

Madhu Gadia, MS, RDN, CDE

Madhu Gadia, MS, RDN, CDE is an Indian cuisine expert, blogger (Cooking with Madhu; www.cuisineofindia.com) with over 40 years in the profession and over 20 years as an FCP member.



Fun facts: I grew up in India and the US. I first came to the US with my family, when I was 10 years old. My father came to do his Ph.D. with 5 kids. After his Ph.D., we returned to India. After finishing college in India, I got married and landed at the University of Illinois, where my husband was doing his Ph.D. I call

that destiny. I feel I grew up in two countries and feel equally comfortable in both places.

Tell us about your career path to and within dietetics

I have to say, even after a lifetime in dietetics, I still love all aspects of nutrition. I am lucky enough to be paid to do what I love. My dietetic journey has taken lots of twists and turns, from clinical dietitian to an Indian cuisine expert.

My father encouraged me to do a master's in Foods and Nutrition, post Home Science degree. I started on a standard clinical dietitian path in hospitals. Then, when we moved to Ames, Iowa, I got a job in an outpatient clinic. That was one of my favorite jobs. It was very rewarding to follow patients' progress. Gradually, the diabetes and nutrition department combined, and I became a CDE (Certified Diabetes Educator). At the clinic, I had numerous opportunities to be a nutrition speaker and I gradually became comfortable in public speaking. And then, life took a new turn. One day, a fellow mall walker, asked, if I would teach Indian cooking classes. That was my next career move.

I wrote and self-published my first book, *Lite and Luscious Cuisine of India* (later published as *New Indian Home Cooking*). Who knew becoming an author would catapult my career in new directions. I worked as a nutrition editor for Diabetic Living, a Meredith Corporation publication and then took some time off and wrote *The Indian Vegan Kitchen*. I realized I am equally passionate about culinary and nutrition. My next job was with FLIK Hospitality, where I was a Wellness Director, working with food and nutrition. Last year, I retired from a regular job and started the blog: Cooking with Madhu – let's see where life takes me next.

What is the biggest nutrition myth out there, IYO?

Unfortunately, the nutrition field is laden with myths. To me the biggest myth is that, healthy food is this limited, tasteless, and special food.

Myth: If you eat "healthy" food, you can eat all you want.

Challenge: It's hard to convince people that all foods fit into a healthy diet and portion size is the key.

People have forgotten how to enjoy a meal and savor every bite.

What advice/pro tip would you give to others who are new to FCP DPG? What do you think is the most valuable benefit of being an FCP member?

If you love culinary and nutrition, like I do, FCP is the place to be. I joined FCP, after I wrote my first book. It's what I needed at that time, to network with like-minded people and be inspired by their journeys.

If you are new to the group, try to attend meetings and conferences where you can connect with other people. Try to attend networking sessions. Also, if you can, get involved and volunteer. I was the *Tastings* editor one year, and met a lot of people, who I feel comfortable calling to this day.

What else do you think FCP members might find interesting about you or your work in the field that I didn't ask you about?

Enjoy whatever you're doing right now, because you always want to give 100% to your job. Be flexible and when the opportunity knocks, take a chance. I always tell myself, I can always come back to what I am doing now, that gives me the courage to take the plunge.

