

# Stylish Simplicity

Lovoni Walker's new cookbook proves that quick, simple meals can still be sophisticated and flavourful

STORY BY *Kate Leighton*

With her latest cookbook, *Simple, Fresh, Delicious: Recipes for Easy Living and Relaxed Entertaining*, Lovoni Walker shares her lifelong passion for good food. "I love food and I come from a family that loves food," she says. But Walker emphasizes that preparing flavourful and nutritious food doesn't have to be time-consuming, complicated or expensive. In fact, she says, you can have a wonderful meal on the table faster than it takes to cook a frozen pizza.

It's a philosophy that has served her well in her many years as a food stylist, recipe writer and consultant. After working in the food industry in Australia for 11 years, Walker moved to Alberta in 2000. Last summer she not only launched a cookbook but also opened a 1,000 square foot commercial kitchen and photo studio in Nisku, just south of Edmonton. "At Fabulous Food Creations, we do food styling and photography for cookbooks and marketing/advertising companies, we teach private cooking classes and, of course, work on our line of cookbooks and test recipes," she explains. "The test kitchen gets quite a workout."

The first in a series, with future books on health and nutrition in the works, *Simple, Fresh, Delicious* delivers on her no-fuss approach with 85 recipes using readily accessible, fresh ingredients that are easy to work with. Dishes such as Thai-style Beef Lettuce Wraps or Peppered Buffalo Steaks with Roasted Corn Salsa can be prepared in 30 minutes or less. Other recipes include a "make ahead" option with handy instructions on refrigerator and freezer storage times. By providing serving suggestions of foods that pair well with her recipes, the cookbook



*Simple, Fresh, Delicious* features unique flavour combinations and ethnic influences.

also helps take some of the guesswork out of meal planning.

Her Australian sensibility brings a simple yet sophisticated approach with unique flavour combinations and ethnic influences. Recipes like Sweet Curried Sausages or Liqueur Popsicles provide fresh ideas for even experienced cooks. For the novice cook, there's a section that provides basic instructions on how to make your own stewed tomatoes or chicken broth, or how to roast peppers and segment oranges and grapefruits. What shines through is an uncomplicated goodness that can only come from really good food made from fresh ingredients. Her approach may be simple, but her recipe book doesn't skimp on style or flavour. **f**



**Quick Beef and Spinach Curry**  
Curry paste can be found in Asian markets and in the Asian section of grocery stores. Naan bread can also be found in grocery stores.

- 1 tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil
- 1 lb (500 g) beef rib eye steak, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 tbsp (20 mL) mild curry paste
- 14 oz (398 mL) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups (500 mL) packed baby spinach leaves
- 19 oz (540 mL) can cooked chick peas
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh mint
- 4 naan bread, warmed\*
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) mango chutney
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) plain yogurt

Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the beef and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes or until browned. Remove from the pan. Add the curry paste and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute or until fragrant.

Stir in the tomatoes and their juice and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes or until thickened. Add the spinach, chick peas, mint and beef and cook for about 2 minutes until the spinach is wilted and the chick peas are hot. Spread one side of each piece of bread with the chutney. Top with the beef mixture and yogurt. Serves 4.

\* To warm the bread, wrap it in foil and place in a warm oven for about 10 minutes. Or, place on a heated grill pan or barbecue for about 2 minutes on each side until grill marks appear.

