

## Discussion Questions for *Taste Makers* by Mayukh Sen

1) American cuisine has changed very much since the 1940s. What are some of the changes you have personally experienced? What is popular now that was not at all popular when you were growing up? To what do you attribute the change?

2) Which of Sen's profiled women were you most drawn to and why? What most surprised you about the lives of these women? Had you heard of any of them before? Are you familiar with their cookbooks?

3) Childhood and food memories play an important role in inspiring these immigrant women. How are you affected by your own food memories and experiences?

4) The food writer's world was New York-centric and male-dominated when Julia Child rose to prominence. Things have changed since then, but can you think of ways they perhaps have not changed (for instance, the popularity of pop-culture chefs)? How do you think readers can influence the influencers?

5) What are some cuisines that are coming to prominence now? How did you become aware of them? What do you think will be the next big thing?

6) Sen speaks of unknown pioneers. Have you or someone you know introduced a food from their ethnic background to others? What "unknown" places have you experienced when eating out? What places, and cuisines, should more people know about in the Ventura County area?

7) Has this book inspired you to look for the profiled women's recipes? If so, what did you find? If not, what cookbook would you be interested in exploring? Have you or would you test some of these recipes?

8) The author lets the reader know a lot about his methodology in profiling the women in this book. What did you think about how Sen put the book together and how he sourced his material?