

PRESS INFORMATION

CURRY FACTS

The History of Curry

- The first commercial curry powder appeared on the market in the UK in 1780.
- The origins of the word 'curry' can be traced back to the Tamil word 'Kari', meaning spiced sauce.
- Britain's first curry house opened in 1809, and was called the Hindustani Coffee House, located in London's Portman Square.
- The earliest known recipe for meat in a spicy sauce appeared on a tablet found near Babylon in Mesopotamia, dating from around 1700 B.C.
- Curries have been used in England as far back as the early 1300s, and maybe even earlier than that!
- The word curry has a different meaning in the western world than in India and Southeast Asia, where it means a type of gravy or stew.
- Although the word 'curry' is almost always associated with being spicy, the original Indian curry dish did not include any chilli peppers, as they were not native to India.
- It was not until 16th century Spanish and Portuguese traders brought chilli seeds back from the New World and introduced them to India, where they were found to suit the climate and palate of the local people, that they slowly made their way into the Indian style of cooking. From there they spread eastwards to Southeast Asia.
- Similarly, tomatoes, potatoes, peanuts and pineapples were introduced from the New World by European traders. It was not long before they were put to best use by the population.
- Coriander is also not native to Asia. It was widely used in Mediaeval Europe for medicinal and culinary purposes, and traveled East, where its use as both a green herb and dried seed ensured its popularity. As most people know, it is easily grown outside in the UK.
- Ancient healers often used curry spices, particularly turmeric, to heal inflammatory ailments. Today, modern medicine is beginning to see the benefits of using spices to treat arthritis.