

Dal Soup

Dal is a generic word used for the legumes family. Dal is an essential food in Indian cuisine since it is a source of protein for vegetarian people. There are many dals in India, but they are always cooked with turmeric. If you go to Indian store, there may be as many as 30 varieties. You may use any dal or legume in the following recipe.

- 1 cup legumes (Use any dal, such as moong, toor (split pigeon peas) or chana.)
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon red chili powder
- ½ teaspoon whole cumin seeds
- 2 quarter-sized fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 1 small onion chopped
- 2 tomatoes chopped
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- Chopped cilantro (fresh coriander) to garnish

Wash the legumes and put them in a pot. Add about 4 cups water, salt and turmeric. Cook on medium heat until the legumes become tender. (Same results can be achieved by putting the legumes in a slow cooker for 6 hours.)

Take a pan and heat oil in it. Add whole cumin seeds to the hot oil. Add chopped ginger, minced garlic and chopped onion. Stir and cook for few minutes until onion becomes golden brown. Add tomatoes and cook for about 5 minutes. Add legumes and cook for about 10 more minutes.

Add fresh coriander and serve with rice.

Serves 4 to 6 people.

Aloo Gobhi With Fenugreek Seeds (Spiced Cauliflower and Potato)

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil or any other oil
- ½ teaspoon fenugreek seeds
- 1-inch fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 green chili, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric powder
- 1/2 teaspoon red chili
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander powder
- ½ teaspoon mango powder
- 1 chopped tomato
- salt to taste
- 1 whole cauliflower cut in small pieces
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh cilantro

Heat the oil in a skillet. Stir in fenugreek seeds and cook about 1 minute until the seeds are brown. Add ginger, green chili and onions. Add the potatoes and cauliflower, and season with turmeric, red chili powder, cumin powder, coriander powder and salt. Cover and continue cooking 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until potato and cauliflower are tender.

Add chopped tomatoes and mango powder. Mix well. Garnish with fresh cilantro. Serve hot with chapatis or rice.

Black-Eyed Peas With Tamarind and Tomato Sauce

- 2 cups black-eyed peas
- Salt to taste
- ½ teaspoon onion seeds (kalonji)
- ½ tsp ajowain seeds
- 1 tablespoon turmeric powder
- 2 teaspoon coriander powder
- ½ teaspoon red chili powder
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1-inch ginger, chopped
- 1 green chili, chopped
- 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon tamarind paste
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- Chopped coriander or cilantro leaves to garnish

Wash black eye peas and put in a pot with 4 cups of water. Boil until tender and keep aside. Heat oil in a pan. Add onion seeds and ajowain seeds. Heat for a minute until ajowain seeds gets dark brown.

Add ginger, garlic, green chili and onion. Fry until onion is cooked. Add salt, turmeric powder, cumin powder, coriander powder and red chili powder. Mix well.

Add can of tomato sauce and tamarind paste. Mix well and cook for about one more minute. Add the boiled black eye peas. Simmer until thick gravy is formed.

Remove from heat. Garnish with coriander leaves, and serve hot with chapatis or rice.

Rice Pulao (Cumin Seeds, Grated Carrots and Bell Pepper)

Basmati rice is aromatic Indian rice that is an essential part of Indian cuisine.

- 2 cups basmati rice
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 carrot, peeled and grated
- 1 bell pepper, finely chopped
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 4 cups water

Put rice in a cooking pan and wash it thoroughly. Add 4 cups of water, salt and turmeric. Cook on high heat until just a little bit of water is remaining, Cover and cook further on low heat until the rice becomes tender.

Garnish with grated carrot and chopped bell pepper.

Eat this aromatic rice with black eyed peas or the potato-cauliflower dish.

Raita (Spiced Yogurt With Mint)

Raita is a yogurt dish that Indians love to use as a complement to their meals. It has a cooling effect when you eat it with other spicy dishes.

- 2 cups plain yogurt
- 15 leaves of fresh green mint paste (Grind fresh mint leaves with water in a blender or food processor.)
- ½ teaspoon black salt (rock salt that you can get in Indian stores)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon roasted ground cumin powder (Roast cumin seeds in a skillet. After they turn brown, grind them. The powder has a nice aroma.)
- 1-inch fresh turmeric root, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Mint leaves or coriander leaves to garnish

Mix the yogurt well. (Add about ½-cup of water if the yogurt is too thick.) Add mint paste, black salt, salt, turmeric root, paprika and roasted ground cumin powder. Mix well, and garnish with mint leaves or coriander leaves.

Chapati (Indian Whole-Wheat Flat Bread)

- 2 cups Indian whole-wheat flour
- Warm water to knead the dough
- Ghee (Indian purified butter)

Mix just enough water with the whole-wheat flour to make dough.

Knead the dough, cover, and let sit for at least an hour. After an hour (or right before rolling out), punch the dough and knead again without any more water.

Make small balls; dip each one into dry whole-wheat flour, and roll out into thin, 6-inch circles.

Place a flat, ungreased iron griddle on the stove at medium-high heat. When hot, place a rolled-out chapati “right side” down on the griddle. (The “right side” is the one facing you when you roll it.)

When bubbles are visible, turn over and cook until tiny brown spots appear on the side facing the griddle. If you have a gas stove, hold the chapati with a pair of tongs, and place it directly over the burner flame for a few seconds, until the chapati puffs up. Turn and repeat on the other side. If you have an electric stove, keep the chapati on the griddle. With a wadded up paper towel to protect your fingers, press gently all around the chapati. Flip the chapati and press gently around the other side. This procedure should make the chapati puff up.

Remove the chapati from the heat and apply ghee on it.