

# SETA

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**INSIDE**  
MASTERCHEF  
AUSTRALIA  
DIANA CHAN

THE BEAUTY  
OF UNCHARTED  
NEPAL

THE AUNTIE  
NETWORK

**PLUS**  
5 SIMPLE HABITS  
TO CHANGE  
YOUR LIFE

WOMEN HEART  
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## WELL BLENDED

EMILY SHAH ON MIXING HOLLYWOOD, BOLLYWOOD  
AND HER OWN BRAND OF AYURVEDIC GIN

# “I LIVE AND BREATHE FOOD EVERY DAY”

*In conversation with **Diana Chan**, MasterChef Australia 2017 winner, who is also a television host and brand ambassador*

**BINDU GOPAL RAO**

**D**iana Chan grew up in Johor Bahru Malaysia and moved to Melbourne, Australia, at the age of 18. She learned a lot from her parents, both of whom are amazing home cooks. But her mother was a huge influence, taking Chan and her two elder siblings shopping with her, and teaching them ways to prep the ingredients before cooking. With such a

strong foundation in the fundamentals of cooking, it was little wonder that Chan won MasterChef Australia by one point. She tells us more in this chat.

***When did you first realize that you wanted to be a chef?***

It wasn't until I finished MasterChef that I realized I could make a career out of food and pursuing my passion. Coming from an







*A dish prepared by Diana Chan*

accounting background, it was daunting. The uncertainty was a little scary at the start but then things just started to happen and lots of exciting opportunities came about, which made me realize it was possible.

***Tell us about your experience in MasterChef Australia.***

My experience was incredible, truly something money cannot buy. I say this because it was somewhat like a crash course in cooking. In the seven months of me being in the competition I learned [a lot]. We were lucky enough to travel to Japan. That was an unforgettable experience. Not to mention the friendships forged and continued after filming had ended.

***How does your Malaysian roots influence your food?***

I cook Malaysian all the time. I travel there frequently, and I think it still plays

a big part in my cooking style. I love the bold and punchy flavors and the variety of cuisine Malaysian food has to offer and I am constantly trying my best to showcase the food I grew up with.

***Tell us about your collaborations and what they mean to you, such as the recent one with Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels?***

I enjoy working across different industries but all with one thing in common, the food element. I love the variety of working with different brands and partnering up to create great content (furniture, lifestyle, fashion, home appliances and cookware). I also enjoy working on projects such as menu creation and on events, which allows me to travel. Being able to share my food with people in India is truly magical. I am so glad to be able to partner with JW Marriott and Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels. I have curated a menu and carefully trained the chefs remotely to help with the execution and I think they have



done a fantastic job. Truly an honor.

***How do you choose brands that you like to endorse?***

First, I think about the alignment. It must be organic. If I believe in the brand, [I have] absolutely no issue endorsing it. If I use the brand organically anyway then it makes complete sense. I think everything must make sense and have a good synergy to what I stand for.

***What are the food trends you are seeing in 2022?***

Food trends are definitely more about snacks. I tend to see lots of restaurants offering a wider range of snacks or small bite-sized food rather than huge dishes. I think maybe it's because people coming out of lockdown want to try everything and having things in smaller portions means you can try more. I am also seeing a big shift in promoting nonalcoholic drinks. Many restaurants now have a great selection of nonalcoholic beverages that are not soft drinks, tea and coffee.

***After the COVID outbreak, how has the food industry changed?***

I feel like things are back to normal here in Australia, but what I have noticed overseas as well is the demand for takeaway food. There are still a lot of people who feel

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more comfortable eating in the comfort of their home. So, there is still a huge demand for good takeaway or finished at home meals.

***What does food mean to you?***

Everything. Apart from family, food is everything. I live and breathe food every day of my life. I cook daily, apart from eating out. I shop daily and I am constantly learning about it every day. It is something I will never get bored of. The best part is, there is so much more to learn and explore.

***What are your plans?***

I am working on my new homeware range, which I plan to launch as soon as I get all my stock in place. Beautiful linen all made here in Melbourne. I am also working on several projects, which include a cloud kitchen food offering. It will be like takeaway style food as I think I could reach more people that way. Also, we have some exciting new FMCG [fast-moving consumer goods] continuing from the expansion of my dumpling range with Golden Wok.

