**Mandira's Kitchen**



My name is Mandira and I am the founder and general dogsbody at Mandira’s Kitchen ([www.mandiraskitchen.com](http://www.mandiraskitchen.com)) - an artisan producer of authentic Indian food. We are a women-led and staffed business and are based out of a 400-year-old converted cowshed based in the Surrey Hills – overlooking the beautiful Surrey Hills.  In addition to creating healthy and homestyle freezer meals, we also provide bespoke catering for large and small events, run hands-on cookery lessons and spice tours and offer freshly brewed chai and the best samosas in town. Our food is available to buy through our shop, numerous stockists or online where we offer next day delivery to any UK address.

In a world that is increasingly becoming driven by financial considerations and profit margins, Mandira’s Kitchen is a small company with a very large heart. We feel that we have been extremely privileged to be able to set up a dream business following a passion and feel that as a responsible and caring organisation, we should be able to use this both to help others not so lucky but also to be able to positively impact our environment and our next generation. Some of the sustainable practise we follow include:

* Running a site with a policy of  “no single-use plastic“. From coffee cups, to tasting pots and straws, everything is made from compostable material. Our new freezer meal trays are fully biodegradable – one of the very few companies in the UK to do so – and the sleeves are non-laminated cardboard so that they can also be thrown in household cardboard recycling. The leaf plates and bowls we use are made from natural palm leaf and are made by destitute women in India thus serving a dual purpose of proving employment and a source of livelihood. The meals we serve at our little café are served in pressed palm leaf plates or authentic stainless steel thalis, our tea bags are made from compostable material and even gift items such as the beautiful cards, wrapping paper or gift bags are all made from waste materials such as fruit peels and discarded materials. Our UK wide deliveries are made in double-walled cardboard boxes and wool insulation with completely biodegradable chill packs.
* Our little shop looks beautiful but on close inspection, every item has been upcycled – old cooking pots used to set up with solar fountains, vintage Indian water pots, old oil drums painted to serve as tables and old crates and tea chests salvaged to add some character and a sense of fun.
* As far as possible, we buy fresh and local ingredients and try to ensure that everything comes from within a 50-mile radius. From British Red Tractor approved chickens in High Wycombe to dishes made using local specialities or discarded produce, we are conscious about everything that goes into our products. Examples of this include our Kingfisher Watercress Dal made using Watercress grown on the family-run Kingfisher farm next door and then stocked at Kingfisher’s farm shop and our newly introduced spiced Orange and Gin chutney is made using the discarded oranges from the Silent Pool distillery. We sell gin from the distillery and organic wine from our neighbour's Silent Pool and Albury Vineyard, local beer from the Firebird Brewery and hot chocolate made from (homegrown chillies) chocolate from the local Sweet Cs chocolate. Our coffee is bought from our local roastery Redbeer and local Gray’s Dairy creates ice creams for us in our unique MK flavours such as Mango and Cardamon and Lychee Martini.
* We work with a host of local small companies who are as passionate about their business as us – this includes running joint events with our neighbour's Silent Pool and Albury Vineyard but also using local printers ( Stag Print, Loddon and Blue Dot), local photographers ( Ingrid Wheel and Julie Skelton) and a host of local service providers be it our telephone or broadband.
* We have also tried to employ a local workforce as far as possible – our passionate and committed team mainly consist of women who are on a second career with MK  who manage most aspects of the business whilst our Junior teams are youngsters who are starting out in the job market in addition to juggling demanding school and college workloads.

The past 18 months have been challenging for most businesses and ours is no exception. However, we have not only managed to survive but thrive – growing at an incredible 1800% last year despite most events being cancelled. This is partly due to the support we have had from our local customers but also due to our ethos of being as green as possible.