

2026 PBS RENO WRITERS CONTEST

PRESENTED BY Rotary Club of Reno

SECOND GRADE: 1st Place "Mom's Bhindi Masala" by Srialia

Coral Academy of Science Elementary

In my house, the most special day of the week is Saturday. That is when Mom makes Bhindi, which is the Indian word for okra. While other kids might think okra is a fuzzy vegetable, to me it is a piece of my family history. I am the chief inspector, helping mom pick the very best ones. We wash the okra and dry them so they stay crunchy. Then we chop them into tiny pieces of green stars. I sprinkle with turmeric. My hands turn into gold. Shiny gold! Mom says these spices are magic dust that makes our food healthy and delicious. Next is tadka. This is an Indian cooking trick where we drop seeds into hot oil. They pop like tiny firecrackers in the pan. When the okra stars hit the oil, they make a loud hiss! The kitchen fills with a warm smoke. Sounds like my tummy is doing a happy dance. While the golden stars are cooking, mom tells me a story about my grandmother. She lived in a small village in India many years ago. India is 1000s of miles away. I feel like I am standing right next to her whenever I smell these spices around our kitchen. Finally, we eat the crispy okra with rice, which is warm. We eat rice mixed with okra curry. This meal is special because it counts me into my culture.

