



# CHETTINAD CUISINE MASTERCLASSES

by The Bangala

for Professional and Home Chefs

*Learn Chettinad cuisine from the renowned chefs at The Bangala  
Demonstrations, 'hands on' classes, workshops, background information, shopping and more  
Special package for professional and home chefs includes intensive 3- or 7-day programme,  
accommodation and meals*

*A maximum number of six chefs will be accommodated. There will be one tutor per two learners.  
A certificate will be given at the end of both courses.*



# Exclusive Chettinad Cuisine Masterclasses

## Introduction

Chettinad, in the heart of Tamil Nadu in southern India, was once little more than a fabled land. This was the home of the Nattukottai Chettiars, the traders who made their wealth overseas in the early 20th century and built in their homeland palatial residences that married local architecture with fabulous imported embellishments – pillars of Burma teak, chandeliers of Bohemian crystal, Belgian mirrors... Everyone had heard of Chettinad, few had the motivation to visit. Till, in 1999, The Bangala opened its doors as Chettinad's first small luxury hotel. Meenakshi Meyyappan, whose family owns the gracious bungalow in Karaikudi, created a hotel that scores of visitors now love to call a second home.

## The Bangala Cuisine

The subtle traditions of Chettiar cooking, the nostalgic 'butler cuisine' and Mrs. Meyyappan's own deep culinary understanding have all contributed to a groaning table of riches.

At The Bangala, guests can expect to encounter the unusual, the comforting and everything in between: from crab rasam to Anglo-Indian mutton cutlets; a Chettiar version of the Tamil staple vatha kozhambu to brussel sprouts masala poriyal; the Chettiar speciality mandis to more familiar pachadis; and of course classic meaty treats such as uppu kari (mutton fry), chicken pepper masala and quail 65.

## A Unique Opportunity for Chefs

The food at The Bangala is unique, and now you too can understand the magic! The newly introduced, intensive Chettinad Cuisine Masterclasses give chefs and gourmets alike the opportunity to experience and learn first-hand one of the world's best-kept culinary secrets.

## The programme includes:

- Full-day cooking masterclasses
- All course materials with a signed copy of The Bangala Table cookbook
- Accommodation at The Bangala (in a deluxe room on double occupancy basis)
- All meals and non-alcoholic drinks

## Schedule

Each day of The Bangala Cuisine Masterclasses programme has been carefully designed to introduce professional and home chefs to a great culinary tradition and equip them with the means to reproduce the subtle cuisine in their own kitchens. Days are packed with interactive sessions on the history and context of Chettinad cuisine, the ingredients, spices and utensils required, menu planning, etc; cooking demonstrations and classes; visits to local fresh produce markets – and of course eating the superb food that emerges from the kitchen. Chefs who would like a brief, intensive experience can opt for the 3-day programme, which will introduce them to the fundamentals of Chettinad cuisine and provide plenty of opportunities to master classic dishes. Those looking for a more expansive cooking experience can immerse themselves in the 7-day programme, which, apart from offering a fuller exposure to the repertoire of Chettinad food, also includes visits to vegetable and spice markets, attending wedding feast preparations and other exciting local activities.

### Day 1

After breakfast (8am), an introductory session followed by demos and cooking classes on sambars, curries and rasams (9am-2pm). Time for lunch and an afternoon break, then a short class on chutneys and accompaniments (5-7pm). The day ends with a discussion and review (7-8pm). And finally the pièce de résistance: dinner (8pm)

### Day 2

Following the previous day's structure, the long morning session focuses on meat and poultry preparations. The afternoon will take on vegetable dishes.

### Day 3

The morning is devoted to that fascinating aspect of Chettinad cuisine – palakarams. Classes in the afternoon will cover fish and shellfish.

### Day 4

Classes have ended for chefs on the 3-day programme – time to relax, reflect and depart. Those staying on spend the morning on a guided visit to a local market. The afternoon cooking session is short but sweet – desserts, of course.





#### **Day 5**

The long morning session offers an intensive introduction to that mainstay of southern Indian food: rice, in all its manifestations. The afternoon is spiced up with lessons in pickle-making.

#### **Day 6**

The penultimate day of the seven-day programme focuses on offal dishes and other add-ons. The group selects 10 dishes, and may include anything from aapams and sambols to trotter curry to brain masala.

#### **Day 7**

After a morning devoted to soups, it's time to wrap up a grand culinary experience. Appropriately, the programme ends with witnessing the preparation of a wedding feast, if possible, or making some specialities served at weddings.

# Highlights of the Programme

## **Chettinad Culture and History**

Cuisine is intricately linked with context. And in the case of the Chettiar people, their particular, fascinating history – of Tamilian traders who made their wealth in South and Southeast Asia in the early 20th century, against a backdrop of British-colonised India – made for a diverse, catholic yet distinctively localised food.

## **Ingredients**

Chettinad cuisine shares much with other South Indian cuisines; likewise, the ingredients used. The masterclasses introduce you to these common ingredients, such as coconut, tamarind, curry leaves and the like, as well as those that are peculiarly Chettinad's own, such as black sticky rice, star anise and pepper.

## **Local Cooking Techniques**

Chettinad cuisine's distinctive variations are reflected in, for instance, the multiple versions of sambar and rasam. But even more fascinating are the international influences that the travelling community absorbed into its cuisine – from Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and further afield. Local cooking techniques, ingredients and spices applied to these diverse influences created dishes that are uniquely Chettinad.

## **Grinding Masalas**

Wet- and dry-grinding of spices and other ingredients is a significant part of cooking across India. Contemporary kitchens have moved to producing these masalas with the help of electric appliances but the traditional Chettinad kitchen invariably uses tools such as an ammi kal (a flat rectangular stone with a separate cylindrical roller stone, used to grind spices and masalas). Experience why gourmets believe food tastes best when produced with these.

## **Use of Local Kitchen Utensils**

Other indispensable kitchen tools in the Chettinad kitchen include an aatu kal (a large block of granite stone with a hollowed-out central bowl and a heavy stone pestle, used to grind rice and dal batters), an aapam chatti (a small cast-iron wok-shaped vessel used to make aapams),

a thengaithiruvi (a coconut scraper with a serrated tip, used squatting on the floor), an aruvamanai (a vegetable cutter with a sharp, curved blade, again used on the floor) and so on.

### **Creating Menus**

A traditional Chettinad meal is an elaborate affair that consists of no less than seven courses, each meal a careful balance of flavours, textures and colours. The Bangala's table reflects this delicate harmony at all meal times and the cooking masterclasses will help you design menus that bring into play the guiding principles behind a Chettinad meal – from the simplest to the most elaborate, as occasion demands.

### **Serving Saapad**

The word 'Saapad' means, very simply, food. But to do justice to a cuisine as complex and subtle as Chettinad's demands that as much attention be paid to the serving of food. Saapad is traditionally eaten off that most eco-friendly of tableware – a bright green banana leaf!















## Your Stay: The Bangala

The heritage home stay at The Bangala offers a pleasant diversion to an elegant past with its traditional interiors, beautiful gardens and classic banquet hall. This mid-20th-century bungalow features 25 luxurious air-conditioned bedrooms, each unique and each offering the perfect combination of modern amenities and old-style comforts. The rooms feature traditional Athangudi tile floorings, antique colonial furniture and fascinating objets d'art. Spacious verandahs and a sprawling lawn invite you to lounge, read and relax – the well-stocked library, catering to all tastes and featuring an excellent and diverse collection of cookbooks, further enhances the experience. And wi-fi makes sure you stay connected, even as you keep the madding crowd at bay, in this oasis of warmth and graciousness.

## The Bangala Table Cookbook

*The Bangala Table - Flavors and Recipes from Chettinad*, co-authored by Meenakshi Meyyappan and Sumeet Nair, is a feast for the senses. This beautiful volume, consisting of a must-have collection of 150 vegetarian and non-vegetarian recipes and featuring classic Chettinad fare as well as Raj-era 'butler cuisine', is a necessary addition to the discerning home chef's library. Gorgeously produced and sumptuously illustrated, this is much more than a cookbook – a veritable testament to a bygone era, a delight to behold.

“The book originated from the Mecca of Chettinad cuisine – The Bangala in Karaikudi.... ultimate information for all food lovers.”

Manish Mehrotra, Executive Chef, Indian Accent Restaurant, New Delhi

[www.thebangalatable.com](http://www.thebangalatable.com)



## Your Hosts and Instructors

**Meenakshi Meyyappan** was born in Bangalore but moved with her family when very young to Colombo in colonial Ceylon. With the outbreak of World War II, she returned to India and continued her education in Bangalore and in Yercaud, going on to graduate from Queen Mary's College, Madras (now Chennai). The daughter of a hospitable family, whose table was renowned for its superb Chettinad fare, Meenakshi married into the MSMM family, which was equally renowned for its food. She then lived between Madras, Karaikudi and Malaysia. When the MSMM family opened The Bangala as Chettinad's first 'heritage hotel', it gave her the natural opportunity to hone and showcase her flair for hospitality and to present and serve the best food in Chettinad.

**Sumeet Nair**, an Economics graduate from Stanford University, has worked in the fashion industry for 20 years. Living on a small farm with his wife and two children, growing organic produce and providing a home to rescued animals, he is an ardent supporter and proponent of artisanal food methods and the preservation of diverse culinary traditions. He has recorded and adapted each of the 150 recipes in the book *The Bangala Table – Flavors and Recipes from Chettinad* to fit the needs of the modern-day home cook. A passionate experimental home cook who sources ingredients obsessively and cooks everything from scratch, from dashi to rolling out his own fresh pasta, he is a self-taught gourmet.

**Umayal Chettyappan** is a senior member of the family that owns and runs The Bangala. She was educated in Malaysia and India. Always passionate about cooking, she initially dedicated her talents to serving outstanding food to family and friends. She attended the Catering Institute, Chennai when the world-famous chef, Mrs Thangam Phillip, was principal. She has conducted cookery courses in both Chennai and Dindigul, Tamil Nadu for batches of 20-30 participants and has demonstrated Chettinad cooking for the past two years at restaurants in Chennai during the Madras Week celebrations.

**Sivagami Subbiah** is a younger member of the family that owns and runs The Bangala. She graduated from Womens' Christian College in Chennai. She has conducted cooking demonstrations of Chettinad cuisine for the chefs and invitees of Oriental cuisines/Wang's group in Chennai. She has supervised the preparation of Chettinad meals for groups and at various Chettinad food festivals. She also caters Chettinad food from home.



## Reservations and Information

### For reservations please contact:

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or call **+91 94443 14719**

## Getting to Karaikudi

### TIRUCHIRAPALLI

90 kms - 2 hours by road

Flights from Chennai, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Colombo, Dubai

### MADURAI

90 kms - 2 hours by road

Flights from Chennai, Colombo, Dubai

### Trains

Overnight trains connect Chennai with Karaikudi

### By Road

Chennai - Trichy - Pudukottai

Karaikudi - 400 kms - 6/7 hours







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