

Cooking Light

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FIRST LIGHT
trimmings


Instructor Sarina Jain leads her class in the Masala Bhangra.

FITNESS TREND

Shake Your Chakra

When Earla Cumberbatch wants to work out, she kicks off her shoes and does the Masala Bhangra, an Indian-inspired dance-fitness class offered at her New York City health club. "It's not like regular aerobics or step," says the 30-year-old from Brooklyn. "I like it because it has a cultural influence behind it."

To create the workout, fitness instructor Sarina Jain added cardio moves like kick jacks and shoulder dips to the *bhangra*, a folk dance performed by northern Indian farmers who celebrated the wheat harvest by whirling to the beat of a *dhol* drum. The result: a *masala* (spicy), fast-paced, total-body aerobic-dance workout.

"The drum beat is so intoxicating that when you feel it in your body, you just want to move," says Jain, 26, who teaches Masala Bhangra at several Manhattan gyms.

To enhance the Eastern mood, Jain sometimes hands out Indian silk scarves to her class. She's even brought in *bindis*, the jewels that Indian women wear in the center of their foreheads. Cumberbatch says these extras "change the whole setting. You don't feel like you're in a sports club."

Try Masala Bhangra at home with Jain's exercise video, *The Masala Bhangra Workout* (\$24.95 plus shipping and handling). To order, call 877-462-7252 or visit www.masaladance.com. —Debbe Geiger