

# Dip in for a tasty treat

Fijian/Indian woman Sangeeta Birt ensures there's always a traditional tasty treat for her girls.

**TAHNAE GOLDSWORTHY** reports on one of her family favourites – bhajia.



Sangeeta Birt loves cooking Fijian and Indian meals.

IT APPEARS to be common knowledge Sangeeta Birt makes the best bhajia as a daytime snack or pre-dinner treat because it's a dish her fellow members of the Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative Meal Mats often request of her.

The Fijian/Indian woman said it was a common recipe from her hometown of Suva, Fiji, that her mother tweaked to enhance the taste by adding potatoes and carrot to the mix.

"Her secret is that lots of

people don't put carrots and potato in but she does," Ms Birt said. "It's different, it changes the taste and makes it better."

Bhajia makes for a light entree accompanied with a bowl of yoghurt for dipping that her children love—when there isn't too much chilli added. "They love it," she said. "It's very common (in our culture)."

Ms Birt said it was a relatively easy dish to prepare but could take time in the deep frying phase and



Bhajia is always popular in the Birt household.

had to be drained to remove the excess oil.

"It takes time to fry but if you love cooking it's not hard," she said.

While bhajia is a deep-fried meal, they were quite healthy because the excess oil was drained and the bhajia contained vegetables.

"I regularly cook dhaal, which is a soup," Ms Birt said. "In every (Fijian/Indian) home you can find they cook it at least two or three times a week."

The soup includes split peas, lentils, water and a few other ingredients, and makes for a healthy dinner option.

Meal Mats runs a cooking class at The Fields Neighbourhood Centre, Glenquarie. Details: Patin on 4627 1188.

## RAITA

### INGREDIENTS

- Two cups plain yoghurt
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 fresh chilli
- Half a teaspoon of ground cumin seed
- Half cup of mint leaves
- Salt to taste

### METHOD

1. Crush the garlic clove and mint leaves and finely chop the fresh chilli. Put all ingredients into a bowl and mix.

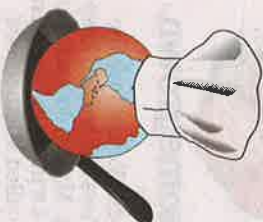
## BHAJIA

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups of chickpea flour
- 2 1/2 cups of plain flour
- Half teaspoon of baking powder
- 1 onion
- 5 garlic cloves
- 2 fresh chillis
- 1 cup of grated carrot
- 1 cup of peeled and grated potato
- 2 cups of finely chopped spinach
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- Salt to taste

### METHOD

1. Heat a pot of oil to deep fry.
2. Finely chop the onion and chilli and crush the garlic clove.
3. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.
4. Add two cups of water gradually and mix well. Take a spoonful of mixture and add it to the pot of oil when hot enough.
5. Leave in for four to five minutes and cook until golden brown.
6. Remove and drain on paper towel and it's ready to serve.



**global kitchen**