



Aman Dosanj collecting micro greens from the garden at Caldwell Heritage Farm. At right, Aman puts the final touches on her Goan Spiced Ocean-Friendly Scallops.

taste or ingredient. When we see similarities, it's easier to accept people's differences."

Aman discovered one of her favourite dishes in Italy.

"I like it when the ingredients do the talking," she said. "I had slices of just-ripened honeydew melon wrapped in 12-month-cured ham. It was served with a small wedge of 12-month-aged Parmigiano Reggiano, and sprinkled with a few drops of 25-year-aged Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale."

The story that goes with Balsamic vinegar is as tasty as the dish.

"It originated in Modena where the vinegar is made from cooked grape must (skins, seeds, stems of the grape). It was traditionally made and stored in attics upon the birth of a new child, and rotated for a minimum of 25 years before it was used. A grandmother may have made some for a grandchild, and even though she may be gone, the Balsamic vinegar is still there."

Some of Aman's favourite dishes are perfect for cool weather comfort food or for entertaining. "The Danish have a porridge called Grød. It can be topped with nuts, local fruit compotes and fresh fruit."

Some other dishes she has come to love, especially when it comes to sharing and entertaining, include spice-rubbed and pan-seared scallops and Scotch eggs with a kebab. (See recipes below.)

When it comes to exotic, flavourful and easy to make, Aman goes for a simple Som Tam Thai salad. When travelling, she often had it for breakfast.

"It's such a simple dish and yet so flavourful," she said. "You take papaya (or substitute zucchini for an Okanagan flavour) and shred it into long strands. Then you bash up some cherry tomatoes, green beans and cucumber, and mix it all up with some fish sauce and cane sugar and chili with some lime juice. Mix in peanuts for extra crunch. It is so flavourful!"

Aman believes food truly connects people and helps build a community.

Indian-Inspired Scotch Eggs

For the eggs:

4 local Caldwell Heritage Farm free-range eggs.

In a small saucepan heat water until boiling, place eggs and boil for 6 minutes (for soft boiled). Remove using a slotted spoon and place in an ice bath to cool. Under-water peel the eggshell and leave to one side.

For the kebab:

250g free-range or organic, local ground beef

1 Tbsp garlic and ginger paste (rough chop equal parts garlic and ginger, and using a pestle and mortar, pound with water)

1 tsp Poppadoms Garam Masala

1/2 tsp Kashmiri chili (Indian paprika sifted to remove lumps)

1 tsp salt (or to taste)

In a bowl mix all the kebab ingredients together. Cover and leave to marinate.

For the breadcrumb:

1 1/2 cups breadcrumbs (take day old artisan bread and blitz until fine).

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour

2 eggs (whisked) for egg wash

Place the flour, egg wash and breadcrumb in three different plates, ready for breading.

Heat vegetable oil to 350 degrees F. Place a sheet of plastic

wrap onto a chopping board. Place the kebab mix, and then place another sheet of plastic wrap on top. Using a rolling pin, roll out the kebab mix until roughly 1 cm thick. Remove the top plastic wrap layer and wrap the first egg until fully coated. Remove any excess and smooth using your hands. Repeat for the 3 other eggs. Coat each egg with the flour, then the egg wash and finally the breadcrumbs. Fry until golden brown. Serve with mint yogurt and season with salt and freshly cracked black pepper.

Okanagan Som Tam Salad:

This is a street snack from Thailand that illustrates how "fast food" can be quick, simple, healthy and delicious. This version uses zucchini instead of raw papaya and should be eaten straight away.

1 firm, local, organic zucchini (shredded)

10 local organic cherry tomatoes

4-inch piece cucumber (shredded)

10 green or yellow beans (chopped)

2 Tbsp fish sauce

Chili (to taste)

2 Tbsp organic cane sugar

1/4 cup roasted peanuts (lightly crushed)

Juice of 2 limes

Using a pestle and mortar, pound the tomatoes and green beans. Add in the cane sugar, lime juice, chili and fish sauce; combine until dissolved. Add the cucumber and zucchini and mix thoroughly using a spoon. Add the peanuts and crush. Taste the liquid and adjust seasoning using fish sauce and lime juice

Goan Spiced Ocean-Friendly Scallops

6 BC Scallops from Codfathers

Goan Spice Rub from Poppadoms (found at the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market) or Poppadoms Garam Masala

2 cubes butter

Parsnip Purée

1 Tbsp vegetable oil

2 parsnips (chopped into similar-sized pieces)

1 shallot (sliced)

1 Tbsp butter

2 Tbsp cream

Salt (to taste)

Clean the scallops and dry using paper towel, then dip the top of each scallop into a plate with the spice rub. Season with salt and then wait until serving to sear using a cast iron pan. Cook about 2 minutes each side until golden brown and cooked through (depending on the thickness of the scallops). Add butter to the pan and baste the scallops

For the Parsnip Purée: heat a saucepan on medium heat, add oil, and once heated, add the shallots. Cook until translucent. Add the parsnips and cover with boiled water. Let cook until soft (but not coloured). Add the cream and keep on cooking for another 2-3 minutes. Blend until smooth, adding in the butter, then pass through a fine sieve, season to taste.

To plate: smear the purée on the bottom of the plate. Add the cooked scallops. Drizzle on top the brown butter from basting the scallops. Garnish with micro greens. **B**

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AST YEAR, Aman Dosanj posted that she was “off to eat the world.” To her, food is family. Food is memories. Food is how she connects to others. She spent the next seven and a half months travelling around the world, discovering herself and making new friends. She also came home with some great recipes, which she graciously shared with *Boulevard*.

Aman and her family moved to the Okanagan in 2008 on an entrepreneurial visa. In 2009, they started Poppadoms, a farm-to-table Indian restaurant. Aman fell in love with creating dishes from local food sources.

“It’s pretty special when you can order organic vegetables from your farmer. It’s picked fresh for you that day or the day before and can potentially be on your guests’ plates that evening! There’s just so much love in the food here and it makes my job so much easier.”

Aman has been collecting ingredients from across Canada and finding alternative Indian ingredients here, so she doesn’t need to import as much from India.

“All my lentils and mustard seeds are from Saskatchewan, I use BC rice from Artisan Sake Maker on Granville Island, and Sunshine Farm even grows this East Indian Basil in its greenhouse. It tastes like clove, so I dehydrate it and use it as a substitute. This country has so many great edibles that it’s really exciting as a cook.”

Aman recently returned from a week in the wilds of northern Alberta where she took part in the filming of *From the Wild*, an online documentary about the Alberta Wild Food scene.

“I got my hunting license and went to the boreal forest for five days,” she said upon her return. “It was my job to add a little Indian vibe to the meat and it was a chance for me to play around, ask loads of questions and rely on my palate. I also challenged the guys to make me a tandoor oven. They did and we had naan on our last evening!”

She adds: “It was a difficult and interesting adventure. I always knew that I used food to heal, but it was evident after this trip how I rely on cooking to slow down and guide me through difficult situations. Seeing animals die is tough. I had a hard time with that. But, on the flip side, the animals are living the dream out there and we legitimately needed food for five days. It gave me more of an appreciation for the animal that just died.”

When Aman travelled the world last year, she was fortunate enough to stay in the homes of some of the people she met. Strangers became lifelong friends, and she discovered a world of delicious foods.

“I calculated I was due at least six months of holiday for the six years I put into the restaurant. It was time for me. I would go to farmers’ markets, buy ingredients and then feed the people I’d meet. My travels taught me that it’s never a bad thing to invest in yourself, even if it means using every penny you have.”

Her journey connected her to some incredible food and wonderful people; it gave her the opportunity for hands-on learning in people’s homes where she expanded her palate.

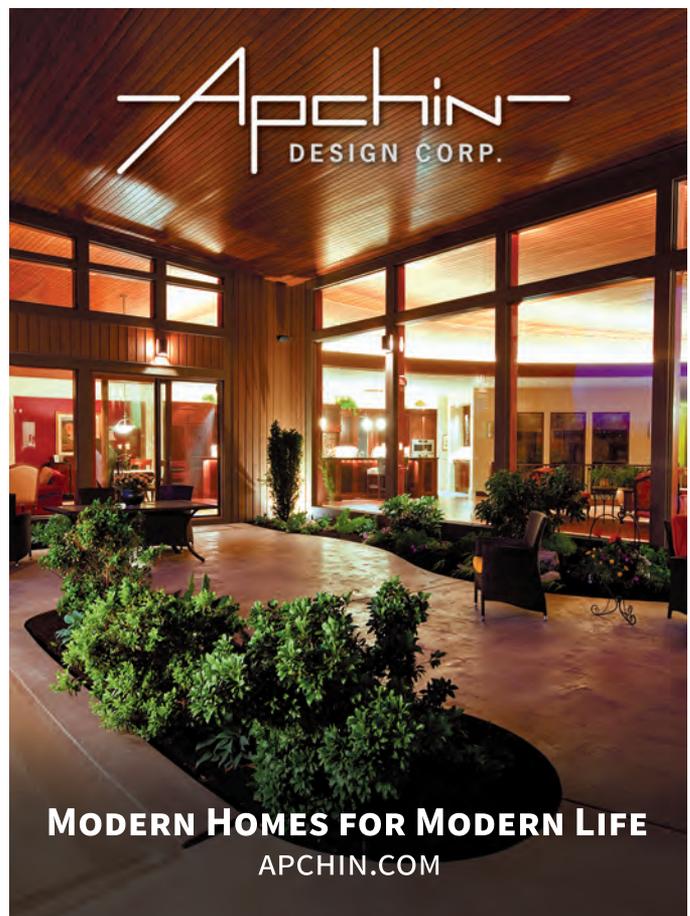
“I don’t think I came across one person that didn’t have a special thing about them. And through it all I learned that if given the opportunity to speak, people are amazing,” she said. “I asked people to share a food memory with me — a smell, time,



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“I don’t want to just feed people. I want to make people think... surprise people, educate them.”

Poetry ON A PLATE

Aman Dosanj's exotic, simple eats

|> BY DARCY NYBO | PHOTOS BY LIA CROWE

