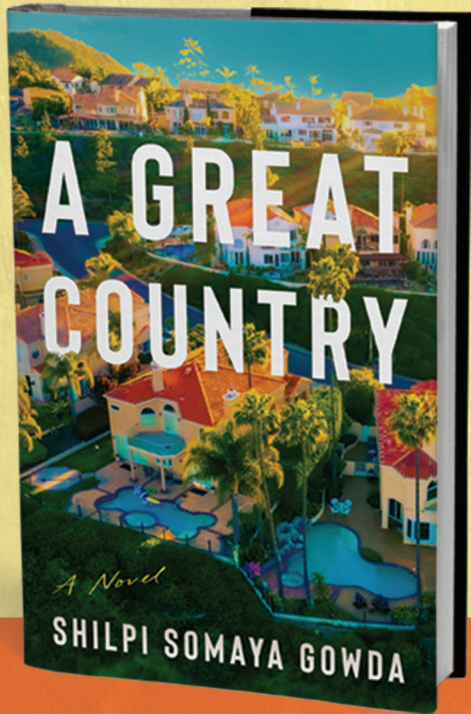


MASALA CHAI

is ubiquitous in Indian households and can be made myriad different ways, but it always means warmth and hospitality. It's an act of love to make chai for someone else, and the first sip brings comfort, regardless of what else is going on. This is the tea that Archie makes for Priya in Chapter 30, one week into her family nightmare.

I envision the tea simmering on the stove, with the fragrance of cardamom, ginger and cinnamon filling the kitchen as they all grapple with their new circumstances. Save any extra chai to use in the evening for Chai-Spiced cocktails, as these friends do many nights.





BEST FRIENDS MASALA CHAI (SPICED TEA) MAKES 4-6 CUPS

8 (white or green) cardamom pods
2 whole cinnamon sticks
6 whole cloves
1 inch gingerroot, or ½ tsp fresh ginger paste
1 star anise (optional)

1-2 springs fresh mint leaves (optional)
2 tbsp loose black tea leaves
(or 4-6 black tea bags)
2 cups milk (whole or 2%)
1 tbsp (or more) honey (or sugar)

1. Gather whole spices (cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, gingerroot, star anise) and pound a few times — either in a mortar and pestle, or on a butcher block with a heavy object — just enough to crack open.
2. Bring 4 cups of water and 2 cups milk in a pot to boil.
3. After the mixture boils, add all spices and tea leaves and lower to a simmer for several minutes.
4. Add honey (or other sweetener) to taste.
5. Remove from heat. Pour chai through sieve or strainer into cups.
6. Refrigerate any leftovers for evening cocktails.



CHAI-SPICE COCKTAIL MAKES 4 DRINKS

4 shots dark rum
1 tsp orange bitters
½ cup fresh orange juice
2 cups strong masala chai, cold

Optional garnish: raw sugar,
cinnamon powder, cinnamon stick,
orange peel, mint, star anise

1. Mix rum, orange bitters, orange juice and chai – shake with ice or refrigerate until cold.
2. Dampen glass rim and dip in raw sugar-cinnamon mixture
3. Pour cocktail into glass over single large ice cube
4. Garnish with orange peel wrapped around cinnamon stick, or other garnish of choice