

Economist &amp; Sun • Stouffville Tribune

# SAVOUR

## That's a wrap

*This simple substitute for sliced bread takes off in the home and business with its multi-cultural versatility*

BY JENNIFER BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

There's nothing new or exotic about the simple recipe Loveleen Khanna uses to make her roti, but people come from all over southern York Region to sample her tasty flatbread — a staple in East Indian cuisine.

On a busy Friday afternoon, Khanna and her small staff work quickly in the Heritage Road kitchen of Mayer Catering and Fine Foods in Markham, shaping and rolling out the dough for a large order of the versatile bread, as a customer waits anxiously.

Roti is a flat, whole-wheat bread food, consisting of a grilled dough made with flour and milk or water (sort of like a tortilla but thicker, fluffier and not as dry), wrapped around curried potatoes and vegetables, meat, or fish or served with curries. It can accompany every meal, be eaten alone or served as a side dish. Roti can also be torn off with the fingers and dipped in flavored sauces or bean mixtures.

And this simple substitute for traditional sliced bread in North American diets has taken off both commercially and in the home, with what has simply become known as wraps.

Once found only in ethnic restaurants or specialty food stores, wraps and flatbreads such as roti have now become a mainstream item for the grocery list and a big seller for fast-food restaurants.

"Because there is such a variety of them in supermarkets today, people have quickly taken to them," says Joan Caverly, otherwise known as The Bread Lady.

"And they come in all flavours and colors, are very convenient and tasty. Wraps are easy to use and store well in the fridge."

Caverly teaches bread making in her Toronto home and, since last fall, demand for Saturday morning flatbread lessons have been on the rise.

Whole grain wraps and spicy hot chickpea wraps are two of the recipes she passes on to students on a regular basis, as well as one for people with wheat and yeast allergies.

"You can use any kind of filling — roasted vegetables, yogurt, cheese, anything you want," said Caverly.

And, she says, the demand for her Saturday morning classes is due in part to the desire for a healthier lifestyle. People have been discarding

their pasta and crusty white bread for lean, long wraps filled with vegetables and grains, grilled meats and even fruit.

"French bread is wonderful, but we like to spread butter all over it. You don't even think to spread butter on a wrap — in fact, you may not use any kind of spread at all," said Caverly.

And before specialty wraps hit the market, there was pita bread — introduced in the 1970s and quickly adopted as a simple way to stuff tasty items in a sandwich pocket.

Then came tortillas, a staple of the Mexican diet, made from whole wheat flour or white, yellow or blue cornmeal. And along the way there have always been wonton skins, Greek phyllo, pastry and Japanese nori as a unique and flavourful way to package simple foods.

So will wraps fade into the bread racks along? Caverly says no.

"I think wraps are here to stay. Now we've gotten to know it, they have become a staple in the kitchen," she said.

"Focaccia was the first to become very popular and the wrap was the logical next step. You can adapt it to any food style."

Wraps can also make a great alternative to boring old lunch box ingredients.

The possible combinations are endless — try putting a Caesar salad and a few pieces of baked chicken breast in a pesto-flavored wrap.

And for kids who may be suspicious of the internal ingredients of a wrap, try spreading peanut butter and jam over the surface of a wrap, rolling it like a jelly roll, then slicing it into pinwheel sandwiches.

If peanuts are a no-no for school lunches, try cream cheese or cheese slices.

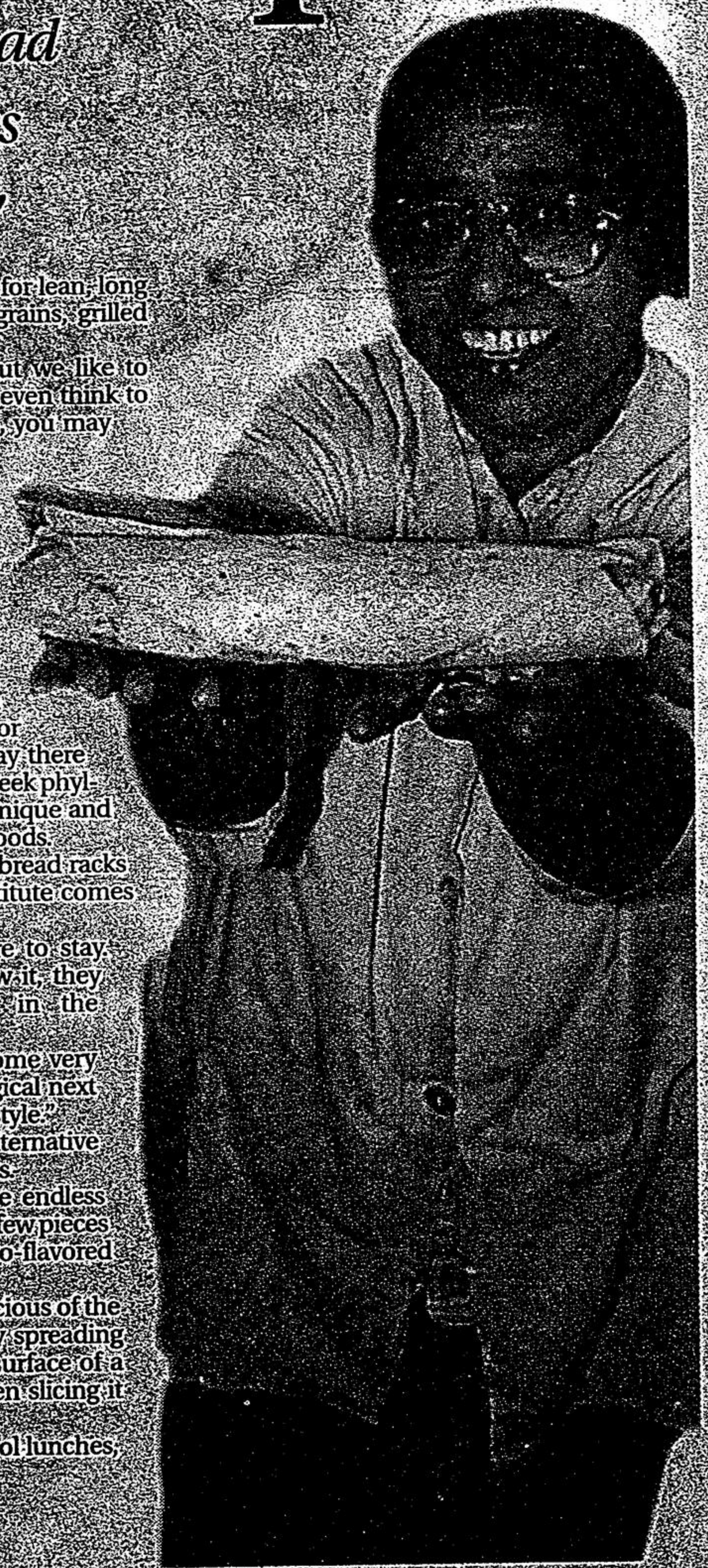
### Roti/field: 12 servings

2 cups Chappati flour or

1 cup whole-wheat flour mixed with 1 cup cake flour

1 cup minus 2-1/2 tsp water

See ANYTHING, page 18.



STAFF PHOTO/SIOERD WITTEVEEN

Loveleen Khanna, of Mayer Catering and Fine Foods in Markham, holds up a roti stuffed with a chicken mixture.

### TIPS TO CREATE TASTY WRAPS

■ When looking for ingredients to line a wrap, look for flat foods, such as spinach, lettuce or fresh basil leaves. Lunch meats such as fresh turkey or roast beef or roasted red peppers are also great foods to roll and wrap.

■ Create a wrap to go: place the wrap, bottom side down, in the centre of a six-inch-wide strip of foil or wax paper. Fold up the bottom edge of the strip over the wrap. Fold the left side over the wrap, continuing folding, rolling the wrap until it is enclosed. This is great for meat or vegetables stir-fried and cut into strips. Use soft flour tortillas.

■ Quick sun-dried tomato topping: puree six chopped sun-dried tomatoes packed in water, half a cup of plain low-fat yogurt and half a cup of fat-free mayonnaise. Makes 8 servings.



*Chefs of Distinction*

A tempting profile of some of the finest chefs and restaurants in and around Markham and Stouffville.  
Thursday, September 17th

Inside this special, process colour supplement, you will find some of the area's most distinguished chefs, their restaurants and a collection of menus and recipes that make them famous.

To Advertise in Chefs please call: 905-294-2200. Ask for Advertising Dept.

FULL  
PROCESS  
COLOUR  
ADS