

Murghi aur Masoor Dal

In English this was called *Bombay-style Chicken with Red Split Lentils* when Madhur Jaffrey published it. I suppose it would now be called *Mumbai-style*. Such is fashion, or is it political correctness?

Anyway, fed up with plain chicken on a Sunday? This delightful recipe is simplicity itself and could be a taste-bud-tickling alternative. As written, this is not over spicey but I'm sure you could adjust the quantity of the spice ingredients to your liking. The original recipe used more water (2½ pints) which I found too much so I've reduced it. You may want to stand by with a little more boiling water as you cook it, just in case.

Being cooked with lentils, of which I am big fan, the healthy vegetable content is already present so this really just needs some Basmati rice to complete the dish.

Planning

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| serves: | 4 |
| prep time: | 20 mins |
| cooking time: | 90 mins |

Ingredients

250g red split lentils [masoor dal]
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 fresh green chilli, finely sliced
2 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground tumeric
1 in/2½ cm piece fresh ginger, peeled & finely chopped
35 fl oz/1 ltr water
1 whole chicken
2 tbs vegetable oil
1 tsp cumin seeds
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tbs lemon juice
½ tsp sugar
½ tsp garam masala
3 tbs chopped fresh green coriander
Salt

Method

I try never to buy chicken pieces because a whole chicken is always better value. Cut the chicken into the traditional eight serving pieces: legs divided into thighs and drumsticks, breasts halved. I also throw in the wings, divided into their two useable joints. Skin the leg and breast pieces and as much of the wings as you can. (If you prefer, an equivalent amount of chicken pieces is obviously perfectly fine. Skin those instead.)

Combine the lentils, onion, green chilli, ground cumin, turmeric and half of the chopped ginger in a big, heavy pan. Add the water and stir. Bring this lot to a simmer and cook gently for 45 minutes covered with a lid left slightly ajar. Add the chicken pieces and salt, then mix and return to the simmer. Now cover completely and simmer for 30 minutes or until the chicken is tender.

Put the vegetable oil in a small frying pan and set over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the cumin seeds. When the seeds sizzle (just a few seconds), add the remaining chopped ginger and the chopped garlic. Fry until the garlic takes on a light brown colour and tip the pan contents into the chicken and lentils. Now also add the lemon juice, sugar and garam masala. Stir to mix and cook on low heat for a further 5 minutes.

Serve sprinkled with the fresh coriander together, of course, with Basmati rice.