



Food for Thought
A Life in Four Courses

Papa's Dal



“When my dad was home, he would cook. Dal was my favourite and I used to say to him when he was dishing up for me “Papa make my rice swim. Make it swim in the dal” so he would put a little bit of rice in the soupy dal and I was in heaven!”

YASMIN STONEBANKS, FOOD FOR THOUGHT PARTICIPANT

Ingredients

9oz red lentils, washed several times

6oz onions, chopped finely

1-2 fresh chillis, finely sliced

2 teaspoons of ground cumin seeds

½ teaspoon of turmeric

½ teaspoon of fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped

2 pints of water

Salt to taste (don't add salt until the lentils have softened or you can leave until the end of cooking)

For the tempering:

2 tablespoons veg oil

1 tablespoon of butter (or a bit more)

1 onion finely sliced

6 cloves of garlic peeled and finely chopped (I use a garlic press)

½ teaspoon of fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped

½ chopped chilli. This is optional depending on how hot you want it.

1 teaspoon (or a bit more depending how flavoursome you want it) of whole cumin seeds

3 tomatoes chopped into small pieces

2 tablespoons of lemon juice (optional)

¼ teaspoon of garam masala

Handful of chopped fresh coriander



Method

Combine the lentils, onion, green chilli, ground cumin, turmeric and half a teaspoon of chopped ginger and about 2 pints of water to a pot. You may need to add more water as the mixture tends to thicken as it cooks (think of it as if you were making lentil soup).

Bring to a simmer and cover, leaving the lid slightly off. Cook on a low heat until the lentils are cooked. When the dal is cooked it should have the consistency of a thick lentil soup.

Tempering: Put oil and butter in a frying pan, and fry the onions until they are quite brown, almost caramelised. Just before the onions reach the brownish stage add the chopped garlic and half a teaspoon of ginger and continue frying until they too become golden brown. You have to watch this stage carefully as, if left too long, the garlic can easily burn which gives the dal a bitter taste.

As soon as you reach this stage, add the cumin seeds, and as soon as they begin to pop, add the tomatoes and keep frying until they go a bit mushy, then take the frying pan and empty the entire contents into the hot dal. At this stage you can add the lemon juice if using.

For the tempering: you can also add extra chopped chillies, (depending how hot you want it, and also you can add a teaspoon of mustard seeds when you add the cumin seeds. Sometimes you may need to add more oil or butter if needed when frying the onions. I have to admit that it tastes much better with more butter! But you can opt for the healthier option.

Stir and leave tightly covered for about 10 mins for the flavours to marry.

Just before serving, sprinkle the garam masala and chopped coriander into it, give a quick stir and serve either with rice, naan or chapatti.



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