

THIS BOOK  
BELONGS TO:



.....  
.....



For Willow and Dylan.  
Always be the person you are born to be.  
*Sophia*

To Cooking and Food, for being there during the best times  
and the worst times – my forever best friends.  
*Sandhya*

The recipe in this book requires adult supervision at all times.  
Please check all ingredients carefully if you have any allergies,  
and if in doubt, consult a health professional.

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# FARUQ

and the  
WIRI WIRI

Sophia Payne Sandhya Prabhat





# THERE was NO BETTER Smell in the WORLD than ATEE'S COOK-UP RICE!

"I gat lots t'do," Faruq's grandma smiled, chopping up the fresh ingredients. She cooked for the family every day. Faruq always watched closely.

The smell of warm garlic made his tummy rumble. The sweet coconut reminded him of lazy days on the beach, and the bright little wiri wiri peppers, they always made him wonder . . .







Wait, are they  
**REALLY SPICY,**  
Ajee?


WHEN do you  
add them?

Can I try ONE?  
Can I help?

But Ajee hadn't heard him.

She was too busy humming along  
to the radio. She pointed out of the window.

"I forgot de bay leaves. Go fetch dem  
will you, bai?"



The garden was bursting with flavours.  
Long, spindly Bora beans, shiny, plump tomatoes,  
and the gorgeous scent of rosemary.  
Faruq wanted to try them all. He proudly  
plucked two leaves from the bay tree  
and raced back inside.

"I'm going to be a cook too!" he exclaimed.

Ajee shook her head and let out a heavy puff of air.

"Nah be troublin' wit dem ideas again. Study is more important.


You gon' be a doctor like your father."



• She told him to go and play football in the garden until dinner was ready.

• "And stay away from dem wiri wiri!"





It was hot and damp outside.  
The palm trees glistened in the low hanging sun,  
and the wiri wiri peppers glowed like clusters  
of twinkling fairy lights.

“Why can’t boys learn to cook?”

oooooooooooooF

Faruq didn’t want to be a doctor.  
“I want to make cook-up rice like Ajee,”  
he muttered, “and bake bread and lime cookies.”  
He swung his leg towards the ball.

That kick was harder than  
he expected.




The ball bounced off the mango tree  
and rolled straight into the wiri wiri plants.  
Faruq felt around with outstretched arms.

A small voice drifted out from  
deep inside the bushy branches.

WHAT'S SO  
Special  
ABOUT you  
ANYWAY?

HELLO FARUQ,  
WOULD YUH LIKE ME  
TO SHOW YOU?





Faruq jumped back in surprise.  
Did the wiri wiri just . . . ?

He inched forwards.

**WHAT did YOU say?**

**WIRI WIRI CALLED  
CHERRY BOMB  
BECAUSE THEY  
VERY SPICY.**

Faruq saw a pair of friendly eyes smiling at him through a gap in the fence. It was Mrs Joseph from next door.



“Did you know I taught your grandmother to cook?” grinned Mrs Joseph. “I can teach you too.”



Faruq squeezed through the small gap and followed Mrs Joseph through her vegetable garden and into the house.

Mrs Joseph's kitchen was wonderful.

There were pots and pans hanging next to huge bunches of dried herbs, and shelves stuffed full with jars of spices. “Let us start wit’ lime cookies, cause they easy peasy.”







Zesting and squeezing was Faruq's favourite part.

WHOOPS!

He grabbed a big spoon and took a huge scoop of cinnamon.

"Whoops. Teaspoon, Faruq or they be too sweet!"



The dough was sticky as he pressed it onto the tray.



Faruq watched eagerly as they baked.

"Oh no! They're joining up!"

"A little too close together maybe," said Mrs Joseph. "But nah worry, they'll still taste good."

Cooking was much harder than Faruq realised, but tasting the cookies made it all worthwhile.

"Mmm, yummy!" he beamed. "What's next?"



Every day while Ajeë was busy in the kitchen, Faruq snuck through the fence and learned to cook with Mrs Joseph.

He helped her to  
**SIFT**



and  
**STIR**



and  
**BOIL**



and  
**BAKE**



And every day he learned about new ingredients.

"The wiri wiri a big part of our culture," explained Mrs Joseph. "Yuh gat to respect da wiri wiri pepper and handle it carefully."








On Sunday morning Faruq knew  
Ajee would be awake early to prepare lunch.  
The whole family were coming as usual.  
But he was shocked to see  
an empty kitchen.



He found Ajee lying in bed.  
“I sorry, Faruq. We gon’ have to cancel de big lunch today,”  
she mumbled. “I nah feel so good.”

“What can I do to help?” he asked.  
“Maybe a cup of fever grass tea?”



Faruq dashed outside to pick the fresh lemongrass, but another plant caught his eye first.

He gazed at the little chilli peppers basking in the morning sunshine. They gave him an idea.

"Ajee needs something spicy to make her feel better."

Faruq beamed. "Barley soup with wiri wiri!"

He raced to fetch Mrs Joseph.



"Yuh can pick dem if you like." Mrs Joseph said.

Faruq's stomach fluttered. "Can I really?"

Mrs Joseph nodded. "But wear these so you nah get chilli on your hands. Choose the nice red ones and I'll chop dem ready."



Faruq carefully stirred them into the soup,  
the little bright pepper pieces bobbing in the broth.



Ajee sipped the soup gratefully.  
“Will yuh thank Mrs Joseph for me?”  
But Faruq wasn't listening. As he glanced up at the clock,  
he had an amazing idea. What if . . . he wondered . . .



PERFECT

he thought,  
carrying the soup to Ajee.

THIS WILL HELP.

WHAT if I  
could make the  
BIG LUNCH?

Faruq ran back to the kitchen to tell Mrs Joseph his plan.  
She hardly needed to help him. They made . . .



PLAIT BREAD and ROLLS,

mango lassi

and SPICY curry,

Cook-up RICE  
bursting with colour

and a stack of  
LIME  
cookies.



When lunchtime came, Faruq's papa arrived home first.  
His jaw dropped when he saw the spread laid out.

Ajee came downstairs and shuffled straight over to Mrs Joseph.  
"I can nah believe yuh made all dis!" she said.  
"Not me, Ajee. This were all Faruq – da soup too!"



“Thank you, bai.” Ajee said hugging Faruq tightly.  
“This a real special thing you done. I were wrong to push you out de kitchen.  
It nah doctor we need. That wiri wiri soup made me better already.”  
Faruq felt as though he was floating.

He looked at everyone around the table: his papa  
and grandma, aunties, and uncles, and all his cousins.  
Cooking for his family filled Faruq’s heart with love.





And everyone  
agreed . . .

THERE'S NO better Smell in the WORLD than FARUQ'S COOK-UP RICE.







# Easy-peasy Guyanese Lime Cookies

Makes 12-14 cookies, depending on size

## Ingredients

- 90g butter
- 110g caster sugar
- Zest of 1 lime ( $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp)
- Juice from half a lime ( $1 \frac{1}{2}$  tbsp)
- 120g plain flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp cinnamon

## For the sugar coating:

- 60g sugar
- Pinch of cinnamon (less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp)
- Pinch of nutmeg (less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp)

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Line two baking trays with baking paper.
3. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.  
Next, mix in the lime zest and juice.
4. In another bowl, use a fork to combine the flour, baking powder, salt, nutmeg and cinnamon.
5. Gradually add the flour mixture to the butter, mixing well as you add.
6. For the sugar coating, combine the three ingredients in a small bowl.
7. Next, scoop a rounded tablespoon of the mixture into the palm of your hands and roll into a small ball (roughly the size of a walnut), then roll the ball in the sugar coating.
8. Place the cookie ball onto a baking tray and use the bottom of a glass to press it slightly flat.  
Repeat steps 7-8 until you run out of mixture. Faruq placed his first cookies too close together! Make sure you leave space between yours as they will spread while cooking.
9. Bake for 12-15 minutes until the edges are just starting to turn a golden-brown colour.  
Use a spatula to lift them onto a wire rack to cool.

Always bake with an adult and check for any allergies!



Don't worry if they merge together – they'll still taste good!

