



## Biography

Gita Mistry was born on April 23rd 1968 in Bradford, West Yorkshire to Indian parents who had come to the UK via Tanzania, having married when Gita's mother was just 13 and her father 20.

At school, Gita didn't really fit into the constraints of academia as she was a creative child who preferred the more artistic subjects. She loved music and yearned to learn to play the piano, but her parents could not afford the tuition fees, so Gita used to sit on the hedge outside the local piano teacher's window and watch other children learn. The first record Gita bought with her pocket money was Beethoven's Symphony in C Minor! She also loved Indian music and tried her hand at playing the tabla drums, a popular Indian two piece percussion instrument, consisting of a pair of drums used in classical music of the Indian Sub continent. Music continues to inspire Gita, allowing her to relax, keep focused and be creative.

Some of Gita's earliest memories were of her mother drying spices in the sun and spending a whole day grinding them together on a large silver plate, before storing them into her special spice tins, each with a number of compartments. Gita was often known to 'borrow' these tins and to be found at a neighbour's house, cooking a meal for all the family.

Gita was a keen sports woman and went on to represent England in 1984 at the World Schools' Volleyball Championships. Once her playing days were over, she coached at a local university.

Her love of music and performance naturally led Gita into the world of dance - from Indian folk to salsa - and drama, although the latter was not encouraged in a young Asian woman.

After leaving school at 18, Gita pursued a career in retail, though was soon lured into the public service arena, firstly as a part time development officer at the local community centre, before moving on to Bradford City Council, where she worked in social services.

Gita's world fell apart in 1999 when she lost her fiancée to a sudden illness. It took her a long time to come to terms with such a loss and to start to discover herself as a single woman again.

In 2001 Gita auditioned for and won the part of Carol in Willy Russell's 'Stags and Hens' at the Theatre in the Mill, Bradford. Following this, the big stage of London beckoned, with Gita going to London to audition for a part in Bombay Dreams. Following a spell at the Yorkshire Playhouse in four different Bollywood dance pieces, she was spotted in a pilot BBC3 movie, though it was now time for Gita to re-evaluate her life and ambitions.

Having been a performer of one sort or another all her life, Gita decided that she preferred to present rather than to act. The decision was made; why not present food - her lifetime's passion!

In 2007 Gita took part in BBC 2's newest and exciting TV cookery series, Eating with the Enemy - a nationwide cookery competition presented by James Martin. After much anticipation, the show aired in summer 2008, Gita came out of the kitchen triumphant and could finally be named publicly as the Home Cook Champion. Gita received a wealth of compliments from the show's judges, some of Britain's best known and toughest food critics: Jay Rayner of The Observer, Toby Young of the Evening Standard, Charles Campion, author of The London Restaurant Guide and Kate Spicer, a freelance food critic. One even went so far as to describe a dish of Gita's as "better than sex"!

Gita Mistry has come a long, long way, learning, re-discovering and constantly taking on life's many challenges, though always with a positive perspective, with a will to win and importantly, with a great and infectious smile. Nowhere will you find someone who cooks with such knowledge of 'spices', with such imagination and with such a passion for food. Perhaps one day Gita will achieve her ambition to help feed the world's hungriest children.

**gita mistry**

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