and Design

In the past four days my taste buds and soul traveled across the world to India, into the Patel household. For fall break my soccer teammate and friend Drasti Patel and her family brought me into their suburban Charlotte household to truly experience a whole new world.

When we walked into the house Friday night I was hungry and excited to try something new. I have some Indian food background, but *palak panir* and *naan* are pretty much my experience. Either way, I was not sure what to expect.

When we sat down I began to eat my *dosa*, what I would describe as an Indian crepe. It is a type of lentil crepe-like bread with a *sak*, onion and potato, filling. Everything could be eaten by hand except for the *sambar* which is a spicy lentil soup that we used to dip the *dosa* in. My first home-cooked Indian meal was a treat.

I am an avid tea-drinker. I drink it every day so when I woke up the next morning to the smell of *jai*, truly the best chai tea I have ever tasted, I knew it would be a good day. Along with the tea we ate *bakari* with two different types of chutney. One of the sauces was a sweet shredded mango *chundo* and the other one *ataneu* (my personal favorite), which is more spicy and made from pickled mango, chili, mustard seed, and red pepper.

Another morning we ate *bataka pooma* which was like Indian hash browns but rice instead of shredded potatoes. It was a mix of rice, potatoes, and onions with a mix of spices.

The main spices used in Indian cooking, at least in the Patel household, are turmeric, cumin, mustard seeds, and most dominant red chili pepper.

A lot of countries across the globe eat the large meal in the middle of the day to leave time to digest before sleep, India included. For lunch we had some *roti*, tortillas, and a type of *chon sak* filling of green beans and peas that came directly from the Patel garden in the backyard. We used the *roti* to pick up the filling and dip it in another, more cream based and lentil-free, soup called *khadi*. The freshness of the entire meal was more memorable than anything else.

I have eaten falafel all over the world from my home in Germany to Jordan Street Café here in Brevard. This falafel I ate at dinner on Saturday night was different. It was made with green peas and *bajaia* (garbanzo beans) from the garden. The falafel had a hint of ginger in it and when you bit into the brown sphere the bright green center from the beans made me feel like I was eating straight out of the garden, and I guess I was.

After having eaten five incredibly authentic meals the past two days I had no idea what to expect at dinner on Sunday. We had *khichadi* which translates to hodge-podge. It was a yellow rice dish with a lot of different flavors and components. There was a hint of clove that was so different and so delicious along with a nutty flavor that came from the *ghee* we drizzled over the plate. *Ghee* is purified butter that is made by slowly heating butter

on the stove which leaves clear golden oil and a rich condiment that is very hard to use in moderation.

I don't know if the best was meant to be saved for last but I must say it was. On Monday night the smells coming from the stove were unbelievable. We had *pavbhaji* which was like an Indian vegetable stew. It is made completely out of vegetables such as potatoes, onions, peas, carrots, and tomatoes. Something that seems so simple has never tasted so good. With a garnish of cilantro and a squeeze of lime juice this dish was perfect Indian home style meal for the perfect Indian fall break.

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## SENIORS don't miss out!

**Oct. 21:** A representative from Semester at Sea will be in Myers Dining Hall Lobby from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Oct. 27:** A van will leave from the Bell Tower at noon to head to WCU for a Career & Graduate School Fair from 1-4 p.m.

**Nov. 9:** Resume Building for Employment or Internships search will be in MG125 at 6 p.m.