



COOKING

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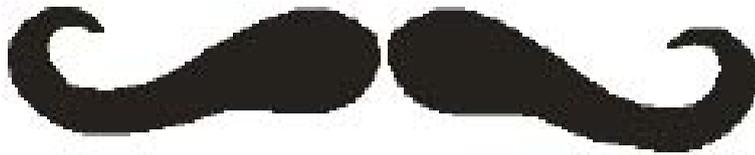
BIGODE



vegetarian / improvisational
peasant / fusion / cuisine
for the twenty-second century



cooking com bigode



vegetarian
improvisational
peasant
fusion
cuisine

for the twenty-second century

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Review

Avant-garde, polyglot, American-born chef Ankur Shah establishes an expat "alternative" commune on an island in Bahia, cultural and spiritual heart of Brasil.

Over the course of six months, the hostel "O Bigode" (Portuguese for "the moustache") became home to a collection of painters, fire-dancers, woodcutters, computer programmers, writers, cocktaileros, videographers, and a few shamans-in-training flown and bused in from throughout the Americas and Europe.

Shah's weekend restaurant provided unity and direction in the form of coconut polentas, zucchini steak sandwiches, mango salsas, carrot mayonnaise, and magical veggie-burgers (to name just a few).

Having survived the Amazon, \$1 bottles of cachaça, and a town full of bewildered bahian carnivores, Shah takes to penning his memoirs and recipes somewhere high above the Atlantic Ocean en route to India for his next experiment.

The result is "Cooking Com Bigode", a hundred-odd pages of intrigue, wisdom, and fabulous recipes straight from the helmsman of the bigode crew. A modern Kerouac of sorts, Shah's "On the Kitchen", with grassroots editions published independently in India and New York, bends the traditional recipe book into a deliciously tangential, intensely personal work which will have you smiling and laughing your way from rice and beans to passion fruit hummus and back again.

A wonderful first-effort from internationally-visited, Stanford-educated Shah, "Cooking Com Bigode" is a treatise on holistic, mostly-vegetarian cooking set in the context of a modern day summer of love in tropical Brasil. [Product Description](#)

Cooking com Bigode is a twisted mustache of modern recipes and ancient wisdom. the cuisine is vegetarian and international -- Indian, Mexican, Thai, Chinese, French, Amerikan, South American. The style is personal, relaxed, and holistic. for each recipe the general theory (pattern) is explained and variations are offered.

It is the vegetarian practice of the proverb: "Teach a man to cook a fish and he will eat fish forever".

You will learn The Jazz. how to improvise, how to see food and cooking and personal relationships from a twenty-second century perspective. The twenty-second century, of course, is the century of love.

Contents

0	some preliminary notes	1
1	feijão . arroz . mango salsa . picante	7
2	zucchini steaks . coconut-wheat bread . passionfruit hummus . tomato salad	21
3	stirfried vegetables . coconut polenta . cabbage slaw	41
4	chana masala . chapattis . cilantro-peanut chutney . carrot salad . raitu	59
5	veggie burgers . buns . ratatouille . carrot mayonnaise . condi- ments	73
6	stuffed peppers . couscous . roasted tomato salsa	85
7	squash and potato empadas . pico de gallo . carrot hummus	97
8	beet soup . texas caviar	113
9	some brasilian favorites	121



Preface

Prepare to meet a recipe book unlike any other you've ever read. I don't mean to embark immediately on flights of hyperbole here in this preface to the alchemical stew that awaits, but in this case, I'm simply calling it like it is. Give it a chapter and tell me you're not a convert.

The Bigode restaurant flourished briefly on the Island of Itaparica off the coast of Salvador in the Brazilian state of Bahia between September 2004 and February 2005. As a real honest-to-God attempt at founding a restaurant in which spontaneity and improvisation ruled the day, the Bigode certainly veered between successful orbit and meteoric collision. Imagine attempting to found a flowering vegetarian establishment in the dense overgrowth of the most militantly carnivorous environs imaginable. (Brings to mind the subtle realm mantra "Location, Location, Location...") On top of its, say it, out of place vegetarian aspirations, the Bigode also attempted to usher in a new era of idealistic gift-economy relations by posting no prices for its offerings and accepting donations only in exchange for its love-crafted foodstuffs. You can probably fill in the gory details for yourself. Each weekend, the Bigode opened for business around noon and offered piping hot vittles straight through to nightfall. Most weekends, the clientele consisted of one or two friends of the proprietors and perhaps the occasional hapless local inquiring about beef stew or the like. As has so often been the case with trailblazing artists and explorers, the true genius of the Bigode did not gain wide recognition during its brief passage through space-time.

With this book, the recipes of the Bigode, nearly lost to history's compost bin, are preserved for posterity. The dishes you're about to digest are all, without doubt, miraculous, battle tested and nutritionally complete.

You'll quickly notice upon perusing the ensuing incantations that the author of

this work places much emphasis on experimentation, variation and attenuation to the moment in which the dish in question arises in universal awareness. I hope you aren't too troubled by this—for it is the way of things, always has been, and it's time we accept the unique demands of the present moment in spite of its seemingly infinite repetition of the motifs of the past. Where most recipe books include helpful quantities like $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, in this manual you'll often encounter the mysterious cypher XXXX. Some readers might be inclined to feel adrift and listless in the face of such unspecificity. Don't!! There's method to this madness, just as all the swear words to come are perfectly justified depending on context and authorial intention.

Also, dogmas (doctrinas in the much preferable Brazilian Portuguese) won't last long in confrontation with the avant garde recipe-forms to come. If you find yourself preferring rigidity to the tensile give of the finest trees/skyscrapers/-suspension bridges, you'd do well to trust, let go and let God. You'll be happy you did.

So, jettison your preconceptions and prepare to confront your kitchen for what may well be the very first time. While the Bigode may never have located its local following in large enough numbers to support its long-term plans, we have preserved before us in the form of this recipe book the beautiful seeds from which all further Bigodes shall spring forth. With a little close attention, some locally available produce and the will to adventure, this guidebook will carry you through to glory.

Also, for those who are interested, Bigode means “moustache.” As in: What's a vegetarian moustache like you doing in this bastion of carnivorousity??

Free your minds, intrepid chefs of the New Time.



some preliminary notes towards the
construction of bigodean recipes

0.1 some preliminary notes

the point of this cookbook, as much as to communicate a sense of the style and content of O Bigode, is to bring the means of Culinary Revolution to the masses. it comes out of a deep discomfort i have with the modern food system (and the social system in general): a feeling of loss and betrayal that we've allowed so ancient and sacred a ritual to be colonized by people, machines, processes, and world-views totally alien to us.

as always, you have had the power all along, and i'm just doing what i can to demonstrate that. as such, i have tried to make the recipes herein independent of time, place, wealth, or social scene. most probably don't even require fire, and only seldom do i proclaim an ingredient to be mandatory. our foods, in dialogue with our emotions, change in texture and temperament with the days and seasons — i see these recipes as mere pattern to help you organize what comes home from the market each particular sunny afternoon.

0.2 equipment

i do suggest some tools, primarily to help you fit these recipes (which many might find complicated and challenging) into the rhythms of your everyday life. canned beans, packaged spices, and prepared pestos have no place in the world we're creating, and the small investments you may choose to make will ultimately save you hundreds of points and hours.

a knife and knife sharpener buy a knife that can be sharpened. you do not need a fancy or expensive knife, but a knife that you can make sharp at will.

a cutting board many cultures hold their produce in one hand and cut with the other. if you try this you will hurt yourself. get or make a large one.

a strainer for making tea, juicing lemons, and draining beans. not necessary but saves a lot of stress when Everything is happening at once.

a mortar and pestle a heavy, metal mortar and pestle from the local indian store. wooden ones get tainted by garlic. a must for catalyzing fresh and fragrant spices. generally, you will toast your spices (without oil) on high heat until they change color, then pour into the mortar and pestle to pound into dust. the mortar also serves to mash together garlic, ginger, onion, and green chiles for curries, to crush peanuts or walnuts, and to grind rock salt and peppercorns.

a pressure cooker fundamental. the one thing you have to buy. people who don't have pressure cookers waste half of their lives waiting for protein or end up building up mini tin reserves and probably supporting the war. it might run you fifty dollars but goddammit it's worth it. to use, first soak your beans overnight (or four hours) in water. the more often you change the water, the less magic bean gas you will experience. drain your

soaked beans and place in the pressure cooker with fresh water. cover the beans and then some. bring the pot up to pressure (there are different styles) and cook until it whistles a few times or otherwise indicates the beans are ready. let the pressure cooker cool gently before opening. it's important to understand that the pcooker is a powerful spirit and should be treated as such. do not misuse or disrespect it in any way because IT WILL HURT YOU. honor and respect the pcooker.

a robot often called a food processor. also extremely helpful. if you have a large (i mean large) mortar and pestle that can work but the robot might just be the third joyous invention of the twentieth century (*pace* dr. walter vogt) and i suggest you get one. for making hummus, soups, pâtés, and salsas, it's truly extraordinary. competing memes might point to a blender or a salsa-maker — the former isn't powerful or wide enough and the latter, while being a narrow manifestation of miracle in its own right, only works for (tomato and onion) salsa.

0.3 specialty foods

while, programmatically and philosophically, i generally suggest making everything from scratch and doing without those ingredients only available in the dying oil economy, there are a few really wonderful luxuries worth buying, in cans, from far-away locales. they are:

chipotle peppers in adobo sauce unless you can get them dry for cheaper (i doubt it)

coconut milk again, if you don't have coconut palms nearby

soy or tamari sauce you can make sure it's 100% soy or you can give in to the reality that in most countries it will be cheap, wheat-based, kind of nasty, and still wonderful.

0.4 what you will not find in this book and why

desserts we ate and served fruit. mangos, papaya, passionfruit, coconut, guava, tamarind, jambu, starfruit, etc.

mushrooms we couldn't find any except at the bourgie markets. and we love them. just love them. like dolphins.

pasta everybody can make it. and it's not vegan.

drinks there were too many to list. they can be found in the forthcoming companion volume:

“My Brother Drinks: O Bigode Cocktail Hour”
by kevin panozzo and erikki uzureau

0.5 acknowledgements for the 1st new york edition

this book is dedicated to our mothers, **bharti** and **madonna**.

madonna is managing the distribution and sales from tennessee. thanks, madonna. **george** in nashville stayed up all night printing. thanks, george. **erik**, **max**, and **matt** did the editing. erik thought up the glossary. max drew up the artwork. matt did up Everything Else. thanks, brothers.

either **amanda** or **cholmes** dreamt the idea for a Bigode cookbook. amanda and i worked and played together in a Bigode kitchen. cholmes promised a Bigode tatoo. thanks, amanda. thanks, cholmes. **kevin** and **caitlin** kept me honest to myself. thanks, kevin. thanks, caitlin.

ultimately, all praise go to **Amazon** and all errors stay here with me. thanks, Amazon. we love you.



refried feijão vermelho e arroz vermelho
accompanied willfully by mango salsa
and the standard brasilian table hot

1.1 red rice

according to the kama sutra, if i recall, there are sixty-four tasks or talents a courtesan must be able to perform with superior skill, and *one* of them is to prepare rice in 40 different ways. the most simple – no matter what your color or size of rice is — is boiling.

- 1 cup of rice
- 2 cups of water

the longer and browner (the more hull each grain has, the more mass, the more density) your rice, the more water you will need. really short white rounded grains (which you shouldn't really be using if you have a choice) will need less. so a really long grain brown rice could take $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of water, and sushi rice takes just $1\frac{1}{2}$.

IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER THOUGH because this method replaces the care of measuring with the care of attention. once you've figured it out for your particular rice you can resume the cruise control you've been c(l/r)utching this whole damn time.

if the rice looks like it might have some teeth-breaking rocks in it, like the organic red rice we bought in brasil, sift through it in a pizzapan to remove any offenders. if it looks web-y, dirt-y, or otherwise like it came directly from the earth, rinse it.

place it with the water to boil on high heat. i add a little bit of fat (oil or butter) and salt. this serves to keep the rice from sticking and to bring out a bit of flavor, but mainly it's a ritual. you can add anything you want — cloves, soy sauce, bacon bits, whatever.

when the water boils, reduce the heat to a simmer and cover. the rice will steam and absorb the water. if you have done the proportions perfectly, after a certain mystical amount of time

- a) all the water will be gone
- b) the rice will be perfectly cooked

most likely this will not be the case. when you check (and don't wait too long because you can't unburn it), you will compare the amount of water left with the amount the rice needs to cook. if it's basically done and there's still water swishing around, all you have to do is pour the water out of the pan and set it back to keep cooking. if the water's almost gone and the rice is still raw, all you have to do is add some water. it helps to add the water in small batches so it can be heated without lowering the temperature of the rice too much.

since you've already ruined the steampressure situation by checking the rice, take a few seconds to stir it against burning or sticking. you'll get a good sense of its moisture as you do this.

know that even after you turn the heat off the rice will continue to cook and absorb a little more water, so if you check it a little later, it's already done and there's a bunch of water, **EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT**. drain the rice well (use a strainer if you have to) and then set it back in the pan with the lid on to finish. don't check it again until you eat to demonstrate your faith.

1.1.1 the *pattern* underneath arroz vermelho

- the basic outline for boiling rice is:
 1. heat an empty pan
 2. add some sort of lubricant
 3. add the rice
 4. add the liquid (usually 2:1) with salt
 5. turn down the heat when the water is boiling; cover
 6. let steam to perfection, turn off, fluff.
- in a standard boiled rice you don't necessarily have to add butter or oil (step 2) though it does help with sticking, especially for white rice (more glutinous).
- in between many of these steps you can add spices or other vegetables to cook with your rice. they should be added according to hardness — potatoes at the beginning, greens at the end. spices which require browning can be added between steps 2-3 to roast and release their flavors into the oil.
- remember that you can mix different types of rice together, or even rice with other grains (see chapter six). also, keep your mind open to the notion that liquid is not necessarily synonymous with water: you can use old soup, vegetable stock, the cooking water from beets or potatoes, some milk, coconut milk, tea, coffee etc. alcohol is also popular (like in risotto), and while i've never found much of a taste difference, it looks great on a menu (... accompanied by a georgian wild rice earnestly simmered in a white wine reduction ...)
- soaking the rice for a few hours (or overnight) will greatly reduce the cooking time, because the rice will already have absorbed a significant amount of water. it's another way that a little bit of work (perhaps 30 seconds) the night before can save you ten minutes of cooking while hungry the next day. this is a cornerstone of my argument against the supposed economy of "fast food" — the food is not actually cooked or prepared any faster; *you*, as a narrow alienated individual, have to deal with it less. to compete with that mentality (and compete we should, because who wants

to wait an hour for dinner after spending all day working for the man), you must learn a handful of slight and clever tricks to save yourself that precious illusion they call time. all this and more in pamphlet “how and why to fuck the system by cooking your own food (and your neighbors’ goddammit)”, coming out later on in the kaliyuga.

1.1.2 variations on red rice

clove or cinnamon pulão

the first and simplest rice i learned how to make was an indian pulão, which follows the technique outlined above with these variations —

- use long grain basmati rice if you can get it
- the rice is generally soaked and rinsed ahead of time
- one uses ghee in step 2
- you throw in a few whole black peppercorns and whole cloves with the rice and water

this can also be made with brown basmati. it has the perfumed aroma of the basmati with added sweet accents of black pepper and clove.

cinnamon perfumed rice is made in a similar way, except that i’ll sauté a cinnamon stick (broken into two or three removable pieces) in the butter for a few minutes before adding the rice and water. for an added kick you can add a $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of ground cinnamon to the water as well.

my mom will typically stir in a little butter at the end and if you’re ever trying to impress some non-vegans, you should follow her lead.

magic yellow rice

this simplest variation is merely to add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of turmeric to the water when cooking any white rice. turmeric is a powerful spice, medicine, and dye, and even a tiny amount will dye the entire pot of rice yellow, a boon for those mindful of plating aesthetics.

magic purple rice

another simple variation puts one diced beet into the water with the rice. the cooking beet will turn the entire pot of rice purple, which most people have never even imagined, must less witnessed, in their mortal histories. the sweet beet flavor goes well with the clove/pepper pulão variation above.

ghee (hindi) : clarified butter

sweet potato biriyani

sweet potatoes were always in the market, though never very good. but sometimes you get tired enough to use them. this recipe works equally well with yams, and likely tastes much better.

- 1 large starchy tuber
- 1 carrot
- 2 cups of rice
- 4 cups of water
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons of raw peanuts
- cinnamon
- clove
- black pepper
- butter or oil

prepare to boil the rice as suggested above. grind together the spices (or get them ground if you don't have the means of production to do it at home) and sauté them for a minute in the butter. add the rice and stir well with the butter and spices, allowing it to toast lightly before adding the liquid. with the liquid add the sweet potato, chopped into bite-sized chunks, as well as the bay leaves and peanuts. when the rice reaches a boil add the carrot in small diced cubes, simmer down, and cover.

fatty coconut rice

replace half of your cooking water with coconut milk, stir well in the beginning to avoid scorching, and cook normally. adding a bit of mango purée or diced mango will give added sweetness and bring further to mind the Absolute Perfection of the tropical world. a bit of toasted coconut or almond makes an excellent garnish.

for a fatty rice experience without the coconut pricetag, try using milk, half and half, evaporated milk, or condensed milk for some fraction of the cooking liquid.

spanish-style fried rice

there are two types of rice commonly called fried rice. the first one rolls the rice around, still dry, with spices and onions to the point of browning, then dramatically takes down the temperature using the cooking liquid.

- 1 diced onion

- some celery (optional)
- a mix of cayenne pepper, cumin, paprika, and oregano
- 2 cups of rice
- 4 cups of water
- salt

use something closer to a frypan than a pot for this variation. start by heating one tablespoon of oil in the pan and add the rice when hot. continue to flip and stir the rice, coating it with the oil. when it starts to look a little drier, add the spices and stir together. as the temperature will be hot, they should release their flavors and start to perfume quickly. when the rice begins to brown, add your onion and celery. this will take down the heat a little bit, buying more time for the onions to cook and the spices to develop before the rice wants to burn. when the rice starts to brown yet again, add the cooking liquid. using vegetable stock or chopped tomatoes (maybe from a can, even!) makes an appreciable difference. simmer when it boils and stir occasionally — the tomatoes and red spices should give the familiar orange color.

the cheesily minded should not pass up the opportunity to sprinkle the rice with cheese when it's almost done, and either cover or broil to melt it.

chinese-minded fried rice

this recipe follows the second type of fried rice i have encountered. it's a recycling process of yesterday's dinner into today's lunch, and the only chinese connection i can imagine is that it works best with soy sauce.

- leftover rice
- some cooking oil
- onions
- garlic
- soy sauce
- sesame seeds
- perhaps an egg

heat oil in a pan and chop your onions and garlic. fry them on medium heat until translucent. while they are frying add a little water and soy sauce to the rice container and break up the chunks with your fingers. when the onions are translucent add the rice and turn up the heat, stirring vigorously to separate the rice and mix well with your spices. if you eat eggs, break in an egg or two at the end, throw in a couple shakes of sesame seeds, and continue cooking (back to medium heat) until done.

this is an excellent rice to accept chopped greens (spinach, beet greens, chard) as well, just before you would add the egg.