

## 'Curry queen' Dipna Anand shares her recipe for success with Eurest chefs

8 months ago



Renowned chef, author and culinary instructor Dipna Anand has always blended tradition with innovation, from growing up at the legendary Brilliant Restaurant in Southall to running gastropubs, cookery schools and her own restaurants. Her latest venture with [Compass Group UK & Ireland](#)'s Business & Industry division, which includes contract caterer Eurest and integrated FM provider 14forty, brings her signature low-fat curries and Indian snacks to workplace pop-ups across the country.

We caught up with Dipna to find out what the partnership is all about and to hear more about her story.

Everyone thinks of The Brilliant Restaurant in Southall when they hear the name Dipna Anand. Now you have announced a new partnership with contract caterer Eurest and integrated FM provider 14forty. What is it about delivering food concepts in workplaces that attracts you?

"It's all about bringing my brand, expertise and offer to a new audience. Not everyone can get to my restaurant and this is a wonderful way of reaching more people.

"It's also fantastic to work with a contract caterer that shares my values and my love of food."

What does your offer for Eurest and 14forty clients look like?

"It's an exciting Punjabi food offer and the menu I put in place will change.

"On top of that I will train 30 chefs on my recipes and specs each year, so that they are familiar with the recipes and can go away to their workplaces and make all those dishes using the Dipna branding.

“I’ll also be doing a lot of pop-ups at businesses across the country. That’s exciting – it allows me to take my expertise and my food directly into workplaces for clients and customers to enjoy.”

Is there anything you can learn from the chefs you meet at Compass B&I?

“Of course. When I’m there, people always ask me: How did you learn? How did you come to know so much about cooking?”

“But the reality is I’m still learning, including from the chefs at Compass.

“I can go to a site and see a chef doing something and it’s me that wants to know: How did you do that?”

“I learn from the team and hopefully they learn from me, too.

“This whole chef world is about leaning and valuing at the same time so that we can all grow together.”

What kind of reception do you get when your turn up at pop-ups in the workplace?

“It’s amazing – there’s a real buzz when we’re in town and clients tell us that more and more people are coming into the office because we’re there. It’s one of the coolest things we do.

“The people at Eurest and 14forty are honestly fantastic and are always welcoming and supportive.

“They also know that when Dipna comes, her food always sells out! So, they order 20% on top of what is usual.”

How did you first become a chef? Can you tell us a bit of your story?

“I grew up in and around a family of chefs and restaurateurs. My dad started The Brilliant Restaurant in Southall in 1975 and we were there for 50 years, until April 2025.

“Right now, we’re evolving. We’ve opened a new Brilliant Gastropub, five minutes down the road instead, because we’ve noted that casual dining is on the rise. But it’s very much an Indian gastropub and we’re still serving authentic curry dishes.

“It’s a big move for us after so long!

“I also have a new restaurant at Unity Place in Milton Keynes, the Dipna Bar & Kitchen, so there’s lots going on.”

How did you become part of the business and how did you learn the ropes?

“Back when my dad started the restaurant, my mum was also in the kitchen, helping prepare all those wonderful dishes – and she learned everything herself.

“Then in 1984 I came along and I remember going to the restaurant as a child when I was just seven or eight years old, and we used to look forward to the weekend because we knew mum would have to help out in the restaurant.

“So, we would tag along with her, me and my brother, and try and make ourselves useful, whether it was

just laying the tablecloth, stacking the bottles, or looking over what my dad was doing in the restaurant.

“I think that was very important for me to see what dad was doing, because I was always desperate to be like him, and that’s still the case today.

“I saw this superman who could run the front of house and the back of house with his eyes closed. And he was an all-rounder – he ran the business so perfectly.

“So, I was very fortunate growing up.”

What kind of advice did you get from your dad when you eventually took over the restaurant?

“He always described the restaurant as a ship. He’d say: This is your ship – you’ve got to steer it in the right direction. I’ve done the hard work making this business, laying the foundations. Now it’s your turn to steer it where you want to take it.”

You’ve since become a famous chef, an author and a television star. You’ve even been called the “Curry Queen!” What have been the highlights?

“Well, it was always my dad’s dream for a Brilliant cookbook to be written. So, in 2014 I did exactly that. That was a big step. Also, setting up a cookery school and of course the success of The Brilliant Restaurant, too.

“I’ve since written two more books and I take copies with me to the Eurest pop-ups so people can get them signed.”

You started by working for your father very young, but did you still focus on education in those early years?

“I did. I wasn’t very academic at school but I was very good at Food Technology.

“It paid off because I won my first national award from the British Nutrition Foundation for a project I did on low fat Indian food.

“I then went on to do Hospitality & Catering at the University of West London – and that helped me put my theory into practice at Brilliant.

“Dad always said he didn’t have a chance to study, it took him years to gain the knowledge and expertise that I got over four years at university. So, I’m very thankful I got my education. I got first class honours and was offered a master’s scholarship, too.

“After that I began to teach at the university.”

So, is that where the idea for your cookery school came from?

“Yes, because when I started teaching at university, customers in the restaurant began asking: Can you teach me, too?

“That’s how The Brilliant School of Cookery was formed – and it was the first step to working with Compass, too.

“Another exciting thing is that I’ll be training Compass B&I’s chefs on my recipes and specs, so that they are familiar with the recipes and can go away to their workplaces and make all those dishes using the Dipna branding.”

You’ve talked about your work with Eurest, what else do you do with Compass Group UK & Ireland?

“It’s a fantastic collaboration which has now been in place for 12 years – and it gets stronger year upon year.

“I met with Eurest’s Culinary Director, Ryan Holmes, put together a presentation and it all kicked off from there.

“Together we’ve been dishing out some seriously delicious Punjabi cuisine across various sectors.

“Compass is a major part of my business plan and over the years we have built up a very strong partnership.”

Picking up on the theme of low-fat Indian cuisine, is that something which features in your menu at Eurest and 14forty?

“Yes, it is – and a lot of people are intrigued by that. It was obviously a quite a few years ago when I first started talking about low fat, because I was in college at that time doing my A levels!

“But maybe I was ahead of the game because these days it’s a big trend. I remember that during the pandemic I did a lot of interviews about it and got a lot of press coverage.

“These days, it is very off-putting to have a curry which is unhealthy or unattractive to look at because of all that grease and fat. Healthy food is important to people and I know that’s true for Eurest and 14forty, too.

“Of course, many of our dishes are a bit of a treat – they fit the indulgence curve of wanting something exciting to eat at work on a Thursday or Friday. But we are very careful to reduce the fat content without impacting the amazing taste.”