

Jeera Rice

- 1 cup Basmati rice (soak in water for 30 minutes before cooking)
- 2 tsp. whole cumin seeds
- ¼ cup white onion, sliced thin
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 cups water
- Salt to taste
- 1 tsp cilantro, chopped

Using 1 Tbsp of oil, fry onions in a medium sauce pan until golden brown. Add a pinch of salt and mix it in. Remove from pan and set aside.

Using the same sauce pan, add remaining 2 Tbsp oil and cumin seeds. Once the cumin seeds turn golden (about 2-3 minutes on medium heat), turn off the burner.

Drain water from the rice and add rice to the pan with the cumin seeds. Add salt to taste, stir mixture and add the 2 cups of water. Cook on medium heat with no lid for about 10 minutes. Once the rice grains appear almost done and there isn't much water left, place a lid on the pan and complete the cooking, about 3 to 5 minutes. Turn off heat, add the fried onions on top and set aside for serving.

Cucumber Raita

- 1 cup cucumber, peeled and grated
- 1 cup plain, unsweetened yogurt (Greek yogurt works too)
- Salt to taste
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp cilantro, chopped

Pour yogurt into a medium-sized bowl, and whisk until smooth. Add the grated cucumber, salt, and pepper and mix well. Decorate with chopped cilantro or sprigs of cilantro. Refrigerate until ready to serve. The cucumber will release some water, so stir before serving.

There are many variations to this basic recipe for making savory yogurt within Indian cuisine.

Spinach Dal

For lentils

- 1 cup red lentils
- 3 cups water
- ¼ tsp turmeric
- salt to taste

For spinach

- 2 cups spinach, freshly chopped (or 1-1.5 cup frozen)
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- ¼ cup onion
- 1 Tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 Tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 Tbsp ginger, grated
- 1 green chili, thinly sliced (optional)
- salt to taste

For seasoning

- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- ½ tsp mustard seeds
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp garlic slices
- 1 whole dry red chili (optional)

In a saucepan, cook 1 cup of red lentils in 3 cups of water with salt to taste. Cook on medium heat in an open pan. After a few minutes, skim off the froth that collects on top or you can leave it. If you take it out, add a similar amount of water back to the pan. Cook until lentils are soft and mushy. You should be able to make them into a paste with the back of a spoon.

In a separate pan, add 1 Tbsp of vegetable oil and heat on medium for a few minutes. Add cumin seeds, green chili, ginger, and chopped onion. When the onion is golden brown, add the coriander powder. Cook for a few minutes and then add chopped tomato. Just as the tomato starts cooking, add the spinach. Add salt and cook for 3-5 minutes or until done.

Add the cooked lentils to the spinach mix.

In a small sauce pan on low heat, prepare the seasoning by adding oil followed by mustard seeds, cumin seeds, red chili (if adding, break into two pieces), and garlic slices. Once garlic slices turn brown and mustard starts popping, add it to the lentil-spinach mix.

Your spinach dal is ready!

Notes: You may use olive oil but cook on low to medium heat and do not let it smoke.

The recipe is for 5-7 cups of cooked dal. You can save the left overs and eat within a day or two. It also freezes well. The recipe can be easily cut in half for smaller portions.

Egg curry

- 4 eggs 4 (hard boiled and peeled)
- 4 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 cup onion, finely chopped
- ½ tsp ginger paste (fresh ginger can be grated and made into a paste)
- 1 tsp garlic paste (1 large clove minced and made into a paste)
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp red chili powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 ½ cups tomato, chopped (may substitute 1 cup tomato paste)
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cups water
- 1 tsp cilantro, fresh & chopped
- red chili powder to taste (optional)

In a medium to large sauce pan, using 2 tbsp of the oil, shallow fry the boiled eggs, add a pinch of turmeric and a pinch of salt. Once the eggs are a golden brown, scoop them out and set them aside.

For the curry: add the remaining 2 Tbsp of oil, cumin seeds, and chopped onion to the sauce pan. Once the onion starts getting translucent, add the ginger, garlic paste, and bay leaf. Cook until onion is golden brown. Add the coriander powder and turmeric and mix well, cook for about a minute. Add the chopped tomato or tomato paste and mix well.

Cook over medium to high heat without a lid and keep stirring so the mixture does not stick to the pan. Once the tomatoes have become mushy and well cooked, you can add the garam masala powder and cook for one minute. Add 1 ½ cups of water and the salt and cook until the mixture starts to thicken, keep stirring in between.

Once the mixture has somewhat thickened, you can add red chili powder (optional) and switch off the stove. Add the cooked eggs to this mixture. You can cut the eggs in half length-wise or keep whole. If the curry seems thin, you can add an egg yolk and cook for another minute before adding the rest of the eggs. Sprinkle with cilantro leaves and serve with the Jeera rice or purchased Roti bread.

Suji Halwa

- 1 cup Suji (or finely ground wheat meal such as Farina or Cream of Wheat)
- 1 cup white sugar
- 3 Tbsp oil or ghee
- A few strands of saffron, soaked in water or milk
- 2 cups water
- 2 pods of cardamom (finely ground or ½ tsp ground cardamom)
- 1 Tbsp cashews (optional)
- 1 Tbsp golden raisins (optional)
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In a medium or large sauce pan, add 2 Tbsp of ghee or oil. (Optional) Add cashews and cook until golden brown. Remove cashews, but leave the oil/ghee in the pan. Add another ½ Tbsp of oil/ghee and roast the Suji or Cream of Wheat until golden brown and it has a nice roasted aroma. Turn off heat the minute you can smell the aroma. Transfer the roasted Suji into a pitcher that has a spout or from which it is easy to pour.

In a separate sauce pan, add water and sugar and let the sugar mix in well, cooking over medium heat. When the water just begins to boil, add the saffron and cardamom. Turn heat to very low. Add the roasted Suji to this sauce pan and keep stirring as you pour the Suji into the water. Once all of the Suji is in the pan, add the remaining ghee or oil and mix until there are no lumps. Add the nuts and raisins (optional).

Serve warm.

Notes:

- *You can use melted butter instead of oil or ghee, if you need to.*
- *Oil can be vegetable or canola oil. Olive oil does not work as well for this recipe.*
- *The recipe can easily be cut in half for smaller portions.*
- *It can be eaten the next day by storing in the fridge. It freezes well too.*
- *If the amount of sugar seems like a lot, you can reduce it to what seems reasonable to you. It doesn't affect the preparation. You can also reduce the sugar and add more raisins as a source of sweetness.*